

ED GREENWOOD'S

CASTLEMOURN

FANTASY CAMPAIGN SETTING



ED GREENWOOD



Original Concept: Ed Greenwood ~ **Fiction:** Ed Greenwood

Writing & Design: Jim Butler, Jennifer Brozek, Steve Creech, Darrin Drader, Sean Everette, Ed Greenwood, Brian Gute, Tim Hitchcock, Alex Jacobs, Tom Knauss, Todd R. Laing, Kevin W. Melka, Montgomery Mullen, James M. Ward

Editor: Brian Gute ~ **Fiction Editor:** Peter Archer ~ **Proofreader:** Christy Everette

Project Manager: Sean Everette ~ **Layout & Typesetting:** Sean Everette

Art Director: Renae Chambers ~ **Cover Artist:** Donato Giancola

Interior Artists: Christopher Appel, Drew Baker, Patrick Ballesteros, Joel Beebe, Mike Bielaczyc, Paul Bielaczyc, Bruce Colero, Jason Engle, Toby Hampton, Kristina Knopse, Ron Lemen, Jennifer Meyer, Therese Mitchell, Stefan Moroni, Dzu Nguyen, Jessica Renk, Daniel Roe, Douglas Sirois, Beth Trott, Fabiola Vargas, Gareth Verleyen, Michelle Weber, Fredy Wenzel

Cartographer: Sean Macdonald ~ **Graphic Designer:** Sean Macdonald

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Some folks collect bowling trophies, some rebuild cars in their driveways, and some try not to miss a single televised moment of football.

I dream up fantasy worlds.

I started worldbuilding in my childhood, imagining what grew into The Forgotten Realms® (now a shared world that continues to grow through the dreamings of literally millions of readers and gamers). It was just the first of over a dozen worlds I've played with since. This is one of them and a particular favorite of mine.

Welcome to Castlemourn.

Or rather, welcome to the many petty baronies, merchant confederacies, and kingdoms that were once, before the Fall, the great and glorious land of Castlemourn. More than a dozen different, and often warring, territories crowded together between the mountains and the sea, plus nine isles that are all that's left undrowned of the lost an-sekhovynd (southern) half of Castlemourn. All of these areas are inhabited by Mournans who no longer know what lies beyond the mountains or across the seemingly endless sea in the world they call Umbrara.

Like the Realms, this is a shared world; within these pages and the books to come, many designers and writers will dive into Umbrara, spinning new tales and revealing new color and details for us all. I'm delighted that my friends, the gaming veterans at Margaret Weis Productions, have given us all the chance to play in this new sandbox.

I've tried to make Castlemourn "feel real." In these pages, you'll find believable people living in a world full of mysteries, ancient magics, and lurking intrigues unfolding right now. It's an ideal home for fantasy roleplaying campaigns, with power groups, throne-strife, and scheming villains enough to keep things interesting for years, even to players whose characters elect to spend much of their time reclining on couches, flagons in hand, watching the world go by! As much as mere curved squiggles of ink on a page can make it, Castlemourn is alive.

It's also flexible. Via the *estemel*, characters from other worlds can readily arrive in Castlemourn. Cities, fortresses, and dungeons from other fantasy settings can easily be placed in the surrounding mountains or in the Mists to the aerho (east) and luthsurl (west) of known Castlemourn. Magic from other places and other worlds can effortlessly be thrust into the castles of Tamrune. Substitute orcs, ogres, or hobgoblins for the golaunt or any really exotic race of creatures for the thaele—or make such creatures allies of those Mournan races, dwelling with them as guards and strike forces.

Castlemourn campaigns can focus on particular areas or kingdoms that offer different flavors of adventure, from piracy on Glamryn Bay to merchants' strivings in Dragonhead and Luuthaven, from the glittering high society of Asmrel to the haughty dukedoms and thundering knights of Lyonar—or from the deadly caverns of the Yarhoon to the sun-dappled farms of Jamandar and from the mist-shrouded menace of Nighdal to the hardy mining and fishing life of the Iron Isles. From the beast-roamed woods of the Haunthills to the perilous mountains where larger, more numerous monsters prowl. From the life of an outlaw in...but my point is made: Castlemourn offers every style of campaign play. Detailed churches await players who want to play priest characters; Castlemourn is awash in wizard-riveting tales of old magics from before the Fall being unearthed in ruins. Thievery and outlawry are rife, and realm after realm is arming or covertly hiring adventurers to swing swords for them. This bright and pleasant land between the mountains is stirring; it's a time for heroes.

How swiftly—or even if—Castlemourn slides into widespread war will be different in every campaign. This book introduces a setting that, if general peace holds, can readily serve as a backdrop for long-term play concentrating on court intrigue, ruins exploration, or even building a mercantile empire along the caravan roads and from port to port along the Bay. No fantasy world should be all drawn swords, dragons toppling castles, grimly onrushing doom, and lurking peril. It should fascinate and soothe, as well, offering people and places we want to know more about and visit. People and places we wish were real. People and places worth fighting for.

From princes trying to regain their rightful thrones to beggars just trying to survive and from street peddlers to rich and ambitious would-be nobles trying to buy titles, Castlemourn holds many colorful characters for players to meet or even become. Guide your own characters to prominence among them, and dream your own dreams about them.

Dreams again. Yes. In an increasingly hectic real world, we all need a home for our dreams, an imaginary world to be our refuge and playground.

So turn the page and step into our new sandbox.

Make Castlemourn your own.

Make Castlemourn your home.

THE NIGHT OF THREE STRANGERS

A CASTLEMOURN TALE
BY ED GREENWOOD

Alune pulled her nightcloak tighter and shivered again. On her cheeks and nose and the battered metal hood of her lantern, the mists of Lothran curled and clung, cold and clammy . . . as they always did at this time of year, when days were still warm but nights turned sharply cold.

Full nightfall had come two tollings ago, but under the line of lamps Alune had lit three bells back, the road was still busy. Though sneak thieves and dark-knives lurked everywhere in Castlemourn, the Grand Duchy was well patrolled and "safe enough." No one could remember the last time an arrow had come out of the night seeking the life of anyone on watch in the aerhopeak, but Alune preferred to keep her lantern tight-shuttered and use it for warmth rather than make herself a beacon. Propping an old hat on a stick in the corner of the peak, she sat down at ease below it, curled around the lantern and peering out into the night through the gap left by the broken board. The huge buckle of the battered old sword-belt Theldor had just given her seemed to catch the heat of the lantern, warming her well enough. A pity its welcome fire only reached her lap.

Across the road, the lanterns in their great cages shed a bright, steady light on the rumbling wagons and jingling riders still passing along Raudar's Way in a hastening flood, despite the hour. More than a few of them drew up at the gate to seek lodging. When Alune swung around to peer out the firing-port, she could see Theldor striding back and forth, a hulking figure in his old war-armor, taking their coin and directing them over to the coach-house or around to the stables with casual waves of his great halberd.

The Gray Gauntlet was crowded tonight—and little wonder. Trade always quickened when the first, cold knife-thrusts of winter reminded folk of the harsher cold to come. Greedy merchants remembered warehouses that needed emptying in a hurry and wares that would earn them no coin at all as sitting frozen on their own thresholds through the winter. And the Gauntlet was just far enough afield up Raudar's Way from always-bustling Zroas of the Many Markets to be free of the everpresent stink of its paddocks and stockyards. Luthsurl, beyond the glow of the Gauntlet's great cage-lanterns standing in their line across the road from the gate guarded by Theldor, scar-faced Mratchen, and her fellow guardswords, the distant lanterns of Zroas could be seen as a handful of glimmerings in the night.

A full Gauntlet meant her own customary bed—the corner strawpile in the loft above the kitchens—would be rented out. Which left a sleepless watch not only inevitable but, given her small size and darksome good looks, the safest way she could spend the night, with the house full of restless wayfarers.

Yes, the Gauntlet was popular; it was clean, well-ordered, and securely walled with a high, stout wall of fitted stones outside the old palisades. Moreover, both Master Baehallow and his off-shift Warder, old Imburl Brokenblade, were well-known, jovial, respected men who made even the surliest stranger feel welcome.

They even had the occasional smile for their smallest, weakest, dirtiest maid-of-chambers—even if she did have to stand guardsword nightwatch, when most women of the house enjoyed well-earned slumber. Well, at least these hours kept her well away from the only two men of the Gauntlet Alune did not like, the swaggeringly handsome pair known as "Bright" and "Shining."

If Baehallow's house lacked some luxuries of Zroasan inns—such as heated bathing-pools or dozens of oiled ladies lounging ready to share themselves with visitors not too weary or saddle-stiff to enjoy such sport—it did have bedchamber doors that could be securely barred, warm hearths, and good food. And it lacked something inns in Zroas did not: outrageous prices. Why—

Alune blinked. Something unusual was striding into the lantern light below. She peered at . . . a lone, trudging figure. A man. There was something familiar about that staff and sagging-from-one-shoulder sharmsack, and the bird-like bobbing and peering set of his head. He stopped to mumble a greeting—and proffer his coin—to Theldor, and Alune caught a glimpse of his face.

Yes, 'twas old Darthar the sage, on his usual as-wandering-as-his-wits way to find a city to winter in before the snows came. "Old Know-Nothing," the folk of the Gauntlet called him—not for his mistakes and increasingly fussy forgettings but for his night-constant habit of muttering "know nothing" to himself as he shuffled along, staring down at a book or a map or at . . . well, nothing at all.

"No more beds!" called Talann from the house doors, and Theldor turned back to Darthar with a shrug—but the old man swept a hand towards the stables and strode off in that direction without waiting for a refusal.

Theldor shrugged again and let him go. Darthar was known and harmless—'twasn't as if the stables weren't well watched. Even should he start a fire in the straw, it'd be put out almost before he was.

Alune smiled. Seeing the sage felt like good luck, a sign from Larlasse. If someone so old and scroll-headed could walk the roads of Mournra and survive unscathed from season to season, this could not be such a fell and dark place as some said 'twas, after all.

She watched the bobbing-headed figure vanish into the stables then turned back to watching the road, feeling in her belt-pouch for the finger of cheese and the sweetsyrup thace-fruit she'd taken from the kitchens. They'd go down good about now. . . .



The creaking of the wooden stair jolted her awake, even before Mratchen's hiss. "Snoring-lass? Seen you Old Know-Nothing?"

"The sage? He took a stall in the stables, yes?"

"Aye, but he's out of it—gone sometime this last bell, and the gates shut and guarded by three of us who keep ourselves more wakeful than a certain peak-watcher. So he's creeping around somewhere. If y'see him, strike your block an' we'll hear—no need to shout or wind a horn an' have all the house roused."

"Sure he hasn't fallen asleep in the jakes?"

"First place I checked—and Tulburt's snoring in one of them right now, loud enough to keep anyone else from joining 'im. Just keep watch, hear?"

"I always do," Alune snapped.

"Through your snores, aye," Mratchen growled good-naturedly, turning back down the stair. "I knew a sword-sentry like you once . . . near got us all killed, he did, snoring while the golaunt crept up on us."

Alune sent a snort after him and heard him chuckle. She knew he'd be back to check on her later—because he'd caught her snoring, not because one old man was wandering somewhere in the Gauntlet.

Yet, she felt uneasy. She'd thought Darthar's appearance a mark of the Lady's favor, but now . . .



In the long, dark hours that followed, a nightgrael hooted once in the woods across the Way. Theldor and Mratchen both crossed the yard quietly but purposefully with swords half drawn and shuttered lanterns in hand . . . and the Seven sent no more signs. Low clouds hid the stars, though their edges glowed with the light of Thelseene, and mists rolled thickly around the walls. Despite the warmth of the lantern, Alune started to shiver again. Well, at least the cold would keep her awake.

She hooked her hands into her old belt, running her fingers back and forth over the hardness of its huge buckle to banish numbness from her fingers, lifted her chin, and devoted herself to being an alert sentinel.



No one tolled bells in the Gauntlet after the gates were shut; paying guests needed their sleep. So Alune could not be sure how much time had passed before she heard Mratchen start up the stair again. She'd started yawning again, she knew, and perhaps had nodded off, just for a breath or two.

She stiffened. Yes, there 'twas again: a light creaking on the stair. The tread was slower than Mratchen's and less steady—almost like that of an old man. Slapping one hand over the great buckle of her old belt, she drew her belt-blade with the other and peered hard through the inner firing-port.

The ascending figure loomed large, dark, and shapeless. It wore a flowing black robe with hood up and head bent over, as if deliberately concealing its face. One arm seemed to ripple under the fabric as it came, as if straining to—she wasn't sure what. That hand was empty; however, and she could see no sign of a belt-weapon . . . or a belt, come to that. The stair had a single rail, a rough-trimmed spar of wood affixed to the inside of the wall palisades, and the climbing hand that betimes clutched it was also empty.

Alune caught her breath and peered harder. Had she seen *scales* on that hand, catching moonglow for an instant?

No—no, in fact that hand, clearer now as the figure rose up before her in almost sinister silence, looked as smooth and long-fingered as that of a high lady, one who'd never known hand-work.



Yet surely the other hand had been that of a man, hairy and callused? Wha—but as she stared at it, that hand drew in swiftly beneath the dark robe, as if its owner knew she was regarding it.

Not rising from her crouch below the peak walls, Alune made her voice as deep and steady as she could and said flatly, "This way is guarded. Halt, give your name, and turn back!"

The dark-robed stranger stiffened and snarled, "Fall down and crawl!"

The voice was unmistakably that of a well-traveled Mournan man, and the utterance sounded more like a curse than an order. And who but a wizard in some tavern-tale would snap such a command?

As Alune crouched, wondering what to do next, the stranger added in quite a different voice, "I—I crave pardon, sentinel. I thought this place was deserted. I seek solitude. I . . . Mundarth is my name. Mundarth. I'll go."

He turned, moving somehow strangely—as if his shape was *shifting* under that robe, Alune thought—and started down the stair again, moving more swiftly than he'd ascended, yet still quietly.

She stood up to stare at him but shrank back when he turned at the foot of the stair to look up at her, his face still invisible in the dark cowl. Then he turned under the stair, into the shadows hard by the wall and was gone.

No matter how hard she strained to hear any sound of his passage, Alune could not tell where he headed.

She shivered again—then reached out with the hilt of her blade and firmly tapped the hollow wooden block pegged to the peak walls. Its hollow "thock" rang out clearly in the stillness. Mratchen promptly strode from the gatehouse and looked up at her. She waved the hilt of her blade back and forth in the "come quickly" signal, and he cast a quick, hawk-like glance around the yard then started up the stair. It made its usual enthusiastic creakings under him.

"Aye, lass? You've seen him?" Mratchen's murmur was as light as a night-breeze. His sword was drawn, its tip lifting to her as Alune leaned forward. She caught her breath sharply.

"This is in case you're not you but someone else luring me up here," he muttered. "So speak."

"A man just came up the stair," Alune hissed at him, suddenly trembling—afraid. "At least I think it was a man, but he—he seemed to have a woman's hand, and his body was *moving* under his robe. A stranger. Retreated when I challenged, said he was seeking solitude. Gave his name as Mundarth."

Mratchen lowered his head and thrust it forward like one of Tulburt's hunting dogs. "Mundarth. You're sure?"

"Y-yes."

The scarred old warrior nodded slowly and thoughtfully—then snapped, “Where’d he go?”

“Under the stair, just now, and gone. I listened hard, heard naught, and struck the block.”

Mratchen nodded again. “Bring your lantern an’ come with me,” he muttered. “Down to the gatehouse, quick an’ quiet.”



Alune was glad to be standing in the close, lantern-warmed gatehouse, even crowded together with three strong-smelling men. “Old Darthar was the only lone walker I let in, to be sure,” Theldor rumbled. “If I recall a-right, this Mundarth’s a wandering wizard, aye?”

“More than that,” Mratchen muttered. “He’s a shape-shifter—cursed, some say—always growing arms or changing height or . . . worse. Alune here saw something of that.”

“So what by the Seven do we do to fight a *wizard*?” Blacklar snarled fearfully, gripping his drawn sword gingerly, as if it were ice-cold.

“Naught, if the Lady smiles on us,” Theldor snapped. “I’ve not heard this Mundarth’s a strifelord or hurls spells to rule.”

“All wizards are trouble and would-be rulers of Mournra, to boot,” Blacklar growled.

“Enough,” Theldor commanded. “When Feln comes out yon house door to join us, Mratchen and Alune will take another walk around the yard looking for him. You and Feln keep the gates, and I’ll stand mid-mud—there—between, trying to keep eyes on all of you. A wizard could well walk through the Gauntlet’s walls, just like that, and there’s no cause to be rousing the house or burying blades in anyone if he doesn’t work harm, hey?”

“Ho,” Blacklar agreed sourly. “Here’s Feln.”

“Or the wizard, using Feln’s shape,” Alune blurted then wished she hadn’t. Theldor swung around, giving her the darkest look she’d ever seen. Mratchen turned his head sharply to glare at the approaching Feln, and Blacklar went pale and wild-eyed in a trembling instant.



Their third tense walk around the yard, like the two previous ones, turned up no sign of the wizard or the missing sage—but did find something else. The end stall of the stables, where Hornlyn the stablemaster swore old Darthar had bedded down “right quiet” half the night ago and that had been dead-bones-certain-before-the-Seven empty in all of their searches since, had suddenly acquired an occupant. One Mratchen was sure he’d not seen in the Gauntlet earlier this night or at any time this season.

“Seven save us!” he spat, in utter bewilderment, as he waved for Alune to shine her lantern full on the face of the figure huddled in the straw. Then he was into the stall in a single bound, sword out and a long arm reaching like a hook-spear to snatch aside the sleeper’s blanket. “*Aumun*?”

A grizzled old face blinked up at him, eyes twisting shut against the lantern-light. “Mratch?” a rough, once-mellow voice asked in some exasperation. “Are you such a good friend, now, as to be waking me at *this* time o’ night?”

Mratchen drew in a deep breath, swallowed a few choice curses in a swift, angry rumble, and asked heavily, “*Aumun*, when did you get here?”

“Hrruh? What?”

“*Aumun*,” Mratchen asked patiently, “when did you pass through the gate?”

“Ah, now . . . I . . .”

“Was it light or dark? Who did you give coin to? And how much did you give?”

The old storyteller—"bard," he liked to call himself, but few received his rough songs and rougher voice with much patience—frowned, tugged at the tiny tuft of beard on his chin, and said disgustedly, "Don't remember."

He peered at Alune, standing with the lantern held high in one hand, the other clenched hard around the grip of her half-drawn belt-blade, and said triumphantly, "Her! 'Twas her as took my copper tooth!"

"Aumun," Mratchen said icily, "this lass has never stood gate-guard in her life. Get up. You're coming with us."

"Ehh? Coming where?"

"To see Theldor and help him unravel a little mystery."

The wandering storyteller brightened. "Ho! A mystery, now! Tell!"

"I'll leave that to Theldor," Mratchen said, waving at Alune to keep the lantern on the old man. His eyes never left Aumun, and his sword was raised and ready. "For one thing, I'm not sure I can say it straight."

He made an impatient stabbing motion to indicate which way the storyteller should proceed. Aumun sighed, belched, scratched himself, and set off into the yard with his usual bandy-legged trudge. Mratchen moved just behind his elbow, beckoning Alune to follow closely on the man's much-patched heels.

They were halfway to Theldor, who stood massive and grim in the night facing them, his old armor glinting in Alune's bobbing lantern light, when the world exploded in a flood of deep blue fire that brought silence and racing bubbles and . . . bright-flaring oblivion.



The mud was cold and hard against her cheek and smelt no nicer than it ever had. Alune groaned, tried to roll over, and discovered she had no idea where "over" was or how to . . . how to . . .



"Up," Theldor growled, not unkindly, as his fingers took her under the arms and plucked her into the night sky. Lanterns swam crazily past her gaze ere she fetched up against a rough wooden wall with a jolt that rattled Alune's back teeth. The yard captain held her there casually with one hand as he glanced around at his command. "Mratchen?"

"I'll live," came an answering growl, in tones that told all Umbrara that a certain much-scarred graysword didn't much care, just now, if he did.

"So who," Theldor asked calmly, "feels hale enough to go searching for Aumun of the Tales? Or the sage Darthar? Or, if you prefer, Mundarth the cursed mage? You can have your pick of quarries; I'm feeling right generous this night!"

"So was whoever laid that spell on us," Feln grunted. "Seven above, my head!"

"Must've been Mundarth," Blacklar said grimly. "Lurking. Watching us. Awaiting his moment."

"Aye, but to do what?" Theldor snapped. "Gate's still shut, nothing gone I can mark, no tumult within . . ."

"Huh. Wait 'til they rise in full morn an' discover something—I know not what, but something—missing," Blacklar said darkly. "Wizards are always after something."

"That's true," a new voice agreed from out of the darkness behind the gatehouse. Everyone whirled around, spitting curses and waving blades—which promptly sang strangely, numbing fingers amid sudden haloes of blue sparks.

More curses erupted as swords and knives tumbled, guards stumbled hastily back, and frantic hands sought clubs and halberds in the darkness.

The sparks drifted away into the night to gather around two upraised hands. Their owner came forward, and Alune saw bright eyes in a weathered face, a long-flowing mane of gray-white hair, and plain black robes gathered at the waist by the most splendid belt she'd ever seen.

"Tharsus!" Theldor gasped, his voice hard with anger and bewilderment. "What're you doing here?"

"What I do every day, it seems," came the weary reply. "Seeking my lost things of great magic, for the time of my need hastens, and I *must* find them."

Alune stared, open-mouthed. She'd never seen this man before, but she knew very well who Tharsus was. All Mournra knew who Tharsus was.

For generations—centuries, some said, but tales have a way of growing in the telling—the old wizard Tharsus had walked the lands nigh Glamryn Bay, seeking where he'd left his "things of great magic." Tomes and wands and wondrous weapons, it was thought, lost long ago. Some said in the Fall, but then, all manner of losings were blamed on the Fall.

Aging and forgetful, for season after season, Tharsus walked on, never seeming to find them, ranging over all Mournra but coming most often to proud Lyonar and here, to Lothran.

"What magic are you seeking here?" Alune blurted, bringing all eyes to her.

The wizard's gaze seemed to brighten as he marked her femininity, and he said in kindly tones, "Why—"

Then he frowned, turned away, and glanced at . . . nothing.

Theldor turned to Alune with a grimace and made a fierce, silent "be still" gesture. None of the other guardswords moved.

The wizard strolled away from them across the muddy yard, and they heard him murmur, "Without magic to trust in, we must fail and fall. . ."

He raised his hands again, as he'd done when disarming them. As if his gesture was a signal—or some silent, truly titanic spell—the coldly glowing clouds overhead rolled aside to lay bare the dark sky and the scores of familiar stars glittering above.

Tharsus started striding with purpose, then, back across the yard in a different direction. His eyes were fixed on nothing, and he passed the guards as if not seeing them at all, heading straight and swift for. . . nothing. Nothing but the dark, high, solid outer wall of the Gauntlet yard. Which he stepped into and through as if it were mere shadow and vanished.

Alune blinked at the place where he'd been and waited, holding her breath, but he did not return. With a sigh of sudden urgency, she raced up the stair to her peak to peer out and down over the wall.

The road was deserted in the steady lantern-light, and there was no sign of the wizard. Or anything else stirring for that matter.

She looked all around, seeing neither man nor beast in the night outside the walls, then came slowly back down the stair, uncomfortable under Theldor's hard, steady gaze.

When she reached the ground, he stepped forward to meet her and said, "Not a word of this to anyone—*anyone*—understand?"

"N-no, lord sir," Alune whispered. "My tongue will be still." Tense silence followed her words, hanging heavily around them all, ere she added wryly, "After all, who would believe me?"

It was Mratchen who started to chuckle—a startled chortling in which all her fellow sentinels joined—but surprisingly, it was Theldor who barked out a full-voiced bellow of laughter ere he ducked inside the gatehouse to muffle his mirth behind a wadded cloak.

When he mastered himself and came out into their midst again, it was to clap a heavy hand on Alune's shoulder and say firmly, "You'll see strange things from time to time when on nightwatch at the Gauntlet—and some far more deadly than this night has been, thus far. Yet in all my years, I've never yet managed to lose a sage but gain a self-styled bard and *two* wizards into the bargain! There's some mystery afoot here that's beyond us—and let's hope it keeps itself in that wise."

"What I want to know," Mratchen muttered, "is who worked that spell when we were bringing Aumun across the yard. Tharsus, or . . . ?"

Theldor shook his head and shrugged, spreading empty hands to indicate he held no answer.

"That wizard, Tharsus," Feln said suddenly. "His words, 'without magic to trust in, we must fail and fall,' those . . . well, they're from a song, now, aren't they?"

Theldor frowned thoughtfully then nodded.

"Yes!" Alune blurted, tapping her knuckles on the big buckle of her sword-belt as she remembered the dark and looming hooded man on the stair below her. "Mundarth said words from it, too! 'Fall down and crawl!' I thought he was just cursing me, but . . ."

"But what?" Theldor said quietly. "More trimmings for our heaped platter of mystery, to be sure." He shook his head in dismissive exasperation, spat into the mud, and dusted his palms together briskly. "Well, this night'll soon be done, and we can leave such worries to Bright and Shining. Back to posts, all, and strike blocks if you see anyone walking about where they shouldn't be. If the Seven smile, 'twon't be Tharsus or Mundarth or even Aumun. Though how an inn and a yard this small can swallow up *four* men is beyond me."



Theldor had recently hired "Bright" and "Shining," the tall, arrogant, and handsome young pair of warriors, to mind the gates of the Gauntlet during the day—when, as he put it, *real* guards weren't needed. Alune had disliked them on sight. She knew they snored like gale-storms and thought themselves grander than everyone else . . . and she also knew that whenever no beautiful women were guesting at the Gauntlet, the two men seemed to think every she on staff would leap to share a bed with them. Worse yet, in this they seemed to be right. Despite being small, young, and of the lowliest standing in the house, her turn would come soon, and she wasn't sure how hard a road she'd be choosing when she refused them—or if they'd settle for her "no" at all.

These gloomy thoughts carried her up the stair to the peak, where she came to a sudden, startled halt. Something—someone—was huddled where she was wont to sit. She retreated a step, fumbled with belt-blade and lantern, then thought better of it and hurried back down the stair as quietly as she could. She almost ran down Theldor in the gatehouse, as he bent to stoke the warming-brazier, but managed to hiss, "Come quick! Someone's up the peak!"

Theldor was out and past her, his great sword grating out, almost before she had time to draw breath. Mratchen was hard on his heels as he burst around the gatehouse and thundered up the stair, and as Alune followed them, she saw twin flashes of moonglow from behind her, as Blacklar drew steel—and from across the yard, where Feln was hurrying from the house doors.

Alune kept both of her hands for the lantern and its shutter as she made for the stair—but by then Theldor was up at the peak, snarling, "*Out* with you!" and hauling forth a blinking bundle of cloak and patched boots that proved to be the bard Aumun.

"How'd you get up here?" Mratchen demanded into the old storyteller's ear as Theldor handed Aumun to him like a half-empty sack of grain. "Past us five, an' all? Hey?"

"Ho," Aumun replied sourly. "Being as I was happily asleep a breath ago, *I* don't know. Ask the Seven. All I know is, whenever I try to get some sleep around here, you damned-in-the-Fall overenthusiastic swords wake me! And none too gently, neither!"

"Stables," Theldor said firmly, quelling Mratchen's questions with a glare. Alune hastily made way for the trio to descend.

As they trudged away across the yard she heard Mratchen mutter, "Magic. That's what all this is. Cursed magic."

Theldor came back to the gatehouse alone. "Mratchen's going to stand guard over old Song-and-Story until we go off duty," he explained in answer to Alune's mute look of query. "Or something *else* happens."

He shouldered past her, adding with a growl, "Shouldn't you be up in the peak? It's had a few breaths standing unattended, now, to grow other missing men who shouldn't even be here."

As Alune hastened back to the stair, he shook his head and muttered, "The Seven must be bored indeed to plague us with such a night of . . ." His voice sank out of her hearing as she ascended, blade drawn, lantern unshuttered and flooding the stair with light.

The peak was empty—thank the Seven—and Alune resumed her post with a sigh. This certainly was a strange night. One guest missing, and three strangers wandering the yard, one after another. Known men, yes, but "strangers" in Gauntlet parlance because they were within the walls without paying gate-coin and being named as guests.

Magic, wild magic of the Seven, it must be. Alune tapped her knuckles on her belt buckle and gave the stars overhead a long look, wondering—and not for the first time—why the gods did what they did. Such as let the Fall happen. What had life been like in Castlemourn before the Fall? And what did the gods intend for Mournra now? Next summer? And the one after that?

The faint creak and rumble of distant wagons arose out of the aerho, coming along the Way towards Zroas. Such night travel was a rare thing, even in the safety of the Duchy. They sounded a long way off, yet. Alune glanced up and down what she could see of the Way in the lantern light then turned to survey the yard.

She saw Mratchen come trotting across the mud to the gatehouse. Theldor strode forth to meet him, looking more grimly resigned than furious.

Alune tossed discipline to the winds and hastened down to join them; Theldor gave her a quick, wary glance as she came but snapped no rebuke. Blacklar had already joined them, and Feln was striding across the mud from the house doors.

Theldor waved a curt hand at Mratchen to repeat what he'd already told their commander, and the scarred warrior said briefly, "Aumun roused to use the jakes. I wanted to, too, so we went in the kitchen door. Some visiting fancy-maid was washing gowns in the near, so we went right along to the far end and had to wait in line."

"And Song-and-Story vanished," Blacklar grunted. It was not a question.

Mratchen nodded. "Worse than that. Talann swears Aumun's not paid for a bed, isn't up an' about, that no one could walk past him unmarked—an' that he was overseeing the lads fetching up a keg of saltfish from the cellars, hard by the jakes! Nor has he seen any wizards or our wayward sage."

"Then he must be going blind," Feln said, pointing back at the stables. "Or Tharsus has been striding about invisible. See?"

The black-robed wizard Tharsus was walking towards them with a puzzled frown on his weathered face, thumbs hooked over the raised, upswept edge of his splendid metal belt. "Lost, all lost," he murmured, as if to himself—and then his eyes brightened, and he added, "But close, now! *Very* close!"

Theldor sighed, made the downward sweeping motion with both hands that told his fellow guardswords "quiet, and keep weapons sheathed," and stepped forward to meet him.

"Lord Tharsus," he said pleasantly, "the bells are late—or early. I'd've thought you'd be seeking a warm bed. Where've you been walking, this last little while?"

The wizard tossed his head, gray-white hair swirling, and replied, "Much magic at work here! I've been sniffing it out, good sentinel—Theldor, isn't it? Yes, I remember you from seasons past—and as I sniff, I see the phantoms of those who last worked strong magic there, and over there, and out on the road yonder."

He looked past Theldor at Alune, and his eyes *flamed*.

"You, maid!" he gasped. "You have it!"

He pushed past Theldor in a swirl of long black sleeves, reaching for her as he said eagerly, "Give it here!"

Theldor took three swift strides and barred his way, glancing back to see both Mratchen and Feln, swords out, step in front of a bewildered and staring Alune.

"Now, Lord Wizard," Theldor began gravely, "let's have no—"

A hulking mountain in war-armor Theldor might be, but Tharsus thrust him aside as if he'd been a doddering whitebeard, scarcely seeming to notice him.

"Lad, lad!" the wizard said happily to Alune, as if she was a boy. The same light was in his eyes that she'd seen last season on the face of a merchant who collected butterflies, and wanted the one that had happened to get tangled in the lace she'd been hanging to dry. "The belt you wear! It's mine—I've been seeking it for centuries!"

"Centuries?" Blacklar growled, joining Feln and Mratchen in a defensive line of drawn blades in front of Alune. "How long do wizards live, anyway?"

"Long enough to lose track of time," Feln muttered. "I'm busying myself, look you, hoping he lets *us* live a little longer!"

Alune stepped back uncertainly. "L-lord Tharsus? You just want . . . this old belt?"

Tharsus nodded eagerly, flicking his fingers absently to unleash some silent magic that sent Mratchen, Feln, and Blacklar tumbling helplessly in all directions. "Yes, yes!" he exclaimed, bearing down on her.

Behind him, Theldor loomed up, blade raised to strike.

"Hold," Alune snapped desperately—to her commander, not the wizard.

Tharsus stopped with a frown, thinking her word was directed at him. Then his face brightened again. "Ah, of course!"

His hands went to his own broad belt of chased metal and gleaming gems. He undid a latch that sent sculpted figures moving in an astonishingly intricate dance across its front. Black robes swung free as he held it out. "You can't be without one, of course, to bear your blade and suchlike. Will you trade?"

Her fellow guardswords stared at her. Alune looked from their faces to the wizard's eager, bright-blazing eyes . . . then at the splendid belt he was holding out to her, its gems aflame with reflections of his burning gaze.

"Why, yes," she said nervously, putting on the brightest smile she could. "Yes, of course, Lord Tharsus!"

She undid her old belt with all the haste and dignity she could manage under the weight of five mens' gazes—one of them literally *burning*—slid off her pouch and blade-sheath, and held it out.

Its own huge buckle was a battered and plain-looking thing beside the gilded splendor the wizard was offering, but he made the exchange with the excitement of a small boy gaining a coveted toy—and, just for a moment, their fingers brushed each other.

That touch sent a tingling shock through Alune that left her trembling, as if her blood was afire and restless, surging through her.

And then, of course, her breeches fell down.



Or almost fell down. Alune clawed and grabbed at them, bending swiftly to maintain her modesty, and ended up on her knees, trying to attach her wadded-up breeches to the unfamiliar hooks, loops, and slides of the magnificent metal belt. Seven above! It looked to be worth more than the entire Gauntlet—and at that thought, her hands started to tremble worse than before.

Tharsus, who'd been standing in front of her murmuring and gesturing things over the old belt she'd handed him, suddenly threw back his head in delight and bellowed, "Yes!"

His voice echoed like thunder off the walls of the Gauntlet, in a mighty roar that couldn't help but rouse everyone within, with only the first faint gray glimmerings of approaching dawn visible yet, and—

From the belt in his hands light raced up into the sky above, in a wild unleashing of stars and tongues of flame that in a mere breath formed a gigantic face as large as the greatest stormcloud Alune had ever seen.

It was feminine, surrounded by a tumbling mane of hair like red, swirling fire. Its eyes outshone the stars and . . . and looked right down at *her*.

Theldor made a sort of sob.

Alune glanced at him. From his awed face, it seemed he was thinking those wonderful, terrible eyes were looking down right at him.

Not far from him, Tharsus smiled and whispered something she couldn't hear, as he lifted one hand to wave at the face.

No, no, it was looking at *him*. At the wizard who'd unleashed or freed it, of course!

Then that vast face moved its lips, and a deep, whispering voice that stood every hair on her body on end and seemed to come from inside her, and from all Umbrara around her, said words Alune could not understand, but yearned to.

Tharsus was weeping openly, the other guardswords were cowering on their knees, staring up at the great face just as she was, and—

Red fire slashed down from on high, or up from the buckle Tharsus was holding, in a crackling, quivering bolt that left Alune frozen and breathless—and that snatched wizard, belt, and all up into the sky or melted them to nothing in an instant, or whisked them elsewhere too swift for the eye to see.

Or at least, that's what Alune thought had happened, as she fought to see anything, with darkness rushing in, as the stars overhead seemed to gather speed in a great rushing spiral that rushed over and around the Gauntlet, racing faster . . . and faster . . .



It was bright morning in the mud of the yard. Alune blinked. Dazed people were stumbling aimlessly around on all sides, and Theldor was bending over her.

Alune looked up at him and smiled—and he reached down a large, callused, and very reassuring hand to touch her cheek, just for a moment.

"What happened?" she whispered.



Theldor shrugged a little helplessly. "You think I—any here—know?" he growled. He shook his head. "They've been chattering as hard as the cooks do, a-talking about what we all saw—and arguing about what it means. As if any but the Seven know!"

Which was when Mratchen let out a soft, disbelieving curse from nearby.

Theldor turned with a warrior's swiftness, almost rolling Alune over, and she found herself gaping at the same thing he was.

A bird-like bobbing and peering man was trudging towards them across the Gauntlet yard: Darthar Know-Nothing, the befuddled sage.

"What did I miss?" he asked peevishly, without giving a greeting. "Well? What?"

Theldor shook his head and spread his hands to underscore his grim confusion. "A little magic is all," he rumbled, and shrugged. "Strangeness sent by the Seven, I guess."

Alune struggled to her feet, her legs weak and awkward. Straightening, she found herself looking directly into Theldor's eyes from the same level as his were—and looking down on Mratchen and the rest! And they were staring at her as if she had three heads and wore a crown on each one!

How—?

Alune looked down at herself, seeing her own familiar limbs, though the leather vest of her armor now seemed to barely reach her belt rather than her knees, and her breeches now ended at the tops of her boots and not at her ankles—and then back up at them all. She was . . .

Mratchen and others, all over the yard, were staring at her with their mouths agape.

"Oh," was all she could find to say, looking down at her own arms—bared almost to the elbow, now, where her shirt no longer reached—in wonder. She was as tall as Theldor! "Oh!"

Theldor's jaw fell open.

"What's happened to me?" Alune hissed at him.

Theldor shut his mouth slowly, frowning as if he had to think hard to remember how to do it. "Lass, you're the same as before, as far as I can see," he growled, "but—but as tall as me!"

Another two men were stopping to stare at her, open-mouthed: Bright and Shining.

"What happened to you?" Bright blurted, eyes huge and dumbfounded.

Alune looked coolly down at them both from her new height, letting her gaze travel slowly to their feet and then back up to their astonished faces, one after the other.

Then she gave them both a clear look of disdainful dismissal and said airily, "A little magic is all. Strangeness sent by the Seven."

CHAPTER I: CHARACTERS

Mournan adventurers are like the adventurers of a thousand other worlds. Some seek knowledge or fame, others seek wealth or personal glory, and still others simply seek adventure and excitement. The *Castlemourn Campaign Setting* provides all of these opportunities and more.

Castlemourn is home to many of the races “standard” to fantasy settings: humans, dwarves, elves, gnomes, halflings, and half-elves; however, Mournan folk have their own unique characteristics. In addition, Castlemourn is home to two new character races: the fell-blooded golaunt and the mysterious thaele. When choosing a race and class for your character, bear in mind that both golaunt and thaele are viewed with suspicion and distrust by many Mournans. This chapter provides the rules material necessary to create characters and begin a Castlemourn campaign, everything from the races available as characters to a new class, new prestige classes, and new setting specific feats.

RACES

Mournans are generally tolerant of other races. Dozens of intelligent races inhabit the lands, some friendly, some not so. By adulthood, even a Mournan who has led a sheltered life will have met or seen folk of many different races. The primary sentient races of Castlemourn are as follows (names in quotations being what other races politely call them):

- **Humans:** The most numerous race, “Swift Tongues” are found almost everywhere and (aside from Ironfell, the Yarhoon, and the mountains) dominate most of Mournra.
- **Dwarves:** The realm of Ironfell is home to most Mournan dwarves, though a few of “the Strong” hail from the Iron Isles, and a sprinkling are scattered widely across the rest of Mournra.
- **Elves:** Most “Fair Folk” hail from Harrag and the Mistcloak Forest, where they prefer to be left alone, often cutting short the lives of those who enter their forested lands uninvited. Elves encountered outside the Harrag are often outcasts, sent forth from their kin for transgressions. Half-elves are usually the children of outcast elves.
- **Gnomes:** A majority of gnomes call Estorna home, but like halflings, “the Quiet Folk” have settled widely elsewhere.
- **Golaunt:** The “Snarlrs” are dominant in the Yarhoon, though small tribes can be found where humans are few throughout Mournra.

- **Halflings:** Most halflings hail from Estorna, though small villages of “Swifthands” can be found across Mournra.

- **Thaele:** A mysterious, unsettling race of transients, the “Strange Folk” wander the lands seeking answers to Castlemourn’s many secrets, even as they protect their own. Thaele are most numerous on the outskirts of Asmrel and Dragonhead and in the Haunthills and Lyonar.

HUMANS

Humans are often considered an “average” people, able to do almost anything, but rarely excelling at any one thing. Yet Mournan humans, descended from those who saw Castlemourn shattered, are extremely adaptable. Humans of other worlds may resist change, but Mournan “Swift Tongues” watch for it. Great trouble can come without warning, and only those who change to meet its challenges survive. Ambition and energy (and sometimes recklessness) are marks of the race.

Humans are a people of paradoxes; they take pride in their adaptability, but also delight in establishing a static way of life. Most established baronies and kingdoms are primarily human, as are many of the religious leaders. Despite the inherent chaos caused by their ambitious strivings, human leaders are best known for the order they bring to their domains.

This is not as contradictory as it seems to other races; since the Shattering of the Castles, human history is not noted for bringing order so much as *attempting* to bring order. Those attempts have caused more chaos, plunging various parts of Castlemourn into nigh-constant strife.

This warring has hardened human lands, making them militarily and magically strong. The striving for order has also given rise to what other races call “human dreamers”: those who dream of a return to the Castlemourn that was, “Before the Castles Fell.” Every Mournan race has individuals fascinated by the mysteries of the past, but none has more such “dreamers” than humans.

Ironically, as the shortest-lived race (aside from the golaunt), humans are more generations removed from the Fall than others, and so have lost far more lore and knowledge. Humans hungry for such things often become merchants, travelers, or ambassadors to other lands so as to see and hear as much as possible, though few share the information they gain.

THE NAMING OF FOLK

Mournans bear an astonishing variety of names, some of which are said to have been ancient “Before the Castles Fell,” from “the far Mists,” or even from other worlds (though no full-witted folk will admit to having a bloodline from “otherwhere”). Some of the most common human Mournan names are given in the following tables. Especially common names are marked with a ^c in the listings. Surnames used by notorious or very wealthy families are marked with an ^N. The Mournan equivalent of “John Doe” is Markyl Deljack (and for “Jane Doe,” it’s Baera Deljack). It should be noted that the male given name “Cendrikh” is pronounced with a soft “c” (as in “celery”) by some families and a hard “c” (as in “cat”) by others.

Mournans very commonly use the surnames of one to three proud old families (though NEVER with hyphens), switching the orders of these names around by whim or as prudence (such as local popularity of one clan or another) dictates. In rural or less “civilized” areas, individuals are more likely to use something like “Jus-son-of-Jus-the-smith” or “Klaela-kin-of-Lorth-who-slew-the-wolf.” While these names are predominantly human, other races also use these names.

Within human-dominated lands, Swift Tongues defy easy generalizations. They frequently choose a narrow skill set in which to concentrate their efforts, though the breadth of what is available to them is vast. An elf warrior, for example, is expected to know not only the bow and sword, but how to watch for signs of magical blight, compose poetry and song, and even practice some magic. Yet most human warriors are only expected to master one weapon and little else beyond some battle skills.

More than any other race, humans are interested in the past. The vast majority of questors (those who seek answers to ancient mysteries) are human. Some hunt for ancient items of power so as to wield them, while others seek only to destroy them for the greater safety of Castlemourn. Many questors are sponsored by a government or other powerful organization that allows them to keep monetary treasure they find, but expects them to hand over artifacts of power or ancient knowledge—on penalty of death.

Personality: Human personalities are more varied than those of any other race. The folk of Baerent tend to be calm and collected, whereas typical Lothrans are ostentatious and aggressive. Yet such regional stereotypes are nigh useless; humans are the most individualistic race in Castlemourn. All humans, however, tend to be curious (though far less so than gnomes), headstrong, proud, and seek to shape the world to their own vision.

Physical Description: Humans typically stand between 5 1/2 and 6 1/2 feet tall and weigh between 125 and 300 pounds. Men tend to be heavier and stronger than women, though exceptions abound. Men usually have greater upper body strength than women, while females outstrip males in lower body strength. Hair can be black, brown, blond, or red, turning gray or white as age increases; specific hues dominate regionally in



Common Feminine Given Names

Adaunthra	Cilindue	Esdue	Indra	Lithleira	Ophala	Sashantra	Wandra
Ammaethe	Clarila	Esmurae	Issiteera	Maelandra ^C	Pellethe	Steelra	Wolauntra
Amryl	Corlue	Faelarna	Jalandeire	Maeradagh	Phaendra	Sousarra	Wulvarra
Aunleira	Dardara	Fyndlara	Jarlarra	Marlarla	Qeldra	Sylsilvarra	Wylдра
Baranthra	Daumra	Gaela ^C	Jhelmune	Mororra	Quemmethe	Tantarra	Xavalla
Baera ^C	Daunelora	Gatha	Juelarma	Namarrue	Qesla	Umbrae	Xintrae
Bemurra	Daunra	Gontra	Klylandra	Nanuen	Ralandara ^C	Uouvorna	Yauvae
Boenarra	Dnaethra	Haelgatha	Korla ^C	Nelvimdra	Regranthra	Valandra ^C	Ylorna
Caedra ^C	Dulsarra	Hyrantha	Kylendra	Nindra ^C	Riltara	Velvra	Zanglezra
Carandeira	Eldreene	Imbrilda ^C	Lalurra	Omrue	Roazranne	Vormarra	Zorma
Chellra	Endrorna	Immra ^C	Laenthe	Omsra	Ruunda		

Common Masculine Given Names

Alaragus	Damar ^C	Esgel	Hirstyn	Lomel	Ojlokh	Renglo	Toelran
Arnaunt	Delmur ^C	Fandran	Hlormyn	Lurlakh	Ombur	Rethan ^C	Turlath
Aumanthus	Delneth	Farl	Hundarr	Mabrith	Ondroth ^C	Rildahar	Uldrin
Barthan	Dirloth	Felna ^C	Iandarr	Markyl ^C	Oskyn	Roldinor	Velmar
Bellard ^C	Dlaerlyn ^C	Fornfael	Intamm	Meslyn	Osril	Sarmar ^C	Vorm ^C
Bellaun	Donthan	Furlyn	Irleth	Mirralar	Parandar	Seldyn	Waundan
Blaskudar	Dorthtyn	Gaskarr	Izarl	Morrud ^C	Pelangar	Sibraular	Weskyn
Bowan	Duntreth	Glamur	Jalandar	Mundur	Prendol	Sondurr	Wulvord
Boel	Duntur	Glintur	Jesky	Murlokh	Purdyn	Stammath	Xauntur
Bulnagh	Ebran	Gommar	Joraund	Narlaph	Quandarr	Suldrin	Xorlyn
Burnar	Edreth	Gorlar	Joroth	Nauntlar	Queltin	Tarvar	Yauramyr
Cadelner	Elarl	Gowlath	Juthrel	Nethdan	Quorlyn	Teltarl	Yethtyn
Caszath	Eldann	Guthlan	Krendur	Noanan	Rald ^C	Tespur	Yundas
Cendrikh	Elgur	Halaunglar	Kruth	Nundaen	Raunthar ^C	Thaungalas	Zaeram
Corlel	Emmer	Hawklorn	Lamoril	Obban	Rauzkyl	Tlothan	Zorul
Cormyn	Empard	Heladh	Landrath	Oadurn	Relmitar	Tindrith	Zunntar
Culdur	Endrego	Hemmar ^C	Lelnarr				

Common Surnames

Andaen	Darbitlur	Faendruse	Hardhorn	Lorlyn	Ormbar	Tarnshield	Vustgathur
Auroth	Darszel	Farfallow	Hamatheir	Lyamar	Rallansylk	Telnard	Waendaen
Baerand	Dawnwing	Fimsar	Hasmyr	Lyndwood	Rulandar	Tharmorn	Warlorn
Bellwood	Deljack ^C	Fondror	Hauklar ^N	Maerilil	Shalaskar	Thelwood	Waywheel
Belarth ^C	Delmorn	Forthond	Jhalad	Mallaunth	Steelpyke ^N	Thust	Wrathelm
Birnan	Downlyon	Galant	Jorneer	Mastarach	Stethnar	Tsauntyr	Xothlin
Blacksaddle	Duimere	Ghaland	Jusklor ^N	Maunjar ^C	Stormdown ^N	Tseldown	Yaendar
Bohlisz	Eledorn	Glaelskyn	Lancenorn	Morthoon ^N	Storneld	Turrkyn	Yarandar
Bondyon	Elempar	Glothkal ^N	Larimmon	Mrester	Stulnar	Uldurguard	Yathaunder
Brondaxe	Elflorn	Gormount	Larthyn	Nortalar	Sundreir	Urendor	Yostur
Brune	Embreon	Gornell	Lippur ^N	Nuskroun	Szistyl	Uraursword	Zarrazel
Caland ^N	Endeth	Haarevho ^N	Llaskryn	Oldwheel	Taen ^C	Varaunt ^N	Zoel
Camtlann	Ethkynd	Halanjak	Londahar				

rural areas. Males grow abundant facial hair, though many choose to be clean shaven out of personal preference or in following local custom. Dress and fashion vary, though poorer and more rural humans tend to wear the same (drab) styles and hues of clothing as the years pass. A careful human can hope to live for 100 to 120 years, though few actually live more than fifty years.

Relations: In their dealings with other races, humans tend to be guided by regional politics and history.

Humans tend to mistrust elves, whose elders were alive Before the Fall, believing they closely guard knowledge, keeping powerful secrets for themselves. Dwarves, nearly as long-lived

as elves, are seen as little better. Halflings and gnomes, however, are appreciated for their skilled handiwork, the useful items they make, and their willingness to engage in trade. Thaele are valued for the same reasons, but most humans are uncomfortable in their presence. Golaunt are clearly powerful and dangerous, yet have knowledge humans want; many humans fear anyone strong and aggressive, making their relations with golaunt difficult.

Alignment: Humans don't tend towards any particular morality; an individual is equally likely to be good, neutral, or evil. Ethically, humans tend toward chaos (the desire to do as they please and to "find their own way") but not in overwhelming

numbers, for they find comfort in order, and tend to demand strong rulers who enforce clear laws.

Human Lands: Humans are established in all the settled lands of Mournra, with the notable exceptions of the Harrag and the Mistcloak, Ironfell, and the Yarhoon.

Religion: For over three centuries, the Seven have been worshiped in every human community in Castlemourn. One or two of the Seven typically command larger congregations than the others in a given settlement, but on the whole, they are venerated equally.

Language: Humans share a single language known as Far Tongue, a sort of “trade common.” Each Mournan realm or region has its own Far Tongue dialect (approximately eight words in ten understandable by a Far Tongue speaker from “somewhere else”), and locals know a smattering of words in the ancient Crown Tongue that have acquired distinct local meanings and so can serve as a local “code” when speaking in front of strangers. Humans who travel and adventure tend to learn useful snatches of local dialects and the languages of other races. A majority of humans learn to read and write, as literacy is seen as a vital key to learning about the lost glories of the Realm of Castles.

Names: See “The Naming of Folk” for a sample of common Mournan names.

Adventurers: Humans usually adventure to gain power, wealth, or knowledge. All three goals usually lead them to search for clues and items from the past, investigating ruins (and almost as often, exploring throne rooms, libraries, or outland cities).

HUMAN RACIAL TRAITS

- **Medium:** As Medium creatures, humans have no size-related bonuses or penalties.

- Human base land speed is 30 feet.

- 1 extra feat is gained at 1st level.

- 4 extra skill points at 1st level and 1 extra skill point at each additional level.

- **Adaptable:** Humans are able to learn or devise unorthodox techniques to perform unusual tasks to which their bodies and minds are not as well-suited as those of other beings. A human’s ability scores are treated as if they are 2 points higher for the purpose of meeting feat prerequisites.

- **Automatic Language:** Far Tongue. **Bonus Languages:** Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic and Thaelen).

- **Favored Class:** Any. When determining whether a multiclass human takes an experience point penalty, his or her highest-level class does not count. Humans are extremely versatile and have no predilection towards any particular vocation.

DWARVES

“If you present a dwarf with a mug of ale and ask him what it is, he will drink it. If you present him with a tool and ask him what it is, he will use it. If you present him with a child and ask him what it is, he will raise it. If you present him with an enemy and ask him what it is, he will kill it. (So saith Rulthgar).”

The dwarves of Mournra are a race of philosophers. Rulthgar Stonewatcher, last of the Mountainfall clan, is regarded as the founder of philosophy and thus, to dwarves, of thought itself. After the Castles Fell, it is said that the elder dwarf Rulthgar returned to the ruins of his home city near Ironfell and spent a year watching the stones. At the end of that year, in a single moment of clarity, he picked up a rock the size of his fist, tossed it into the air and, with a single swing of his warhammer, reduced it to dust. In that moment, understanding came, and he took the name Stonewatcher. He spent the rest of his life traveling among surviving dwarves and teaching them his thinking, so they could best survive in the changed world.

Dwarves avoid the Far Tongue (elf-coined and human-embraced) term “philosophy.” To them, there is only thought.

Rulthgar’s Thought claims that the world is an illusion. It holds that since a thought is either true or untrue, the notion that different ways of thinking can be equally valid is crazed. Rulthgar said the Fall proved that everything changes, yet because change means tenets of truth must also change, nothing is true. Therefore, everything we believe we know is but illusion. Rulthgar’s belief, however, is that by achieving harmony with the illusion one can manipulate it and, eventually, see through it to a truer reality, drawing ever closer to “cold and clear truth” (hence the dwarven oath “Cold and Clear!”).

It is by following Rulthgar’s Thought that the dwarves have prospered. While other races concern themselves with exploring and mastering Castlemourn (and hidden past knowledge), dwarves seek to see beyond everyday conditions by knowing them intuitively. A dwarf never says *what* something is, because to put a label on it is to limit it. Instead, he will experience the thing for what it is, using it for its intended purpose or in whatever manner it can aid him at that moment. In that way, his understanding of the illusion is increased, and he moves that much closer to seeing past it.

Through Rulthgar’s Thought, dwarves have become the most down-to-earth people (no pun intended) of Castlemourn. They are master crafters, not just for the sake of perfecting their craft, but to experience the materials they work with. They construct homes in places where they can feel at one with the earth and air, experiencing both

in their natural states. Dwarves who cleave most closely to Rulthgar's Thought join monasteries, seeking to experience their own bodies and minds in a natural, focused state. Dwarves who renounce it or care little for it often become adventurers or traveling merchants, restless to find something else to guide them (or that which matters to them) in life.

Personality: Dwarves have a well-earned reputation for being quiet and aloof (terse in public, often mocking, sarcastic, or dry when they do utter a few carefully chosen words). Yet most dwarves relish the chance to drop their guard and speak freely. A monastery may normally be filled with dwarves pursuing work and devotions in silence—but on feast days, its halls ring with song, laughter, and cheer. Due to their deep investment in understanding the illusion of Castlemourn, dwarves tend to be one of the kindest and most helpful Mournan races, though it tends to be an emotionally distant kindness.

Physical Description: The typical dwarf is between 4 and 5 feet tall and weighs between 130 and 230 pounds. Males tend to be slightly larger and stockier than females and have long, thick beards, the combing and braiding of which serves to identify clan affiliation (dwarves with unkempt beards are outcasts; "beardless" dwarves have been punished or assaulted by someone who knows how to shame a dwarf). They have brown or red hair that retains its color (yet grows back ever-more-slowly) through old age. Dwarves are considered adults

after 40 winters (puberty is attained from 34–40 years of age), though their apprenticeships last as much as a decade longer, and can live up to 450 years.

Relations: Dwarves are self-reliant stalwarts who seldom grow very close to anyone beyond a love-partner, even other dwarves. This is not to say they are haughty and cruel. Dwarves have never been known to turn away folk truly in need, and a dwarf who makes an oath can be counted on to keep that oath. Yet dwarves inherently distrust other races. Rulthgar warned that anyone not actively seeking to see past the illusion of the world was contributing to that illusion—and though such beings deserve mercy and pity for their folly, they are not to be trusted. Thus, a typical dwarf is unlikely to ever grow to trust or rely upon a non-dwarf, unless the non-dwarf dedicates his life to Rulthgar's teachings.

Alignment: Most dwarves are lawful, as the dedication to follow Rulthgar's teachings is rarely found among those whose focus is half-hearted or absent. Exceptions are usually outcasts who no longer follow Rulthgar. Dwarves tend to be neutral, though good and evil dwarves are not unknown.

Dwarven Lands: Ironfell is the only dwarven kingdom, with its great "Deep Cities" of Diamond Caves, Forgedeeep, Hammerhall, Imundar, and the Halls of Light beneath Ormscar. There are also significant dwarf populations in the Foreshore, the Grand Duchy of Lothran, Ormscar, Estorna, and the Iron Isles.



Religion: While most dwarves acknowledge the gods and pay homage to them, few are strong believers. Rulthgar claimed the gods, as the ultimate manifestation of the world, were also its ultimate illusions. Thus, while many dwarves study and worship the gods, few truly *believe*. Gods are instead worshiped for the aspects of the illusion they represent (the better to use and understand—so as to ultimately see through—those aspects). The most popular deities among the dwarves are Amaunt and Haelarr, seen by the Strong as brother dwarves and the two most powerful gods.

Language: All Dwarves speak Far Tongue and Dandarr, a harsh, simple tongue (humans imitate it by spitting out loud “kuh!” and “gokh!” sounds). Dwarves tend to learn other languages when possible for the understanding such mastery brings of sound and meaning, as well as what they can learn through communication.

Names: A dwarf has three names, though only two are often used. The first is a given name given at birth. This is what friends and acquaintances call the dwarf (sometimes in conjunction with the dwarf’s second name).

That second name is the dwarf’s title, chosen by the dwarf (or a close friend or relative) when he realizes his place in the world. This moment may come at any point in the dwarf’s life (Rulthgar Stonewatcher didn’t take the name “Stonewatcher” until he was over 400 years old), but when the time comes, the dwarf knows it—and also knows, unshakably, if a suggested title “fits.” This title name is uttered after the given name in semi-formal address and when differentiating between two dwarves who share the same given name. Dwarves lacking a title name are differentiated by their mother’s name and clan (Martenth son of Uria of the Bellowforge clan).

A dwarf’s third name is his clan name and is inherited by a dwarf upon acceptance by the clan on achieving adulthood. It tends to be used only on very formal occasions, and the clan may take the name back if a dwarf disgraces it.

Popular names are listed hereafter; as with all the races, these lists are by no means exhaustive.

Male Names: Arduth, Borold, Daerroc (Daerokh), Durravin, Embuld, Forlar, Gorth, Irduir, Mord, Nurn, Othmar, Thurroc (Thurrokh).

Female Names: Azurla, Bardarra, Durbara, Flaeme, Gurlara, Hurma (Hurna), Kleea, Murnra, Nornra, Odele (Odyle), Pelarra, Respra, Suldra (Suldarra), Thelva, Urmarra.

Titles: Axelord, Battlemaster, Darklantern, Darkwatcher, Deepcleave, Deepsinger, Delver, Doorkeeper, Firewatcher, Foesmiter, Forgeheart,

Ironarm, Ironbrow, Longwatcher, Loresinger, Mountainhand, Peakstrider, Rockfist, Rockshield, Steeltrue, Stonecalm, Stoneshoulder, Surestrike, Swiftthought, Surerememberer, Thoughtforger, Tonguebold, Waywalker, Wisegem.

Clans: Anvilar, Arrandur, Bellowforge, Durn, Farront, Gelklor, Hammerstar, Haurhammer, Heldrim, Immur, Jorlorth, Kadaunth, Maurold, Stonehammer, Summersun, Toroth, Yarraun.

Adventurers: Dwarves go adventuring to experience more of the illusion that is the world in the hopes they can see past it. They typically have little interest in the ruins of Castlemourn, beyond expanding their experiences. Many dwarven monks go forth to perfect their bodies and minds and so gain a deeper understanding of their illusions of self, but eventually return to the monasteries.

DWARF RACIAL TRAITS

- **+2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, –2 Intelligence, –2 Charisma.** Dwarves are naturally physically fit and have strong intuition gained from years of closely viewing the world around them. However, they refute accepted beliefs, and their assertions that those around them are only unwitting parts of a grand illusion discomfit those who hold more traditional views.
- **Medium:** As Medium creatures, dwarves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- **Dwarf base land speed is 20 feet.** However, dwarves can move at this speed even when wearing medium or heavy armor or carrying a medium or heavy load (unlike other creatures, whose speed is reduced in such situations).
- **Darkvision:** Dwarves can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black-and-white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight. Dwarves can function normally in no light at all.
- **Stonecunning:** This ability grants a dwarf a +2 racial bonus on Search checks to notice unusual stonework, such as sliding walls, stonework traps, new construction (even when built to match the old), unsafe or unstable stone ceilings or surfaces, and substances disguised as stone. A dwarf who comes within 10 feet of such “unusual stonework” can make a Search check as if he were actively searching, and a dwarf can use the Search skill to find stonework traps as a rogue can. A dwarf can also intuit depth, naturally sensing his approximate depth underground.
- **Weapon Familiarity:** Dwarves treat dwarven waraxes and urgroshes as martial weapons rather than exotic weapons. Dwarves who are monks add both of these weapons to their list of special monk weapons for purposes of determining the effects of their flurry of blows ability.

- **Stability:** A dwarf gains a +4 bonus on ability checks made to resist being bull-rushed or tripped when standing on the ground (but not when climbing, flying, riding, or otherwise not in firm contact with the ground).

- +2 racial bonus on saving throws against poison. Generations of eating strange substances for the sole purpose of new experiences have imbued dwarves with a natural resistance to toxins.

- **Life of Illusion:** Dwarves see all life as an illusion and therefore suffer a -4 racial penalty on saving throws against illusion spells and effects, and never gain the +4 bonus to disbelieve illusions communicated to them as such by others. While dwarves are susceptible to illusions, they also have an extremely high tolerance for them and are always allowed to save against the effects of an illusion (regardless of spell descriptions). Whenever a dwarf fails to save against the negative effects of an illusion, he suffers only half of its effect (either in damage or duration, whichever is applicable). Whenever he makes a successful save against an illusion, its effect is negated. In addition, a dwarf can choose to disbelieve the effects of one spell per day by making a successful Will save as if it were an illusion. He must declare he is using this ability prior to making his normal saving throw. For all intents and purposes, the designated spell is considered an illusion in regard to its effect on the dwarf.

- +4 dodge bonus to Armor Class against monsters of the giant type. (Whenever a creature loses its Dexterity bonus—if any—to Armor Class, such as when it's caught flatfooted, it loses its dodge bonus too.) Dwarves are highly skilled at fighting larger opponents.

- +2 racial bonus on Appraise and Craft checks related to stone or metal. Dwarves are skilled stonemasons, recognizing the inherent value of stone and how to work its strength and beauty.

- **Automatic Languages:** Dandarr and Far Tongue. **Bonus Languages:** Any (except secret tongues, such as Druidic and Thaelen).

- **Favored Class:** Monk. The combination of discipline, reflection, and contemplation along this path is consistent with dwarven culture and thought. A multiclass dwarf's monk class does not count when determining if he receives an experience point penalty for multiclassing.

ELVES

Mournan elves are extremely reclusive, shunning the company of most other races. They dwell in the forests of Harrag and Mistcloak, zealously defending their borders against intrusion from all non-elves. They are a peaceful race at heart but,

since the Time of Destruction, have allowed no one into their home forests. Would-be intruders are found at woods' edge, riddled with arrows. Any elf who attempts to leave the home forests is banished—so almost any elf encountered outside Harrag or the Mistcloak Forest is an outcast.

Seeing both as the primary causes of the Time of Destruction, the vast majority of the elven people have abandoned technology and arcane magic. While those dwelling outside of the Harrag and the Mistcloak Forest may still engage in metalworking and the arcane arts, those dwelling in their hereditary forestlands live simply, relying on the land for their needs. The magic of the gods (divine magic, both clerical and druidic) is still embraced by the elves, but any arcane lore remaining after the Time of Destruction has since been destroyed. Some elder elves clung to metalsmithing and arcane magic after the Fall, but they have long since abandoned that knowledge or been cast out from the Harrag.

Personality: Elves tend to follow one of two distinct paths. Those in the home forests tend to be rather stern and unforgiving, believing that if elven law and tradition is broken then the "Daeree" (all elf people; the word literally means "We" in Elven) will Fall once more in a new Time of Destruction all their own. Elves dwelling outside the Harrag and Mistcloak tend to be more open-minded, good-natured, and free of love for law and strict social order. All elves take pride in the beauty of their race and elven-made things and are swift to come to the aid of other elves.

Physical Description: Elves are shorter and more slender than the average human, standing between 4 1/2 and 5 1/2 feet tall and weighing between 90 and 140 pounds (most adults weigh around 120). Elven males ("raem") tend to be slightly taller and just a bit heavier than females ("nulae"). Both genders tend to be graceful and of delicate features and build, hairless except for eyelashes and scalp hair. Elves have pale (almost blue-white unless suntanned) skin, dark hair, and eyes of light hues. Most prefer simple, elegant, form-fitting garb, though specific colors and fashions vary from place to place. Elves mature physically at about 100 years of age and can live to be 800 or 900.

Unlike other races, elves don't need to sleep. Instead, for four hours each day, an elf enters a light, self-induced trance to commune with the forest of his birth. This process rejuvenates an elf both mentally and physically, providing the same benefits as a good sleep does for a human. Elves call this "daereth;" in the Far Tongue, it's "communing."

Another peculiar elven trait is moonglow, a faint white radiance that emanates from elf skin (though

it's readily hidden by clothing not of openwork weave). The magics of the Time of Destruction changed Mournan elves to cause this "immue" (no elf is quite sure what magic worked this great change or how), but it's now a permanent, stable part of elf physiology; every elf born since the Fall has the moonglow trait. Mournan elves could once see in very low light, but their moonglow has impeded that ability to the point that it has been lost to all but a handful of frail elders.

Relations: Elven relations with other races depend largely on where the elf hails from. Elves in the Harrag and Mistcloak Forest do not willingly interact with non-elves, save to kill any entering their woods. Elves who have been cast out of their ancestral society have decent relations with most races, but they tend to be suspicious and wary of golaunt and find dwarves very difficult. For the most part, elves seek to avoid conflict through slipping away, speaking gently or not at all, and try to "fit in" with other local inhabitants. Since the Fall, the "haughty elf" has been far more stereotype than reality.

Alignment: Harrag and Mistcloak elves cling to rigid laws and traditions and so tend to lawful alignments, predominately neutral rather than good or evil. Elves from elsewhere are more accepting of whim, new ideas, and the chaos that life often brings, and tend towards good more often than not.

Elven Lands: The only truly elven lands in all of Mournra are the Harrag and the Mistcloak Forest, sparsely-settled elf backwaters before the Time of Destruction, but since then, the fiercely-protected elf homelands. Elves love woods and exult in living in harmony with nature. Elves in other lands tend to congregate in small enclaves that are almost always integrated into human settlements.

Religion: To elves, Larlasse is "Laeralee the Dancer," strongest

of the Seven and Guardian Mother of all Daeree. An amazingly beautiful, twelve-foot-tall elf matron whose every movement is flowing grace, Laeralee flies about the forest as a blue-white glow and sends will-o'-wisp-like healing radiances, guiding dream-visions to elves she favors, and the race in ways that sometimes seem whimsical to humans. Munedra and Damantha are seen as her daughters. Damantha presides over the farming of the woods without clearing them; human ways of farming are seen as sinful, ignorant, and despoiling. Ralaroar (as Tlessarar, the Horned One) is portrayed as Laeralee's stag-headed consort, who betimes goes mad and succumbs to his predatory nature (represented by the fury of marauding beasts and monsters) until she soothes him. Beyond appeasement offerings, the other three of the Seven are barely worshiped at all; elves regard them as less wise and powerful.

Language: Spoken Elven is beautiful, flowing, light, and lilting. It is primarily known outside of elven lands or communities as the language of love and poetry. Bards learn it in order to add beautiful elven songs and epics to their repertoires. Written Elven (which serves woodland beings as the script of the Sylvan Tongue) is a script of flowing curves, words being rendered as small ovals.

Names: Elves are given a name at birth that they carry until adulthood (immature elves are called "luel," the Far Tongue equivalent being "children"). Such names are unisexual and based on trivial aspects of forest life.

Adult names are bestowed by surviving parents (kin if no parent is available, another elf if no kin are available, and the elf herself only if no elf or mentor—respected teacher—of another race can be found) on mature elves during a special naming ceremony. Regardless of who bestows a name, it must



be one the recipient agrees with, never one forced upon her. Elves participating in such ceremonies outside the home forests occasionally adopt human names. Many elves dwelling among humans also have human-bestowed names, such as "Swift," "Tallsilent," and "Nimble," which they willingly go by in their human dealings.

Elves value family but use no family names. As elf matrons may take different consorts from time to time (and so give birth to luel with different fathers), generations of such customs have made almost every elf related in some manner to almost every other elf. Moreover, elves see pride in kinship as leading to strife among elves and so to be avoided.

Birth Names: Acorn (given only to mischievous "free spirits"), Breeze, Briar, Cloud, Fallingstar, Flickerlight, Glow, Leaf (Greenleaf, Littleleaf, Swiftleaf), Palemoon, Petal, Stream, Starshine, Thorn, Trickle, Whisperwind, Willow.

Male Adult Names: Arbrand, Cyundaen, Delshar, Estel, Fyndrel, Glarym, Halandar, Heln, Jindren, Loeroes, Melqor, Nathnor, Pelblaes, Relendur, Sandur, Tarth, Veldaen.

Female Adult Names: Adarnra, Amruua, Belnune, Cyndraethe, Duara, Erembra, Endalue, Iymbethnele, Iluuyx ("Lyx"), Iyrtress, Morlorne, Naeyasa, Olorne, Omae, Syndele, Taslyn, Tysheene, Uvarla, Veldra, Voreeme.

Adventurers: Elf adventurers are almost exclusively outcasts, either by personal choice or for committing a crime. Such "rurlaeden" (Far Tongue: "wildwanderers") adventure out of necessity, seeking to make lives for themselves in a harsh and unfamiliar world. It would take a dire situation for the Daeree of the Mistcloak to send elves into "the Outlands," to treat with outlanders, and then return.

ELF RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution.
- **Medium:** As Medium creatures, elves have no size-related bonuses or penalties.
- Elf base land speed is 30 feet.
- Immunity to magical *sleep* effects and a +2 racial saving throw bonus against enchantment spells or effects. Not needing sleep, elves are unaffected by *sleep* spells and effects; their daily trances aid their minds in resisting many enchantments.
- **Moonglow:** Mournan elves glow with a soft, white radiance that's barely perceptible in daylight but, in dark or dimly-lit conditions, gives clear illumination in a 15-foot radius and shadowy illumination out to 30 feet. This effect makes it almost impossible for an elf to hide. Hide checks suffer a -10 penalty unless the elf is completely covered by clothing or body paint. As elves mature, they learn to control this ability somewhat and can

successfully suppress their moonglow with a DC 15 Concentration check. Suppression lasts as long as the elf concentrates. Maintaining concentration to suppress moonglow is identical to concentrating to maintain a spell.

• **Weapon Proficiency:** Elves receive the Martial Weapon Proficiency feats for the longsword, longbow (including composite longbow), and shortbow (including composite shortbow) as bonus feats. They also receive the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feats for bolas and net as bonus feats. Elves rely on hunting using ranged weaponry and longswords for survival, so all elves receive training with these weapons.

• +2 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks. Elves have developed keen senses to survive in the forest.

• +2 racial bonus to Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks. Elves are raised to be at one with nature.

• **Bonus Class Skill:** Concentration. Elves are taught to concentrate from birth (it's impossible to commune with one's forest without being able to deeply, fully, and continuously visualize it). Concentration is always considered a class skill for elves, regardless of their chosen class.

• **Automatic Languages:** Elven and Far Tongue. **Bonus Languages:** Crown Tongue, Gadoar, Gnoll, Gnome, and Sylvan.

• **Favored Class:** Druid or Ranger. At 1st level, an elf must choose either druid or ranger as her favored class. Once chosen, this favored class can never be changed. A multiclass elf's chosen favored class does not count when determining whether she takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing. These classes represent the elf's strong inherent affinity with nature and either more passive or more active approaches to it.

GNOMES

Tinker, putter, tinker, putter—so goes the life of a gnome. Gnomes are forever messing around with new things, "fixing" old things, collecting "useful" odds and ends, and (in small ways) modifying their dwellings, habits, and surroundings. To gnomes, change is life.

Where other races try to dominate or understand the world, or perfect their minds and bodies, gnomes seek to make the world a better place. To this end, they study not only the practical (e.g., farming, soldiering, and magic) but also such pursuits as music, sculpture, painting, and poetry. Gnomes believe that gnomes should work, and their work should not only improve things large and small but also make Mournra more aesthetically pleasing.

No one knows where this drive comes from. It is “the way gnomes have always been.” Some humans believe gnomes try to overcome their short stature and shy natures by affecting Castlemourn as much as possible—yet halflings exhibit no such drive. Moreover, gnomes aren’t interested in merely changing the world; they always strive to better it.

Gnomes are born curious, seeing, hearing, and remembering almost everything—and thinking, always thinking, trying to see causes and effects or just how things work. From the day he masters walking without falling over, a gnome begins his Great Task (though settling on its specifics may take a decade; a gnome finding this identification difficult may well go adventuring in hopes of “revelation”).

Great Tasks vary greatly from gnome to gnome. One may strive to prevent children from being killed by collapsing roofs and dedicate his life to expertly thatching roofs so no child is harmed by careless thatching. Another might decide her Task is to spread laughter and spend her life as a comedic bard, traveling about Castlemourn to delight audiences young and old. A third might determine that he must protect weak “simple folk” and become a powerful necromancer in order to oppose dark wizards. Another gnome might see a great need for all to be adequately fed and devote her time to inventing new farming tools to increase crop yields.

After settling on a Great Task, a gnome spends as much as two decades or more studying it and planning how to carry it out. During this time, the gnome works for many masters, apprenticing in various “necessary” professions until finding the skills that truly resonate with her Great Task. When this key training ends and the gnome feels ready, she sets out into the world to begin her Task.

From that day on, the gnome dwells wherever her Task takes her (hence the human expression, “As driven as a Tasked gnome”). Most gnomes have no permanent home and contribute to the undeserved reputation of their race as restless wanderers (in truth, gnomes are more likely to stay in one place than not). Gnomes occasionally receive dream-visions compelling them to travel to new places that may better assist, or benefit from, the completion of their Great Tasks.

The gnome tendency to tinker with items and craft or alter “machines” is deeply rooted. It’s rare for a gnome to adopt a straightforward, brute-force approach to completing his Task (after all, if obvious, simple fixes worked, the problem would already have been solved, and the Task would be unnecessary). Wherefore, many gnomes create unique machines, processes, or contraptions to address their Tasks.

This unusual approach reflects essential gnome character. Gnomes try to make the world better, but most hold very different ideas of just what “better” means. While many gnomes can agree on some basic improvements Castlemourn stands in need of, there’s a great deal of dispute beyond such basics. Is the world better if rulers are strong or weak? Are a few massive structures more efficient (or beautiful or desirable) than many smaller ones? And which should win out: efficiency, beauty, or what the majority desire? Such disagreements ensure that gnomes will never run out of Great Tasks; there will always be something to “improve.”

It is important to note that gnomes never fight each other over such disagreements or try to hamper each other’s Tasks. Every gnome accomplishes what he can and retires when his Task is complete or he feels no longer able to carry on with it—which is when most gnomes marry, settle down, have children, and usually earn livings in human towns, cities, and villages by making furniture or locks and keys, sharpening blades, devising aids (crutches, articulated artificial limbs, and the like) for elderly or maimed humans, and so on. Gnomes never defend their accomplishments against anyone seeking to change or destroy them: the striving was enough, not the end result (note that they feel very differently about lesser tasks, like making locks or doorstops or self-refilling lanterns: these they very much want to work, as well and for as long as possible). To the gnomish way of thinking, it’s sinful pride (that the gods will surely punish) to believe one’s own Great Task is somehow better than the Great Tasks of others and should be defended against later Great Tasks that may alter or even eradicate it.

Personality: Despite the drive with which they undertake their Great Tasks, most gnomes are very light-hearted. They tend to be friendly and easy to get along with. The few exceptions are gnomes whose Tasks involve converting others to specific religions or beliefs.

Physical Description: Gnomes range between 3 and 4 feet tall and 40 to 60 pounds in weight. Males (“vlark”) tend to be slightly taller and heavier than females (“hlem”), and both genders tend to have large or “strong” features (noses, ears, and lips). Gnome dress is dictated more by a gnome’s Task or practical needs than by fashion, though a few are guided by strong personal tastes. Vlark are usually clean-shaven, but some take great delight in grooming their beards and mustaches. Gnome hair and eye hues vary widely, but their skin coloration only varies from golden tan to deep brown. Gnomes have very keen senses of smell (and remember specific scents and odors). Gnomes

typically mature around the age of 50 and can live for up to 500 years.

Relations: Gnomes get along well with most races, thanks to their cheerfulness and strivings to improve things around them. The grolaud, who gnomes consider too competitive (a gnome would probably say “ruthless,” “mean-spirited,” or “selfish”), are the one exception. Gnome crafters are known to work hard and produce work of quality, and gnome warriors tend to have a keen grasp of strategy, though usually lack outstanding weapon skills. Gnomes get along especially well with halflings, whose idealistic attitudes reinforce the gnomish desire to make Castlemourn a better place.

Alignment: Gnomes are almost universally good; it’s hard not to be when you’re trying to improve what’s around you. Occasional gnomes pursue Tasks concerned with neutral aspects of the world (nature), and a rare few gnomes are unquestionably evil or pursue Tasks through sinister means or with fell results. Given the great variety of Tasks and beliefs behind them, gnomes tend to be chaotic, but many gnomes champion law and focus on spreading order through their Great Tasks.

Gnome Lands: While Estorna is largely a land settled by gnome and halfling craftsfolk, the gnomes have no realms or regions truly their own. Many other areas of Mournra (especially larger human trading cities) also have significant gnome

populations. Gnomes wander until they find where they are needed and tend to remain there unless called away.

Religion: Each gnome community typically worships one of the Seven exclusively. Gnomes often travel throughout Mournra just to expose themselves to the teachings of each of the Seven, if for no other reason than to expand their own understanding. Most gnome households have a small shrine dedicated to the family’s deity. Gnomes who choose to enter the clergy typically spend up to a decade deciding which of the Seven they can best serve.

Language: All gnomes use the Far Tongue and their own language (Vrarr or “Gnome”).

Names: Gnomes collect names like children collect seashells. A gnome has his given name, the childhood nickname his youthful friends gave him, pet names from his father, mother, and most of his friends, often various titles related to his apprenticeship or profession, a clan name, and so on. While every gnome can recite his entire list of names from memory, most limit themselves to three names (given, nickname, and a clan name) in casual situations.

Male Names: Barend, Belkaer, Csorlus (“Suh-SORL-us”), Delmurt, Eldrake, Goskul, Hoarvend, Jaskur, Khontor, Klarm, Larbrand, Meldock, Nors, Osklyn, Sarrask, Taragh, Ulfyndar, Vlorn.



Female Names: Anikka, Belra, Burrmra, Calatorma, Dalaera, Hendriika, Hulda, Ilbaelra, Jalarra, Khemdree, Lorroura, Miina, Mysk, Nurrikka, Olodele, Paerle, Qestelle, Sarja, Tasmel.

Nicknames: Alequaff, Calmshatterer, Death-of-Chairs, Evercurious, Fastcrash, Fyndle (the Gnome word for “disaster-prone”), Furfriender, Hearthwarmer, Mapchanger, Peerer, Sleepless, Sparkfingers, Try Again, Tuneful (Tuneless), Whimrider.

Clans: Alock, Brande, Clementh, Delbaer, Figliol, Karandor, Longnose, Molond, Mosstree, Myrmaur, Neeve, Shadowveil, Tarrael, Tyebout, Wise-eye, Yelankh, Zaezurr.

Adventurers: Most gnomes adventure in order to gain more knowledge (either to decide on their Great Task, to gain more knowledge of the world so as to be ready to undertake their Great Task, or to gain something they need to complete their Great Task). Occasionally, a gnome decides his Task is simply to wander and help those he meets; such “wander-gnomes” naturally fall into the adventuring life.

GNOME RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Intelligence or +2 Charisma, –2 Strength. Gnomes are small and so not as strong as larger races, but they try to dominate with wit and charm.
- **Small:** As a Small creature, a gnome gains a +1 size bonus to Armor Class, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks, but they use smaller weapons than humans. A gnome’s lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters those of a Medium character.
- Gnome base land speed is 20 feet.
- **Low-Light Vision:** A gnome can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similarly poor illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- **Weapon Familiarity:** Gnomes may treat gnome hooked hammers as martial weapons rather than exotic weapons.
- **Focused Caster:** Gnomes are natural spellcasters. Gnome spellcasters can choose to focus on a single school of magic. Any spells cast from this school gain a +1 racial bonus to their saving throw Difficulty Checks. The chosen school is usually related to their Great Task.
- +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against kobolds and goblinoids. These creatures are a gnome’s natural enemies, and they are taught from birth how to defend against them.
- +2 racial bonus on Listen and Perform checks. Gnomes have keen hearing, an excellent sense of humor, and a good feel for melody, rhythm, and rhyme.

- +2 racial bonus on Craft checks that involve a discriminating nose (such as alchemy, brewing, and cooking). A gnome’s sensitive sense of smell helps him to identify and distinguish between different mixtures and guess at their properties (e.g., strength, spiciness).

- **Great Focus:** In addition to his class skills, a gnome picks three additional skills related to his Great Task. These are considered class skills, and a gnome can always Take 10 on these skills, even if in the middle of combat or otherwise distracted.

- **Automatic Languages:** Far Tongue and Varr. **Bonus Languages:** Crown Tongue, Dandarr, Elven, Gadroar, and Giant. In addition, all gnomes have the innate ability to speak with burrowing mammals (badgers, foxes, rabbits, or the like). See the *speak with animals* spell description.

- **Spell-Like Abilities:** 1/day—*speak with animals* (burrowing mammal only, duration 1 minute). A gnome with a Charisma score of at least 10 also has the following spell-like abilities: 1/day—*arcane mark*, *mending*, *prestidigitation* (caster level 1st); save DC 10 + gnome’s Charisma modifier + spell level. Gnomes often use these spells when crafting objects to improve their quality and to mark them so particular gnome-work can be identified.

- **Favored Class:** Bard or Wizard. When beginning play, a gnome must choose either bard or wizard as his favored class. Once chosen, his favored class can never be changed. A multiclass gnome’s chosen favored class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty. Both of these professions allow the gnome to pursue a singular intense focus with the greatest amount of freedom.

GOLAUNT

The golaunt are Castlemourn’s bastard children; their mixed-blood heritage can be traced to the interbreedings of goblinoids, fell humanoids, and barbarous human tribes in the wild mountain regions. Golaunt have long been hated and feared widely among the pureblooded races; rather than breaking their pride, this treatment has made them aggressive and self-reliant.

Golaunt believe life is a series of challenges to be defeated, that everything in Mournra is just an obstacle to be overcome. As a result, golaunt are aggressive in all they do. They raise armies to sweep across Castlemourn and build massive fortresses to show their supremacy. When there is no other foe to defeat, they happily fight each other, tribe against tribe.

Though golaunt culture is fully as old and intricate as that of the elves, the golaunt are frequently (and unfairly) seen by others as

"barbaric," thanks to their aggressive nature: to other races, golaunt are violent brutes interested only in death and destruction.

From the golaunt viewpoint, life is a series of battles, sent by the gods to test and temper them to become ever-stronger and more worthy of reward (by serving the Talon after death). Might makes right—if the might triumphs decisively and efficiently. The unfortunate result of this outlook is that the golaunt have been responsible for most of the worst atrocities since the Fall. Yet it has also made them perhaps the most formidable race of Castlemourn.

In their own eyes, golaunt rarely instigate any conflict; rather, they react (swiftly, directly, and efficiently—in other words, to most non-golaunt, "brutally"—so as to best be ready for the *next* threat) to perceived threats. And every threat, intended or otherwise, is a challenge to be defeated. Not every golaunt draws steel and attacks at the first dirty look or casual insult he receives—but it's not uncommon to find a golaunt in the middle of a tavern brawl.

Golaunt society is ordered yet unstable. In small groups, such as individual tribes or villages, golaunt usually follow strict discipline in a rigid hierarchy. As any golaunt group becomes larger, however, that rigidity breaks down as more and more "big fish" vie for the few senior leadership positions. More than that, the challenges, perceived threats,

and insults inherent in so many gathered golaunt inevitably lead, sooner rather than later, to mass strife.

Just as their society emphasizes the might of the individual, golaunt culture glorifies the supreme might of their race. Large wall and ceiling murals depicting famous olden-time, or currently prominent, golaunt triumphs are commonplace. Stories of the deeds of such victors are told and retold to awe and inspire golaunt listeners and fill non-golaunt with dread. Popular golaunt songs recount battle-glories, acts of honor, and above all, great victories.

Golaunt architecture is the most visible, awe-inspiring expression of their self-proclaimed superiority. Most golaunt buildings are massive, soaring structures (though not as large as the ancient castles from before the Fall) that dwarf their

occupants.

Personality: To other races, golaunt appear very tense and are commonly compared to cats eager to pounce. This constant "prowling readiness" impresses or frightens, causing most other races to tread very softly in the presence of golaunt. Yet in truth, golaunt are quite tolerant until they believe they are being challenged. Once challenged,



a golaunt dedicates herself to conquering the challenge as swiftly and decisively as possible. As a result, golaunt are often seen as incredibly arrogant and spiteful, always eager to attack others—and always demanding others recognize their superiority. Male and female golaunt have equal standing in golaunt society, and the one taboo among golaunt is to criticize the physical appearance of another golaunt (praise is acceptable, but is usually done privately, between friends, mates, or lovers, and tends to be brief; extended, fulsome public praise is regarded as mockery and a deliberate insult). This prohibition is due to about a tenth of all golaunt looking more monstrous (usually more like orcs or hobgoblins, facially), a trait that has led to bitter bloodshed among golaunt in the past.

Physical Description: Golaunt are massive, standing 6 to 7 feet tall and weighing between 200 and 450 pounds. They are heavily muscled, with females (“loril”) slightly stronger than males (“hurlur”), though most males outstrip females in endurance. Golaunt lack the smooth, flowing muscles of humans or elves; golaunt brawn takes the form of large, bulging “pouches” that distend oddly from the body under stress.

Golaunt faces are broad and flat—but have sharp chins and noses and thick brow-ridges of solid bone, almost as if horizontal, polled ox-horns were lurking beneath the skin. Their dark eyes range in color from blackish-red through deep shades of blue, green, and purple. The cartilage around the edges of golaunt ears is thin, giving them a floppy, serrated look. Golaunt have thick, almost fur-like hair ranging in shade from reddish auburn to dark brown and black. Hurlur usually have rough facial hair, whereas loril may have a few whiskers; both genders have sleek, dark hair running down their spines and in small tufts at the points of their elbows.

Golaunt prefer clothes (and even armor) that shows off their physiques and like to adorn themselves with jewelry and bright-polished weapons. Golaunt have a shorter lifespan than most Mournans, maturing at about age 15 and living up to 80 years, though their violent lifestyle usually cuts their years short.

Relations: It’s said that the easiest way to get along with a golaunt is to accept that she is one’s ruler, to be obeyed instantly and politely; most Mournans follow this wisdom. Golaunt enjoy spending time with other races because most non-golaunt treat them with great respect (and may even show open fear).

Elves are the exception, as elves consider all races superior to the golaunt (whom the elves call “Forarr-luth,” which translates in the Far Tongue

to “Beast-rut”), themselves most of all. Moreover, the elves have guarded the Mistcloak and Harrag borders for centuries with aggression to fully match every golaunt foray, so they’re seen as a challenge that defies all golaunt—and so, an affront. Most elves are clever (and grimly silent) enough not to offer open insult to golaunt they meet, so elves and golaunt tend to step around each other warily, trading icy glances and a few curt words.

Many golaunt often have trouble dealing with humans, whom they see as potential threats due to their versatility.

Alignment: Golaunt tend towards chaos and evil. Most are not malicious, but simply self-centered and convinced of their own superiority. Moreover, it’s hard to be lawful when constantly looking for ways to challenge one’s superiors. “Goodness” is an equally difficult concept for most golaunt, who see so-called “good” acts as foolishness or weakness. Showing mercy to a foe in a fight is almost unknown among golaunt, except to one’s own offspring (and then only when they’re young). Golaunt who manage to keep their positions for a long time tend to impose a semblance of law and order upon those they lead.

Yet “rakyag” (the golaunt word means “teacher,” though in this connotation a better translation for real-world gamers would be “saint”) are revered among golaunt. Rakyag are golaunt who give freely of themselves to aid comrades in a fight. To the golaunt, there is no act more selfless and pious (“honored before all the Talon”) than sacrificing one’s own ambitions to aid others.

Golaunt Lands: Golaunt have few lands of their own but have conquered much of the Yarhoon and the Haunthills. In a few places, such as Caeth, Dragonhead, and Roserook, golaunt manage to live in relative peace with other races. However, golaunt usually establish villages wherever they please, often clashing violently with others having a prior claim to the locale. While golaunt are happy to serve as soldiery in any land in which they dwell, most folk of other races shudder to learn that golaunt have settled nearby.

Religion: Golaunt worship a trio of gods (Araugh, Amaunt, and Haelarr) they call the Talon. Araugh leads (and fights for), Amaunt provides (food and whatever else golaunt need), and Haelarr, the weakest of the Talon, follows (giving comfort and bearing witness). To the golaunt, this arrangement proves the strongest rightfully rise to lead the weak, but must care for those under their rule.

Other gods are officially seen as weaklings, deserving only to be “ground into the earth” (though a few golaunt quietly pray to them when their aid would be most appropriate).

Languages: Golaunt have their own speech, Gadoar, and also use Far Tongue, but rarely learn other languages. Gadoar is shared by goblinoids, orcs, ogres, and trolls. Most golaunt are literate, recognizing that knowledge is a very potent form of power, and the heroic songs only impart a narrow sort of wisdom. Almost all golaunt writings are practical books on war, construction, and other technical works.

Names: Golaunt have a personal name and a title related to their position in the community, such as "Nekrach, the warrior," or "Ornrha, the builder."

Male Names: Araunn, Avgarl, Barrdagh, Belokh, Brorel, Clort, Darrokh, Felkath, Gorog, Gort, Guryakh, Haukauth, Horaunn, Irrog, Jorth, Jurth, Klaul, Klord, Maeraek, Mlor, Morilk, Mrelkor, Naeryakh, Nekrach, Neldrau, Nuryar, Onthok, Qael, Qoth, Ruchtarg, Ruelgur, Sakr, Taunth, Taur, Urgurth, Vraukh.

Female Names: Anglara, Baedra, Belmethe, Beshyele, Calaela, Curaunna, Darlii, Faenre, Garshee, Hella, Horhondra, Ilsakr, Iltarse, Jarandra, Kuluu, Lorora, Mrye, Murra, Narleera, Nurlii, Ormprene, Ornrha, Puethe, Ravorra, Rundra, Rurraera, Sildra, Slarsharra, Souksa, Tantraura, Tarara, Uoulvra, Urrara, Vlara, Vyxlara, Woele, Yaryandra, Zoese.

Family Names: Beldelkh, Darhragh, Gontor, Guszmur, Hael, Haummagh, Hurmauk, Jarrar, Kairagh, Khasryn, Klaelyn, Lokhlar, Maelgryn, Maur, Murlonkh, Merrendur, Murrakh, Nelnurr, Nolelaut, Olornt, Orrmauth, Rorsyn, Ruraur, Sarlusk, Storlth, Tabrakh, Taurtogh, Traurr, Ulnrakh, Urneth, Yeldruu.

Adventurers: Golaunt become adventurers to increase their power, demonstrate to others the might they've already attained, learn secrets of the outside world to gain battle-wisdom, or to be seen by other golaunt as having more experience. If a golaunt challenges another for a position in his home village and fails, it's not uncommon for him to leave, returning only after proving his worth by surviving the worst the world could throw at him.

GOLAUNT RACIAL TRAITS

- **+2 Strength, -2 Charisma.** Golaunt are large and strong, but their appearance and arrogant sense of superiority tends to put others off.

- **Medium:** As Medium creatures, golaunt have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

- **Golaunt base land speed is 30 feet.**

- **Darkvision:** Golaunt can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision "sees" only in black and white but is otherwise like normal sight. Golaunt can function unimpaired with no light at all.

- **Fell Blooded:** A golaunt is not considered human and isn't subject to magical effects (such

as spells or items) that specifically target humans. Instead, a golaunt is considered a humanoid belonging to a fell race and is subject to the full effects or benefits of magic items or spells that specifically target orcs, ogres, trolls, and creatures with the goblinoid subtype.

- **Strong Stature:** The golaunt's massive build makes him slightly more resistant to bull rush, grapple, and trip attacks. Whenever he is forced to make an opposed check against such an attack, he is treated as if he is one size larger. He may also use weapons designed for creatures one size larger without penalty; however, his space and reach are still determined by his actual size.

- **Indomitable Spirit:** Once per day, when a golaunt faces an opponent with at least two more HD than his own, he may receive a +2 morale bonus on any one attack roll, saving throw, skill check, or ability check. Using Indomitable Spirit is a free action that must be declared before the results of the chosen roll are determined.

- **Barbaric Literacy:** A golaunt who begins play as a barbarian is literate without having to spend skill points.

- **Automatic Languages:** Gadoar and Far Tongue. **Bonus Languages:** Abyssal, Crown Tongue, Giant, and Gnoll.

- **Favored Class:** Barbarian. A multiclass golaunt's barbarian class does not count when determining whether he suffers an experience point penalty.

HALF-ELVES

Elves living amongst other races in Castlemourn sometimes fall in love with, and marry, humans. These unions are typically short-lived by elven standards but often result in issue. Half-elves are accepted in most Mournan lands; the racial open-mindedness of most Mournans makes growing up as a half-elf no worse than growing up as a child of a fullblood race. Adolescence is often hard for half-elves, however, as they mature more slowly than human friends but much more swiftly than elven companions.

Personality: Half-elves almost always share the drive and ambition of their human parent, yet have some elven sensibilities and refinement.

Physical Description: Half-elves are not as small and slight as elves, but tend to be smaller and lighter than humans. They vary in height from just under 5 feet to 6 feet and weigh from 100 to 190 pounds. Males tend to be a little taller and heavier than females. Half-elves are almost always lighter in skin color than their human parents but enjoy the same full variety of skin, hair, and eye hues as humans. Half-elves are considered adults at 20 and



have been known to live to be nearly 200 years old. Half-elves inherit the moonglow trait from their elven parent, though they do not glow as brightly (and except at moments of high emotion, pain, or pleasure, can suppress it perfectly at any age).

Relations: Because they live between two cultures, half-elves are consummate diplomats. They have a knack for relating to all races and cultures, even managing to get along with golaunt (though half-elves don't like golaunt very much). The only sour half-elf relations are with the elves of the Harrag and Mistcloak Forest, who see half-elves as abominations.

Alignment: Half-elves have the same range of beliefs and views as their human relatives, though many tend towards the chaotic, whimsical nature of their outcast elven parent.

Half-Elven Lands: Half-elves have no lands of their own.

Religion: Half-elves usually follow the faith in which they were raised, though many have been known to seek their own answers and forego the gods completely.

Language: Half-elves speak both Far Tongue and Elven.

Names: Half-elves use both human and elven names, often being granted both at birth. Hereafter are listed names currently popular among half-elves.

Male Names: Alander, Beldyn, Dornbar, Eruthys, Haerond, Helver, Lothlyn, Lyrond, Naerance, Norndar, Tallant, Tesmer, Tornel, Traye.

Female Names: Asmer, Belarbra, Dradarma, Evoe, Faendarra, Loaroara, Malauva, Naeranthra, Olyss, Ormelle, Samprelle, Tarnra.

Family Names: Ardawn, Dawngleam, Duskwynd, Eldren, Evenshadows, Glaemtree, Hlaun, Lyndom, Myrym, Morninghorn, Mistwood, Nightstars, Summerstars.

Adventures: Having no lands of their own, half-elves are natural adventurers and explorers. They crave the excitement and wonder of travel and the rewards of successful ventures. Naturally gregarious, they are great companions and enjoy traveling in the company of others.

HALF-ELF RACIAL TRAITS

- **Medium:** As Medium creatures, half-elves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Half-elf base land speed is 30 feet.

- Immunity to *sleep* spells and similar magical effects, and a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells or effects. Though they need sleep like humans, they inherit the elven resistance to *sleep* spells and enchantments.

- **Moonglow:** A half-elf's elven blood makes him glow, albeit not as brightly as a full-blooded elf. Half-elves give off clear illumination in a 5-foot radius and shadowy illumination in a 15-foot radius. This effect makes it hard for a half-elf to hide. Hide checks suffer a -5 penalty unless the half-elf is completely covered by clothing or body paint or suppresses his moonglow. Half-elves learn to control their moonglow and can successfully suppress it with a DC 8 Concentration check. Suppression lasts as long as the half-elf concentrates (governed by the same rules as for maintaining spell concentration).

- +1 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks. Half-elves partially inherit the keen perceptions of elves.

- +2 racial bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks. Being forced into an array of social situations make half-elves excellent communicators.

- **Bonus Class Skills:** Concentration and Diplomacy. Half-elves are trained using both of these skills from birth. They are always considered class skills, regardless of a particular half-elf's chosen vocation.

- **Elven Blood:** For all effects related to race, a half-elf is considered an elf.

- **Automatic Languages:** Far Tongue and Elven. **Bonus Languages:** Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic and Thaelen).

- **Favored Class:** Any. When determining whether a multiclass half-elf takes an experience point penalty, her highest-level class does not count. Like humans, half-elves are very adaptable, having no predisposition for any class.

HALFLINGS

Halflings are a race of poets and idealists, true romantics at heart. To a halfling, the world is a beautiful tapestry to be enjoyed, a delightful wine to be sampled, and a succulent roast to be savored. Many beings of other races consider the diminutive folk to be layabouts, lacking drive and ambition—but halflings have ample ambitions, merely on a smaller scale than those pursued by other races. A “good day” to a typical halfling consists of a large breakfast, some light reading, a hearty lunch, some light work in the garden, a pleasant afternoon snack, a bit of painting, cooking and dinner with friends, and finally some music or courting. Such a lifestyle might not lead to great wealth, but halflings

consider it better to live happily without riches than to be rich but not know life's simple pleasures.

Unlike other races, halflings lack all desire for “great accomplishments,” being content with “lesser” goals. They master subtle pleasures: the joy of a job well done or creating an object or item of beauty. Halfling crafts and artwork are treasured throughout Mournra, often selling for twice or even thrice the price of an equally functional human or dwarven-made item. Incredible attention to both detail and beauty are hallmarks of halfling-work. Halfling items are lovingly decorated with intricate knot work, lively colors, and a certain something: the “halfling touch.”

Halflings are generally peaceful, keeping to themselves and their small pleasures rather than involving themselves in the affairs of others. The dangerous, often brutal life of an adventurer holds little interest for most Swifthands. As one said, “I can bed down by a campfire, cold, bloody, and desperate for something to eat, or I can bed down with me Jerianne ‘n’ get sleep ‘n’ better.” As coarse as that sentiment may be, it reflects the halfling attitude perfectly: the outside world is cold and painful, while their own is warm and pleasant.

Some halflings, however, take great delight in exploring the world. They tend to be either rather old and grown dissatisfied with the limited life experiences afforded by their halfling communities, or younglings full of the eagerness and energy of youth. Both are restless to see more of Mournra. The other reason a halfling typically leaves his community is when tragedy strikes (often the death of a spouse or child), and he feels the need to reaffirm his sense of beauty. For these reasons, most adventuring halflings leave a very different impression than is typical of their race.

In the end, most halflings return home, for the one thing they want more than beauty and pleasure is love. Halflings are romantics who believe that life should begin and end with loved ones. Halfling life begins with the unconditional love of a parent and ends with the reciprocal love of a child. Along the way are friends, family, and a spouse. While halflings don't marry other species, they flirt enthusiastically with those of other races and are notoriously open within their own kind. Jealousy of any kind is almost unknown in halflings, and most halflings openly have two or three lovers at a time, though they only have children with a wedded spouse.

The spouse is arguably the focus of halfling life. To halflings, nothing is more beautiful than love, and no love is more beautiful than that which creates a child. There comes a time in a sheen's (female halfling's) life when she realizes her feelings for a particular hlan (male halfling) are the most

beautiful thing she's ever experienced. Such a realization is usually mutual; when it is not, the rejected halfling usually becomes a tragic wanderer. The two pledge their love for each other, marry, and dwell together. Both are still free to take other lovers, but they are—and will remain—the heart and focus of each other's lives.

Personality: Most halflings are happy, simple people. They are generous, offering to share what they have with strangers, but expect the same kindness in return. The notion of personal property is rather vague in halfling communities, though they recognize outsiders value the concept of ownership and typically refrain from indiscriminate "borrowings" from non-halflings.

Physical Description: Halflings are short, standing between 2 1/2 and 3 1/2 feet tall and weigh between 45 and 55 pounds. Hlan tend to be an inch or two taller than sheen and a few pounds heavier. Halflings have no facial hair, but delight in decorating their scalp hair, weaving it intricately and often entwining bright and colorful objects in it. Halflings dress in vibrant colors and wear a great deal of jewelry (though much of it is colored glass or painted iron rather than precious gems or metals). Halflings have a very strong sense of taste and can readily identify spices, ingredients, and taints (such as poisons). A typical halfling matures at 25 and can live to be 250 years old.

Relations: Halflings get along well with every race. Their laid-back nature helps them to avoid conflicts. Oddly enough, halflings get along wonderfully with golaunt; the golaunt disregard the small ambitions of halflings, while the halfling appreciation of beauty reinforces the golaunt ego. Halflings get along just as well with gnomes, appreciating their attempts to make the world a better, and thus more beautiful, place. Halflings tend to have trouble finding common ground with dwarves; the dwarven dismissal of the world as illusion chafes against halfling appreciation of beauty and everyday pleasures.

Alignment: Halflings tend towards true neutrality. Extremes of good and law promote an "accepted way of doing things" that is "right," and this rigid thinking discourages artistic growth. Extremes of evil and chaos often involve destruction, which tends to include destroying things of beauty. As a result, it's unusual for halflings to embrace alignments that aren't at least partially neutral—though a rare few become sickened by the ways of the world (usually through losing everyone they love, suddenly and/or violently) and seek only to destroy it, claiming beauty is folly. Castlemourn holds nothing of lasting worth, and so nothing matters but passing gratification.

Halfling Lands: Halflings have no lands of their own, though Estorna is largely a land of gnome



and halfling craftsfolk. Rather, Swifthands establish communities in the lands ruled by other races but cling to their own culture and perspectives (often, for example, becoming the preeminent cooks and craftworkers in human cities.) Over time, halfling ideals spread to others they dwell with, so cities with sizeable halfling populations tend to notice and value beauty and form more than citizens of places without many halfling inhabitants. Rulers looking to demonstrate their wealth and sophistication through murals, wall carvings, statuary, and other visually appealing displays have often specifically hired halfling crafters to accomplish this.

Religion: Halflings worship the Seven, but as a whole don't favor any one god. Religion is a matter of personal choice among halflings; with little resonance between their thinking and the credos of any of the gods, deep faith and devotion is something of a rarity.

Language: Halflings speak their own melodic, fluid tongue, wherein the meanings of words change with the tone in which they are spoken. This makes it difficult for outsiders to learn, though elves have the easiest time of it, and dwarves have little trouble if they devote sufficient time to it the task. Halflings also speak Far Tongue and tend to learn at least trade-useful smatterings of the more elegant languages of the world, such as Elven and Vrrar. For written communications (such as recipes), halflings use the "common" script of Far Tongue with a mix of Halfling and Far Tongue vocabulary (to those who don't know Halfling, the result looks like a private word substitution code).

Names: All halflings are given a personal (given) name at birth and use it with their family name. Many halflings have nicknames that see more everyday use than their formal names; such nicknames can be almost anything, from "Stumblehead" to "Pretty One" and "Old Stick" to "Everfaster."

Male Names: Adelbar, Avarandis, Baeren, Boldo, Chaern, Dorro, Esglan, Gloroun, Habbur, Imbrar, Jaerair (Jaerar), Jeldyn, Karaeyan, Kemmur, Leesaud, Loriss, Nysham, Storn, Tarm, Tanburlyn, Zurown.

Female Names: Asgraele, Bel, Chancelle, Dlarra (Dlarralorra), Embrelle, Faene, Faunra, Ghalass, Hamma, Holorne, Jasraele, Lamorne, Mandreile, Morrowe, Moszmae, Nairi, Nanreene, Oskla, Osmae, Prella, Qestele, Rovune, Sestrara, Sunree, Syryl, Tamburra, Tantarelle, Velauna, Yeolee.

Family Names: Andeth, Antranig, Avellar, Gallowgate, Glorr, Hovhaness, Hullbuck, Hyartar, Izmyrlian, Kurrkor, Lurklock, Mirlian, Prestel, Urnhallow, Yarlondar.

Adventurers: Halflings become adventurers to explore Mournra and see its beauties. Some leave

their communities after tragedy, seeking something to restore their faith in the beauty of Castlemourn. Rare evil halflings, who've lost the ability to see beauty, adventure for revenge, seeking to mar and harm.

HALFLING RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Strength. Halflings are less muscular than taller races but much more agile.
- **Small:** As a Small creature, a halfling gains a +1 size bonus to Armor Class, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks, but uses smaller weapons than humans. Her lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of a Medium character.
- Halfling base land speed is 20 feet.
- +1 racial bonus on all saving throws. Halflings are notoriously lucky in tough situations.
- +2 morale bonus on saving throws against fear. This bonus stacks with the halfling's +1 bonus on saving throws in general. Halflings are resolute in the face of danger.
- +1 racial bonus on attack rolls with thrown weapons and slings. Halflings are noted for their exceptionally good aim.
- +2 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks. Halflings possess natural stealth and agility.
- +2 racial bonus on Listen checks. Halflings have exceptional hearing.
- +2 racial bonus to all Craft skill checks to create masterwork items. As crafters, halflings are patient, meticulous perfectionists.
- When creating magic items, halflings pay only 75% of the normal experience cost (round up). This does not stack with any other ability that reduces the experience cost when creating magic items.

• **Automatic Languages:** Halfling and Far Tongue. **Bonus Languages:** Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic and Thaelen).

• **Favored Class:** Bard or Rogue. Halflings have a natural aptitude for stealth, the arts, and feats of skill. When beginning play, a halfling character must choose either bard or rogue as her favored class. Once chosen, this favored class can never change. A multiclass halfling's favored class does not count when determining if she takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing.

THAELE

Thaele are a mysterious race who first appeared shortly after the Fall. They radiate an unsettling aura that literally makes other races uneasy in their presence, but they are favored for their skill as healers. A people without a true home, the thaele wander Mournra, desperately hiding their terrible secret and searching constantly for answers to lore-

queries that confound even the wisest, eldest elves, in hopes of finding a cure for the curse that afflicts them.

Thaele anxiously guard the secret of their nature; if it ever became common knowledge, they would likely face extinction. After the Time of Destruction, the thaele were cursed. Who cursed them, and why, is long forgotten; what concerns them now is survival (keeping the secret) and finding a cure. Their curse forces them to be nomadic and guarding its secret means thaele rarely, if ever, become close with those who don't share their affliction.

The curse of the thaele has perverted the race, forcing them to prey on other creatures to survive. Thaele radiate an unsettling, life-draining aura and can only gain sustenance by consuming the blood of other living things—such as rodents, forest creatures, or intelligent beings, but *not* other thaele. Drinking the blood of a living creature at least once a day, for at least one round per drink, provides all the nourishment a thaele needs.

Thaele auras do not give their owners direct sustenance but can (over sufficient time in close proximity) allow them to incapacitate a potential victim so they can be easily bled. Any non-thaele who comes into close contact with a thaele soon feels tired and weak; over time, they may even fall unconscious or die. Unfortunately, thaele do not know how to control this power. Despite many attempts, no one has yet developed even a temporary cure—magical, herbal, or otherwise—for the curse. Worse, their need to imbibe blood and their involuntary, life-draining power horrifies most thaele.

Yet the thaele have discovered a fortunate side-effect of their affliction: they can cure diseases of the blood in other creatures (and so are valued throughout Castlemourn as healers). To do so, a thaele literally sucks out some tainted blood, cleansing the afflicted creature in the process. Typically, thaele claim they can only “work their magical healing” in utter darkness and so insist on absolute privacy, that their patient be masked, and that the place they're sucking blood from (typically one of the patient's limbs, at wrist, elbow, back of knee, or ankle) is shrouded under cloth along with the thaele at work—so none will learn their secret.

Personality: Thaele are a tight-lipped folk who typically keep to themselves and rarely make friends with those not of their kind, the better to keep their secret. Thaele tend to cultivate an aloof manner and purposefully keep their distance from others, often feigning an aversion to personal contact with strangers. Thaele long ago spread rumors (now deep-rooted across Castlemourn) that “the gods curse anyone who harms a thaele with

bad luck, forever.” To combat ghoulish aggression, they later augmented this with “the Talon consider no one worthy, who harms a thaele. Leave them alone, unless you need their magic.”

Physical Description: Thaele are similar to humans in appearance (some tales say they began as “improved” or experimented-upon humans). They stand between 5 and 6 1/2 feet tall and weigh from 125 to 275 pounds, with males noticeably taller and heavier than females. Thaele are not nearly as physically diverse as humans; all thaele have sallow complexions and dark, pupil-less eyes. Their hair can be of any hue (most often dark), but it is almost always thin and straight; a scant few thaele have thick, curly, or wavy hair. Few thaele have facial hair.

Most thaele prefer subdued styles of dress, so as to not draw unwanted attention. It's commonly believed by other races that none of the original thaele who appeared after the Fall have died of old age yet, so thaele lifespans are unknown. In truth, thaele age slower than humans, their unnatural thirst sustaining their bodies long past a normal human lifespan. Thaele children age like humans until they reach puberty, when their aging slows considerably (a typical two-century-old thaele looks like a human in his mid-thirties). Thaele typically mature around age 50 and can live for up to 500 years.

Relations: Thaele relations with other races are tentative at best. While their healing abilities are well-known throughout Mournra, most humanoids find it uncomfortable to be around these people (due to the nature of the thaele curse, though none realize that fact). Only the most desperate, those who have found no comfort from the ministrations of local clergy or healers, come to the thaele for aid.

Alignment: The thaele take a neutral stance in life, preferring to remain out of the business of others. A rare few wholly embrace the evil side of their curse and embark on wanton killing sprees; others enjoy blood-hunting stealthily, taking pride in obtaining what they need without raising any alarm (for instance, sucking from stabled horses or oxen, or pouncing on pets running free by night, or even drugging victims with doctored wine and drinking blood “on the sly”). Their blood thirst makes it difficult for thaele to adhere to the tenets of good unless they can find willing, aware donors (such rare individuals tend to be outcast humans, elves, or half-elves craving love and acceptance).

Thaele Lands: The thaele have no lands of their own. They wander Mournra with their families, spending much of their time in wagons moving from campsite to campsite (or, in warmer months, roaming the mountains and hunting). There are several “great camps” (semi-permanent locales

where thaele tend to gather) on the migratory routes of wild herd animals (which tend to follow river valleys), though it's rare for a family or clan to remain in one spot for more than a few months. Thaele dwelling among other races usually become live-in servants tending cemeteries or temple undercrypts, or keep to huts just outside towns and cities, and publicize their skills as healers, allowing them to make meager livings.

Religion: Publicly, most thaele doubt the gods, claiming they need to see proof that the gods have power that they use for good in Castlemourn (as opposed to mortals doing good out of their own beliefs or doing ill "as they did during the Time of Destruction when we saw no aid from the gods at all!") and cherish Mournans, aiding them for other than unknown, selfish divine ends, before they are worthy of worship. To avoid trouble with priests and religious zealots of other races, true thaele religious beliefs are not normally shared with non-thaele.

Thaele believe that when they die, their souls merge with a supernatural entity comprised of the souls of their ancestors called the Dusk. Thaele don't see death as a final ending, but rather the next stage in their existence. Thaele refer not to dying but to *dusking*.

Life is seen as a preparatory time in which each thaele must develop himself to be a worthy contribution to the Dusk. Each thaele has his own concept of what his contribution should or must be and what he must do to achieve it. This makes thaele worship a very personal matter. All thaele have slightly different interpretations of the Dusk; as a result, the true nature of the Dusk and the thaele spiritual relationship with it is one of the great mysteries of Castlemourn (see [Chapter Seven, Mysteries of Castlemourn](#)).

Thaele clerics choose their domains based on their interpretation of the Dusk. Often these personal interpretations coincide closely enough with the dogma of one or all of the Sleeping Seven that the thaele cleric can pass for a priest in one of the churches of the Seven. Whether or not any of the Seven take offense to this practice is unknown; certainly, the gods do not complain of it to non-thaele clerics.

All thaele share certain superstitions that cause them to avoid flowers, mirrors, silver, and traveling over water.

Language: Thaele have their own secret language, Thaelen. In truth, Thaelen is a derivative of Crown Tongue, the ancient language of Castlemourn. In front of others, the thaele primarily speak Far Tongue. Most are literate, as they consider reading and writing an important key in their unending search for answers about their condition.



Names: A thaele is given a primary name at birth that no living direct family member bears. Individuals share a secondary name (usually a modification of a common primary name) with other members of their family. Some also take a third name if the group they travel with is made up of multiple families who have chosen to identify themselves by a common, shared name. For example, a thaele male might have the name Ruirel Xynxil Mourncan.

Male Names: Adalbran, Bruirlur, Etlarn, Lorn (Orlorn), Nelarn, Omslarr, Plorn, Ruirel, Taladh, Torlond, Xynxan.

Female Names: Aethnae, Brysra, Caiomhae, Indyl, Kaie, Naerae, Qerara, Qlarra, Quemele (Quevele), Uerbora, Uoula, Vaerimbra.

Adventurers: Thaele are all adventurers of a sort. Through their nomadic way of life, young thaele have experienced much by the time they reach puberty. It's incredibly rare for a thaele to choose to ally or travel with a group of non-thaele for more than a lone encounter or situation (expected to last half a day or less).

THAELE RACIAL TRAITS

- **+2 Strength, -2 Charisma.** The thaele curse gives them greater strength, but it makes others shy away from them.

- **Medium:** As Medium creatures, thaele have no special size-related bonuses or penalties.

- **Thaele base land speed is 30 feet.**

- **Low-Light Vision:** A thaele can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination, and retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

- **Accursed Aura:** Because of their curse, all thaele involuntarily and continuously radiate life-draining auras. Any living, non-thaele who comes within 5 feet of a thaele must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 12) or be drained of 1 hit point. Thereafter, for every additional minute the subject remains within the thaele's accursed aura, he must make an additional Fortitude save (DC 12) or lose another hit point. Once a being makes a successful Fortitude save against the aura of a particular thaele, that being is immune to the effects of that particular thaele aura for the next 24 hours.

The accursed aura is unsettling to non-thaele; thaele suffer a -2 morale penalty to all Charisma-based skill checks (except Intimidate) when interacting with living creatures. Conversely, this aura has a pleasurable effect on undead and evil outsiders, who treat thaele as if under the effects of a *sanctuary* spell (caster level equal to the thaele's HD).

Thaele gain no personal healing benefits from their accursed auras, but they can manipulate their auras to the benefit of others. By holding hands with two individuals, a thaele can attempt to transfer hit points from one willing donor to another who has suffered a hit point loss. Provided both individuals make their Fortitude save against the accursed aura's draining effect, the donor can transfer 1d6 hit points per round to the injured subject. Hit point transfer requires the full concentration of both the donor and the thaele. None of the participants can take any actions and provoke attacks of opportunity for the duration of the transfer. The injured recipient can never gain more hit points than his maximum.

- **Blood Thirst:** The thaele curse has made the race dependent on blood for sustenance. Food and water aren't necessary for survival but consuming them isn't harmful; thaele often eat and drink to maintain the illusion that they're nearly human.

Unless "gorged" (see below), a thaele must drink blood directly from a living non-thaele creature at least once per day. Thaele have no special physical features that allow them to draw blood, so their victims must first be cut with a slashing or piercing weapon for at least 1 point of damage, following which the thaele must make a successful grapple check to hold the opponent still and drink its blood. He need not grapple a willing or bound creature; however, drinking blood is still a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. A subject from whom the thaele drinks blood suffers a temporary loss of Constitution at the rate of 1 point per round. While a thaele only needs to feed for 1 round per day, he can prolong his feeding provided he can maintain contact with his victim, requiring additional grapple checks each round. Drinking for up to six rounds allows a thaele to become gorged, storing enough sustenance to avoid the need to drink blood for 1 day per additional round (so a fully gorged thaele need not drink blood for the next five days). Thaele who drink for seven rounds or more can consume more blood, but (unless restoring an existing Constitution loss; see next page) their bodies can't store any additional blood. No matter how much blood the thaele imbibes, he must still drink again on the sixth day after feeding or begin to suffer Constitution damage.

The negative effects of any disease or poison the thaele's subject is afflicted with will be neutralized if the thaele is permitted to drink the subject's blood for 3 full rounds. This act is a supernatural ability producing effects identical to the *remove disease* and *neutralize poison* spells. While using this ability, the thaele is not affected by any disease or poison present in the victim's body. (In all other

situations, a thaele is subject to disease and poison effects).

A thaele unable to feed within the required time suffers adverse effects: at the end of each day he's unable to feed, he suffers 1 point of temporary Constitution damage. The Constitution damage remains until he is able to consume blood for a number of rounds equal to the temporary Constitution damage he has sustained. Magical and natural healing of ability damage does not help a thaele who has not been able to feed.

- **Seasickness:** Thaele are highly susceptible to nausea when traveling by boat. Every hour a thaele travels in this manner, he must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 12) or become nauseated for the duration of the voyage. The nausea can be terminated by a *remove curse* or similar spell, but regardless of the usual spell effects, the thaele must make a new save each hour he remains at sea. This condition can be prevented through the use of specially prepared drugs that allow thaele to sleep through such voyages, such as kleefae paste (see *Chapter Two, Magic*).

- **Silver Allergy:** Thaele are highly allergic to silver; its touch causes their skin to erupt in blistering sores (fading over 1d4+1 days from last contact). If silver is touched to a thaele's bare flesh, he must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 12) or suffer 1 point of damage. Likewise, silver weapons have a +1 bonus to damage against thaele.

- **Bonus Class Skills:** Concentration and Heal. Thaele are taught to use these skills from birth; they are always considered class skills regardless of any chosen vocation.

- **Automatic Language:** Thaelen and Far Tongue. **Bonus Languages:** Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).

- **Favored Class:** Cleric. A multiclass thaele's cleric class does not count when determining if he suffers an experience point penalty for multiclassing. This class represents dedication to the Dusk, not necessarily to one of the Seven (though a thaele whose beliefs about his proper state to contribute to the Dusk coincide closely enough with the creed of a particular priesthood of the Seven can make a pious, dedicated priest of that deity).

CLASSES

Life in Umbrara is ruled by the same needs—and ambitious dreams—as life in other worlds, fantasy and otherwise. A Mournan existence is difficult for almost all folk, even those nominally powerful. Dwelling in lands shattered and fallen from ill-remembered glory, yet ever-shifting with new rulers and strivings and trade pacts, many Mournans are inclined (whatever the local social status of adventurers may be) to undertake lives of adventure.

Such courageous individuals differ little from their venturing counterparts in other fantasy settings. In game terms, there are no significant differences in the core classes as seen in Castlemourn from those presented in the Core Rulebooks. Starting characters, and existing characters looking to multiclass, may take any of the eleven core classes with only the standard

COMMON MOURNAN LANGUAGES

Language	Typical Speakers
Aquan	Water-based creatures
Auran	Air-based creatures
Celestial	Good outsiders
Crown Tongue	Dragons, elves, sorcerers, and wizards
Dandarr	Dwarves
Draconic	Kobolds, lizardfolk, troglodytes, dragons
Druidic	Druids (only)
Elven	Elves
Far Tongue	Folk of Castlemourn (trade common)
Gadroar	Bugbears, kobolds, goblins, golaunt, hobgoblins, ogres, orcs, trolls
Giant	Giants
Gnoll	Gnolls
Halfling	Halflings
Ignan	Fire-based creatures
Infernal	Devils, lawful evil outsiders
Muarar	Whisperlips
Sylvan	Dryads, brownies, leprechauns
Terran	Xorns and other earth-based creatures
Thaelen	Thaele (only)
Vrarr	Gnomes

restrictions. This section also introduces a new character class common to Castlemourn, the buccaneer, and six prestige classes: dusked, faithless one, rhymesword, servant of the Seven, truesword knight, and waymaster.

CORE CLASS

BUCCANEER

Castlemourn depends on Glamryn Bay for swift travel and trade. The waters of the Bay are busy with ships carrying traders and their goods, settlers, and questors from port to port on the mainland and between those ports and the arc of large islands that form the sekhovynd (southern) boundary of Glamryn Bay. As a result, it's not surprising that many have taken to the waves. The most successful seafarers are those not just skilled at sailing, but able to defend their ships from the treacheries of the high seas. Every day at sea may test the bravery and smarts of these hardy sailors commonly called "buccaneers" or "salts."

Adventurers: Buccaneers adventure for a living, sailing to various ports and fighting off pirates and hostile beasts. Such careers often spark in them an even greater wanderlust, full of curiosity about what lies beyond the Vaerath in wider Umbrara. Some become questors, signing on to perilous voyages of exploration. Financially-successful "old salts" often sponsor their own missions to explore the mysteries of Castlemourn.

Characteristics:

Buccaneers have a wide array of skills, including martial training. Their "ship-learning" gives them the ingenuity and swift reactions necessary to cope with unexpected and dangerous situations, at sea and elsewhere.

Alignment: Buccaneers can embrace any alignment. Good and neutral salts often serve as crew or bodyguards

to wealthy merchants or join navies as freesails. Those who are more carefree travel wistfully or act as guides for others. Evil buccaneers often succumb to the lure of piracy.

Religion: Buccaneers can be of any faith, though they often renounce all piety. Most pay at least nominal respect to Araugh, seeking protection against the fierce storms at sea.

Background: Buccaneering is integral to Mournan society, especially in and around the Iron Isles. Most salts begin young, signing on as apprentice crew or "deck rats." Others learn seafaring the hard way as mutinous slaves, prisoners of war, or after being kidnapped and spirited away to sea.

Races: Buccaneers can be of any race, but (as the profession favors ambition and adaptability) most salts are humans, half-elves, or golaunt. Most dwarves remain among their own kind, but the few who become buccaneers find life at sea soothing and in accordance with their philosophy. The other short races tend to dislike buccaneering, as ships are not often built with their stature in mind and so are especially hazardous. Thaele are least likely to become buccaneers, largely avoiding ship travel altogether.

Other Classes:

Buccaneers are useful even ashore. Naturally gregarious, they get along well with most other classes but are most at home with those who practice related skills and live similar lifestyles—rogues, fighters, and rangers. Their relationships with other classes are influenced more by personal ethics and beliefs than profession.

Role: Buccaneers make strong secondary combatants, relying on specialized attacks more than brute force. They are excellent sailors and scouts; they are good at gleaning resources and lore from



Buccaneer

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Rapid climb, scrap-fighting
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Combat expertise
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Uncanny dodge
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Great leap
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Bonus feat, drop attack
6th	+6/+1	+2	+5	+2	Acrobatic charge
7th	+7/+2	+2	+5	+2	Improved scrap-fighting
8th	+8/+3	+2	+6	+2	Roll with the blow, throw weapon
9th	+9/+4	+3	+6	+3	Improved uncanny dodge
10th	+10/+5	+3	+7	+3	Bonus feat
11th	+11/+6/+1	+3	+7	+3	Scrap-fighting mastery
12th	+12/+7/+2	+4	+8	+4	
13th	+13/+8/+3	+4	+8	+4	
14th	+14/+9/+4	+4	+9	+4	Acrobatic mastery
15th	+15/+10/+5	+5	+9	+5	Bonus feat
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+5	+10	+5	
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5	
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+6	Seen the world
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+6	
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+6	Bonus feat

many sources, thanks to their knack for dealing with folk from many lands.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Abilities: A high Dexterity helps a buccaneer with attacks and defense, as well as Balance and Tumble checks. A high Intelligence helps a buccaneer best develop a broad array of skills. High Strength aids in climbing and swimming, and a high Charisma helps in maintaining crew harmony and dealings in foreign ports.

Starting Coin: 6d4 x 10 (150 gp)

Alignment: Any

Hit Die: d8

CLASS SKILLS

The buccaneer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Profession (sailor) (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the buccaneer.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Buccaneers are proficient with all simple weapons, bows (long and short), and nets. They are also proficient with the following buccaneer weapons: handaxe, kukri, longsword, rapier, sap, scimitar, and short sword.

Buccaneers are proficient with light armor but not with shields.

Scrap-Fighting (Ex): In addition to traditional sword skills, buccaneers use an unorthodox form of fighting that involves a combination of swordplay and unarmed combat. Provided he is using a buccaneer melee weapon, a buccaneer can make a second attack (either by punching or kicking) as if he had both the Two-Weapon Fighting feat and the Improved Unarmed Strike feat (even if he doesn't meet the prerequisites). A buccaneer can also use his unarmed attack from scrap-fighting to make grapple and trip attacks. He cannot fight in this manner if wearing medium or heavy armor, or using a non-buccaneer weapon. Scrap-fighting is a full-round action.

Rapid Climb (Ex): At 1st level, a buccaneer learns to climb faster. If he takes a –5 penalty to his Climb skill check, he can climb at half his base speed. At 5th level, the penalty for rapid climbing is reduced to –2. At 10th level, his climb speed increases to three quarters of his base speed. At 15th level, he loses the remaining penalty for rapid climbing. At 20th level, he can climb at his base movement without penalty. He cannot use this ability if wearing medium or heavy armor, or carrying more than a light load.

Combat Expertise: A buccaneer gains the Combat Expertise feat even if he does not meet its prerequisite.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): By 3rd level, a buccaneer cannot be caught flat-footed and reacts to danger before his normal senses would warn him to do so. He retains his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class even if caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker (but loses this bonus if immobilized). If a buccaneer already has the Uncanny Dodge ability

from another class (such as barbarian or rogue), he instead gains Improved Uncanny Dodge.

Great Leap (Ex): All buccaneers need to learn how to jump from ship to shore, to other ships, and to maneuver quickly around a ship's deck. At 4th level, a buccaneer always makes Jump checks as if he was running and had the Run feat. This enables him to make long jumps without a running start and provides him with a +4 competence bonus to Jump checks. He cannot use this ability if wearing medium or heavy armor, or carrying more than a light load.

Bonus Feat: At 5th, 10th, 15th, and 20th level, a buccaneer can choose one of the following bonus feats: Acrobatic, Agile, Alertness, Dodge, Improved Critical, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Mobility, Negotiator, Persuasive, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus, Whirlwind Attack. The buccaneer must still meet all prerequisites for a bonus feat, including ability score and base attack bonus minimums.

Drop Attack (Ex): At 5th level, a buccaneer can make attacks by dropping on a flat-footed opponent from above, allowing him to strike from a mast, a roof, or even a tree. The target must be the same size as, or smaller than, the buccaneer, who must be 20 feet or less above his target with an unobstructed line of effect. A successful Jump check (DC 15) breaks his fall on his target, dealing the target 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage per 10 feet the buccaneer drops. The target must also make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be dazed for 1 round + 1/2 the buccaneer's level (rounded down). Following the attack, both buccaneer and target are prone. A drop attack is a full-round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the target.

At 10th level, the buccaneer can attempt to grapple an opponent he successfully drop attacks in the same round, though he and his opponent are still both knocked prone. The grapple doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity from the target. By 13th level, he can attempt to make a melee attack against an opponent he scores a successful drop attack on in the same round (he and his opponent are still both knocked prone), and this melee attack doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity from the target. At 16th level, a buccaneer can instead choose to stand as a free action following a successful drop attack.

Acrobatic Charge (Ex): By 6th level, a buccaneer has learned to make charge attacks through hazardous terrain, around allies, and over obstacles that would normally impede a charge. This allows him to charge across a ship's deck, then leap or swing from masts and rigging to attack

opponents. Acrobatic charge is a move action, and a buccaneer employing this tactic may need to make appropriate skill checks along the way, depending on the circumstances (GMs decision). He cannot use this ability if he is wearing medium or heavy armor, or is carrying more than a light load.

Improved Scrap-Fighting (Ex): At 7th level, when using his scrap-fighting ability, the buccaneer is now treated as if he had the Improved Two-Weapon Fighting feat when fighting with a buccaneer weapon, even if he doesn't meet the prerequisites. He cannot use this ability if wearing medium or heavy armor, or carrying more than a light load.

Throw Weapon (Ex): At 8th level, a buccaneer can throw any buccaneer melee weapon as a ranged attack without suffering the normal -4 penalty. All buccaneer weapons are treated as having a range increment of 10 feet.

Roll with the Blow (Ex): Starting at 8th level, the buccaneer learns how to roll with his opponent's blows, so they do not inflict as much damage. Provided he is not caught flat-footed and maintains his Dexterity bonus to AC, he can reduce the damage from each attack scored against him with a weapon or natural attack by 1 point. In practice, this acts like a conditional form of damage reduction. For every 3 levels thereafter (11th, 14th, 17th, and 20th), the amount of damage a buccaneer can avoid in this manner increases by one point to a maximum of 5 at 20th level; however, this ability can never reduce the damage from a successful attack to less than 1 point. A buccaneer can only roll with the blow if he is wearing light armor or less and carrying no more than a light load.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): At 9th level, a buccaneer can no longer be flanked, reacting to opponents on opposite sides as easily as he reacts to a single attacker. Additionally, only an opponent whose class level is four greater than the buccaneer's class level can sneak attack him. This ability allows a buccaneer to flank rogues and buccaneers with the same ability, provided he is four levels higher than such an opponent.

Scrap-Fighting Mastery (Ex): At 11th level, a buccaneer has mastered his unique style of brawling combat. When using his scrap-fighting ability, the buccaneer is now treated as if he had the Greater Two-Weapon Fighting feat, even if he doesn't meet the prerequisites. As before, the buccaneer cannot use this ability if wearing medium or heavy armor, or carrying more than a light load.

Acrobatic Mastery (Ex): By 14th level, a buccaneer becomes thoroughly proficient with his acrobatics and can take 10 on any Balance, Climb, Jump, and Tumble checks, even under stress.

Acrobatic mastery works in conjunction with rapid climb.

Seen the World (Ex): At 18th level, the buccaneer's extensive travels and experience grant him keen insight into his current location. He automatically knows which direction he faces at all times, as if under the effect of a permanent *know direction* spell. Furthermore, he is aware of his relative location and distance from major settlements in any country or body of water in which he has traveled.

HUMAN BUCCANEER STARTING PACKAGE

Armor: Leather (+2 AC, speed 30 feet, 15 lbs.)

Weapons: Longsword (1d8, 19–20/x2, 4 lbs., one-handed, slashing)

Skill Selection: Pick a number of skills equal to 5 + Intelligence modifier

Feat: Weapon Focus (longsword)

Bonus Feat: Acrobatics

Gear: Sack with waterskin, one day's rations, a bedroll, block and tackle, candles (4), fishhooks (2), flint and steel, 50 feet of rope, sealing wax

Gold: 2d4 gp

Buccaneer Skills

Skill	Ranks	Ability	Armor Check Penalty
Climb	4	Str	0
Intimidate	4	Cha	—
Jump	4	Str	0
Profession (sailor)	4	Wis	—
Spot	4	Wis	—
Swim	4	Str	0
Use Rope	4	Dex	—

PRESTIGE CLASSES

The following new Prestige Classes are open to any Mournan who meets the prerequisites.

DUSKED

Thaele feel a strong spiritual connection to a supernatural entity they call the Dusk. While most spend their lives preparing to join with this entity, some thaele make it the sole focus of their lives. They call themselves "the dusked" and daily



seek to perfect their minds and bodies for the ultimate union they will one day attain through death. Thaele clerics are most likely to pursue this path, but dusked can come from any background, provided they meet the class requirements.

Hit Die: d8

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a dusked, the character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Race: Thaele

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks

Feats: Disciplined Aura

CLASS SKILLS

A dusked's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (history) (Int),

Dusked

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells Per Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Drain bonus (+1 d6 hp)	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Toxin resistance	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Transfer disease/poison	—
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Drain bonus (+2d6 hp)	—
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Toxin immunity	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Transfer disease/poison	—
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Drain bonus (+3d6 hp)	—
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Greater toxin immunity	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Transfer disease/poison	—
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Drain bonus (+4d6 hp)	—

Knowledge (religion) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the dusked prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The dusked gains no additional armor or weapon proficiencies.

Spells per Day: At 2nd, 5th, and 8th level, a dusked gains additional spells as if she had gained a level in her former divine spellcasting class (if any), but dusked level advancement confers no other abilities or benefits from that previous class.

Drain Bonus (Su): Once per day, a dusked can regain lost hit points by successfully quenching her blood thirst. Starting at 1st level, she can regain 1d6 hit points for every point of Constitution she drains using her blood thirst ability. She can also absorb more hit points than she has lost (to a maximum of 10 + her dusked prestige class level), but she cannot gain any personal benefit from them; instead, she must transfer these extra hit points to another being by touch (possible only if that recipient successfully saves against her accursed aura).

These additional, reserve hit points can be carried for a number of rounds equal to a dusked's Constitution modifier (minimum 1), after which they fade away. During the carrying time, reserve hit points can be transferred to another being (or automatically used by the dusked, if she suffers hit point loss). Failed transfer attempts (due to failed saves against the dusked's accursed aura) don't diminish or destroy reserve hit points; the dusked can attempt to transfer them to other beings.

A dusked's drain bonus increases by +1d6 hit points per point of Constitution drained for every three levels attained after 1st (at 4th, 7th, and 10th).

Toxin Resistance (Ex): Exposure to toxins gives a dusked a +2 resistance bonus against all nonmagical poisons and diseases.

Transfer Disease/Poison (Su): A dusked can store and transfer diseases and poisons from creatures she heals to opponents by spitting as a ranged touch attack (10 foot range increment). Following a successful use of the blood thirst ability to remove a disease or toxin from a subject's blood, she can will it into her spittle. The spittle then has the same properties and produces the same effect as the last poison or disease the dusked absorbed. A dusked can make this attack a number of times per day equal to her dusked prestige class level.

As a dusked advances in levels, she learns how to retain and excrete multiple toxins. At 6th level, she can spit a combination of the last two toxins she removed, and at 9th level, she can spit a combination of the last three toxins she removed.

If a dusked removes a different toxin from a new individual, it is substituted for the oldest she has stored. Some dusked even carry a collection of venomous creatures or poisons, afflicting, then curing, victims for the soul purpose of altering the toxins they wish to transfer. (The differing effects of toxins on different sorts of creatures are left to the GM, who should be guided by a "less deadly than one might think" principle: a poison transferred from one human to another should affect both in the same way. However, a majority of things poisonous to one mammal are harmless to most reptiles and many other mammals and may affect much larger creatures of any sort only mildly.)

Toxin Immunity (Ex): By 5th level, a dusked is completely immune to the effects of nonmagical poisons and diseases.

Greater Toxin Immunity (Ex): By 8th level, a dusked's toxin immunity extends to include magical poisons and diseases.

FAITHLESS ONE

Rulthgar's Thought, like any belief system, is subject to a vast array of varied interpretations. The vast majority of views differ only subtly, often in barely noticeable ways; a minority differ sharply—that minority includes the disciples of Thorald the Defiant, commonly known to Mournans as "the Faithless Ones."

This moniker makes most Mournans mistakenly believe the sect is atheistic, but it actually refers to their particular view of Rulthgar's Thought. Thorald the Defiant, the sect's founder, believed Rulthgar's Thought was correct in one respect only: the physical world is an illusion. Thorald took Rulthgar's thinking farther, not only claiming that perceived Umbrara is an illusion, but every living creature's illusion is different—so the "real world" can be forced to conform to one's perception of what is real and what is illusory. Reality exists but is not a constant; rather, it's an entity created and shaped by the projections, desires, and beliefs of the living beings comprising it.

Individuals who accept this concept can make reality obey them. They can twist and, on rare occasions utterly break the "natural order" of Umbrara. Such alterations are brief, because the great majority of beings who do not understand reality's illusory nature refuse to accept radical deviations from what they understand to be real. Their unwillingness to believe (coupled with their overwhelming numerical superiority) essentially forces reality to return to established norms.

Thorald often "proved" the validity of his view by demonstrating astounding feats and abilities previously unknown in Castlemourn. Those who accepted his definition of reality soon embraced

his heretical views on Rulthgar's Thought. Most others believed Thorald's mystifying deeds must be due to his secretly rediscovering ancient magic. To this day, even most dwarves view Faithless Ones with suspicion, mistrust, and, in some circles, outright contempt, calling them "tricksters" and worse. Despite Thorald's death a few decades ago (itself disputed by his most devout followers), the sect's numbers are slowly but steadily increasing.

Thus far, all Faithless Ones have been dwarves, primarily centered in Lothran (though pockets of the sect are scattered across Mournra). Beings of other races have tried to join the Faithless, but senior members of the order have fiercely rebuffed such overtures. Most sect members are monks and ex-clerics practiced in concentrating the will, but arcane spellcasters, fighters, druids, and rogues can all be found among the Faithless.

Hit Die: d8

REQUIREMENTS

To become a faithless one, a character must fulfill all of the following requirements.

Alignment: Any non-lawful. Defying reality requires an intentional disregard for established and accepted physical laws of Umbrara.

Race: Dwarf

Base Will Save: +5

Skills: Concentration 4 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 4 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 4 ranks



Feats: Iron Will

Special: Must unquestioningly accept Thorald's interpretation of Rulthgar's Thought (see the preceding class description for details).

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills of the faithless one (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (nature) (Int),

Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Profession (Wis), Swim (Str), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each

Level: 4 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the faithless one prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Faithless ones are proficient with all simple weapons, as well as all types of armor and shields.

Defy Reality (Su): Once per day, when a faithless one makes any die roll, he can roll one additional die of the same type and add the results together. For example, this ability allows him to roll two d20's (and combine the results) for a skill check, ability check, saving throw, attack roll, or initiative check. The player must announce the intention to utilize this ability before rolling. Modifiers (such as a resistance bonus in the case of saving throws) are only added once. If both die rolls generate an additional effect, such as scoring two

Faithless One

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Defy reality 1/day
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Defy reality 2/day, discern reality
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Defy reality 3/day
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Defy reality 4/day, distort reality 1/day
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Defy reality 5/day
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Defy reality 6/day, shape reality
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Defy reality 7/day
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Defy reality 8/day, distort reality 2/day
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Defy reality 9/day
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Defy reality 10/day, escape reality

critical threats, the effects do not stack (if a player rolled two natural 20s on his character's attack rolls, he would score only one critical threat, not two). This ability can be used once per day per faithless one level.

Discern Reality (Su): Cognizant of reality's illusory nature, a faithless one is immune to illusion spells and spell-like effects directed at her, such as *color spray* or *phantasmal killer*. Spells that affect a designated area visit their usual effects on anyone in that area except faithless ones (who are completely unaffected and can't voluntarily waive this immunity under any circumstances).

A faithless one can also potentially see the exact location of creatures or objects under *blur* or *displacement* effects, discern invisible creatures or objects normally, and see through illusions. Her ability to do so depends on her class level and the potency of the illusory effect.

A faithless one can see through any illusion having a spell level of up to one level less than her faithless one class level. Thus, a 3rd-level faithless one can see an invisible wizard, and a 4th-level faithless one can detect the precise location of a displaced wizard.

Distort Reality (Su): To others, the most dazzling feat faithless ones can do is to reach or move across astonishing distances with a single step or movement. Activating this ability is an immediate action (though it cannot be employed by a faithless one caught flat-footed or otherwise unable to act), and it remains in effect for a number of rounds equal to the faithless one's base Will save.

Distort reality allows a faithless one to briefly, but dramatically, reduce the volume of space immediately around him. In game terms, a number of squares equal to half her faithless one level in any direction are treated as one square for movement purposes, so a 6th-level faithless one treats a distance of three squares (15 feet) as one square (5 feet) when moving. She can, therefore, with one 5-foot stride, move to any square within 15 feet of her previous location (and a faithless one with a base speed of 30 feet can move up to 90 feet).

Distort reality also increases, by the same amount, the area threatened by a faithless one when determining if she's entitled to take an attack of opportunity against an enemy within or moving through her threat range. (It does not, however, actually increase her weapon's reach.) If a threatened opponent draws an attack of opportunity, the faithless one moves to an unoccupied square closest to her previous location yet within her weapon's reach of her opponent, to make the attack of opportunity. For instance, if an enemy wizard fifteen feet away casts a spell, a 6th-level faithless one employing *distort reality* would

be entitled to an attack of opportunity, because the wizard is now within a threatened square (within 15 feet of the faithless one). The faithless one could move to an unoccupied square adjacent to the wizard (if one exists) that is also closest to her previous location and take her attack.

Distort reality can be used once per day at 4th level and twice per day at 8th level, but it is extremely draining. When the effect ends, the faithless one suffers 1d4 points of nonlethal damage and is fatigued for the next 1d4 rounds.

Shape Reality (Sp): Once per day, a faithless one can shape reality as she sees fit in a manner that duplicates the effects of a *limited wish* spell.

Escape Reality (Sp): Once a day, a faithless one can escape the limitations of the real world altogether as if she had cast *time stop*.

RHYMESWORD

Realms fall, buildings crumble, and mortals die, but in Castlemourn, myths and legends (albeit altered) always seem to survive. Many of these legends speak of the great magics that were so commonplace before the Castles Fell, magics wielded by common folk just as easily as mighty wizards and sorcerers. Traces of this magic linger on in a few, little known and poorly understood phrases and chants in Crown Tongue. Seemingly simple rhymes and snippets of song, these words contain magical might just waiting to be tapped.

While some folk throughout Castlemourn have learned minor magics from old rhymes and song, rhymeswords are adventurers who have learned significantly more. They understand many of the key power words of Crown Tongue, and they can work them together to create more powerful magics. While they may not fully understand the divine magic of the gods, or even the arcane magic wielded by sorcerers and wizards, they are formidable casters in their own right.

Pairing martial training with magical might, rhymeswords harness ancient Crown Tongue words of power on and off the field of battle. While rhymeswords are neither as martially skilled as fighters or rangers nor as talented as sorcerers or wizards, their ability to combine martial prowess and magical skill have allowed them to become legends in their own right.

Hit Die: d6

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a rhymesword, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Skills: Decipher Script 6 ranks, Spellcraft 6 ranks

Language: Crown Tongue

Feats: Crown Tongue Chant, Magical Aptitude, Weapon Focus (any sword)

CLASS SKILLS

The rhymesword's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (history) (Int), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Swim (Str), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the rhymesword prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency:

Rhymeswords gain no additional proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Crown Chant Mastery (Sp): Your study of Crown Tongue has given you mastery of minor magical Crown Tongue chants and phrases. Choose four additional 0-level spells to add to the spells you gained from the Crown Tongue Chant feat. These spells can come from any spell list. In addition, you gain additional spells per day equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum +1).

Magical Insight (Ex): In depth study of Crown Tongue has given the rhymesword greater insight into the fundamentals of magic. At 1st level, the rhymesword gains a +1 insight bonus on all Spellcraft and Use Magic Device checks. This bonus increases at higher levels, as shown in the Rhymesword table.

Spells: Beginning at 1st level, a rhymesword gains the ability to cast a number of arcane spells. To cast a spell, a rhymesword must have an Intelligence score of at least 10 + the spell's level, so a rhymesword with an Intelligence of 10 or lower cannot cast these spells. Rhymesword bonus spells are based on Intelligence, and saving throws against these spells have a DC of 10 + spell level + the rhymesword's Intelligence bonus (if any). When the rhymesword gets 0 spells per day of a given spell level (for instance, 1st-level spells for a 1st-



level rhymesword), he gains only the bonus spells he would be entitled to based on his Intelligence score for that spell level. The rhymesword's spell list appears on the following page. A rhymesword casts spells just as a bard does.

Upon reaching 6th level and at every even-numbered level after that (8th and 10th), a rhymesword can choose to learn a new spell in place of one he already knows. The new spell's level must be

Rhymesword Spells Known

Level	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	2 ^B	—	—	—
2nd	3	2 ^B	—	—
3rd	3	3	2 ^B	—
4th	4	3	3	2 ^B
5th	4	4	3	3
6th	5	4	4	3
7th	5	5	4	4
8th	6	5	5	4
9th	6	6	5	5
10th	6	6	6	5

^B Provided the rhymesword has sufficient Intelligence to have a bonus spell of this level.

Rhymesword

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells Per Day			
						1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Crown chant mastery, magical insight, spells	0	—	—	—
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Primal magic +1	1	0	—	—
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Battle magic, magical insight +2	2	1	0	—
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Primal magic +2	3	2	1	0
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Elemental substitution, magical insight +3	3	3	2	1
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Primal magic +3	4	3	3	2
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Magical insight +4	4	4	3	3
8th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Primal magic +4	4	4	4	3
9th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Magical insight +5	4	4	4	4
10th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Primal magic +5	4	4	4	4

the same as that of the spell being exchanged, and it must be at least two levels lower than the highest-level rhymesword spell the rhymesword can cast. A rhymesword may swap only a single spell at any given level and must choose whether or not to swap the spell at the same time that he gains new spells known for that level.

Rhymeswords do not normally need spell components or focuses; however, if a spell has an expensive component (one with a listed cost), the rhymesword must provide that component. Alternately, the rhymesword can willingly suffer 1 point of Constitution damage per 25 gp value of a missing material component. Thus, if a rhymesword needed to cast *nondetection* (requiring 50 gp worth of diamond dust as the material component) but did not have the diamond dust, he could willingly suffer 2 points of Constitution damage instead.

While the use of Crown Tongue gives the rhymesword significant spellcasting ability, it also hampers his understanding of the arcane magic used by other spellcasters. As such, the rhymesword is incapable of using spell completion and spell trigger devices based on his spell list. Instead, the rhymesword must rely on his magical insight and the Use Magic Device skill when attempting to use scrolls, staves, and wands.

Primal Magic: Because he taps raw magic for his spellcasting, a rhymesword's spells are more powerful and more difficult to dispel than those of other spellcasters. At 2nd level, a rhymesword gains a +1 bonus to his effective caster level. This bonus increases his effective caster level for all caster level checks and for determining level-dependent spell variables. This bonus increases to +2 at 4th level, +3 at 6th level, +4 at 8th level and +5 at 10th level.

Battle Magic (Ex): At 3rd level, the rhymesword has learned enough secrets of Crown Tongue that he can spontaneously alter the spells *magic vestment*, *magic weapon*, and *greater magic weapon*. With a successful Spellcraft check (DC 15 + spell level) and a successful Concentration check (DC 12 + spell level), the rhymesword can trade the enhancement bonus from the spell for an armor or weapon special ability with the same base price modifier. For instance, a 6th-level rhymesword casts *greater magic weapon* on his longsword. Knowing that he'll shortly be facing a group of trolls, he makes a Spellcraft check (DC 18) and Concentration check (DC 15) to trade the +2 enhancement bonus for the *flaming burst* special ability. The exchange is made when the spell is initially cast and cannot be changed later. The special property lasts until the spell expires or is *dispelled*.

Elemental Substitution (Ex): Rhymeswords of 5th level and above are able to change the elemental type of certain damage causing spells. By changing

the Crown Tongue phrasing used to create the spell, a rhymesword can vary a spell's damage between the various elemental types: acid, cold, electricity, and fire. Changing the elemental type of a spell is part of casting the spell and does not increase the spell's casting time; however, the rhymesword must make a successful Spellcraft check (DC 15 + spell level) to know how to modify the spell properly and a successful Concentration check (DC 12 + spell level) to alter the spell while casting. If either check fails, the spell is cast normally with its standard elemental type. If the rhymesword fails one of the checks by 5 or more, the spell is lost, but if both checks are failed by 5 or more, the spell is miscast. The rhymesword suffers 1d6 points of damage per spell level from the magical backlash.

RHYMESWORD SPELL LIST

Rhymeswords choose their spells from the following list:

1st Level: *burning hands*, *charm person*, *command*, *endure elements*, *erase*, *faerie fire*, *hold portal*, *jump*, *lesser confusion*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *magic weapon*, *obscure object*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*, *true strike*

2nd Level: *acid arrow*, *arcane lock*, *bear's endurance*, *blur*, *calm emotions*, *daze monster*, *detect thoughts*, *eagle's splendor*, *flame blade*, *flaming sphere*, *fox's cunning*, *heroism*, *hold person*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *locate object*, *misdirection*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray*, *suggestion*, *whispering wind*

3rd Level: *arcane sight*, *bestow curse*, *blink*, *charm monster*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *confusion*, *dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fireball*, *greater magic weapon*, *haste*, *invisibility purge*, *keen edge*, *lightning bolt*, *magic vestment*, *nondetection*, *phantom steed*, *protection from energy*, *remove curse*, *slow*

4th Level: *arcane eye*, *break enchantment*, *dimension door*, *dimensional anchor*, *dismissal*, *dominate person*, *fire shield*, *freedom of movement*, *greater invisibility*, *hold monster*, *legend lore*, *locate creature*, *modify memory*, *sending*, *stoneskin*

SERVANT OF THE SEVEN

Across Castlemourn, very few beings renounce and fail to worship the Sleeping Seven. Of those who choose to dedicate their lives to faith, the great majority follow just one god, but a very few priests devote themselves to all seven deities. These few become members of the Order of the Sacred Seven. Some seek the Order after a strong personal revelation. Most turn to it out of disgust over power-schemings within their own church.

Members of the Order of the Sacred Seven seek to fully understand the oft-contradictory teachings of the seven gods and share that understanding with all Castlemourn. The Order believes every trait, quality, and word of the Seven (even those

Servant of the Seven

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells Per Day
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Deity dedication, resilient mind	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	—	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
3rd	+1	+3	+1	+3	Bonus metamagic feat	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
4th	+2	+4	+1	+4	—	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
5th	+2	+4	+1	+4	Bonus domain	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
6th	+3	+5	+2	+5	Bonus metamagic feat	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
7th	+3	+5	+2	+5	Greater dedication	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
8th	+4	+6	+2	+6	—	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
9th	+4	+6	+3	+6	Bonus metamagic feat	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
10th	+5	+7	+3	+7	Bonus domain	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class

considered evil and wrong by most) has its place in the great living flow of Umbrara. Servants of the Seven teach tolerance in all things and the maintenance of a balance, both in their own lives and across Castlemourn. This can make them less than welcome to rulers or those who hate and fear formidable foes, though the Order strives to maintain a small presence in every land of Castlemourn.

The Order has a strong interest in the Fall. Though it was formed after that cataclysm, Order teachings insist their beginnings are rooted in the Fall. A few sages and Order members even believe the Order's founders caused the Fall, bringing everything back into balance by ending the reign of whomever—or whatever—then dominated Castlemourn.

The Order of the Sacred Seven has only two monasteries but tries to place a member, or at least establish a contact, in every major church, temple, or religious gathering place of any faith. The two Order monasteries (Sevenfold House in anarrlith (northeastern) Lothran and the Allhouse on the aerho (eastern) flank of the Summerstar Hills) are large compounds that, at any given time, house over half of the Order.

A single Patriarch (who holds the title regardless of gender) heads the Order, and an Archmitre is charged with governance over each compound. The Order dispatches Mitres to the court of each realm with which it has an official relationship. All other Order members hold the title of Priest and are ranked within the Order by seniority.



Order of the Sacred Seven members are almost exclusively clerics, augmented by a handful of druids and rangers who have come to follow the teachings of all the Sleeping Seven. Some monks study with the Order but aren't recognized as members unless they have formal religious training. Paladins sometimes ally themselves with the Order, but generally, they consider it too tolerant in the fight against evil.

Hit Die: d8

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a servant of the Seven, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any neutral

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast divine spells

CLASS SKILLS

A servant of the Seven's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the servant of the Seven prestige class.

Weapon and

Armor Proficiency:

Servants are proficient with all simple weapons, with all types of armor (light, medium, and heavy), and with shields (except tower shields).

Spells per Day:

A servant of the Seven continues training

in divine magic, so when a new servant level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if also gaining a level in the divine spellcasting class he belonged to before joining the Order. He does not, however, gain any other benefits of advancing a level in that class.

Where a character had more than one divine spellcasting class before becoming a servant, the player decides which divine class each servant level is added to for purposes of determining spells per day.

Deity Dedication (Su): Each day, when the servant of the Seven prays for his spells, he dedicates himself to the service of one of the Seven. For the next 24 hours, all of his praying, preaching, contemplating, or fighting is done in that deity's name. During that time, he gains an additional blessing from the deity he serves. The blessing ceases at the end of the 24-hour period. Once the period has passed, the servant cannot honor that same deity again until he has dedicated one day to each of the other Seven Sleepers in the same manner.

- *Larlasse's Blessing:* The servant gains a +1 sacred bonus on all of his saves.

- *Haelarr's Blessing:* The servant gains a +3 sacred bonus on all Intelligence-based skill checks.

- *Munedra's Blessing:* The servant gains a +3 sacred bonus on all Heal checks and can cast two extra *cure light wounds* spells.

- *Araugh's Blessing:* The servant gains a +3 profane bonus on all checks related to sailing. He also gains a +1 profane bonus to command and rebuke undead checks. Servants who normally cannot command and rebuke undead can do so on this day, but they lose their turn undead ability while serving Araugh.

- *Ralaroar's Blessing:* The servant gains a +3 sacred bonus on all Handle Animal, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (nature), and Survival checks.

- *Amaunt's Blessing:* The servant gains a +1 sacred bonus on attack rolls and Armor Class.

- *Damantha's Blessing:* The servant is immune to natural poisons and diseases and gains a +2 sacred bonus to Armor Class and attack rolls when fighting undead. Servants who normally cannot turn undead can do so on this day, but they lose their ability to command or rebuke undead while serving Damantha.

Resilient Mind (Ex): Through opening his mind to all Seven Sleepers, a servant's mind becomes more resilient. He gains a +2 bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells and effects.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th levels, a servant of the Seven gains a bonus metamagic feat of his choice.

Greater Dedication (Su): At 7th level, the sacred or profane bonuses of the Seven's blessings are increased by +1.

Bonus Domain: At 5th and 10th level, a servant of the Seven gains access to an additional divine spell domain of his choice, though he may only select alignment domains (Good, Evil, Law, Chaos) that match his alignment. This occurs through increasing familiarity with the full diversity of teachings from all of the Sleeping Seven.

TRUESWORD KNIGHT

In the eyes of most Lyons, the prestigious title of Truesword Knight evokes reverent images of unflinching valor and unwavering fidelity. Although many young warriors aspire to become Truesword Knights, the knighthood is extended only to a select few who earn this reward through courageous deeds and devout allegiance to their lord.

Becoming a Truesword Knight is no simple task. At least three current Truesword Knights must recommend the prospective knight to a selection committee of senior Truesword Knights, who then appoint three impartial knights to covertly investigate the nominee and devise three disguised tests of the individual's worthiness. (The candidate is kept unaware of nomination, investigation, and testing.) Typically, these tests are scenarios carefully devised to measure the candidate's abilities, character, and loyalty to the King. (For instance, a senior Truesword Knight might privately approach the candidate and request assistance in a treasonous plot against the king or let the candidate "overhear" plotters, offering a bribe in return for the candidate's silence.) The names of candidates whose performance earns the approval of the committee are brought before the King, who must approve (and personally perform) bestowals. In an average year, about fifty individuals become Truesword Knights, and roughly five times that number fail the tests. Failing tests of loyalty and character could well result in a candidate's lifelong imprisonment, if he supported a treasonous plot or was otherwise clearly disloyal.

Like his subordinates, the Trueswords of the King, a Truesword Knight protects the royal family; however, he's much more than a simple bodyguard. He is the King's personal representative, entrusted to speak and act with full royal authority, from communicating the King's decrees to a Lyon duke to rendering swift justice on a cutpurse in the street. In addition to his well-known official capacities, he performs covert operations on the King's behalf, both within the realm and outside its borders. The Truesword Knight is a diplomat, judge, and covert agent charged to further the King's interests by any means necessary.

In exchange for his dedication and talents, a Truesword Knight enjoys a life of privilege and wealth at the royal court in Sharlaunce, while commanding the respect (and in some cases evoking the fear) of common folk. Knights receive a handsome salary, beginning at 100 gp every month for junior members and increasing to as much as 1,000 gp per month for the most senior Truesword Knights (all in addition to housing and food in the castle, mounts, and personally-fitted arms and armor, all on the royal purse).

Truesword Knights are active participants in court social life, attending lavish revels and wooing both alluring ladies of the court and seductive dignitaries from throughout Lyonar (in part to serve as eyes and ears for the King against treason). Despite the inherent dangers, many warriors are eager to risk life and limb in defense of the King in exchange for the favors and status of this knightly order.

Truesword Knights are almost exclusively human, though there are a few humanoid Truesword Knights with human blood in their ancestries. Many begin their careers as fighters or paladins. Clerics (due to allegiance to a deity over any temporal authority), barbarians, and rangers (both thanks to being "backwood uncouth") are ill-suited for life as Truesword Knights.

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To become a truesword knight, the character must fulfill all of the following requirements.

Alignment: Non-chaotic. Truesword knights are entrusted with constantly enforcing the King's laws and edicts; thus, chaotic characters are prohibited from becoming truesword knights.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Skills: Diplomacy 2 ranks, Knowledge (local) 2 ranks, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 2 ranks, Sense Motive 2 ranks

Feats: Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Special: The process of becoming a truesword knight (usually from the ranks of the Trueswords) is



Truesword Knight

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Bodyguard, render verdict 1/day
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Rapid response 1/day
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Martial training
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Render verdict 2/day
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Royal authority
6th	+6	+5	+2	+5	Rapid response 2/day
7th	+7	+5	+2	+5	Render verdict 3/day
8th	+8	+6	+2	+6	Line of fire
9th	+9	+6	+3	+6	Advanced martial training
10th	+10	+7	+3	+7	Rapid response 3/day, render verdict 4/day

described above. The character must satisfy all these requirements and win the personal approval of the King to become a truesword knight.

CLASS SKILLS

A truesword knight's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the truesword knight prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A truesword knight is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, as well as all types of armor and shields.

Bodyguard (Ex): A truesword knight can (instead of launching any attacks of his own) parry, shield, and otherwise aid an ally so as to grant that ally a +6 bonus to Armor Class against any attacks in a round. This special ability will fail against an unwilling ally, or if the truesword knight can't move freely to accompany a moving ally, and ends instantly if the truesword knight makes any attack (as opposed to parrying and shielding). While using this ability (which can be maintained from round to round continuously), the truesword knight suffers a –2 penalty to his own Armor Class. This penalty drops to –1 at 4th level and disappears entirely at 8th level.

Render Verdict (Ex): Truesword knights are given the authority to render judgment on any matter of criminal or civil law brought before them within the King's jurisdiction (though when the accused is noble, detention and transport before the King is expected whenever possible). The knight must always demonstrate that her verdict was based on available evidence and testimony at the time the matter was brought before her. If she renders a guilty verdict, she must bring the guilty party to a King's bailiff, who then metes out punishment. If an accused resists or attempts to flee, the truesword knight can employ deadly force (if necessary) to capture the accused and defend herself and any innocent bystanders. A knight can be stripped of her judicial authority if she demonstrates a pattern of unfair or prejudiced verdicts. Enacting justice for purposes of receiving personal gain can result in immediate expulsion from the order, as well as imprisonment for egregious offenses.

To carry out this important task, a truesword knight must be adept at discerning truth from

falsehood. Once per day, as a standard action, she can take 20 on any Sense Motive check. Over time, experience grants her additional daily uses of this ability. She can utilize this ability twice per day at 4th level, three times per day at 7th level, and four times per day at 10th level.

Rapid Response (Ex): Once per day, a truesword knight may add a +20 insight bonus to her initiative check. She must announce her intention to do so before rolling any dice. At 6th level, she can do this twice per day and, at 10th level, three times per day.

Martial Training (Ex): At 3rd level, the truesword knight gains one of the following bonus feats of her choice, even if she does not meet the feat's prerequisites: Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Quick Draw, or Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Royal Authority (Ex): Backed by the authority of the King, a truesword knight can add her class levels as a bonus to any Diplomacy or Intimidate skill checks; thus, a 7th-level truesword knight has a +7 bonus. She can add this bonus to any combination of skill checks a number of times per day equal to her Charisma modifier, although a truesword knight with a Charisma modifier of zero or less is still entitled to use this ability once per day. If this ability is employed outside the borders of Lyonar, the bonus is halved, so a 7th-level truesword knight would only gain a +3 bonus in such a circumstance.

Line of Fire (Ex): Once per round, a truesword knight can use her longsword to deflect an arrow, crossbow bolt, spear, or other projectile or thrown weapon that would normally hit an ally within her melee reach. To use this ability, she must make an attack roll using her longsword's highest attack bonus. If her attack roll exceeds the opponent's attack roll, the missile has been deflected, and her ally takes no damage. She must be aware of the attack and not flat-footed to employ this ability. Furthermore, unusually massive ranged weapons and ranged attacks generated by spell effects, such as *scorching ray*, cannot be deflected in this manner. Attempting to deflect a ranged weapon is an immediate action.

Advanced Martial Training (Ex): At 9th level, the truesword knight gains one of the following bonus feats of her choice, even if she does not meet the feat's prerequisites: Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Quick Draw, or Weapon Specialization (longsword). She can also choose Greater Weapon Specialization (longsword); however, she must have Weapon Specialization (longsword) to acquire this feat.

WAYMASTER

The waymaster is a merchant who has studied at one of the many Jamandran fencing schools and graduated as a full-fledged waymaster. These individuals are able negotiators and skilled swordsmen. However, they aren't trained in the arts of warfare (strategy, tactics, supply, and the like), and so do not typically make good soldiers or military leaders. Nevertheless, only a fool underestimates a Jamandran merchant with a rapier at his belt.

Waymasters come from all manner of backgrounds and not all are swordsmen. Some Jamandran merchants are known for their skill at unarmed fighting. Most Jamandran schools do not specifically teach pugilism or grappling, though many of their lessons are easily adapted to unarmed combat. Those who choose to master unarmed combat are usually self-taught or informally instructed by those who've taken up pugilism.

Waymasters are expected to school others in their profession and, in the twilight of their careers, are expected to educate and sponsor apprentice merchants (one for every waymaster class level they possess), training them in skills that will eventually allow them to become waymasters.

Individuals who become waymasters usually have training as bards, fighters, rangers, or rogues, and all have some experience traveling across Mournra. While monks have the martial skills to become waymasters, few care for the politicking that inevitably accompanies the trade. Wizards and sorcerers may be excellent at handling the business aspects of waymastery, but they aren't well suited to the more martial aspects of the class. Paladins and barbarians make poor waymasters; their lifestyles and backgrounds rarely lead them to take up lives as merchants.

Hit Die: d8

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a waymaster, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Skills: Appraise 4 ranks, Bluff 4 ranks,



Merchant Lore

DC	Type of Knowledge	Examples
10	Common, known by at least a substantial minority; common legends of the local population	A legend about a local ruin; a prominent lord's penchant for drink
20	Uncommon but available; known by only a few people; legends	A story about a place before the Fall of Castlemourn; the history of a powerful magic item
25	Obscure; known by few; hard to come by	The location of Tharitar; fell city of sorcerers; an obscure pre-Fall legend
30	Extremely obscure; known by very few; possibly forgotten by most who once knew it; possibly known only by those who don't understand the significance of the knowledge	The true nature of the thaele; Sealord Thusker Orlin's first ship as a boy; something specific about Castlemourn's Fall

Waymaster

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Merchant lore
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Canny defense
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Improved reaction +2
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Master negotiator
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Precise strike +1 d6
6th	+6	+5	+5	+2	Opportunist
7th	+7	+5	+5	+2	Elaborate parry
8th	+8	+6	+6	+2	Master persuader
9th	+9	+6	+6	+3	Improved reaction +4
10th	+10	+7	+7	+3	Precise strike +2d6

Diplomacy 6 ranks, Profession (merchant) 6 ranks

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Weapon Finesse

CLASS SKILLS

A waymaster's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (merchant) (Wis), Ride (Dex), and Sense Motive (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the waymaster prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A waymaster is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and light armor but not with shields.

Merchant Lore: Waymasters learn a great deal just by listening to local gossip and merchants' talk. As a result, a waymaster may make a Merchant Lore check upon arrival in a place with a bonus equal to his waymaster level + his Intelligence modifier. If the check succeeds, he knows some relevant information about local people or organizations, noteworthy items, or legendary locations. This check may not necessarily reveal true information, as much of what the waymaster hears is rumor or exaggeration. The waymaster cannot take 10 or 20 on this check. The GM determines the Difficulty Class of the check by referring to the Merchant Knowledge Table (see right). If the waymaster also has bard levels, add those class levels when determining the bonus to his Merchant Lore or Bardic Knowledge checks. Waymasters with 8 or more ranks in Gather Information gain a +2 synergy bonus to Merchant Lore checks.

Canny Defense (Ex): When not wearing armor or using a shield, and while wielding a melee weapon, a waymaster may add 1 point of his Intelligence modifier (if any) per waymaster class level (up to his total Intelligence modifier) to his Armor Class, in addition to any other applicable bonuses. For example, a 3rd-level waymaster with an Intelligence of 18 (+4 modifier) and a Dexterity of 15 (+2 modifier) may add a total of +5 (+2 Dex, +3 Int) to her Armor Class. If a waymaster is caught flat-footed or otherwise denied his Dexterity modifier, he also loses this bonus.

Improved Reaction (Ex): At 3rd level, a waymaster gains a +2 bonus on initiative checks. At 9th level, the bonus increases to +4. This bonus stacks with the Improved Initiative feat and any other initiative bonuses.

Master Negotiator (Ex): By 4th level, the waymaster has honed his negotiation skills to perfection. He gains Negotiator as a bonus feat and

can always take 10 on Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks, even under stress.

Precise Strike (Ex): At 5th level, a waymaster gains the ability to strike precisely with a light or one-handed piercing weapon, adding an extra 1d6 points of damage to his normal damage roll. When making a precise strike, a waymaster cannot attack with a weapon in her off hand or use a shield. Precise strike only works against living creatures with discernible anatomies. Any creature that is immune to critical hits is not vulnerable to a precise strike, and any item or ability that protects a creature from critical hits also protects a creature from a precise strike. At 10th level, the additional damage on a precise strike increases to +2d6.

Opportunist (Ex): Once per round, the waymaster can make an attack of opportunity against an opponent who has just been struck for damage in melee by another character. This attack counts as the waymaster's attack of opportunity for that round. Even with the Combat Reflexes feat, this ability cannot be used more than once per round.

Elaborate Parry (Ex): At 7th level and higher, if a waymaster chooses to fight defensively or use total defense in melee combat, he gains an additional +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class for each waymaster class level he possesses.

Master Persuader (Ex): By 8th level, the waymaster has honed her persuasion skills to perfection. She gains Persuasive as a bonus feat and can always take 10 on Bluff and Intimidate checks, even under stress.

BIRTHLANDS

The lands of Mournra were infused with magical energies centuries ago; power permeates the body of every Mournan creature before its birthing, linking it to the place of its birth. Whenever a Mournan drinks the water or sleeps on the ground of his birth place, resonance arises within him, allowing him to absorb more of the silently-surging forces of the land and be revitalized. This link gives every being dwelling near its birthplace an almost psychic benefit. Life just seems better and easier when at home.

Each character has a birthland, a 50-mile-radius area centered on the spot where he was born. Within this area, the character feels the power of the land. An individual who leaves his birthplace for more than 48 hours loses his birthland benefit. As soon as that individual returns, drinks of the waters of his birthland, and rests there for a full 8 hours, his birthland benefit is regained.

THE HARRAG

The elves of the Harrag (and the fey who dwell there as well) have a close connection to their forested homeland. They know and revere every untainted, living thing within the land's bounds. Folk of the Harrag immediately recognize interlopers and outsiders upon sight, even those invaders who have made the effort to disguise themselves. As a side effect of this closeness between land and people, they also have the ability to tell if native flora or fauna has been tainted by the "Dark" of the Mistcloak Forest.

Those born in the Harrag have a +3 bonus on Spot checks to notice when something from "the Tainted Outside" intrudes into their realm. Additionally, those born in the Harrag gain a +2 alchemical bonus on all Fortitude saves versus poison, as medicinal herbs and other curatives are always close to hand.

FIRELORN

Named for the legendary dragon slain there long ago, Firelorn and its people inherited more from that former resident than just a name. Dragons are powerful, magical creatures that always leave their mark on the earth. On that fateful day many Times ago, when dragon-riding heroes slew ancient Firelorn in the skies overhead, fire and blood rained down on the land.

Firelorn's blood hissed and steamed as it fell to the earth, saturating the ground and mysteriously transferring some of Firelorn's essence to the land and its people. While in their homeland, native Firelornans gain a +2 bonus on all Appraise checks and have resistance to fire 2.

BAERENT & HAUNTHILLS

Generally calm and thoughtful, Baerentaen and Hauntrans are generally slow to anger even when provoked. Considering carefully and acting deliberately, these folk strive to act correctly rather than react mistakenly. Natives of Baerent and Haunthills gain a +2 bonus on all Will saves against charms, compulsions, and fear effects.

Additionally, those born to these lands are capable of occasional, remarkable feats of peaceful strength (single-handedly lifting loaded wagons so broken wheels can be replaced, halting runaway horses with their bare hands, or bending bent iron tools straight). Once per rathren (10 days), a Baerentaen or Hauntran gains a +8 enhancement bonus to Strength checks made in such peaceful feats of strength. Once the task is completed, the individual becomes staggeringly weak (Strength reduced to 4) and must sleep for most of a day (at

least 12 hours). Once rested, the individual awakens unhurt and back to normal.

JAMANDAR

Jamandar has long been hailed as the feast table of Castlemourn with its bountiful crops and plentiful herds. Many Jamandrans excel at farming and animal husbandry, while others are shrewd merchants. Characters who were raised in Jamandran farm families gain a +2 bonus on all Handle Animal and Knowledge (nature) checks and can make untrained Knowledge (nature) checks. Those raised by Jamandran merchants have their own unique skills. Mercantile natives of Jamandar gain a +2 bonus on all Appraise and Sense Motive checks.

TANTANTHAR

Once a thriving land of strong trees and plentiful herds, Tantanthar is a realm lost to damp bogs and misty swamps. No longer do the ports bring in the business they once did. As the land itself was ruined by foolish Tantanthan ancestors, the folk must rely on themselves to make trade and survive.

Though it has been ill-treated, the land has forgiven its people. Most Tantanthans are crafters, doing exacting work that requires much time and skill. They pass their days in their shops, working hard to produce the best that may be had. To aid their efforts, Tantanthans are blessed with skill and attention to detail. Natives of the realm choose to gain a +2 bonus on a single Craft or Profession skill. Also, the Tantanthan drive for exacting workmanship grants them a +2 bonus on all Concentration checks.

THE FORESHORE

The people of the Foreshore have a hard and unpleasant lot. The Coves that cluster around Thamral, the main city-state in the region, are poor but often necessary second choice ports of call for travelers, sailors, or mercenaries. This land of intrigue and blades has blessed its people with the ability to speak quickly and wisely when negotiating through the land. Natives of the Foreshore gain a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy checks.

Also, the rocky trails between the ports and the Stoneshield (separating Jamandar from the Foreshore) have taught these people to be light on their feet and quick with their reactions. While traversing their native lands, the folk of the Foreshore gain a +2 bonus on all Balance checks. This also applies while at sea, so long as the ship

skirts the coast anywhere between the Marsh of Mists luthsurl (west) to Sardulkin.

THE IRDRAKE LANDS (LOTHRAN, ORMSCAR, & IRON FELL)

The lands from Mount Urbarr sekhovynd (south) past the Irdakewater all the way to the sarrind (northern) eaves of the Stormstars Wood are saturated with magic. Most likely related in some way to the Fall, the presence of magic in the land is undeniable. In particular, it appears to be centered on lands around Orn Doalryn—more specifically, the duchy of Septran. All Septrians have a 50 percent chance of causing magic items to glow upon touch. Also, there is a 50 percent chance a Septran's eyes will glow when she comes into contact with magic, including wards and spells. For other denizens of the Irdake Lands, there is only a 10 percent chance either of these events will occur.

In addition, those of the Irdake Lands have an inborn talent for activating and using odd magic items. These folk gain a +2 bonus on all Use Magic Device checks. Sometimes, unfortunately for them, the folk of the Irdake Lands do not always use this skill consciously. They may accidentally activate a magical artifact just by picking it up.

YARHOON

The Yarhoon is a steep, cavern-riddled ridge that runs from sarrind (north) to sekhovynd (south) to the luthsurl (west) of the Irdake Lands. The primary birthland of the golaunt, it is also home to many other dangerous creatures. Those who are unlucky enough to be born in the Yarhoon find themselves at a distinct advantage over non-natives. Yarhoon natives are skilled at foraging for food in this difficult terrain and avoiding poisonous flora and fauna. They also have an instinctive knack for locating warmfires during the harsh winter months. Golaunt and others born on (or in) the Yarhoon gain a +3 bonus to Survival checks related to gathering safe food, locating clean drinking water, and finding protection from the elements.

LYONAR

Called the "Crossroads of Castlemourn," Lyonar is center stage to all of Mournra. The main trade routes pass through its well-fortified and organized lands. Thus, news traveling from one end of Castlemourn to the other reaches many interested parties in Lyonar. With six independent duchies

paying fealty to the Sevenscrown Lord, rest assured that numerous intrigues are always afoot, keeping nobles and peasants alike interested and engaged. To this end, native Lyons have developed an instinctive skill for ferreting out the truth of what is really going on. Folk native to Lyonar gain a +2 bonus on all Gather Information checks. Likewise, while Lyons are friendly folk, not at all tight-lipped, they know the value of information and how to protect it, gaining a +2 bonus on all Bluff checks.

THE STARHAVEN REACH (ASMREL, DRAGONHEAD, GHANDALAR, & LUUTHAVEN)

The lands of the Reach are dominated by three major trade cities—Asmrel, Ghandalar, and Luuthaven. Asmrel and Ghandalar are locked in constant trade wars with Luuthaven remaining apart, except when the city's Master deems his influence is needed in settling disputes between the two trade powers. Dragonhead, located a short distance up the Luuthride from Luuthaven, benefits from the strife and rampant mercantilism. The buying and selling of all manner of goods and services is the life blood of this land. As such, the advertising involved is as important as the goods themselves. Those born within the Starhaven Reach have a real talent for persuasion, gaining a +2 bonus to all Bluff and Diplomacy checks related to selling an individual on something (be it a piece of merchandise or an idea). Likewise, growing up in this region has given its natives an instinct for determining an item's true value (+2 bonus on all Appraise checks).

ESTORNA, MARROVAR, & KHALANDORN

At first glance, the natives of Estorna, Marrovar, and Khalandorn seem to have absolutely nothing in common except the ground they walk on. Estorna is full of exacting crafters. Khalandorn is filled with farmers and beloved knights. Marrovar is a land of secretive bankers. Nothing in common until one observes them in action. The natives of these lands are especially good at what they do—master craftsmen, exceptional horsemen and warriors, and merchants so insightful many believe them gifted with precognitive skills.

All characters from this region pick three skills that are empowered while within their birthland.

Whenever a character fails a skill check with one of these skills, a reroll is granted, but the result of the second check is binding.

THE WILD LANDS (FAEREL, THE HAUNT OF EAGLES, & SPARRUK)

The Wild Lands form a realm of their own—blasted and forsaken stretches of wilderness where only a few hardy souls manage to survive. Within recent memory, Sparruk and Faerel were settled lands, kingdoms of men. Now these lands, along the Haunt of Eagles, are little more than monster-infested wilderness. However, for those born in the Wild Lands, treasures abound. Folk of the Wild Lands can often “feel” the presence of magical traps and wards (30 percent chance) and can use the Search skill to locate magical traps as a rogue.

The Wild Lands also bless their people with the natural ability to easily find food in the harsh landscape. The birthland grants a +3 bonus on Survival checks made when foraging for food.

THE IRON BARONY

The Iron Barony is a land born of a contradiction in sounds, cities filled with the constant ringing din of smithies juxtaposed against the deep silence of the forests and alpine meadows. City-dwelling Staele (what most Mournans call the folk of the Iron Barony) learn early on to separate the harsh din of the forge from other sounds, allowing them to carry on conversations over the incessant noise. Beyond Chemmore and Ruthstay, the Barony is filled with dense alpine forests and rushing streams, and rural Staele learn from birth to protect themselves from fierce wild boar, prowling cats, and other dangerous beasts. No matter where one hails from within the Iron Barony, natives gain a +3 bonus on all Listen checks.

THE IRON ISLES

The people of the Iron Isles are a mystery to the rest of Castlemourn. It is said that the Isles are ruled by fell sorcerers and populated by all manner of strange folk. While this may not be completely true, it is true that the Iron Isles are home to many powerful spellcasters. No one knows why, but folk of the Iron Isles have a propensity for magic and spellcasting; they are exceptionally gifted when on their native soil.

While on her home island (her birthland), an Iron Isle spellcaster has the ability to channel more

magic through her body than would be considered normal elsewhere. She gains bonus spells per day as if her primary spellcasting ability score were 4 points higher. Thus, while on her home isle, a wizard native to Arshroon with an Intelligence of 14 would gain bonus spells per day as if she had an Intelligence of 18.

FEATS

In addition to the standard types of feats (General, Item Creation, and Metamagic), two new types of feats are introduced in the Castlemourn Campaign setting: Racial Feats and Starmoot Feats.

RACIAL FEATS

The races of Umbrara have unique abilities, some of which are difficult to control. Racial feats represent the character’s learned discipline over a racial ability. Racial feats always have a racial prerequisite.

STARMOOT FEATS

Starmoot Feats represent a strong connection between the character and the constellation of his birth, which is determined by a conjunction of the wandering constellation Aumounel and one of Mournra’s nine fixed constellations. Mournans refer to constellations as nightlanterns and the combination of two constellations as a starmoot. These are described in detail in [Chapter Three: Religion & Astrology](#). Unless stated otherwise, Starmoot Feats can only be taken during character creation.

ACUTE SENSES [GENERAL]

Your acute senses allow you to detect creatures all around you, even in total darkness.

Prerequisite: Blind-Fight

Benefit: When attacking opponents with total concealment (including invisible opponents) within 25 feet, you only suffer a 25 percent miss chance.

Normal: You suffer a 50 percent miss chance when attacking opponents with total concealment.

Special: This ability only functions if you have previously seen and been within 25 feet of a particular type of creature. For example, in order to sense an invisible kobold, you must have previously encountered at least one kobold.

AMAZING SHOT [GENERAL]

Your communion with the land allows you to make ranged shots at amazing distances.

Prerequisites: Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus, base attack bonus +12

Benefit: You gain two additional range increments when using a ranged weapon. Projectile weapons, such

Mournan Feats

General Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Acute Senses	Blind-fight	1/2 penalty when attacking invisible targets
Amazing Shot	Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus, base attack bonus +12	Gain additional range increments
Brave Heart	Wis 13	+2 bonus to opposed checks against Bluff and Intimidate
Covenant with the Land	Wis 12	Recover additional hit points after a full night's rest
Creature of the Land	Cha 14, Knowledge (nature) 7 ranks	Gain an animal companion
Crown Tongue Chant	Int 12	Gain the ability to cast three 0-level spells per day
Defuser	Special	No penalty to rushed Diplomacy checks
Elemental Insight	Int 14, special	Gain +2 bonus to attacks, AC, and skill checks when dealing with specific elementals
Falling	Dex 14, Tumble 10 ranks	Take less damage from falling
Fist of the Gods	Wis 14, Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks, base attack bonus +7	Gain an additional melee attack
Guild Mastery	Leadership, any one class skill 8 ranks	Gain +2 bonus to Leadership score
Hero of the Land	Base attack bonus +10, special	Heroic reputation grants benefits within your birthland
Inspiration	Wis 15, Cha 15, Leadership	Close associates gain +2 morale bonus
Primal Howl	Con 14, Cha 12	Howl inflicts a -2 morale penalty to melee attacks
Purifier	Cha 14, special	Gain +1 bonus to attacks, AC, saves, and skill checks against undead
Quickness	Dex 12	Increase base movement rate by 10 feet
Tactics	Profession (soldier) 6 ranks	Troops gain a +4 bonus to initiative and avoid attacks of opportunity
Racial Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Disciplined Aura	Thaele	Increase or suppress your accursed aura
Intensified Indomitable Spirit	Golaunt, base attack bonus +4	Gain additional use per day of indomitable spirit ability
Intensified Moonglow	Elf or half-elf	Double the radius of your moonglow
Starmoot Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Blackel	Born under Blackel	Gain Appraise and Knowledge (history) as class skills
Caladuth	Born under Caladuth	Gain Disguise and Control Shape as class skills
Durblade	Born under Durblade	Gain Knowledge (dungeoneering) and Survival as class skills
Longfire Birthed	Born under the sign of your deity	You provide a +1 bonus to the attacks and saves of others of your faith
Malavindor	Born under Malavindor	Gain Escape Artist and Search as class skills
Orluth	Born under Orluth	Gain Heal and Knowledge (nature) as class skills
Paeragus	Born under Paeragus	Gain Knowledge (any one) and Spot as class skills
Rauth	Born under Rauth	Gain Intimidate and Knowledge (the planes) as class skills
Tree of Stars	Born under the Tree of Stars	+2 to saves against negative energy damage and negative levels
Viliyathar	Born under Viliyathar	Gain increased life span and a save to prevent level or ability loss when being raised or resurrected

as bows, now have 12 range increments, while thrown weapons have 7 range increments.

BLACKEL [STARMOOT]

You were born under the sign of Blackel, the Anvil.

Prerequisite: Born under the sign of Blackel

Benefit: You gain Appraise and Knowledge (history) as class skills. If you already have one or both as class skills, you instead gain a +2 insight bonus on Appraise and Knowledge (history) skill checks as the feat's benefit.

Special: This feat can only be taken at character creation.

BRAVE HEART [GENERAL]

Your courage and the strength of your convictions give you the ability to overcome impossible mental hardships and see through deceptions others cannot.

Prerequisite: Wis 13

Benefit: You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to any opposed checks you make against the Bluff and Intimidate skills.

CALADUTH [STARMOOT]

You were born under the sign of Caladuth, the Claws.

Prerequisite: Born under the sign of Caladuth

Benefit: You gain Disguise as a class skill and receive a +2 insight bonus on Disguise checks. If you already have Disguise as a class skill, you gain a +4 insight bonus on Disguise skill checks. In addition, should you ever contract lycanthropy, you are automatically aware of the condition, gain Control Shape as a class skill, and receive a +2 inherent bonus on Control Shape skill checks.

Special: Aside from taking this feat at birth, you may opt to take it after succumbing to lycanthropy (provided you have never taken a Starmoot feat). Oftentimes, children are not told they were born under this "ominous" sign, but discover the truth later in life

after being afflicted by lycanthropy and fulfilling their long-avoided fate.

COVENANT WITH THE

LAND [GENERAL]

You have made a life-long commitment to assist the natural growth and vigor of your birthland.

Prerequisite: Wis 12

Benefit: Your natural ability to heal is increased when you are resting on or in a natural stone formation, including water- or wind-carved caves or tunnels or on exposed ground. Provided you take your full night's rest, you recover a number of additional hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier. These hit points are above and beyond the hit points you would normally have healed during that rest period, though you can never recover more than your total hit points. If you seek bed rest under these conditions, or bury three-quarters of your body (or more) in the earth for 8 hours, you double the number of hit points recovered. Buried characters are considered helpless.

Special: At least once per rathren (10 days), you must tend the land in some way for ten full hours (planting seeds, tilling farmland, clearing weeds or dead trees, tending to sick or starving animals, and so on) or lose the benefits of this feat for three months.

CREATURE OF THE

LAND [GENERAL]

Your birth land reacts to you, giving you an unusual ally.

Prerequisites: Cha 14, Knowledge (nature) 7 ranks

Benefit: You gain the benefit of an Animal Companion as per the ranger class feature. The animal must be native to, and commonly associated with, your homeland, but it isn't restricted from traveling elsewhere.

Special: No individual character may have more than one animal companion, no matter the source.

CROWN TONGUE

CHANT [GENERAL]

You have learned a few magical Crown Tongue phrases during your adventures.

Prerequisite: Int 12

Benefit: You gain the ability to cast a limited number of 0-level spells. When you take this feat, you can choose any four 0-level spells. These spells can be chosen from any class spell list and need not all come from the same list. You know these spells (they become your Crown Tongue spell list) and are able to cast three 0-level spells from your list per day just as a bard does.

Special: This feat can be taken multiple times. Its effects stack.



DEFUSER [GENERAL]

You are a peaceful being, skilled at quickly handling situations in a non-violent manner.

Prerequisite: You must take a personal vow of non-violence.

Benefit: You suffer no penalty when making a rushed Diplomacy check. You are also immune to the *rage* spell.

Normal: Diplomacy takes 1 full minute (10 rounds) to use effectively. Characters attempting to change an NPC's attitude as a full-round action suffer a -10 penalty to their Diplomacy checks.

Special: Should you, of your own accord, act violently out of vengeance or anger, you instantly lose the benefits of this feat until you receive an *atonement* spell (the requirements are judged by the GM, though the character has the right to defend himself under the threat of violence).

DISCIPLINED AURA [RACIAL]

You have learned to exercise some limited control over your accursed aura.

Prerequisite: Thaele

Benefit: You can increase the radius of your accursed aura to 10 feet with a successful Concentration check (DC 12). Likewise, you can attempt to temporarily suppress it with a slightly higher Concentration check (DC 14). The effect lasts for 1d6 rounds, until your concentration is broken, or you dismiss it. You can use this feat a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Normal: A thaele has no control over his accursed aura.

DURBLADE [STARMOOT]

You were born under the sign of Durblade, the Fallen Warrior.

Prerequisite: Born under the sign of Durblade

Benefit: You gain Knowledge (dungeoneering) and Survival as class skills. If you already have one or both as class skills, you gain a +2 insight bonus on Knowledge (dungeoneering) and Survival skill checks as the feat's benefit.

Special: This feat can only be taken at character creation.

ELEMENTAL INSIGHT [GENERAL]

The nature of elementals intrigues you, and over time you have learned some of the secrets that make them powerful.

Prerequisites: Int 14, must have fought at least one elemental of the chosen type

Benefit: When you take this feat, you choose a specific elemental type (air, earth, fire, or water). From this point forward, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all attack rolls and Armor Class when fighting elementals of your chosen type and on all skill checks

when dealing with elementals of your chosen type. For purposes of this feat, elementals are any creature with the extraplanar subtype and either the air, earth, fire, or water subtype.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new elemental type.

FALLING [GENERAL]

You have learned the secrets of mitigating damage to yourself when falling.

Prerequisites: Dex 14, Tumble 10 ranks

Benefit: So long as you are not wearing heavy armor or carrying a heavy load, you take no damage from falls of 30 feet or less and only suffer half damage from falls of up to 100 feet. You take normal damage from falls of more than 100 feet.

FIST OF THE GODS [GENERAL]

You have been blessed by the Seven with greater fighting prowess.

Prerequisites: Wis 14, base attack bonus +7

Benefit: You may make an additional melee attack at your highest base attack bonus. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier.

GUILD MASTERY [GENERAL]

You have traveled far and wide and, in the course of these travels, have made a name for yourself among other members of your guild or profession.

Prerequisites: Leadership, 8 ranks in any one class skill

Benefit: When determining the number and levels of your cohort and any followers you gain from the Leadership feat, add +2 to your Leadership score.

HERO OF THE LAND [GENERAL]

Through a lifetime of harrowing adventure and dangerous exploits, you have become a hero to the people of your birthland. More than that, you have become a larger-than-life figure, a legend.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +10, must have defeated an enemy of the land (see below)

Benefit: Intelligent creatures with fewer HD or levels than you must make a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 your character level) or be unable to attack you in any way unless you initiate combat. If you attack or strike such a creature, that creature is free to attack you with no penalty.

Additionally, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Perform checks while within your birthland, though at the same time, you suffer a -2 penalty on all Disguise checks.

Special: In order to gain this feat, you must have killed a foe of the land. This enemy could be an individual or a monster, but must have been a

significant threat to a place or region, must have been actively terrorizing inhabitants there, and must have had a CR such that even the most powerful residents of the area had failed to kill or otherwise neutralize this foe. The exact nature of this enemy is left to the GM, but at the very least, it should have a CR 10 or greater. Your character does not have to defeat the enemy in single combat, but the enemy must be killed or permanently neutralized (placed in prison, banished to a different dimension, imprisoned in the center of the earth, or otherwise removed as a threat); your character must have led the expedition and contributed in a significant way to the enemy's downfall. The GM has final say over these requirements.

INSPIRATION [GENERAL]

People around you are inspired to act after seeing your good works.

Prerequisites: Wis 15, Cha 15, Leadership

Benefit: Those you inspire gain a +2 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls, skill checks, and saving throws so long as they remain within sight of you. This effect only functions while you are in full control of your own actions. If other forces control you, the feat's effect is negated.

You must spend at least 48 total hours, in no less than 4 hour increments and within one week's time, with anyone you wish to inspire. Additionally, you must spend 1,000 XP for each individual you wish to inspire. From then on, your actions affect those persons even if you haven't interacted with them for years, so long as they can see you.

INTENSIFIED INDOMITABLE

SPIRIT [RACIAL]

You have developed an even greater relish for proving yourself against larger foes in combat.

Prerequisites: Golaunt, base attack bonus +4

Benefit: You gain an additional use per day of your indomitable spirit racial ability.

INTENSIFIED MOONGLOW [RACIAL]

You can cause your moonglow to shine brighter.

Prerequisite: Elf or half-elf

Benefit: With a successful Concentration check (DC 12), you can double the normal radius of your moonglow. Intensification can be increased with a Concentration check (DC 18), so it penetrates your clothes, body paint, or medium armor; it can never be intensified enough pass through heavy armor or solid objects.

You can maintain the increased radius or effect by concentration as if you were concentrating to maintain a spell. The effect ends if your concentration is broken or when you release it.

LONGFIRE BIRTHED [STARMOOT]

Your birth was hailed and blessed by your god through the presence of a longfire.

Prerequisites: Born under the sign of your deity, ability to cast divine spells

Benefit: When you stand in combat with those of your own faith, you grant them a +1 morale bonus on all attacks and saving throws for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1). You can only use this ability three times per day and can affect a number of faithful allies equal to half your HD (rounded down) within 30 feet of you.

Special: This feat can only be taken at character creation.

MALAVINDOR [STARMOOT]

You were born under the sign of Malavindor, the Lost Chariot.

Prerequisite: Born under the sign of Malavindor

Benefit: You gain Escape Artist and Search as class skills. If you already have one or both as class skills, you instead gain a +2 insight bonus on Escape Artist and Search skill checks as the feat's benefit.

Special: This feat can only be taken at character creation.

ORLUTH [STARMOOT]

You were born under the sign of Orluth, the Blind Bird.

Prerequisite: Born under the sign of Orluth

Benefit: You gain Heal and Knowledge (nature) as class skills. If you already have one or both as class skills, you instead gain a +2 insight bonus on Heal and Knowledge skill checks as the feat's benefit.

Special: This feat can only be taken at character creation.

PAERAGUS [STARMOOT]

You were born under the sign of Paeragus, the Watcher.

Prerequisite: Born under the sign of Paeragus

Benefit: You gain Knowledge (any one) and Spot as class skills. If you already have one or both as class skills, you instead gain a +2 insight bonus on one specific type of Knowledge skill check and Spot checks as the feat's benefit.

Special: This feat can only be taken at character creation.

PRIMAL HOWL [GENERAL]

When you enter battle, you can let out a terrifying shriek that startles your opponents.

Prerequisites: Con 14, Cha 12.

Benefit: On the first round of any combat, so long as you are able to speak and your opponents can hear you, you can let out a primal howl. This howl forces your opponents to make a Will save DC 10 + 1/2 your character level + your Constitution modifier. If they fail,

they suffer a -2 morale penalty on all melee attacks they make against you for 1d4 rounds.

PURIFIER [GENERAL]

You are the bane of all things undead.

Prerequisites: Cha 14, must have destroyed at least five different kinds of undead

Benefit: You gain a +1 inherent bonus on all attack rolls, Armor Class, saves, and skill checks when dealing with undead.

QUICKNESS [GENERAL]

The strength of the land flows through you, making you faster than most.

Prerequisite: Dex 12.

Benefit: Choose one type of movement you possess (afoot, flying, swimming, or climbing); your base movement speed increases by 10 feet per round.

Special: Creatures with different types of movement can take this feat multiple times; however, each time it must be applied to a different form of movement.

RAUTH [STARMOOT]

You were born under the sign of Rauth, the Bloodboar.

Prerequisite: Born under the sign of Rauth

Benefit: You gain Intimidate and Knowledge (the planes) as class skills. If you already have one or both as class skills, you instead gain a +2 insight bonus on Intimidate and Knowledge (the planes) skill checks as the feat's benefit.

Special: This feat can only be taken at character creation.

TACTICS [GENERAL]

You have studied the art of war and can use a combination of practical experience and learned theory to give the forces you command an advantage on the battlefield.

Prerequisite: Profession (soldier) 6 ranks

Benefit: When in command of five or more individuals of a martial class (barbarian, fighter, warrior, etc.) and some knowledge of the field of battle, you can use your Profession (soldier) skill to convey to

your troops a strategy that will improve their initiative and ability to aid each other in a single upcoming confrontation.

A successful Profession (soldier) skill check (DC 15) provides a +4 insight bonus to your troops' initiative rolls which lasts for the duration of the encounter. In addition, your troops are not subject to attacks of opportunity during the encounter. Planning and implementing this strategy requires a minimum of 5 + 1d6 minutes.

Special: The troops must follow your battle plan in order to gain this benefit. Each member of your troop must also remain within 20 feet of another troop member or the entire group loses this benefit. This feat doesn't work if you and your troops are ambushed or surprised.

You gain an additional +2 circumstance bonus on your Profession (soldier) skill check if all of the soldiers under your command hail from the land of your birth.

TREE OF STARS [STARMOOT]

You were born under the sign of the Tree of Stars.

Prerequisite: Born under the sign of the Tree of Stars

Benefit: You gain a +2 inherent bonus on any saving throw you make against negative energy damage and negative levels.

Special: This feat can only be taken at character creation.

VILYATHAR [STARMOOT]

You were born under the sign of Viliyathar, the Sky Dragon.

Prerequisite: Born under the sign of Viliyathar

Benefit: Your maximum lifespan is increased according to your race (human +30 years; dwarf, gnome, or thaele +100 years; elf +250 years; golaunt +20 years; half-elf or halfling +50 years).

In addition, should you die and be returned to life, you can make a Fortitude save (DC 20) to prevent the loss of a level, Hit Die, or Constitution as a result of being brought back.

Special: This feat can only be taken at character creation.

CHAPTER 2: MAGIC

There came a time when titanic battles swept over, under, and across Castlemourn. Mountains rose from swamps, wild spells transformed jungles into murderous tentacled creatures, and battling titans were thrown down and magically frozen in time deep under the landscape.

The struggle raged for most of a season until the very land revolted, spewing forth a great chaos of ravaging magic. When the dust settled, every spired city across Castlemourn had been thrown down. Ancient forests were drowned swamps, marshlands had suddenly disappeared as mountain peaks thundered skyward, and the land bled flows of wild magic, lava, and new rivers. Surviving Mournans huddled in a ruined world, dazed and mind-numbed. The lands around them were changed; no one could quite remember how or by whom—and the suddenly-sentient landscape wasn't talking.

Three centuries have passed.

Today, new cities have risen, and Mournans are seeking to uncover and understand their past. The few still-living survivors of the Fall remember nothing coherent of what happened. Ordered magic and its use have returned to Castlemourn but in a manner different—and lesser—than before. Everything must be rediscovered or learned anew; magic is once more in its infancy. Wizards and sorcerers are only slowly groping beyond what mere novices knew Before the Fall.

MAGIC'S PAST

Before the Fall of the Castles, magic was everywhere in Castlemourn. Even the lowliest peasants knew minor charms and conjurings, and they had useful magic items to aid their daily lives. Much of this magical prowess came from their use of Crown Tongue, the ancient language of Castlemourn laden with magical keys and words of power. In the Fall, almost all books and items of magic were buried, transformed, or blasted to dust. All of the races, mind-burned in the great chaos of wild magics, forgot their magical skills and struggled to forge lives without the use of magic.

Today, most folk still can't wield magic. Few think much about, or are aware of the full extent of, the vast labyrinth of buried caverns and ruins beneath their feet. The hunt for spells and items of magic has become a passion for adventurers everywhere, but a find is only a beginning. Each rediscovery must be carefully experimented with and guarded against theft or seizure; literally thousands of magics remain complete mysteries to

even the most astute of modern Mournan scholars of magic.

MAGIC TODAY

Spells of 4th level and higher aren't commonly known in Castlemourn. Individual mages may know powerful magics but guard their secrets closely. The islands *sekhovynd* (south) of Glamryn Bay; where isolation is easy to achieve and the land itself aids in the study of magic, inspiring those who experiment with visions and meaningful glows; are natural homes for all classes of spellcasters. Even on the Iron Isles, higher-level spells are kept secret but sometimes given as rewards to those who venture to mainland Mournra and bring back artifacts and magical lore.

Ruins all across Mournra often yield up scrolls of long-forgotten magics, and rare or hitherto unknown spells can be sold for fabulous sums to the wealthiest wizards and sorcerers. Yet even though the land spurs its inhabitants to understand magic, it seems to inhibit reckless experimenters: despite innate mastery of magic, sorcerers cannot cast specific 4th-level or higher spells until they've witnessed that particular spell unleashed by someone else.

More importantly, folk have begun to rediscover the magic hidden within the words of Crown Tongue. Some of the minor charms and conjurings have begun to resurface, and rhymeswords harness Crown Tongue chants and phrases to work feats of magic.

ESTEMEL

Mournra contains scores of *estemel* that open when the light of both moons falls together on particular enchanted stones, and certain other specific local conditions of season or stellar conjunction are met. *Estemel* allow beings to step from "otherwheres" into Mournra and vice versa. As a result, a wide variety of odd people and strange beasts, called *farfarers* ("felar" in the Crown Tongue) by Mournans, can be found in Castlemourn. (This affords GMs a ready explanation for introducing monsters, characters, and even artifacts from any other fantasy setting into a Castlemourn campaign.) Most Mournans believe such appearances through the "Doors of the Gods" have been going on "since before the Castles Fell" (forever), so *farfarers* aren't attacked or shunned on sight unless their behavior elicits such reactions.

Even those who have researched *estemel* are unsure of their origins. The *estemel* aren't naturally occurring features or weak spots in reality, though some dwarves may contest such points over an ale or two. The most widely accepted contention is that they were erected by long-forgotten wizards during the Time of the Castles. Some speculate the *estemel* were the final catalyst for the great destruction. Even now, they heighten the possibility for a mass influx of extraplanar raiders or dangerous beasts, and the potential threats for such occurrences would have been extreme in a time where powerful wizards sought every opportunity to unleash wild and uncontrollable powers upon the world. These temporary, eerily-glowing, "fading in and fading out again" doorways function only sporadically and are generally located in inhospitable or remote regions.

SPELLS OF CASTLEMOURN

Magic plays an increasingly significant role in Mournan life, but it is nowhere more prevalent than on the Iron Isles that ring the sekhovynd (southern) bounds of Glamryn Bay. Many mainlanders call these storm-lashed rocks the "Wizard Isles," though the term is far from truth (many spellcasters dwell on the Isles, but they're both a tiny minority among islanders and keep to themselves, avoiding most daily politics and positions of local authority).

Spellcasters continue to be drawn to the Isles, because they know many folk skilled in magic dwell there. Some folk come to the islands to craft magic items, research new spells, or investigate ancient relics. Often they call on resident sages and crafters, or fellow seekers-of-magic, to aid them in such work.

On the Isles, barter is the norm, and even spells and magic items are often traded for magical teaching and aid. As a result, sorcerers, wizards, and clerics of the Iron Isles have developed or acquired many new magical spells, most rare or unknown on the mainland (save as secrets held by a powerful few).

The majority of the following spells are known of across the Iron Isles, but only a medium- to high-level mainland spellcaster with many years of experience

spellcrafting and researching is likely to have access to one or more of them. These Iron Isles spells are considered native to a specific island, as indicated in parentheses in the spell description; native spells are known by spellcasters throughout the Isles, but are most common among folk of their island. Other spells, those without a native island designator, are extremely rare and known to only a handful of casters throughout Castlemourn.

AIRSPHERE

Conjuration [Creation] (Dunnklaer)

Level: Drd 3, Rgr 3, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature or object touched

Area: 30-foot-radius spread

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: Yes



Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell creates a sphere of fresh air around the individual or object touched by the caster. Gaseous and vaporous attacks are unable to penetrate this *airsphere*, and acids or other liquids simply wash over it. The spell generates oxygen, enabling you to breathe underwater or in other areas with no fresh air (though as the sphere surrounds its recipient being or object, it hampers movement in or under water).

This spell doesn't protect against natural or magical effects occurring within the *airsphere* (for example, if a vial of acid is thrown into the sphere, it enters; if it breaks, its contents splash for their normal effects. This spell was specially crafted to guard against dragon breath; it will absorb and negate any breath weapon upon contact but is itself destroyed, instantly and harmlessly, in doing so.

Material Component: A perfect moonstone, a square of virgin white parchment of any size, and any sort of high-purity silver coin.

APPEAR UNDEAD

Necromancy (Blackoon)

Level: Clr 2, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: Caster

Duration: 10 minutes/level

This spell allows you to appear to unintelligent undead (such as skeletons, zombies, ghouls, ghosts, and shadows) as if you are a specific type of undead creature (type determined by the material component used in casting the spell). All undead sense that you have the aura of a specific undead creature, though intelligent undead discern your true nature if they actually see you.

Material Component: A small piece of material from an unintelligent undead creature, such as a finger bone or bone fragment from a skeleton or a scrap of zombie flesh.

AWAKEN THAELSTONE

Transmutation (Nor Umber)

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Target: 1 thaelstone

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless, object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

This spell allows you to awaken a thaelstone and attune its properties to a specific individual. Once completed, the attuned being can use the thaelstone to record and play back messages. At its owner's command, a thaelstone can remember and repeat a number of minutes worth of sound equal to the *awaken thaelstone* caster's level. A thaelstone can hold multiple messages, provided it has enough "memory" available.

While thaelstones can be used to record and repeat spell instructions and activation words for magic items, they always "garble" spell incantations and so cannot be used to record verbal spell components.

Material Component: A mix of rare oils and herbs, worth 250 gp, boiled inside a heated geode bowl. The thaelstone is dropped into this mixture during casting.

XP Cost: 20 XP.

BLOOD CURSE

Necromancy (Blackoon)

Level: Brd 5, Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Touch

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round/2 levels

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

With this spell, you cause a target creature's blood to thin and its heart to beat faster, increasing blood flow—and with it the amount of damage dealt by wounds. A target under the effects of this spell suffers double damage from all slashing or piercing attacks and double damage from continuing damage effects (such as those suffered by a dying character). This increased damage stacks with any damage done by a critical hit. This spell does not affect creatures with the construct, elemental, plant, ooze, or undead creature type. Its effects can be negated by *heal*, *remove curse*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish*.

BRIEFLY VISIBLE

Divination (Stormsharr)

Level: Clr 1, Drd 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 10 feet

Area: 10-foot-radius burst, centered on the caster

Duration: 1 round

Any *invisible* creatures or objects within the spell's radius become visible for one round, before becoming *invisible* again. The spell reveals only magically-obscured creatures or objects, not hidden features such as secret doors and traps.

CLOUD DRAGON

Transmutation (Stormsharr)

Level: Clr 4, Drd 4, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Special

Target: Special

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

The energies of this spell are directed against clouds overhead, which take on the form of an adult gold or silver dragon under your control. This dragon has partial substance and is capable of transporting up to three Medium (or smaller) creatures on its back, just as a regular dragon can; however, it cannot make attacks and doesn't possess a breath weapon. Whenever you are unable to concentrate on controlling the actions of the *cloud dragon*, it simply stops, hanging motionless despite winds or gravity, until you resume control or the spell expires (whereupon the dragon vanishes). The *cloud dragon* flies with the speed and maneuverability of an adult gold or silver dragon. To cast this spell, you must have seen a real gold or silver dragon and be outdoors, able to see clouds in the sky.

Material Component: The scale of an adult gold or silver dragon, held in the caster's hand.

COMMUNE WITH THE ANCIENTS

Divination (Bel's Sharth)

Level: Clr 4, Drd 4, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Personal

Target: Caster

Duration: 10 minutes

Through this spell, you become one with the land or ruins you are touching, gaining knowledge about your immediate surroundings regarding any occurrence that befell there during the last 48 hours. You can mentally ask up to three simple questions about the location; if your queries have clear answers, they will instantly enter your mind.

Common questions include: "How many beings like me (or larger than me) usually dwell here?", "What kinds of creatures live in this forest?", "In what direction is the nearest body of water larger than a small stream (or the largest body of fresh water)?", or "Where is the closest drinkable water on the surface of the land?"

The land replies as honestly and completely as it can, but it is incapable of answering specific questions, such as "Does Rael Yundri live in these lands?" or "Has a wizard (or the wizard Beldran Sendaer) ever been here?" (Or, "Is Rael Yundri inside this castle or on this farm right now?")

The caster can ask about specific spots or features (such as rooms or doors). Queries about a particular set of ruins will be answered about only those specific ruins. If queried about an entire land or region, the land answers about a plot of land of a 10-mile radius maximum area centered on the caster.

CRYSTAL TELL

Divination (Halar)

Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One crystal or gemstone touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

When cast on a crystal, gemstone, or object containing a crystal, this spell identifies the kind of gemstone or crystal, its value, and whether or not any spells are currently active on the gemstone. The spell does not reveal any spells previously cast on the stone, unless they are currently active or remain dormant within the stone awaiting activation.

While this spell is useful for identifying and appraising gemstones, its main use comes in identifying the crystals within a geode. If cast on a geode, the spell reveals the type of crystals present within the geode, whether or not the geode has been activated, and what spells (if any) have been stored within the geode.

Strangely, this spell does not work properly when cast on dreamstones. Anytime the spell is cast on a dreamstone, the spell provides false but plausible information—usually indicating that the stone is a bit of moonstone, milky quartz, or some similar stone.

Focus: Magnifying glass or a jeweler's loop.

DEATH TOLLING

Necromancy [Sonic] (Blackoon)

Level: Clr 7, Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Special

Target: One specially-prepared bell

Duration: Special

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell must be cast on a specially prepared metal bell. Anyone ringing the enspelled bell can then potentially deal damage to all living creatures in earshot. Each time the bell rings, all living creatures within the area of effect are struck by an audible wave of necromantic energies. The magic creates only one such wave per round; additional ringing attempts cause only normal chimings.

On the first round, this sonic attack causes damage equal to one-half the *death tolling* caster's level in hit points, rounding down (a 17th-level wizard would inflict 8 points of damage). Every successive time the bell is rung, the amount of damage dealt by the wave is reduced by 1 point. Once the damage reaches zero, the spell ends (the bell can ring normally, but it won't deal damage until *death tolling* is cast on it again). The damage occurs in a 50-foot-radius spread/caster level (so the wave produced by a 15th-level sorcerer would have a maximum range of 750 feet).

Aside from the bell-ringer and creatures incapable of hearing (including permanently or temporarily deafened individuals), all living creatures in earshot are affected unless underwater or protected by a building, cave, or some other natural phenomenon (such as the roar of a waterfall) that prevents them from properly hearing the toll of the bell (GM's discretion). Only living creatures able to hear as humans do are affected by this spell; constructs, oozes, plants, and undead of all types are immune.

Every creature within the area of effect may attempt a Will save to avoid damage. Any successful Will save prevents a creature from suffering additional damage from that particular *death tolling* casting (no matter how often thereafter they hear the bell's sonic attack).

Arcane Focus: A bell worth at least 2,000 gp.

DISINTEGRATION SPHERE

Evocation (Bel's Sharth)

Level: Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 3 rounds

Range: Medium (100 feet + 10 feet/level)

Area: 5-foot-radius sphere

Duration: 1 minute

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

When you cast this spell, a glowing ten-foot-diameter globe of deep, vivid purple energy comes into being and floats along the ground in the direction you will it, moving 30 feet per round at a maximum of ten feet above the underlying terrain. The *sphere* can't harm you (it will pass through you harmlessly), but it disintegrates anything else it touches, affecting up to twice your maximum hit points (if you have 60 hit points when fully healed, your *disintegration sphere* will "vanish" up to 120 hit points worth of creatures and items).

You can direct the *sphere* to go anywhere within the spell's range but must concentrate to move it. If you are unable to do so, the *sphere* becomes motionless until you again concentrate on it. If the *sphere* lacks sufficient energy (remaining damage points) to destroy a living being or object, it does as much damage as possible. A *disintegration sphere* disappears after one minute or after inflicting its total damage capacity, whichever comes first.

DISRUPTIVE MISSILE

Evocation [Force] (Arshroon)

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: Caster

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

When you cast this spell, it grants you limited protection from projectile weapons and a retaliatory strike against an attacker. You gain damage reduction 10/magic against ranged weapons; however, this spell does not grant the ability to damage creatures with similar damage reduction.

Additionally, for each projectile weapon that strikes you within a round, a single *magic missile* streaks back at the source of the attack, so long as the attacker is within 100 yards. The spell releases a maximum of one *magic missile* per four caster levels each round. (If an 8th-level wizard is struck by five arrows, his *disruptive missile* spell retaliates with two *magic missiles*, one directed at each of the archers who loosed the first two arrows.) Each retaliatory bolt strikes unerringly, inflicting 1d4+1 points of force damage. The *magic missile* is released even if the spell's damage reduction negates all damage inflicted by the projectile weapon, so even

nonmagical projectiles elicit the retaliatory *magic missile* effect.

DRAGON CALL

Divination (Stormsharr)

Level: Clr 5, Drd 5, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: 500 miles

Target: A single dragon of the same alignment as the caster

Duration: 5 minutes

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell mystically establishes a link between you and the nearest dragon of your alignment, so long as such a dragon is within the spell's range at the moment you finish casting it. If no such dragon is present, the spell is wasted (aside from informing you that no suitable dragons are in the area).

Once the link has been established, you have five minutes to convince the dragon to assist you. This link is two-way but, beyond "feeling" each other's mental presence, the spell doesn't allow either party to read the other's mind; it simply allows clear "speaking in your head" mental communication (anything you say aloud is heard mentally by the dragon, who is also made aware of your precise location at the moment the link is established).

The dragon is not obligated to assist you and may do anything (nothing, aid you fully, negotiate, or double-cross you). Usually speaking, if the exchange is diplomatic and your request is within the dragon's own interests, it will decide to offer some sort of aid. Hostile exchanges with evil dragons usually invite attack.

After five minutes, the link abruptly ends. In addition to the material component, successful use of this spell almost always requires a tribute worth at least 3,500 gp, which the dragon takes as payment.

Material Component: A scale from any sort of adult dragon.

DRAGON SUMMONING

Conjuration [Summoning] (Stormsharr)

Level: Clr 7, Drd 7, Sor/Wiz 8

Components: V, S, M, F

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: See text

Target: A single dragon

Duration: 1 minute + 1 minute/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: No

When you cast this spell, you summon an adult dragon of the same type as the dragon scale you used in the casting.

The moment the casting is complete, a lone dragon appears high in the sky above you. It is not under your direct control, but it will accept your commands and aid you to the best of its abilities for the spell duration. Regardless of the commands you give it, the dragon will not deliberately injure itself or engage in combat with opponents whose Hit Dice total 10 more than its own.

You may dismiss the dragon from serving you at any time, but it then becomes free to stay or depart, as it desires; you may then find that you must negotiate for its services or forbearance, requiring more than the initial tribute offered during casting. If you fail to reach an agreement with the dragon, you may well face its wrath.

Material Component: The scale of an adult dragon of the type the caster desires to summon.

Focus: In order to attract the dragon, the caster must provide a tribute worth at least 10,000 gp (taken by the dragon when it leaves).

FAERIE LIGHTS

Evocation [Fire] (Nor Umber)

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Area: 50-foot-radius emanation centered on the caster

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

The spell generates bright, flame-like radiance in the darkness all around you. These lights aren't hot, ignite nothing, and do no damage, but they resemble dancing flames in appearance, and play about cracks in timbers, joints where items meet, weaknesses in stone, and similar features. They will also move to, and cling to, beings entering or moving within the spell's area. Any creatures or objects within the area of effect are affected as if they were in bright sunlight.

Material Components: A pinch of sulfur and at least two dried oak leaves (or fragments from two leaves).

FARCASTING

Transmutation

Level: Brd 5, Clr 6, Drd 6, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Unlimited
Effect: Magical conduit
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

When you cast this spell in conjunction with a spell or item that creates a magical sensor (*arcane eye*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *scrying*, and *greater scrying* or a *crystal ball* or *mirror of mental prowess*), you create a magical conduit allowing you to target spells through the magical sensor. You must create or activate the magical sensor first for *farcasting* to work, otherwise the spell fails.

Creatures and locations that you can see through the magical sensor are considered to be at close range (within 30 feet) for purposes of targeting spells. Spells you cast through a *farcasting* must target a creature or area visible through the magical sensor. Spells with a range of personal or touch do not work, though if you cast a *spectral hand* spell through the magical conduit, you can then use it to deliver touch spells. Likewise, spells that require line of effect or are emanations centered on you (the caster) do not travel through the conduit. The spell *message* works perfectly in conjunction with this spell, though *farcasting* does not improve your chance (5 percent) of successfully casting *detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*, or *detect magic* through the magical sensor.

Finally, if the spell you are casting requires willing targets, it will only work if you have some means of communicating with the targeted creature (*message*, *telepathic bond*, *whispering wind*, or some other form of telepathy).

This spell won't work if the target travels to another plane or is within an area that blocks *scrying* or similar divination magics.

FIND THE CULPRIT

Divination (Stormsharr)
Level: Clr 3, Drd 3
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Special
Target: One creature
Duration: 2 minutes
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

If you cast this spell within one hour of observing a specific creature using a *teleport* spell or other translocation magic (or some other means of magical transport), you are empowered to see

through the eyes of that individual for the spell's duration. The gods proffer this power, leaving the target creature unaware of your spell. You can't compel the target to do anything and (aside from seeing surroundings you recognize) aren't made aware of the target creature's location; you simply see everything the target sees (if the target is reading, you can read the text only if you're familiar with the script; seeing an unfamiliar spell may or may not impart enough information to enable you to identify the spell or something of what it does).

This spell won't work if the target travels to another plane or is within an area that blocks *scrying* or similar divination magics.

FOGGY MIND

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]
 (Dunnklaer)
Level: Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 3
Component: V
Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Long (400 feet + 40 feet/level)
Target: One creature
Duration: 5 minutes + 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

With this spell, you cause the target creature to instantly believe that a cloud of fog has suddenly enveloped her. The target suffers a -4 penalty on all attacks she makes and has trouble seeing surroundings, just as if she was shrouded in the midst of a thick fog cloud, granting her foes concealment (20% miss chance). The target is allowed a Will save once per minute; any success negates the spell's effects.

FRIGID SLOWNESS

Necromancy (Bel's Sharth)
Level: Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 20 feet
Target: One creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Fortitude half
Spell Resistance: Yes

With this spell, you hurl a phantom blast of icy air at a lone target creature, which must be at least partially visible to you during casting; this frigid wave sears the living, but it has no effect upon undead.

If your target carries no source of open flame, he suffers 1d4 points of cold damage per caster level.

If the target is carrying a lit lamp, candle, or other lesser flame source, the target suffers 1d3 points of cold damage per caster level, and the flame source is extinguished.

If the target is carrying a lit torch, or standing within 10 feet of a campfire or larger source of open flames, the target suffers 1d2 points of cold damage per caster level.

Frigid slowness delivers a maximum of 10 dice of damage and cannot miss so as to affect an intervening creature.

Any target affected by *frigid slowness* must make a Fortitude save or be *slowed* (as per a *slow* spell) for one round.

Material Component: A bit of shroud (wrapping or burial clothing) the size of your finger or larger, taken from an active ghoul or wight.

GATE HOME

Conjuration [Creation or Calling] (Arshroon)

Level: Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Duration: Concentration (up to 1 round/level)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

With this spell, you create an interdimensional doorway linking your current location to a location on the plane you designate during casting (where you must previously have been, while holding or carrying the material component of this spell). The *gate* is ten feet tall and five feet wide. Any number of beings can move through it in either direction, as long as they can physically fit through.

This passage is not entirely secure; there is a one-in-six chance that a creature from another plane is attracted to the *gate* and comes through it (as per *summon monster VII*). Such a creature is not under your control.

Material Component: A blue-white diamond valued at 5,000 gp or more.

INSPIRING WORD

Enchantment (Dunnklaer)

Level: Brd 4, Sor/Wiz 4

Component: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 5 feet/level

Area: The caster and all allies within a 5-foot-radius/level burst, centered on the caster

Duration: 3 rounds + 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

While casting this spell, you shout a word of challenge to foes, inspiring your allies. All allies within the area of effect gain 2d8 temporary hit points +1 per caster level (to a maximum of 2d8+20 temporary hit points at caster level 20th), a +2 morale bonus on attacks and Will saves, and immunity to all *fear* effects.

LARGRYMM'S DOOM

Necromancy [Death, Evil]

Level: Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (400 feet + 40 feet/level)

Target: One living creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Special

Spell Resistance: Yes

You cause the brain and cranial fluids of a creature you have previously touched, directly met the gaze of, or directly conversed with (spoken to and been answered by, while being observed by the creature at a distance of no more than twenty feet, and in its physical presence) to expand very rapidly, causing its head to explode (and causing death for creatures who can't function without a head). Creatures able to regenerate may be able to survive *Largrymm's doom*, but they lose one day's worth of memories (and all memorized spells, if any).

The spell automatically fails against creatures who do not meet these criteria, creatures who have died (and then been revived) since your contact with them, against the brain of any creature actively engaged in spellcasting, and against any creature protected by any sort of magical barrier or aura created by a 4th-level or higher arcane or divine spell.

The target creature is allowed both a Will save and a Fortitude save. If both succeed, the spell is negated, and the target creature is forever immune to *Largrymm's doom* cast by you.

If just one save succeeds, the target creature suffers a blinding, debilitating one-round headache (resulting in one round of complete inactivity and helplessness; fast-moving targets must make a successful Reflex save [DC 26] or fall down) and suffers 1 point of damage per caster level. Their brains and cranial fluids will thereafter be immune to all *Largrymm's doom* castings for 1 day per (their) character level.

If both saves fail, the creature's head explodes.

LIGHTEN ARMOR

Transmutation (Stormsharr)

Level: Clr 1, Drd 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Touch

Target: One suit of armor or shield

Duration: 10 rounds

Saving Throw: Will negates (object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

This spell lightens the weight of any shield or armor. *Lightened armor* retains its normal armor bonus, but it is treated as one type lighter than normal for purposes of movement. In addition, the wearer's maximum Dexterity bonus increases by 2, armor check penalties decrease by 2, arcane spell failure decreases by 10%, and the actual weight of the armor decreases by 10 pounds.

For example, a *lightened* suit of splint mail is treated as medium armor, allowing the wearer to run at quadruple normal speed. It retains its +6 armor bonus, but its maximum Dexterity bonus increases to +2, its armor check penalty decreases to -5, the arcane spell failure percentage decreases to 30%, and its weight is reduced to 35 pounds.

Shields are treated as the next lighter type of shield: a heavy steel shield will have the armor check penalty, arcane spell failure percentage, and weight of a light steel shield.

This spell in no way negates penalties suffered due to lack of proficiency. In other words, while a *lightened* suit of splint mail is treated as medium armor for movement purposes, its wearer (to avoid penalties) must still be proficient with heavy armor.

LIGHTEN LOAD

Transmutation (Nor UMBER)

Level: Brd 3, Drd 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Component: V

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Touch

Target: Up to 3 nonmagical containers

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell reduces the weight of up to three containers and anything placed into each container, allowing those transporting the containers to carry greater loads before becoming encumbered. The magic reduces the weight of the container and any non-living materials placed therein by one-half. Only containers the size of a wheelbarrow or 50-gallon drum (or smaller) can be affected. The magic only affects material inside the containers, so something removed instantly regains its normal weight; objects placed in the containers after the spell is operating instantly "go light" (and "go heavy again" when removed).

LOCATE PRECIOUS STONES

Divination (Nor UMBER)

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (400 feet + 40 feet/level)

Area: Circle, centered on caster, with a radius of 400 feet + 40 feet/level

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell is a specialized version of the *locate object* spell, allowing you to locate specific kinds of gemstones within range, no matter how much stone or other material exists between you and the gems. The spell tells you the specific types of gems detected, the precise distance and direction from you, and whether or not the gems are "raw" and encased in rock or cut and polished.

For the spell to "see" a particular type of gemstone, you must be touching a sample of that sort of gemstone (you can cup a dozen or so gemstones of typical size in your hand at once) while casting the spell.

Focus: One of each of the different types of gems the caster wishes to locate.

Material Component: Diamond dust worth 100 gp that is sprinkled over the focal gem stones.

LUCKWING

Conjuration (Arshroon)

Level: Clr 3, Drd 2, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 10 feet

Effect: One golden butterfly

Duration: Concentration (to 10 minutes/level)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Casting this spell creates a one-foot-long golden butterfly that has 1 hit point/caster level and an AC of 18. This butterfly is under your complete control, and you are empowered to see, hear, and feel everything the butterfly does.

The butterfly triggers any traps and suffers any damage a normal butterfly would, but you don't take any damage when it does.

You don't need to maintain line of sight with the butterfly, but if it flies into an *antimagic field* (or similar effect) or moves more than 50 feet + 10 feet/caster level away from you, the spell ends (and the butterfly "winks out").

Material Component: A dead butterfly.

MALAHAND

Enchantment (Stormsharr)

Level: Clr 1, Drd 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell inflicts a minor curse causing any creature touched to become shaken. The spell can affect a maximum of one creature per two caster levels.

OPEN PORTAL

Conjuration [Teleportation] (Bel's Sharth)

Level: Clr 6, Drd 7, Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 2 rounds

Range: 5 miles

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

When you cast this spell, an inky-black rectangular doorway as tall and wide as you forms right in front of you. This two-way portal links your current location to any place you have previously visited and at which you have left a specific mark (a handprint, sigil, etc.). Anything that can physically fit through the portal can be passed through it, and creatures that fit can freely step back and forth through it (they are not subject to your control). The portal lasts until the spell expires or the mark it is linked to is obliterated or smudged beyond recognition.

At some time in the past, you must have explored or toured the location, and, during your visit, placed your mark, made in special ink containing the material components listed below, on a surface somewhere within that location.

At any later time, so long as the mark remains within the location (it can be placed on something mobile, but if that surface is moved to any spot you didn't visit, this spell won't function until it is returned to a location you have visited), you may use this spell to return to that exact spot. To do so, you must be within 5 miles of the mark.

If you have placed multiple marks within five miles of your current location, the spell opens a portal to the closest one. Marks can be removed by scrubbing them off the surface they were placed on, by destroying the surface, or by any other means that would eliminate any ink mark.

Material Component: Ink created from the blood of a blink dog, the caster's blood, and common black ink. In addition to the ink required to place the mark, five drops of the same ink are used in casting the spell.

PEEPHOLE

Transmutation (Arshroon)

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Effect: 1 inch diameter opening, 1 inch deep plus 1 inch per two additional levels

Duration: 10 minutes/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You create a small opening through wood, plaster, or stone wall but not through metal or other harder materials. The peephole is 1 inch deep plus an additional 1 inch per two caster levels above 1st (6 inches at 11th, 8 inches at 15th, and a maximum of 10 inches deep at 19th level). If the wall's thickness is more than the depth of the peephole created, the spell fails.

Observing through the hole created by a *peephole* spell grants improved cover to the observer (+8 to AC, +4 to Reflex saves, and a +10 bonus on Hide checks). Additionally, the peephole eliminates the Listen DC modifier for a wooden door and reduces the Listen DC modifier for a stone wall to +5.

The *peephole* spell can also be used to create a small hole in the side of a chest, a safe or lockbox, or any other container so long as the type of material and thickness are within the spell's capabilities.

Material Component: A small saw blade or piece of a saw blade.

REMEMBRANCE

Enchantment [Mind-Affecting] (Dunnklaer)

Level: Brd 3, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Personal

Target: Caster

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

When you cast this spell, it allows you to instantly recall something specific from your past that you want to remember (such as the precise route taken through a maze of corridors, the contents of a scroll

read long ago, the face of someone you met only fleetingly, or the activation words for a magic item). *Remembrance* comes to you with vivid clarity, as if you've just experienced it for the first time, and you will be able to examine it repeatedly without fading or distortion until the next time you sleep.

This spell can only restore memory of an event or piece of information the caster once knew; it can't be used to reveal something you never experienced. If the memory you're seeking has been magically suppressed, *remembrance* grants an immediate Will save, with a +5 bonus, to negate the suppressing magic.

SCREAMING GEM

Transmutation (Nor Umber)

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Target: One cut gem of any type

Duration: 1 month/level (D)

Saving Throw: Special (see text)

Spell Resistance: No

When you cast this spell on a gemstone, you make it into an audible alarm device. During casting, you define one or two sets of circumstances in which the *screaming gem* will be activated (with the same limitations for the activation as instructions of a *magic mouth* spell; typical instructions are "when any humanoid creature comes within 10 feet of the gem" or "if any creature touches or moves the gem." The gem remains enchanted for one month per caster level and, during this period, will activate whenever its activation conditions are met.

An activated *screaming gem* emits a shrill whistle loud enough to be heard up to one mile away. All creatures within 10 feet of the gem must make a successful Fortitude save or be deafened for two minutes per caster level. The whistle continues for ten minutes per caster level, or until the caster dismisses the spell or the gem is destroyed.

Focus: A single gem worth no less than 100 gp.

SIGHT

Transmutation (Arshroon)

Level: Clr 3, Drd 4, Sor/Wiz 4

Component: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: Caster

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

When you cast this spell, you gain the ability to see as clearly as you would on a well-lit (not glaring) day. This *sight* serves you in all lighting conditions, fogs of any intensity, or water of any murkiness. Powerful magic will foil this spell, but *darkness* and similar spells of lower levels don't affect a character using *sight*.

SLOWSTRIKE

Abjuration (Stormsharr)

Level: Clr 1, Drd 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Personal

Target: Caster

Duration: Special

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

After you cast this spell, the next ranged weapon (arrow, bullet, stone, et cetera) to strike you inflicts only 1 point of damage.

Slowstrike doesn't protect against magical damage (such as bonus damage from an enchanted weapon or energy damage) or lessen damage caused by the spilled contents of a container.

SOFTEN

Transmutation (Nor Umber)

Level: Brd 2, Clr 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (object)

This spell decreases an object's hardness rating by 1d4 points and its hit points by 1d6 points (to a minimum of 1 hit point) for the spell's duration. Up to ten cubic feet of material per caster level is affected by this spell. An area can be targeted by multiple *soften* spells, and the effects stack. *Soften* only affects nonliving material (such as stone, dead wood, or metal). Mining groups in the mountains of Nor Umber use this spell frequently.

Material Component: A piece of the material that is to be *softened*.

SPIRIT DRAGON

Illusion (Stormsharr)

Level: Clr 4, Drd 4, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes
Range: Close (25 feet + 10 feet/level)
Target: Special
Duration: 1 hour + ten minutes/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

When you cast this spell, a life-size, illusory adult red dragon appears, under your complete control. If, for any reason, you're unable to concentrate on controlling the actions of the *spirit dragon*, the illusory dragon simply ceases to move or act until you retake control. Its natural weapons and breath attack never do actual damage, though if the victims of this dragon's attacks fail their Will saves, they suffer nonlethal damage equal to the normal damage dealt by an adult red dragon. You must have seen an real red dragon in order to cast this spell.

Material Component: The scale of an adult red dragon, held in your hand during casting. If the scale is fragmentary or in poor condition, the spell's duration is shortened. Depending on the scale's condition, the spell's duration can be reduced to as little as ten minutes/level.

SUMMON WEAPON

Conjuration [Summoning] (Nor Umber)

Level: Brd 1, Pal 1, Rgr 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: 0 feet

Effect: One summoned melee or ranged weapon

Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell summons one melee or ranged weapon (but not ammunition) of your choice. This weapon appears in your hands. The weapon is typical for its type and appropriate for your size. Only one weapon appears per casting, and only you can wield it. If you set it down or hand it to someone else, it vanishes as soon as you release it from your grasp. You can't summon a weapon too large to be held in two hands.

TETHER

Divination (Stormsharr)

Level: Clr 1, Drd 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Special

Target: Caster

Duration: 60 minutes/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The spell only functions if you cast it within ten minutes of last seeing a particular individual. When casting the spell, you must mentally picture the individual whom you desire to *tether*. If the spell is successful, you become aware of, and continuously know, the general direction (both horizontally and vertically) from you to your target for the duration of the spell. The spell does not provide any indication of the distance between you and the spell's target, nor does it give any information regarding his surroundings. A *tether* can't form or fades away if either you or your target enter a *gate* or *portal*, go to another plane, lose consciousness, or die.

TRUEFAITH

Divination (Stormsharr)

Level: Clr 1, Drd 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Clerics use this spell to test the faith of inductees into their order. Upon completing the spell, the caster knows if the spell's target is willingly joining and is of righteous character (i.e., not joining to exact revenge or to otherwise work against the order's ways). Regardless of her intent towards the testing, the spell's target must make a Will save. If successful, the caster is unable to read anything and knows that this particular casting of *truefaith* failed.

TRUTHLIGHT

Divination (Stormsharr)

Level: Clr 1, Drd 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Personal

Target: Caster

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Once you cast this spell, the first being (during the spell's duration) to utter a falsehood in your hearing glows bright white for ten minutes.

Alternately, you can elect during casting to employ a form of this spell that only applies to creatures conversing directly with you.

This spell won't "catch" differing interpretations or slight exaggerations and provides a pulsing or flickering aura rather than steady radiance if the liar believes he is speaking the truth (for example, he's been misinformed or conditions have changed without his being aware of it, such as a person being brought back to life whom the speaker saw slain). The bright white glow is equal in effect to full sunlight and affects undead accordingly, provides ample light for reading or tasks requiring precision, banishes all shadows, and so on.

UNDEATHMAER

Necromancy (Blackoon)

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One undead creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

With this spell, you flood an undead creature with rejuvenating necromantic energies, effectively healing it of damage. You must cast this spell on an undead creature; if applied to a living or merely dead being, the spell is wasted.

Undeathmaer restores 3d8 points of damage +1 point per caster level (maximum +25) to an undead, but the caster suffers 1 hit point of damage for every 5 points the spell recipient gains. If this would take the caster below 0 hit points, the spell fails, having no effect on the undead at all and being wasted.

WATCHBEAST

Abjuration [Force] (Nor Umber)

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 feet + 5 feet/2 levels)

Effect: Phantom guardbeast

Duration: 1 round/level

With this spell, you call into existence a vaguely hound-shaped, shadowy beast that stands about knee high. The beast is silent, amorphous in shape, can spread itself out like a cloak or sail to cover a large area, and leap to interpose attacks from above. It places itself between you and the most apparent danger, even when threatened by *invisible*, flanking, or otherwise unseen attackers you are unaware of, and cannot be fooled or magically contacted.

This magical *watchbeast* blocks damage from the next successful attack made against you, absorbing 1d6 points of damage per caster level. No matter how much or how little damage is actually inflicted by the attack, the *watchbeast* winks out of existence as soon as it prevents damage from one attack.

A *watchbeast* cannot prevent damage dealt by area-effect spells or similar effects. For example, it can prevent damage from *magic missiles* but not from a *fireball*.

Material Component: The hair of a bloodhound or trained war dog.

MAGIC ITEMS

Before the Fall of the Castles, Castlemourn was rife with spellcasters and their magical devices. The people of Castlemourn had delved deeply into the magical arts for thousands of years, and as a result even simple folk had some minor magical abilities. Furthermore, society and technology had advanced to the point that vast cities had grown up across the continent. Economies prospered, and people wanted for nothing.

Then the great war and the Destruction came. All massive metropolises were leveled or, according to some legends, forced into other planes of existence. Those few left alive found their memories of times before the Fall gone—including a great deal of magical knowledge. Furthermore, most of the skilled spellcasters and knowledgeable sages perished during the Fall or were never heard from again. As a result, knowledge of the magical arts is only 300 years old and rudimentary at best. The most advanced minds of modern day Castlemourn can fashion magic items, but they are still unable to create powerful ones. On the other hand, many magic items and artifacts from before the Fall of the Castles are found every day. For the most part, these items cannot be duplicated at the present time, though many spellcasters are actively seeking means for their creation. The best magical devices come from the workshops of Iron Isles spellcasters. The spellcasters hailing from those islands are the most adept and skilled members of their trade and often call upon each other for assistance in their research or fabrication efforts.

SPECIAL SUBSTANCES AND MATERIALS

GEODES

These naturally occurring crystalline formations have been found throughout Mournra. Once believed to only exist on Arshroon, they have since been found throughout the Iron Isles and mainland Mournra. Geodes are especially plentiful in the

caverns beneath the Yarhoon, though given the golaunt control of most of the region, expeditions to mine them are extremely dangerous. It is believed that geodes form around ancient sources of magic, their crystals encasing and absorbing arcane and divine energies. Perhaps, much like oysters encasing grains of sand, the land has sought to protect itself from buried magics by trapping them in these crystalline prisons. Whatever the truth behind the formation of geodes, these geological wonders are greatly prized by arcane and divine spellcasters as the crystals within the stones are capable of absorbing and containing magical energies.

While lore on geodes is difficult to come by, some wizards and priests of the Seven have been able to amass enough information to identify and activate geodes without having to crack open their protective stone casings. Leaving the geodes intact is essential to harnessing their spell absorbing or storing properties. Rumors also abound that some spellcasters have discovered ways to incorporate geode crystals into armor and weapons.

Outwardly, geodes look like dull grey, roughly spherical rocks. While there are larger specimens, most geodes are somewhere between 2 to 6 inches in diameter. Inside the dull looking stone is a hollow center lined with crystals. These crystals come in a wide variety of colors, shapes, and sizes, though they are impossible to see without cracking the geode in half or boring a hole through the stony exterior. Dormant geodes radiate faint transmutation magic.

Geodes have an AC 12, 10 hit points, hardness 8, and a Break DC of 15.

The market value for an unidentified (crystal type unknown), dormant geode is 2d6 x 100 gp. Specific market values for awakened geodes are given below in the section on magical geodes.

Spellstoring Geodes: Geodes act as minor spell storing devices, each stone capable of holding three levels of spells. However, geodes only hold spells from one school of magic, based on the color of their crystals. To awaken, or prime, a geode, the possessor need only cast a spell of the appropriate school into the stone and spend the appropriate

XP. The first spell is lost to the activation process, but the geode stores any additional spells from the proper school cast into it.

The real challenge with geodes is determining what kinds of crystals they hold without shattering the stone. While some researchers claim to have discovered alchemical means of testing geodes, most spellcasters rely on one of two spells: *peephole* or *crystal tell*. The *peephole* spell can be used to create a small, magical opening in the stone that allows the caster to peer inside without actually breaking the stone open, while *crystal tell* is useful both for determining what kind of crystals are present and whether or not the stone has been activated and what spells (if any) it already contains.

To cast or release spells in a geode, the caster must hold the geode in his hand. Geodes are treated as spell trigger devices. Once a spell has been cast into a geode, it is stored within the crystals for a period of one rathren (ten days). After ten days, the spell fades from the crystals, freeing "space" within the geode. If a caster accidentally casts more spell levels into a geode than it can store, the geode shatters, releasing all of the stored energy and that of the spell just cast in a magical blast. Everyone within a five-foot radius of the stone suffers 1d6 points of damage from the stone shards plus an additional 1d6 points of force damage per spell level (Reflex save, DC 15, half damage). The wielder of the stone suffers a -4 penalty on this Reflex save.

The various types of geodes and their associated schools of magic are listed in the Spellstoring Geodes table.

GIANT EAGLE FEATHERS

Large magnetic lodestones can be found in fields throughout the Khalandornar high country and the Haunt of Eagles. Some claim these stones fell from the sky during the Fall of the Castles, while others say the stones are just that, naturally occurring rock formations. These highlands are also home to a wide array of colorful birds. Prominent among these are several varieties of giant eagle for which the region has become famous.

When Thelseene is full and high in the sky, something strange happens. The lodestones that dot the highlands mysteriously attract giant eagle feathers, which literally cling to them as if made from iron. The feathers are found in a variety of colors, and each bears minor magics that can be activated through the use of special Crown Tongue phrases. Some of this lore has been collected diligently

Spellstoring Geodes

Geode Type	Crystal Type	School of Magic	XP Cost	Market Price
Black geode	Black onyx	Necromancy	35	1,750 gp
Blue geode	Blue calcite	Enchantment	20	1,000 gp
Green geode	Emerald calcite	Conjuration	25	1,250 gp
Grey geode	Smoky grey quartz	Illusion	20	1,000 gp
Pink geode	Rose quartz	Abjuration	25	1,250 gp
Purple geode	Purple amethyst	All schools	60	3,000 gp
Red geode	Red calcite	Transmutation	30	1,500 gp
White geode	Clear or white quartz	Divination	20	1,000 gp
Yellow geode	Yellow citrine	Evocation	30	1,500 gp

by sages and explorers, but no complete source of feather lore is available—or at least, no one has volunteered or published such a useful tome. However, a few varieties of feathers are common enough that they can be found for sale in some market stalls and the shops of apothecaries, herbalists, and alchemists, along with (usually) correct instructions for their use.

Each feather is only usable once, crumbling to dust after its magic has been discharged. A feather can be activated by any individual who knows the proper Crown Tongue command word. As the command word is spoken, the holder of the feather must spill a drop of blood on the feather's shaft and gently spread it along the length of the feather, infusing the feather with some of his own life force (XP costs are included in the individual feather descriptions). When this is done, golden Crown Tongue runes appear along the feather's shaft. Feathers only work for the individual who activated them. Up to six activated feathers can be worn at once, though only one active feather can be tied to a weapon at a time. Feathers tied to worn or carried weapons count against the six feather limit. If a seventh feather is worn (or a second feather tied to a weapon), one of the other six feathers (determined randomly) instantly crumbles to dust.

Inactive giant eagle feathers, at least those infused with magical energies, radiate faint transmutation magic.

Bane Feather: These solid black feathers are treasured by rangers and adventurers. Before the feather is activated, a bit of a creature's hair is bound to the feather's shaft. When the feather is activated and tied to a weapon (melee or ranged), it bestows properties similar to the bane weapon special ability on that weapon for five days. The target of the bane property depends on the type of hair bound to the feather's shaft. The *bane feather* grants a +2 insight bonus to attack and damage rolls with that weapon against the feather's designated

foe, and the weapon inflicts an additional 1d6 points of damage against the foe.

The *bane feather* does not bestow an enhancement bonus and so does not help against damage reduction. Also, once tied to a particular weapon, the feather cannot be removed. If it is

removed, it immediately crumbles to dust.

Faint conjuration;
Requires proper Crown Tongue activation phrase and 20 XP; Market Price 250 gp.

Battle Feather: Once activated, this brown- or black-striped feather is tied to the haft or hilt of a melee weapon. The *battle feather* grants a +2 insight bonus to melee attack rolls with that weapon. Once activated, this feather bestows its bonus on the weapon for 5 days before crumbling to worthless dust.

Faint transmutation;
Requires proper Crown Tongue activation phrase and 8 XP; Market Price 100 gp.

Deflection Feather: This black or golden brown tipped, crimson feather is normally tied to a thong and worn around the neck. Once active, the feather grants its bearer a deflection bonus to AC for 5 days. At the end of the fifth day, the feather crumbles to dust. When activated, the feather's owner decides whether the feather will bestow a +1 or +2 deflection bonus based on the XP the character is willing to spend.

Faint abjuration; Requires proper Crown Tongue activation phrase and 8 XP (+1) or 16 XP (+2); Market Price 200 gp.



Giant Eagle Feathers

Feather Type	XP Cost	Market Price
Lodefeather	2	15 gp
Munedran feather	2	25 gp
Mindshield feather	varies	45 gp
Battle feather	8	100 gp
Forgery feather	4	100 gp
Sureshot feather	8	100 gp
Deflection feather	8 or 16	100 gp
Bane feather	20	250 gp

Forgery Feather: This black feather has a single white stripe and a solid black shaft. This feather is treasured by corrupt government officials, courtiers, rogues, spies, and assassins. Before activation, the feather must be carefully prepared as a writing quill. When activated, the quill provides a +10 enhancement bonus to a single Forgery check. Once the forgery is complete, the quill turns to dust.

Because of their use, these feathers are black market items and are twice as expensive as they would be otherwise.

This type of feather is perfect for use in creating a *forger's quill* and decreases the cost to create by 25 percent.

Faint transmutation; Requires proper Crown Tongue activation phrase and 4 XP; Market Price 100 gp.

Lodefeather: When activated, this golden brown feather will always point sarrind (north). A boon to travelers everywhere, *lodefeathers* can be used five times before their magic expires. Each time, the feather is either hung from a thin string or set on a flat surface. When the bearer says "sarrind," the feather slowly spins until it points due sarrind (north). After the fifth use, the feather crumbles to dust.

Faint divination; Requires proper Crown Tongue activation phrase and 2 XP; Market Price 15 gp.

Mindshield Feather: This crimson feather grants its bearer a resistance bonus on his next save against any mind-affecting spell, spell-like ability, or supernatural ability. After the feather prevents one such attempt, it crumbles to dust. The resistance bonus granted by the feather depends entirely on the amount of XP the character is willing to spend when activating the feather.

Faint abjuration; Requires proper Crown Tongue activation phrase and 2 XP (+2), 4 XP (+4), or 8 XP (+6); Market Price 45 gp.

Munedran Feather: These black feathers have a single white spot at their tip. Called *Munedran feathers*, once activated, these feathers can be brushed over injuries, curing the injured individual of 1d8+1 points of damage. This is the only variety of feather that can be used to help an individual other than the person who activated the feather. Once the feather's magic is used, the feather crumbles away.

Faint conjuration; Requires proper Crown Tongue activation phrase and 2 XP; Market Price 25 gp.

Sureshot Feather: This white feather has a single red or golden brown spot near its base. When

activated, the *sureshot feather* is attached to a ranged weapon and grants a +2 insight bonus to ranged attack rolls with that weapon. This feather bestows its bonus on the weapon for 5 days before crumbling to worthless dust.

Faint transmutation; Requires proper Crown Tongue activation phrase and 8 XP; Market Price 100 gp.

KLEFFAE PASTE

Kleefae mushrooms are noted for their exquisite taste. The thaele also use them to create a powerful sedative that calms seasickness and helps them sleep through ocean voyages. The paste is made from the flesh of a single mushroom, along with a few additional rare herbs (cost 25 gp). The process requires a successful Craft (alchemy) check (DC 25). The paste is typically applied by rubbing it on one's open eyes, though applying it to the tongue or an open head wound will also work. For the next four hours, the individual is immune to sickened and nauseated conditions.

STARMETAL

Irregular, rounded lumps of starmetal are formed when massive skybolts come flaming down from the heavens and strike the earth. Starmetal doesn't rust, is very light, has a beautiful silvery-blue hue when polished, and is durable (always malleable rather than brittle, even in the face of dragon breath and extreme cold). As a result, it's the best substance known for the forging of blades and magic items, even though it is more difficult to magically enhance (magical enhancements of any kind cost an additional 2,000 gp).

Weapons and armor forged from starmetal are always masterworks. Weapons made from starmetal are treated as cold iron for purposes of damage reduction, while armor provides the wearer with a +1 inherent bonus to saves against the natural effects of cold or heat. Just like mithril, any item made from starmetal weighs half as much as the same item made from other metals, while most starmetal armors are one category lighter than normal for purposes of movement and other limitations (see the description of mithril for details).

Starmetal Cost Modifiers

Type of Starmetal Items	Item Cost Modifier
Light armor	+1,200 gp
Medium armor	+4,400 gp
Heavy armor	+9,600 gp
Other items	+600 gp/lb.

Items without metal parts cannot be made from starmetal. A longsword can be made from starmetal, but a quarterstaff cannot.

Starmetal has 30 hit points per inch of thickness and hardness 12.

THAELSTONES

Thaelstones are thumbnail-sized translucent blue gems that can be enchanted to utter messages when touched and, when properly attuned to a single individual, can record and repeat sounds. Attuning a thaelstone requires a successful casting of the *awaken thaelstone* spell. The properties of individual thaelstones are determined by the caster level of the individual who awakens it. Thaelstones can be used to record and utter spell instructions and words of activation but always garble spell incantations.

The market value of a raw thaelstone is $1d10 \times 100$ gp. The market value of an awakened thaelstone is equal to $100 \text{ gp} \times \text{the awakening caster's level} + \text{the stone's base value}$.

GLAMRYN BAY SHELLS

Hundreds of delicate shells wash up on the shores of Glamryn Bay every day, a few of them containing remnants of magical energies presumably from Before the Fall. How these energies are incorporated into sea shells remains one of Castlemourn's many mysteries. Whether it has something to do with the creatures that create the shells or magically-charged underwater regions in which the shells are formed, no one will argue that these shells contain magic just waiting to be tapped by spellcasters.

Many spellcasters have spent years studying these shells, and quite a bit of lore exists pertaining to the powers of various types of shells. Unfortunately, there are few complete texts on the subject. As with much other arcane knowledge, information on the shells of Glamryn Bay has been hoarded by a few, and most magical practitioners only have scraps of information pertaining to a few of the more common varieties of shells. Descriptions of some of the more common magical shells follow.

Physical Description: Magical shells are nearly identical to those typically found along the shore, except they appear to be in perfect condition and are slightly more vibrant in color. The appearance of a magical shell is in some way tied to its abilities. Inactive shells radiate faint transmutation magic. Though common enough, most magic shells are extremely fragile and break easily. Each shell has 4 hit points, hardness 1, and Break DC 8.

Activation and Use: In order for a shell to work, its magic must first be awoken. This awakening requires knowledge of the proper Crown Tongue phrase, perfect enunciation, and a minor XP cost. The awakener must have the Crown Tongue Chant feat and know the proper activation phrase for the type of shell. He must then make a successful Intelligence check (DC 12) to properly pronounce the phrase. As he speaks the Crown Tongue words, he must smear the surface of the shell with a small amount of his blood (and in doing so spend the necessary XP to activate the shell). When awoken, a shell's color becomes even more vibrant, and faint traces of ancient Crown Tongue runes appear etched into its surface.



Awakening a shell is a full action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

Once awoken, the shell's powers are ready to be used. Most shells are activated (and remain active) when held against an individual's skin. Shells used in this manner may be activated while grappling or when swallowed whole. The shell's effect remains for as long as it touches the individual's skin and ends as soon as contact is broken. Any number of magical shells can be used at the same time; however, the normal rules for stacking bonuses apply.

Prolonged exposure to the energies of these magical shells is detrimental. Most shells can be used for as long as 8 hours without incurring any health risk (unless the shell's description states otherwise). At the end of the 8 hours and each successive hour after 8, its bearer must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 15 + 1 per hour worn) or become sickened for 1d3 hours plus 1 hour per two hours the shell is in use (rounding up). For instance, if Torvald stops using his *armor shell* before 8 hours is up, he is fine. However, once he hits the 8 hour time limit, he must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 23) or be sickened for 1d3+5 hours. If he makes his save, he can continue using the shell but must make an additional Fortitude save (DC 24) at the ninth hour and so on, until he removes the shell from contact with his skin. After 12 hours of use, the shell ceases to function, and the character becomes nauseated (no save). He remains nauseated for 12 hours after the shell is removed.

Multiple shells can be used at the same time. But, for every shell after the first, the amount of time they can be used before the user must make his Fortitude save decreases. A second shell decreases the time from 8 hours to 6 hours. Additional shells after the second each decrease the time by an hour. For example, Torvald can use a single shell for 8 hours, but he can only use two shells for 6 hours before he is required to make a Fortitude save. Add a third shell and the time decreases to 5 hours. A fourth decreases the time to 4 hours, and so on. At the end of this time, Torvald would still have to make a save as if he had used one shell for 8 hours. If he fails the save, the die roll for the length of his bout of nausea would also be the same as if he had been wearing a single shell for 8 hours.

If more than four shells are used at once, the DC of the Fortitude save increases by +5 for every shell over four. Using the example above, if Torvald used five shells at once, he would only be able to use them for three hours before he would have to make a Fortitude save at DC 28 (23 + 5 for the fifth shell). If he used six shells, he would only have 2 hours

before he had make his Fortitude save at DC 33 (23 + 10 for the fifth and sixth shells).

A character who is sickened can continue to benefit from a magical shell; however, that character must continue to make additional Fortitude saves every hour to avoid becoming nauseated. Nausea resulting from magical shell use lasts for 12 hours (beginning once contact with the shell is broken). In any case, once physical contact with the shell is broken, the shell becomes inert for 12 hours. Even if the sickness or nausea is cured (magically or otherwise), the character must avoid using any magical shells until the duration of his sickness or nausea has passed, otherwise he must make a new Fortitude save immediately upon activating another shell, just as if he had been exposed to an activated shell for 8 hours. Shells that are not activated by touch may have slightly different effects as detailed in their individual descriptions.

Price is included to indicate the shell's value as treasure and the average value an activated shell would sell for on the open market. Since these are naturally occurring objects there is no cost to create or creation process, just the awakening process mentioned earlier.

ARCHER'S SHELL

This shell grants its wielder a +2 competence bonus to all ranged attacks.

Moderate transmutation; CL 6th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 250 XP to activate; Price 12,000 gp.

ARMOR SHELL

When touching the user's skin, this shell grants a +4 natural armor bonus to AC.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 600 XP to activate; Price 28,800 gp.

DRAGON SHELL

These normal-looking seashells are not typical magic devices. Each is attuned to a single color of dragon. Whenever a dragon of that type comes within 1,000 feet of the shell, it glows. Once the shell glows, the user may choose to activate it.

Likewise, dragons can sense the shell and are generally well disposed toward the wielder. The wielder gains a +3 competence bonus to Charisma-based checks when dealing with the shell's specific type of dragon, and an NPC dragon's attitude should begin as Helpful. However, dragons with diametrically opposed alignments can also sense the presence of the shell, and the shell's possessor suffers a -6 penalty to Charisma-based checks when dealing with these dragons. In either case, the shell does not prevent a dragon from exercising its

Ioun Shells

Shell Color	Effect	XP Cost to Activate	Price
Green and gold	Sustains creature without food or water	50	1,800 gp
Dusty rose	+1 insight bonus to AC	50	2,250 gp
Deep red	+2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity	100	3,600 gp
Incandescent blue	+2 enhancement bonus to Wisdom	100	3,600 gp
Pale blue	+2 enhancement bonus to Strength	100	3,600 gp
Pink	+2 enhancement bonus to Constitution	100	3,600 gp
Pink and green	+2 enhancement bonus to Charisma	100	3,600 gp
Scarlet and blue	+2 enhancement bonus to Intelligence	100	3,600 gp
Dark blue	Alertness (as the feat)	100	4,500 gp
Vibrant purple	Stores three levels of spells as a <i>ring of spell storing</i> , minor	350	16,200 gp
Iridescent	Sustains creature without air	200	8,100 gp
Pale lavender	Absorbs spells of 4th level or lower ¹	200	9,000 gp
Pearly white	Regenerate 1 hit point per hour	200	9,000 gp
Pale green	+1 competence bonus on attack rolls, saves, skill checks, and ability checks	300	13,500 gp
Orange	+1 caster level	300	13,500 gp
Lavender and green	Absorbs spells of 8th level or lower ²	400	18,000 gp

¹ After absorbing twenty spell levels, the shell burns out and turns to dull grey, forever useless.

² After absorbing fifty spell levels, the shell burns out and turns to dull grey, forever useless.

own free will. It is simply an aid to the wielder in negotiating and dealing with dragons.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 550 XP to activate; Price 27,000 gp.

FIRELORNAN SHELL

Like most shells, *Firelornan shells* are activated by direct contact with the wielder's skin; however, they do not possess the typical sickening effect from overuse. Instead, when an individual activates the shell, he gains a +2 resistance bonus on all Fortitude saves.

If the same individual continuously wears the shell (in direct contact with its skin) for one taelole (40 days) or longer, she gains an additional +1 enhancement bonus to her Constitution. If the shell breaks, or for some reason is deactivated for more than 24 hours, the individual loses these bonuses. If the shell is briefly deactivated (less than 8 hours), the individual only loses the +2 resistance bonus on Fortitude saves while the shell is deactivated. If, however, the shell is removed for more than 8 hours, the individual must wait another taelole to regain the Constitution bonus.

Firelornan shells are better able to withstand physical blows and damaging effects. They have 20 hit points, hardness 5, and Break DC 15. These shells are often found in oily nodules of sand that wash up on the beach. No one knows how or why the shells form in the center of these oily balls. Village children are regularly encouraged to break open these nodes to try and find the magical shells potentially found therein. On average, these shells are found in one of every twenty nodules, typically found washed ashore after significant storms. To date, these shells have only been found in any great number along the shores of Firelorn.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 200 XP to activate; Price 10,000 gp.

IOUN SHELL

Every kind of *ioun stone* can also be found as a magical shell, though they all seem to be some variety of cowrie. Each *ioun shell* has properties identical to a specific type of *ioun stone* and can be identified by hues of the appropriate color. *Ioun shells* are activated by touching the shell to bare skin and throwing it into the air, after which they orbit the user's head just as *ioun stones*. They remain in effect until they are caught and deactivated (usually by placing them in a pouch or similar safe spot). An activated *ioun shell* can cause sickness as if it were touching the skin. Some *ioun shells* have reportedly changed variety, apparently at random, after being struck with spells hurled at their possessors that they apparently absorbed.

Moderate (varies); CL 12th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and listed XP cost to activate; Price varies (see Ioun Shells table).

IRON BARONY SHELL

Iron Barony shells are some of the most plentiful magic shells in all of Castlemourn. Many residents of the Iron Barony possess several of these shells. People generally find them along the beaches after a heavy storm off Glamryn Bay.

When activated and carried next to the wielder's skin, this shell increases one her five senses (determined randomly when the shell is first used). The shell's effects stack with those provided by other magic items or spells but not with other *Iron Barony shells* that boost the same sense; multiple *Iron Barony shells* can be worn—with the wielder gaining the benefits of each—so long as each enhances a different sense.

Strangely, a single shell may affect a different sense when passed between individuals. In short, every time an *Iron Barony shell* is wielded by a different creature, the sense it affects is randomly determined. Yet, when an individual that once wielded a particular shell takes possession of it once again, the shell affects the same sense as it first did for that individual. The following entries describe how these shells affect the various senses.

Hearing: The wielder cannot be surprised by creatures within 50 feet and gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all Listen checks.

Sight: The wielder gains a +1 competence bonus on all ranged attack rolls and a +2 circumstance bonus on all Spot checks.

Smell: A creature wielding a shell that affects the sense of smell gains the scent special ability. In addition, she has a 10 percent chance of detecting poisons of all types, identifying them as dangerous up to ten feet away.

Taste: The wielder gains a +1 resistance bonus on all saves against spells and magical effects.

Touch: The wielder gains a +1 competence bonus on all melee attack rolls and a +2 circumstance bonus on checks for any of the following skills: Climb, Craft, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Move Silently, Open Lock, Search, Sleight of Hand, and Use Rope.

Iron Barony shells cancel the effects of *Khalandornar shells* already wielded by the same individual.

Moderate transmutation; CL 5th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 100 XP to activate; Price 3,000 gp.

KHALANDORNAR SHELL

These leopard-spotted shells are occasionally found along the shoreline between Ruthstay and Ghandalar, but they are most often found along the shores of Khalandorn. Like the folk of that land, *Khalandornar shells* are tough and resilient, more durable than most other shells. They have 12 hit points, hardness 4, and Break DC 12.

As long as they are worn, *Khalandornar shells* grant their owners 5 bonus hit points. Additionally, the shells grant a +3 competence bonus on Bluff and Intimidate checks and a +2 resistance bonus on saves against fear effects.

When activated, *Khalandornar shells* cancel the effects of any *Iron Barony shell* wielded by the same creature.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 300 XP to activate; Price 14,500 gp.

NEGATION SHELL

When activated, *negation shells* prevent certain kinds of magic items from functioning while within a 20-foot radius of the shell. There are seven different kinds of shells, each of a different color; each color affects different types of magic items. The chart below lists the items affected by each specific color of *negation shell*.

Moderate abjuration; CL 12th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and listed XP cost to activate; Price varies (see below).

NIGHDAL SHELL

These shiny black shells contain the essence of evil. In the sun, they gleam with a golden color, making them easy to spot from a distance. The shells can be found on the beaches of the Foreshore as well as



Negation Shells

Shell Color	Type of Magic Item	XP Cost to Activate	Price
Brown	Dust, Oils, and Ointments	100	3,000 gp
Charcoal	Amulets, Beads, Brooches, and Pins	450	21,750 gp
Crimson	Rods, Staves, and Wands	900	44,500 gp
Emerald	Gloves, Hats, Feathers, and Robes	350	15,250 gp
Ivory	Weapons and Armor including shields	900	44,500 gp
Purple	Rings	900	44,500 gp
Yellow	Animated objects of all types including golems, statues, and spheres	1,350	65,500 gp

inland, presumably having been carried from the beaches by birds nesting along the shore.

Any good-aligned individual who picks up or comes into direct contact with one of these shells suffers a –1 profane penalty to Intelligence and Charisma; worse still, these victims do not feel the adverse magic. Local folk living in areas where *Nighdal shells* are common have been known to hide these shells in the wagons and supply carts of their enemies in an attempt to sabotage them.

Evil creatures that wear these shells against their skin gain several benefits. They immediately gain a +1 profane bonus on all Charisma and Intelligence-based skill checks. Additionally, evil clerics gain a +2 profane bonus to all attempts to control undead. Finally, these individuals gain a +4 resistance bonus whenever making a saving throw to avoid the effects of spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities with the good descriptor.

The shell also allows evil wielders to instantly determine whether a substance is poisonous. Whenever a wielder takes hold of a container holding any amount of poisonous substance, the substance glows with a green luminescence—the more deadly or dangerous the poison, the brighter it glows. These shells typically wash up on the beaches all along the Foreshore, but most folk consider them ill-favored detritus from Nighdal. The shells give off a faint aura of abjuration magic, though only concerted research of the shell reveals its actual nature.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 450 XP to activate; Price 21,000 gp.

OPENER OF WAYS SHELL

This shell reveals secret and concealed doors and hidden compartments. When activated, hidden doors and compartments within 30 feet of the shell's user are easily visible, outlined in a golden aura. However, the shell's user must be able to see the surface the door is hidden within. If the door is further concealed behind a tapestry or other solid object, the shell's user will not see the door until the obscuring object is moved.

Faint divination; CL 3rd; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 100 XP to activate; Price 4,000 gp.

PASSAGE SHELL

This shell works differently than most of the magical shells. Three times per day, the shell's owner can use *passwall* as if cast by a 12th-level wizard. The shell is touched to the wall (or other surface) where the user desires to create a 15-foot-long passage, and its Crown Tongue command word is spoken. Each use counts as one hour of exposure to a shell.

Moderate transmutation; CL 12th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 1,300 XP to activate; Price 64,800 gp.

SHELL OF SWIFTNESS

So long as this shell maintains contact with its user's skin, his base speed is increased by 10 feet. The effect of this shell stacks with those of other magic items or spells, but they are not cumulative with additional shells of this type. These shells are popular with the knights of Khalandorn who typically secure them between their mount's skin and its saddle blanket, increasing their mount's movement by 10 feet. Of course, the knights always take great care to remove the shell before the creature suffers any ill effects.

Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 50 XP to activate; Price 1,800 gp.

SHRINK SHELL

Like the *passage shell*, this shell's power can be activated three times per day by touching it to a nonmagical, inanimate object and speaking its Crown Tongue command word (marked on the shell's surface in Crown Tongue runes). It shrinks any object of Huge size or smaller to Fine size. The weight of the object drops by a corresponding factor. Any inanimate objects within the targeted object are likewise shrunk, though any living creatures or plants, including undead, outsiders, constructs, or similar creatures, are immediately cast out of the object. Anything cast out of the object lands safely on the ground (or other appropriate surface) around the object; creatures cast out of an object in this way are able to act normally. If the wielder touches the shell to a shrunk object for a second time within 5 days, the object is restored to its normal size. Likewise, the shell's effects wear off



after 5 days, and the object returns to normal size, no matter where it is. The shell can only be used to shrink one object at a time.

As with the *passage shell*, each use of a *shrink shell* counts as one hour of exposure to a shell.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 500 XP to activate; Price 24,300 gp.

SPELL STORING SHELL

When touched to a spell scroll upon which a spell has been scribed, this shell absorbs the spell's energy, reducing the scroll to ash. With proper activation, the shell then allows any individual to use the spell successfully. Each shell can only store spells usable by one spellcasting class (bard, cleric, druid, paladin, ranger, sorcerer, or wizard). Each shell can store up to 10 levels of spells.

The shell's user must place the shell in contact with her skin and leave it there for at least 10 minutes. After that period, the shell has attuned itself to the individual, and she knows the number and type of spells stored within the shell. If all the spells stored within the shell are cast, the device crumbles to worthless sand. So long as the user keeps at least one spell stored within, the shell can be used over and over again. The shell must be kept in contact with bare skin. Every time contact with the shell is broken, it requires an additional 10 minutes to become attuned to the shell. Each use of the shell counts as a minimum of one hour of exposure. In all other ways, using a *spell storing shell* is identical to using a *ring of spell storing*.

Spells cannot be directly cast into a *spell storing shell*; such shells can only gain and store spells by being touched to a scroll or certain other magic items. Wielders are warned that most such shells absorb spells automatically, and if multiple spells are available to them, they take a random spell, one per touch, even if the contact is continuous.

Strong evocation; CL 17th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 1,000 XP to activate; Price 50,000 gp.

TANTANTHAN SHELL

Tantanthan shells protect their owners from detection. When activated, the shell's user leaves no tracks or scent trail as if under the effects of a *pass without trace* spell. Likewise, scrying and other means of magical detection fail to locate him as if he were under the effects of a *nondetection* spell.

The shell's user also appears blurry to individuals attempting to target him with ranged attacks, granting him concealment (20 percent miss chance). Melee attacks and attacks that target an area, rather than the individual, do not suffer this miss chance.

Armorsmiths have been known to place one or more of these shells within sturdy medallions, working them into suits of armor at waist level or inside the small of the wearer's back. This framework makes it almost impossible to break an encased shell.

These shells typically wash up on the shores of Tantanthar, but a few have been found as far away as Lyonar and Firelorn.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 750 XP to activate; Price 36,900 gp.

WARRIOR'S SHELL

A *warrior's shell* allows its wielder to call upon a weapon which instantly appears in the wielder's hand, replacing the shell. The shell can call forth any kind of simple or martial weapon with which

the wielder is proficient. Any weapon called forth in this way is of masterwork quality, though not at all magical. Once called forth, the weapon remains for up to 24 hours. The shell can only call forth one specific type of weapon each day, but the weapon and shell can be interchanged repeatedly throughout the day. Anytime the weapon is set down or released, it reverts back to a shell. Additionally, the shell's wielder can command the weapon to disappear at any time during that 24 hours period with the shell taking its place in the wielder's hand. The weapon is the shell for the purpose of determining its sickening effect. So long as the weapon is held, the wielder is in contact with the shell.

Moderate conjuration; CL 6th; Naturally occurring, requires Crown Tongue Chant feat and 100 XP to activate; Price 3,600 gp.

Glamryn Bay Shells

Shell	Market Price
loun shell, green and gold	1,800 gp
Shell of swiftness	1,800 gp
loun shell, dusty rose	2,250 gp
Iron Barony shell	3,000 gp
Negation shell, brown	3,000 gp
loun shell, deep red	3,600 gp
loun shell, incandescent blue	3,600 gp
loun shell, pale blue	3,600 gp
loun shell, pink	3,600 gp
loun shell, pink and green	3,600 gp
loun shell, scarlet and blue	3,600 gp
Warrior's shell	3,600 gp
Opener of ways shell	4,000 gp
loun shell, dark blue	4,500 gp
loun shell, iridescent	8,100 gp
loun shell, pale lavender	9,000 gp
loun shell, pearly white	9,000 gp
Firelornan shell	10,000 gp
Archer's shell	12,000 gp
loun shell, pale green	13,500 gp
loun shell, orange	13,500 gp
Khalandornar shell	14,500 gp
Negation shell, emerald	15,250 gp
loun shell, vibrant purple	16,200 gp
loun shell, lavender and green	16,200 gp
Nighdal shell	21,000 gp
Negation shell, charcoal	21,750 gp
Shrink shell	24,300 gp
Dragon shell	27,000 gp
Armor shell	28,800 gp
Tantanthan shell	36,900 gp
Negation shell, crimson	44,500 gp
Negation shell, ivory	44,500 gp
Negation shell, purple	44,500 gp
Spell storing shell	50,000 gp
Passage shell	64,800 gp
Negation shell, yellow	65,500 gp

MAGIC WEAPONS

FEYBLADES

Soon after the Fall of the Castles, quite a few talented gnome and halfling spellcasters (and their kin) banded together with sprites and other fey creatures for their own protection. For years, they worked together crafting weapons and other items designed specifically for their short statures and

tiny hands, allowing them to better defend their homes and settlements. Now, several hundred years later, these devices have spread all across Castlemourn.

The most common are short, sturdy-bladed longswords known as *feyblades*. Unfortunately, many of the Estornar clans have lost the ability to make these swords. As a result, *feyblades* are much sought after by gnome and halfling families. Estornar merchant houses collect as many of these swords as possible, paying large sums for them when necessary. They consider the *feyblades* part of their heritage and the birthright of their children. There is no greater honor for a young gnome or halfling coming into adulthood than to be gifted with one of these ancient blades.

Most *feyblades* are Small +2 *longswords* crafted from mithril and enchanted to shrink or enlarge as necessary to fit the hands of Tiny and Medium fey (but only for fey). All *feyblades* possess the ability to warn their wielder of specific dangers, glowing dimly or brightly depending on the proximity of the danger, and have at least one or two other magical abilities.

All +2 *feyblade longswords* have 25 hit points, hardness 19, and weigh only one pound.

Hearthsword Feyblade: Often given to paladins and other community defenders, *hearthwords* are designed specifically for those who would protect the weak and defend their birthlands. In the hands of any other creature, these swords are Small +2 *defending longswords*. However, in the hands of a gnome, halfling, or fey, the blade of a *hearthsword* glows green whenever evil creatures come within 60 feet. Additionally, the sword grants its wielder a +4 stability bonus against bull rush or trip attacks, and by speaking the sword's command word, the wielder can cast *shield other* three times per day (caster level 3rd).

Moderate abjuration; CL 8th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be a gnome, halfling, or fey; *detect evil*, *enlarge person*, *shield* or *shield of faith*, *shrink item*, *shield other*; Price 38,201 gp; Cost 20,108 gp + 1,448 XP; Weight 1 lb.

Vigilant Feyblade: Created for guardians of small communities and those who stand vigil over the dead and dying, *vigilant feyblades* alert their owners to the presence of evil creatures and undead and are particularly useful for fighting off incorporeal undead. In the hands of any other creature, a *vigilant feyblade* functions only as a Small +2 *undead-bane ghost touch longsword*. However, in the hands of a gnome, halfling, or fey, the sword glows green whenever an evil creature approaches within 60 feet of the blade and glows pale blue if undead

are within 60 feet. In the presence of evil undead creatures (within 60 feet), blue and green lights dance along the length of the blade.

Moderate conjuration; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be a gnome, halfling, or fey; *detect evil*, *detect undead*, *plane shift*, *shrink item*, *summon monster I*; Price 47,665 gp; Cost 24,840 gp + 1,826 XP; Weight 1 lb.

Wayfinder Feyblade: *Wayfinder feyblades* are +2 *flaming longswords* treasured by gnome and halfling rangers and adventurers. While they only function as Small +2 *flaming longswords* in the hands of any other creature, halflings, gnomes, and fey creatures benefit from several other abilities when wielding these blades. If the creature grasping the sword's hilt is a gnome, halfling, or fey, she always knows which direction is *sarrind* (north), as if constantly benefiting from the *know direction* spell. Additionally, by speaking the proper command word, she can cast *find the path* once per day (caster level 11th).

Moderate divination; CL 11th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be a gnome, halfling, or fey; *find the path*, *fireball*, *know direction*, *shrink item*; Price 59,663 gp; Cost 30,839 gp + 2,306 XP; Weight 1 lb.

HARRAG WATCHBLADES

Long ago, the elves of the Harrag knew the secrets of crafting unusually fine starmetal blades. Several master bladesmiths, elder elves who survived the Time of Destruction, lived and worked within the depths of the Harrag for years after the Fall, continuing to forge these excellent blades even though they had lost all knowledge related to their enchantment. However, as time went on, more and more elves came to shun all knowledge of the past, believing technology and magic had led to the downfall of the Realm of Castles. The remaining elf craftsmen either gave up their professions all together, continued in secret, or left the Harrag greatly saddened by the attitude of their people. Today, the elves seem completely bereft of the knowledge and skill necessary to craft starmetal blades. Even so, the elves have caches of starmetal blades that clerics of the Seven continue to enchant and bestow upon young elf warriors. These *watchblades* are presented to elf fighters, rangers, and warriors who guard the boundaries of the Harrag and lead expeditions into the Mistcloak Forest. The powers of these specially-crafted swords vary based on the elf's duties.

Aerho (east) of the Yarhoon, there are many tales of warriors who have managed to win an elf's sword. The glory of such an act is fleeting, however, as each of these tales ends in the warrior's death. Without fail, the elves hunt down and slay any who

have stolen or otherwise captured a *watchblade*. One such tale speaks of a human who sailed to Tamrune to escape their vengeance, only to find a group of elves waiting for him when he arrived.

The elves attach a great deal of religious and personal significance to these swords, the reason they often react so violently to others wielding these weapons. The graceful lines and fine craftsmanship make the origins of these weapons obvious.

All *Harrag watchblades* detailed herein are +3 *longswords* crafted from starmetal. As such, each blade has 25 hit points, hardness 14, weighs only two pounds, and is considered a cold iron weapon for purposes of damage reduction.

Bordercaptain Watchblade: *Bordercaptain watchblades* are crafted for and gifted to captains of the Harrag border patrols. While most of the border guardians rely on bows, sending feathered death raining down on their enemies, the captains hurl devastating lightning at spellcasters and other potential threats. Three times per day on command, these +3 *shocking burst longswords* can emit crackling bolts of lightning, as if the wielder had cast a *lightning bolt* spell (caster level 10th) that deals 10d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex, DC 16, half damage). The weapons also grant their wielders a +2 resistance bonus on all saves against electricity.

Moderate evocation; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be an elf; *call lightning*, *resistance*; Price 69,455 gp; Cost 36,935 gp + 2,602 XP; Weight 2 lbs.

Darkbane Watchblade: Designed for elf warriors leading Damanthan expeditions into the Mistcloak Forest, these +3 *holy longswords* grant their wielders the ability to function with minimal rest and without having to eat or drink (a useful trait when attempting to avoid tainted food and water sources in the Mistcloak). While this weapon is carried (even sheathed), the bearer gains the benefits of a *ring of sustenance*. Since Mournan elves only require 4 hours of *daereth* per day (instead of sleep), an elf with a *darkbane watchblade* only needs 1 hour of *daereth* per day to be fully rested. As with the ring, the sword must be carried for seven days before its magic begins to work. If the bearer removes his sword belt to rest, he must maintain contact with the sword in order for the sustaining effect to continue, going so far as to sleep clutching the sheathed blade.

Moderate evocation [good]; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be a good-aligned elf cleric of Damantha; *create food and water*, *holy smite*; Price 56,915 gp; Cost 30,665 gp + 2,100 XP; Weight 2 lbs.

Forestrunner Watchblade: *Forestrunner watchblades* are easily recognized by their guards, crafted to resemble mottled green maple leaves (tips pointed toward the blade) edged with gold. Created specifically for elves patrolling the vast depths of Harrag, these +3 *keen longswords* grant their owners three benefits. Even when a *forestrunner watchblade* is worn sheathed, it grants its bearer 60-foot darkvision. While the sword is held, its wielder gains the druid's woodland stride and trackless step abilities.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be an elf druid; *darkvision, freedom of movement, pass without trace*; Price 50,415 gp; Cost 27,415 gp + 1,840 XP; Weight 2 lbs.

Hearthguard Watchblade: These swords are gifted to elf warriors dedicated to protecting specific nomadic family groups and ensuring the safety of the family elders. *Hearthguard watchblades* are +3 *human-bane returning longswords of throwing*. The blades have a range increment of 10 feet. When thrown, whether it strikes its intended target or not, the blade unerringly returns to its wielder's hand at the beginning of the following round.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be an elf; *animate objects, magic stone, summon monster I*; Price 76,415 gp; Cost 40,415 gp + 2,880 XP; Weight 2 lbs.

Magic Weapons

Weapon	Market Price
Feyblade, hearthsword	38,201 gp
Feyblade, vigilant	47,665 gp
Watchblade, forerunner	50,415 gp
Watchblade, darkbane	56,915 gp
Feyblade, wayfinder	59,663 gp
Watchblade, bordercaptain	69,455 gp
Watchblade, hearthguard	76,415 gp

WONDROUS ITEMS

This section presents some wondrous items specific to Castlemourn. As with spells, the secrets of magic item creation were lost to Mournans during the Fall, though through hard work and diligent study spellcasters have regained some of this lore. Most Mournan spellcasters are incapable of crafting items requiring spells of 5th-level or higher in their creation. However, some have regained bits of lore, allowing them to craft more powerful magic items. Capturing this lore from enemy spellcasters or recovering it from ancient ruins is a great focus for adventures set in Castlemourn.

This section also introduces some magical masks. While masks don't cover the eyes, they occupy the same location on the body as eye lenses or goggles.

AMULET OF WARDING

These small, plain silver amulets are primarily created by powerful thaele spellcasters and given to those who work around them on a daily basis.

The amulet must be in direct contact with the wearer's skin to work, granting a +4 resistance bonus on all Fortitude saving throws. It also absorbs energy-draining attacks, death effects, and negative energy effects, including the thaele's accursed aura. Absorbing these attacks drains energy from the amulet, and upon absorbing 6 such attacks, the amulet crumbles to dust. Anytime the wearer is subjected to a thaele's accursed aura, she first attempts a Fortitude saving throw with the amulet's bonus. The amulet only expends a charge against the accursed aura if the wearer's saving throw fails.

Any thaele who touches such an amulet directly (the metal, not a ribbon or strap it has been threaded through) is typically burned to the bone or even hurled away from the amulet. In either case, the thaele's skin is blackened where he touched the amulet, and he suffers 3d6 points of holy damage.

Moderate abjuration; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item; *death ward, resistance*; Price 10,500 gp.

ARACHNULUS

While exploring the lands surrounding Dragonhead, especially ruins close to Sparruk and along the beast-haunted borders of Faerel, adventurers have found intricately-crafted metal spiders, ranging in size from the span of a large human hand (Diminutive) to the size of a small cat (Tiny). At first, they appear to be odd, uneven metallic spheres, but when handled by an arcane spellcaster, the spider awakens, unfolds itself, and begins to attune itself to that individual—thrumming with arcane energies, its eyes filled with an ominous red glow. If the spider is attacked by the spellcaster during this process, it scurries off to hide and goes dormant. Once attuned to an individual (a process that requires one minute and requires the spellcaster to sacrifice 80 XP), the spider will follow the spellcaster's commands and becomes linked telepathically to the spellcaster, just like a homunculus. Destroying an arachnulus does not damage its master.

Diminutive Arachnulus: CR 1; Diminutive construct; HD 2d10; hp 11; Init +9; Speed 20 feet, climb 10 feet; AC 21, touch 19, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +1; Grp -13; Atk/Full Atk +10 melee (1d2-3, bite plus poison); Space/Reach 1 foot/0 feet; SA poison, web; SQ antitoxin, construct traits, darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 4, Dex 21, Con —, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 7

Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Hide +21, Jump +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Spot +5; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse^B

Antitoxin (Ex): Every arachnulus has a small chamber that its owner can fill with one dose of antitoxin. If this is done, the arachnulus will administer the antitoxin to its master any time he is poisoned. The arachnulus, if within 10 feet of its master, can sense if its master has been poisoned.

Poison (Ex): An arachnulus injects a small dose of poison every time it bites. Injury, Fortitude DC 12, initial and secondary damage 1 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial modifier.

Web (Ex): The arachnulus' web ability is identical to that of a monstrous spider of the same size.

Tiny Arachnulus: CR 1; Tiny construct; HD 2d10; hp 11; Init +8; Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet; AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +1; Grp -9; Atk/Full Atk +7 melee (1d3-2, bite plus poison); Space/Reach 2 1/2 feet/0 feet; SA poison, web; SQ antitoxin, construct traits, darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 6, Dex 19, Con —, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 7

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Hide +16, Jump +8, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse^B

Antitoxin (Ex): Every arachnulus has a small chamber that its owner can fill with one dose of antitoxin. If this is done, the arachnulus will administer the antitoxin to its master any time he is poisoned. The arachnulus, if within 10 feet of its master, can sense if its master has been poisoned.

Poison (Ex): An arachnulus injects a small dose of poison every time it bites. Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial and secondary damage 1d2 Strength. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial modifier.

Web (Ex): The arachnulus' web ability is identical to that of a monstrous spider of the same size.

Construction: An arachnulus is built from bronze, silver, and steel. Unfortunately, the process of crafting arachnuli was lost during the Fall. The following crafting rules apply to spellcasters who have somehow rediscovered the lost art of crafting arachnuli. The materials cost 400 gp. The arachnulus's creator can assemble the body or hire someone else to do the work. Creating the body requires a successful Craft (metalworking) check (DC 16). After the body has been assembled, it is animated through an extended magical ritual which requires a specially prepared workshop, similar to an alchemist's laboratory and costing 500 gp to

establish. If the creator is personally constructing the arachnulus' body, the building and ritual can be performed together.

An arachnulus with more than 2 Hit Dice can be created, but each additional Hit Die adds 2,500 gp to the cost to create.

CL 4th; Craft Construct; *arcane eye, mending, poison, web*; Price 6,400* gp; Cost 3,400 gp + 240 XP; Weight 2 lbs.

*Many sorcerers and wizards would gladly pay twice this amount for an inactive arachnulus.

ASSASSIN'S GLOVES

These soft, calf-skin gloves quickly resize to fit snugly on the wearer's hands. The gloves grant their wearer the benefit of the Improved Feint feat, allowing the wearer to make a Bluff check to feint in combat as a move action. If the wearer already has the Improved Feint feat, he gains a +5 competence bonus on Bluff checks to feint in combat.

Additionally, the wearer gains a +5 competence bonus on all Sleight of Hand checks.

Faint transformation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item; *cat's grace, eagle's splendor*; Price 8,750 gp.

BOOTS OF THE WAYMASTER

These thigh-high, broad-cuffed leather boots increase the wearer's base land speed by 10 feet. In addition to this striding ability (considered an enhancement bonus), these boots greatly increase the wearer's balance and mobility. She gains a +5 competence bonus on Balance, Move Silently, and Tumble checks.

Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item; *longstrider*; creator must have 5 ranks in the Balance, Move Silently, and Tumble skills; Price 10,500 gp; Weight 1 lb.

CRYSTAL BALL OF FARCASTING

Based on traditional *crystal balls*, this scrying device allows a character to observe a creature over virtually any distance (as with the spell *scrying*, Will save DC 14 negates) and to target the observed creature with a wide variety of spells (as with the *farcasting* spell, see *Spells of Castlemourn* earlier in this chapter). The crystals used for these items are 6 to 8 inches in diameter and can range from perfectly clear crystals to smoky grey, purple, brown, and even translucent black.

Just as with traditional *crystal balls*, *crystal balls of farcasting* can have additional powers to be used on the target viewed.

Moderate divination; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item; *farcasting, scrying* (plus any additional spells used); Weight 7 lbs.

Crystal Ball of Farcasting

Crystal Ball Type	Market Price
Crystal ball of farcasting	72,000 gp
Crystal ball of farcasting with <i>see invisibility</i>	80,000 gp
Crystal ball of farcasting with <i>detect thought</i> (Will DC 13 negates)	81,000 gp
Crystal ball of farcasting with <i>telepathy</i>	100,000 gp
Crystal ball of farcasting with <i>true seeing</i>	110,000 gp

DEATH CANDLE

In the three centuries since the Fall of the Castles, tomb robbers have been a plague upon the lands. The families and close associates of prominent and powerful individuals recently deceased have gone to great lengths to make the tombs of the departed as safe and secure from thieves as possible. The *death candle* is just one answer to stopping grave robbers. These candles are placed throughout a tomb, especially around the casket or sarcophagus.

The presence of a living creature within 25 feet of a *death candle* causes the candle to burn with a cold flame. The flame radiates an aura of negative energy in a 10-foot radius, and any living creature that comes within the candle's area of effect must make a Fortitude save (DC 11) or suffer 1d6 points of negative energy damage and 1 point of Strength damage. The creature must make a saving throw every round it remains within the candle's area of effect. If the creature is within 10 feet of multiple candles, it must make saves against each of the candles or suffer damage from each candle. A *death candle* cannot be extinguished by normal means (water, snuffing, or blowing out) or with magic (short of a *limited wish*, *wish*, or *miracle*). The only way to stop the *death candle's* effects is to destroy the candle.

A *death candle* looks like a nearly-round sphere. When a creature is slain by its magic, another sphere forms on top of the first; there is no limit to how large a single candle can grow. Each sphere burns for one hour or until no living creatures remain within 25 feet. If no living creatures remain, the candles go out, retaining the remainder of its duration for the next victim. *Death candles* are usually hidden among several identical, but nonmagical, candles.

A *death candle* has AC 5, 10 hit points, and hardness 3.

Faint necromancy; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item; *chill touch*; Price 4,000 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

DRAGON MASK

The *dragon mask* provides the wearer with a number of beneficial powers. Any intelligent creature wearing the mask can speak and understand Draconic. The mask grants its wearer a +2 resistance bonus on all Reflex saving throws against a dragon's breath weapon and a +2 competence bonus on all Charisma-based checks when dealing with dragons.

The wearer also knows the direction of the nearest dragon (though not the range). A slight glowing haze appears in the wearer's vision when a dragon is within twenty miles of the wearer's position, increasing in intensity the closer he is to the dragon.

Strangely, dragons are often very friendly to *dragon mask* wearers, not only because the wearers gain bonuses when dealing with dragons, but many actually enjoy speaking and interacting with the masks' wearers. On occasion, a dragon will bond with a mask wearer, the two becoming loyal companions.

Moderate conjuration; CL 3rd; *eagle's splendor*, *resistance*, *tongues*; Price 19,750 gp; Weight 4 lbs.

FLESHMASK

These single-use items are rather fragile paper masks, waxed and painted with cosmetics into the likeness of a human face. To use a *fleshmask*, the owner places it on her face and speaks the word of activation (written on the inside of the mask). When this is done, the mask bonds to the user's flesh and melts into an illusion of the face painted on the mask.

Lesser fleshmasks lasts for 2 hours, standard *fleshmasks* last for 6 hours, and *greater fleshmasks* last for 12 hours. When the mask's duration expires, it vanishes, leaving no physical trace behind.

This simple illusion changes the wearer's face as if she were using the *disguise self* spell. If the wearer is trying to disguise herself as a specific individual, the mask grants a +10 bonus on the Disguise check.

Faint illusion; CL 6th; Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell; *disguise self*; Price 150 gp (lesser), 300 gp (standard), 600 gp (greater).

FORGER'S QUILL

This fine quill pen grants a +10 competence bonus on all Forgery checks.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, creator must have 10 ranks in the Forgery skill; Price 10,000 gp.

GEODES

While some spellcasters are content to use geodes to store simple spells, others have sought to further exploit their magical properties. Magical means have been found to augment geodes to absorb particular types of spells or magical effects, based on the kind of crystals within the geode, and then hurl similar energies back out. There seems to be no limit to how many times these geodes can be used, but if they absorb more than 30 spell levels without releasing some of that energy, they crack. When this happens, the excess spell energy inflicts the geode's normal power against the creature in possession of the stone. Geodes with three or more

cracks crumble, becoming useless and worthless. There is no way to tell how many spells have previously been absorbed into one of these magical geodes.

The geode's absorbing ability works even if the stone is packed away in its owner's backpack. So long as the wielder has the geode on her person, and a spell that the geode can absorb is targeted at her, the geode absorbs the spell's energy, leaving the wielder unharmed and otherwise unaffected. Note that a geode will not absorb the energy of an area-effect spell (such as *fireball*), except in specific circumstances, like the *lightning stone* detailed later. A wielder can only have three magical geodes in her possession at a time (not including spellstoring geodes from the Special Substances and Materials section). If carrying four or more magical geodes, two (selected randomly by the GM) cancel out each others powers, crack repeatedly, and crumble to dust. This process continues until three or fewer geodes remain in the individual's possession.

Physical Description: Magical geodes are identical to nonmagical and spellstoring geodes.

Activation: A geode must be held in order to release its stored-up magical energies. To activate its powers, the geode is held out in the direction of the target creature (or in some cases touched to the creature), and the wielder must make a successful Concentration check (DC 12) to release the magical energy from the geode. Activating a geode to release spell energy is a standard action that draws an attack of opportunity. Geodes discharge their effects as if cast by a 6th-level spellcaster. A few types of geodes are described below.

Lightning Stone: The orange crystals within this geode absorb energy from all types of electricity attacks, providing the bearer with electricity resistance 20. Every time the bearer would suffer any electricity damage from an attack, the stone absorbs some of the energy from the attack and gains two effective spell levels.

When activated, the wielder chooses to power the stone's *lightning bolt* with one to six spell levels. The *lightning bolt* inflicts 1d6 points of electricity damage per spell level released (to a maximum of 6d6). In every other way, the stone's *lightning bolt* is identical to the spell.

Moderate evocation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item; *lightning bolt* to activate; Price 45,010 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

Negation Stone: These geodes, containing smoky gray crystals, absorb all abjuration spells of 4th level and below. This is a mixed blessing, since the *negation stone* absorbs abjurations cast to protect the stone's possessor as well as all other abjurations

the possessor encounters. Any abjuration spell (of 4th level or lower) cast directly on the stone's possessor is automatically absorbed into the stone. Additionally, anytime the possessor of a *negation stone* enters the area of an abjuration spell, such as *alarm*, the spell ends and is absorbed by the stone. Finally, as a touch attack, the stone can be used to absorb abjuration spells protecting another individual. This use of a *negation stone* does not draw attacks of opportunity. In the case of multiple protections, the stone always absorbs the lowest level abjurations first and can only absorb one spell per round.

When activated, the *negation stone* releases a gray ray of energy that acts as a targeted *dispel magic*. The wielder must make a successful ranged touch attack for *dispel magic* (CL 6th). Each use of this ability drains 3 spell levels from the geode. For each additional spell level drained from the stone (to a maximum of 6 spell levels per use), the effective caster level increases by 1. So, a character expending 6 spell levels activates a *dispel magic* with an effective caster level of 9th.

Moderate abjuration; CL 6th; Craft Wondrous Item; *dispel magic* to activate; Price 40,000 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

Shield Stone: Alternately known as *shield stones* and *blast stones*, the scarlet crystals within these geodes function somewhat differently than other geode crystals. *Shield stones* absorb *magic missiles*, but their storage capacity is determined by the number of *magic missiles* absorbed rather than the number of spell levels absorbed. Each *magic missile* counts as one spell level, so a *shield stone* can absorb 30 *magic missiles* before it risks cracking.

Likewise, the stone releases *magic missiles* when activated and can release up to 6 *magic missiles* per round. The missiles produced by the stone are identical to those produced by the spell; each missile inflicts 1d4+1 points of damage and strikes its target unerringly, so long as the stone's wielder can see the target.

Moderate abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item; *shield* to activate; Price 14,050 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

Sun Stone: This stone absorbs spells with the light descriptor and makes its possessor immune to the effects of *prismatic spray*, though the stone does not absorb the spell and others in its area of effect still suffer the spell's effects. Spells with the light descriptor are absorbed normally; however, any time the possessor is struck by a beam from a *prismatic spray*, the stone absorbs 2 spell levels. In other words, if the possessor is struck by multiple beams from a *prismatic spray*, the stone absorbs 2 spell levels for each beam.

The possessor can use the energy absorbed by this stone to duplicate three different spell effects:

- *light* (1 spell level)
- *daylight* (3 spell levels)
- *searing light* (3 spell levels)

Both *light* and *daylight* are automatically targeted on the stone, but the stone's wielder can target the *searing light* spell normally.

Moderate evocation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item; *light* to activate; Price 32,150 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

Wraith Stone: *Wraith stones* are geodes containing black, nearly opaque crystals. The crystals within a *wraith stone* absorb all death spells and magical death effects from spells and spell-like abilities and the spells *energy drain* and *enervation*. The geode does not protect its possessor from the energy drain or negative energy effects of undead creatures.

When activated, the *wraith stone* unleashes a black, crackling bolt of negative energy that streaks out towards the intended target (only one creature can be targeted). The wielder must make a successful ranged touch attack with the bolt to damage the target. Before the attack roll is made, the wielder must choose the number of spell levels (between one and six) to be unleashed from the geode. The bolt inflicts 1d6 points of negative energy damage per spell level expended.

Moderate necromancy; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item; *death ward* to activate; Price 42,150 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

HARLEQUIN ORBS

Harlequin orbs are usually found in sets of three or more fruit-sized spheres carved from a strange, marble-like substance. They are lightweight and of a soft grayish color filled with deep brown veins.

Harlequin orbs are the perfect size and weight for juggling and indeed provide a +5 competence bonus to Perform checks. However, in the hands of a skilled bard, they reveal their true power. A bard who combines the use of the orbs with his *fascinate* ability not only gains the +5 competence bonus to his Perform check, but he can also affect twice as many creatures as normal.

Moderate enchantment; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item; *enthrall*, creator must have 5 ranks in Perform; Price 4,500 gp; Weight 1 lb.

HARRAG MASK

Although the elves of the Harrag want nothing to do with outsiders, they recognize that to protect their lands, they must gather intelligence about the outside world—especially about their greatest potential enemies. As a result, they dispatch their most skilled individuals out into the world, granting these agents the privilege of donning a

Harrag mask and visiting the lands beyond without being banned from their society.

The mask allows the elf wearing it to disguise herself when traveling outside the Harrag or the Mistcloak Forest. The wearer can change her appearance as per the *disguise self* spell. When the wearer activates the mask's disguise ability, the mask simply blends in with the wearer's face, disappearing completely. Beyond disguising the elf's true race, the mask has several other abilities. The mask grants its wearer a +3 competence bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks, making it easier for the wearer to convince people she meets that she should be trusted. The mask also grants the wearer the ability to understand and speak in any language she encounters, as per the *tongues* spell, and she can read the surface thoughts of those around her as per the *detect thoughts* spell. These four abilities combine to make the mask a powerful disguise and means of fitting in, even if the wearer is considered an outlander.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item; *detect thought*, *disguise self*, *eagle's splendor*, *tongues*, crafter must be an elf; Price 27,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

JAMANDRAN BATTLECLOAK

These fashionable and rather colorful cloaks have quick-release clasps, allowing them to be swept off and wrapped around the wearer's offhand forearm as a free action. When so worn, the *battlecloak* serves as a +1 buckler.

Additionally, while wrapped around the forearm, the *Jamandran battlecloak* grants its bearer a +5 competence bonus on all Bluff checks to feint in combat and a +5 competence bonus on all disarm attempts.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; *magic vestment* or *shield*; Price 6,625 gp; Weight 1 lb.

KHELPAE GLOVES

Crafted from hide covered in fine, iridescent green scales, these gloves have a slight amount of translucent webbing between the fingers and a long, fin-shaped flare along the outside edge. When donned, the gloves grant the wearer a swim speed of 50 feet. The gloves also provide her with the ability to breathe underwater. Both gloves must be worn for their magic to function.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item; *freedom of movement*, *water breathing*; Price 14,000 gp.

MASK OF DISGUISE

The *mask of disguise* allows its user to assume the form of a creature of the same type as his normal form. So, it allows a human wearer to transform himself into another kind of humanoid, such as a goliath, or a dwarf might transform into a troglodyte. The effect of the transformation is similar to a *polymorph* spell (though much more limited) and includes alteration of the creature's scent to that of the target species. In addition to the transformation ability, the mask grants the wearer the ability to speak and understand the language of his new form, as per the *tongues* spell. The mask's effects have a limited duration, and the mask has a limited number of charges; each charge allows the mask to be worn and used for 12 hours.

If the mask's wearer uses its powers to disguise himself as a specific individual, he has a +10 circumstance bonus to his Disguise check.

A newly-created *mask of disguise* has 50 charges. Once all of the charges are expended, the mask ceases to function, but retains its magical aura for 48 hours. If the charges are not renewed in that time, the mask becomes a nonmagical item. The High Lord of Tantanthar has wizards in his service who he pays very, very well to recharge his mask and not talk about it.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item; *polymorph, tongues*; Price 36,500 gp; Weight 1/2 lb.

METAL FLOWERS

Metal flowers are unique devices usable once per month. When thrown to the ground, a thick patch of flowers or vines springs up. After one full round, the patch fills a 5-foot-radius area, but it spreads rapidly; its radius increases by 5 feet per round until, at the end of the eighth round, it covers a 40-foot-radius spread.

There are five different types of *metal flowers*, each of which has different effects on creatures within its area. No matter the type, all *metal flower* patches behave as if under the effects of an *entangle* spell (CL 10). This effect lasts ten minutes.

After ten minutes, the entire patch, with the exception of a single flower at its center, quickly withers and disappears. After use, the *metal flower* must be bathed in moonlight for an entire night before it can be activated again.

Metal Hailbloom: In addition to being *entangled*, any creature within a hailbloom patch is subject to the effects of a *confusion* spell (caster level 10th, Will save [DC 14] negates). Any time the *confusion* result indicates that the affected creature targets the spell's caster, he instead targets the person who activated the *metal hailbloom*.

Moderate enchantment; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item; *confusion, entangle*; Price 16,500 gp.

Metal Moonflower: Spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities cast within or targeted into the area of effect have a 50 percent chance of failure. This is in addition to the difficulties spellcasters face trying to cast spells while *entangled*.

Moderate abjuration; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item; *entangle, lesser globe of invulnerability* or *spell resistance*; Price 15,200 gp.

Metal Thornbloom: All creatures within the area of effect suffer 1 point of damage per round from the thorns of the thornbloom plants. Creatures that move through the area or struggle to break free of the *entangle* suffer 1d6 points of damage per round of movement or struggling.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item; *entangle*; Price 8,000 gp.

Metal Starpetal: Starpetal plants are dangerous at certain times of year because of the mind-numbing pollen they give off. The flowers in a *metal starpetal* patch also give off this pollen that dazes individuals within the patch as if affected by a *daze monster* spell (Will save [DC 13] negates). Creatures within the area of effect that fall victim cannot make attacks or take any actions, but attackers gain no special advantage against them.

Moderate enchantment; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item; *daze monster, entangle*; Price 18,100 gp.

Metal Vine: These vines deal 2 points of damage per round to floors, walls, doors, and any other surface they cover, automatically bypassing hardness. If a particular section of surface is destroyed, the vines will begin to destroy the next surface available. Oddly enough, the grapes formed in the last two minutes of the vine's growth can be harvested to make an amazing wine.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item; *entangle, soften*; Price 12,000 gp.

ORMSKARN STONE CHEST

This gray marble chest is one foot wide, one and a half feet long, and stands seven inches tall. The stone sides of the chest are two inches thick, making the interior dimensions of its opening eight inches by fourteen inches. The chest opens into a nondimensional space (similar to a *bag of holding*, though with no weight or volume limit), allowing any number of gems and jewelry to be stored in that space. The chest never becomes any heavier with the addition of gems and jewels, no matter how many are placed inside. Only gems, jewelry,

and gem-encrusted objects can be stored in the chest; such items must have 70% or more of their surface covered in gems to be considered encrusted. Any object that isn't a gem or gem-encrusted placed into the chest simply passes through the chest as if the stone were incorporeal (though the sides of the chest seem solid enough to living creatures, and it's certainly solid from the outside). Attempting to store objects that don't belong in the chest causes a crack to appear in the chest's marble lid. If the lid suffers three cracks, the chest loses all of its magical power, and all the items stored within are lost forever.

As with *bags of holding*, it is extremely unwise to place an *Ormskarn stone chest* within a *portable hole* or vice versa.

These devices were obviously used by Mournra's wealthiest residents long ago to store their riches. Few survived the Fall, or at the very least, few individuals claim to have found one. When found un plundered and intact in ancient ruins, the riches found within an *Ormskarn stone chest* are great indeed. In fact, enchanted gemstones are fairly common in *Ormskarn stone chests*, and the chest's magic doesn't appear to affect enchanted gemstones, jewelry, or gem-encrusted objects in any way.

A typical haul might include: *dusty rose prism ioun stone* (5,000 gp), *pink and green sphere ioun stone* (8,000 gp), *pearly white spindle ioun stone* (20,000 gp), citrine (50 gp), large irregular pearl (30 gp), perfect bloodstone (80 gp), red spinel (100 gp), fine violet garnet (250 gp), amber oval with a large butterfly inside (500 gp), yellow topaz (500 gp), black star sapphire (1,000 gp), stunning fire opal (1,600 gp), perfect star ruby (2,000 gp), perfect emerald (8,000 gp), and large blue diamond (16,000 gp).

The gray *Ormskarn stone chest* is the most common type, though there are a number of variants enchanted to hold different kinds of valuables. The black marble *Ormskarn stone chest* (one of which rests in Dauntcastle's treasury) is able to hold any amount of gold. Reportedly, the chest in Dauntcastle is used as the city treasury and already has two cracks in its lid. City officials are now very careful to place only gold within it. Legends claim that when this chest was first found, it contained one million square gold coins bearing the stamp of a kingly dwarf on one side and the head of a fire breathing dragon on the other. However, no one in modern times has ever found any of these coins. Rumor has it that Ironar dwarves actively seek out such coins for luck pieces and pay ridiculous sums for them.

Some tales speak of a crimson *Ormskarn stone chest* said to hold potions. There is also one legend of a white marble chest said to hold scrolls. Yet

another mentions an *Ormskarn chest* made of crystal said to hold the heart of a god; if the story can be believed, that chest is supposed to lie in a cave somewhere on Mount Glath.

Strong conjuration; CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item; *secret chest*; Price 33,000 gp; Weight 10 lbs.

POTION MIXER

Only two of these devices are known to exist. The knowledge of their construction has been lost to the past, but their usefulness is timeless. *Potion mixers* are intelligent and able to speak using simple sentences. When the device's owner requests a specific potion or oil, or specifies the effects that he wishes to gain from a potion, the device tells its owner what ingredients are required, the proper brewing time, how much heat or cold to apply, and any other parameters required to make the concoction.

This device is capable of brewing amazing potions, so long as the proper ingredients are provided and the device's instructions are followed to the letter. A *potion mixer* knows and can state how long it will take to brew a particular potion (owner-caused delays aside) and how long it must rest between potion makings, usually a minimum of six days (but longer for many potent brews). The standard rest period for a *potion mixer* is five days plus one day per level of the potion being duplicated. Additionally, if a small amount of liquid is placed within the *potion mixer*, it can identify the unknown liquid. *Potion mixers* can identify liquids without limit but cannot do so while engaged in potion making.

Using a *potion mixer* to brew a potion is more time consuming, but it does not require spellcasting ability or the expenditure of experience points. First, the owner must acquire the necessary ingredients. *Potion mixers* use obscure recipes, and some of the ingredients are not readily available. The necessary ingredients will cost 75 percent of the potion's market price and locating the components requires one day per 100 gp. In other words, gathering ingredients for a *potion of enlarge person* (250 gp market price) will cost 187 gp and 5 sp and take two days. Once the owner has acquired the necessary ingredients, the *mixer* can begin its work.

Brewing time is also longer than normal potion creation using the Brew Potion feat. A standard potion, one created at the base caster level, takes one day plus one day per caster level of the potion being duplicated (0-level potions take two days). If the potion's duration or properties are to be increased (by increasing the caster level), the time to brew the potion increases by one day per three caster levels beyond the minimum caster level. For

example, a standard *potion of nondetection* could be brewed in six days (CL 5th, so one day base plus five days for the caster level). However, if the *potion mixer's* owner wanted a *potion of nondetection* that would last for 12 hours (at 1 hour per caster level), it would take nine days (six days for the base potion plus one day per 3 caster levels above 5th rounded up).

The *mixer* has a humorous personality and often provides commentary and speculation on what its owner will do with the potions it brews. The device listens in on conversations and is often able to suggest special potions that will solve some of its owner's problems. Of course, its helpfulness depends on how well it is treated by its owner.

The *mixer* is extremely fragile; it has 5 hit points and hardness 3. While some quick thinking owners have asked the device how to create more *potion mixers*, they were disappointed to learn that the device does not have this information. Neither does it know that a total of twenty of its kind were crafted many centuries ago. The *mixers* have no memory of the Realm of the Castles or anything predating the Fall.

Strong transmutation; CL 19th; Craft Wondrous Item, Brew Potion; *identify*, *major creation*, creator must have 20 ranks in the Craft (alchemy) and Heal skills; Price 90,000 gp; Weight 6 lbs.

SANDS OF TIME

This item appears more or less as a mundane, eighteen-inch-tall, sand-filled hourglass with the exception of the many magical glyphs inscribed on its base and the odd dial near the hourglass's center. The *sands of time* typically has five different abilities; its wielder turns the dial to the desired ability and turns the hourglass over. For the next hour, the device's magic affects everything and everyone in a 30-foot radius. Each of the five powers can be used twice; after an individual power has been used twice, the associated glyph disappears from the dial. When all five powers have been used twice, the device becomes inert, functioning only as a normal hourglass. Such hourglasses have 10 hit points and hardness 2.

All creatures to be affected must be within the area of effect when the hourglass is activated; those that move into the area thereafter do not gain its benefits. Creatures that move out of the device's area of effect immediately lose the device's benefits, though they regain the powers if they return to the affected area.

Breathing: Creatures within the area of effect do not need to breathe and can function in the airlessness of space or the depths of the ocean without ill effects (though in an environment without an atmosphere, creatures will not be able

to talk). The device does not protect those within its area from the environment; it simply allows them to function without having to breathe.

Hardiness: Creatures within the area of effect gain a +10 resistance bonus on all saving throws.

Health: All creatures within the area of effect gain fast healing 1, regaining 1 point of damage per round.

Missile Failure: Any ranged attacks using mundane weapons (including masterwork weapons) targeted against creatures within the area of effect automatically miss. Attacks launched by magic weapons have a normal chance of striking and inflicting damage.

Wounding: Creatures within the area of effect are not harmed by any mundane device or effect—they take no damage from nonmagical weapons, falls or physical assaults (including those made with masterwork weapons), or even poisons or similar substances. Spells, spell-like abilities, supernatural abilities, and magic weapons still inflict damage normally.

Moderate abjuration; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item; *mass cure light wounds*, *protection from arrows*, *resistance*, *stoneskin*; Price 57,000 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

SEPTRAN FACE CHALICE

Septrur is a land rife with strange, dark magics. The *face chalices* are one of the most noticeable offshoots of that darkness. The *chalice* is designed to trap and hold a single intelligent creature. An individual touching the *chalice* is trapped within it. Typically, these *chalices* are crafted for unscrupulous individuals looking for a crafty way to be rid of an opponent. One common tactic is to place an empty *chalice* within the victim's chamber, often filled with gems or other valuable objects—enough to lure the victim into picking up the cup or touching it while picking up the valuables. The instant bare skin touches the *chalice*, the item's magic activates.

When an intelligent creature touches an empty *chalice* with bare skin, it must make a Fortitude save (DC 22) or be drawn into the *chalice*—mind, body, and soul. If the target creature's saving throw is successful, it becomes immune to the effects of this particular *chalice*; the *chalice* still remains "armed," and the next intelligent creature that touches it will be subject to its effects. A *face chalice* can only absorb and hold one being at a time, so a filled *chalice* is harmless until vacated.

Once an individual has been sucked into the *chalice*, she is permanently trapped within; the effects of a *wish*, *limited wish*, *freedom*, *miracle*, the intercession of a deity, or some similar effect can release a trapped individual. Such *chalices* always have a command word that, when spoken, releases any being trapped within.

The individual's body, including all clothing and equipment worn, immediately disappears, and her face appears on the *chalice*. The face seems to be made from the same material as the *chalice*, but it is animated. The individual can speak normally and may display normal facial expressions. She likewise sees and hears normally but is deprived of her other senses. The trapped individual cannot physically move the *chalice* in any way, but maintains all of her mental faculties and never again needs to eat, drink, or sleep while trapped within. Beings trapped in a *chalice* don't age, heal, or suffer the ravages of existing wounds or diseases; while they are "chaliced," time stops for their bodily processes. Since the trapped individual can think and speak, a trapped spellcaster can still be a danger to the *chalice's* owner—if she had any spells requiring only verbal components memorized when trapped in the *chalice*.

The *chalice* has AC 8, 20 hit points, and hardness 5. If the *chalice* is broken, the individual trapped within is slain and her body lost.

Strong transmutation [evill]; CL 15th; Craft Wondrous Item; *magic mouth*, *trap the soul*, creator must be evil; Price 28,000 gp; Weight 2 lbs.

STAR RUBY AMULET

Star ruby amulets have only been found within natural caverns in the Haeldar Mountains. Each has been found on a four-foot-tall, white marble column, typically surrounded by vast amounts of wealth. Once an individual puts the amulet on, that person seems to lead a charmed life. The amulet gives the wielder a +2 luck bonus on all attack rolls, saves, and skill checks. Yet, the amulet is also cursed, attracting dangerous, hostile monsters to its wearer. The specific creatures drawn to the amulet seem to be linked to the type of treasure found with it.

Basilisk Attraction: If chests spilling over with gold and silver coins (worth 3,000 to 8,000 gp) are found around the pedestal, the wearer begins to encounter more and more creatures with the ability to turn their opponents to stone. Every time the wearer has a random encounter, there is a 50 percent chance that creatures with petrification attacks (basilisks, cockatrices, gorgons, medusae, and the like) are part of the encounter. Additionally, at least once a week (once per day if actively adventuring), the wearer comes across such a creature, even if well away from lands they normally inhabit. Medusae sometimes offer to buy the amulet from the wielder, but failing that, they attack in an effort to take it through battle.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item; *heroism*, *summon monster VI*; Price 11,000 gp.

Giant Attraction: If the amulet is found amidst numerous chests full of uncut gems (worth a total of 6,000 to 12,000 gp), the wearer begins to encounter more and more giants. Worse still, these giants find the wearer offensive in some way. Every time the wearer comes across a random encounter, there is a 50 percent chance that one or more giants will be part of the encounter. Additionally, at least once per week (once per day if actively adventuring), the wearer will encounter a giant, even if well away from their normal environs. Furthermore, the wearer suffers a –6 circumstance penalty on all Charisma-based checks when dealing with giants.

Moderate transmutation; CL 13th; Craft Wondrous Item; *heroism*, *summon monster VII*; Price 9,000 gp.

Undead Attraction: If the amulet is found on a pedestal surrounded by coffers and chalices filled with pearls (worth 3,000 to 8,000 gp total), the wearer begins to encounter more and more undead. Every time the wearer has a random encounter, there is a 50 percent chance that one or more undead are part of the encounter. Additionally, at least once per week (once per day while actively adventuring), the wearer encounters hostile undead. Occasionally, a vampire may try to barter for the amulet, rather than immediately attacking its wearer.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item; *heroism*, *create undead*; Price 11,000 gp.

Insect Attraction: If the treasure surrounding the pedestal consists of chests and bags filled with copper and silver coins (worth 2,000 to 6,000 gp), the wearer finds that she encounters more and more giant insects and insect swarms. Worse still, these insects always attack the wearer in preference to other targets. Every time the wearer has a random encounter, there is a 50 percent chance that insects and insect-like creatures are part of the encounter. Additionally, at least once per week (once per day if actively adventuring), the wearer encounters a dangerous insect.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item; *heroism*, *summon swarm*; Price 13,000 gp.

STONE DRAGON TEETH

Stone dragon teeth are typically found in hand-sized, dragonhide bags containing 3 fang-shaped stones. If a *dragon tooth* is planted (buried no more than a handspan deep in loose earth, which is then

watered) when the moon Thelseene is full and Amaunt is also visible, a huge dragon skeleton rises up from the ground 24 hours later. As long as the sun's light doesn't shine on the dragon, it will continue to serve the individual who planted the tooth. The dragon skeleton is a mindless undead; it automatically understands its creator and will obey simple commands, but does not have the power to think independently.

Planted *stone dragon teeth* are transformed into dragon skeletons and can't be re-used; the dragon skeletons collapse into inert dust when touched by sunlight. If the planter isn't present at the planting site when the skeleton rises up, it emerges uncontrolled, and the planter can't subsequently establish control by any means. Uncontrolled dragon skeletons attack all living things they see.

Planting multiple *teeth* at a time is a problem; the dragons immediately fall upon each other and continue to fight until only one of their number is left standing. This occurs even if different individuals plant each of the *teeth*. Any time two or more dragon skeletons come within sight of each other, they abandon whatever else they were doing and immediately attack each other until one of them is destroyed.

Strong necromancy; CL 13th; Craft Wondrous Item; *animate dead*, *summon monster VII*; Price 12,000 gp (4,000 gp per tooth); Weight 1/2 lb. per tooth.

YOUNG ADULT RED DRAGON SKELETON

Huge undead (fire) (Neutral evil) **CR 8**

HD 20d12 **hp** 130

Init +5 **Speed** 40 feet

AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 11

BAB/Grapple +10/+28

Attack Bite +18 melee (2d8+10)

Full Attack Bite +18 melee (2d8+10) and 2 claws +12 melee (2d6+5) and 2 wings +12 melee (1d8+5) and tail slap +12 melee (2d6+15)

Senses Darkvision 60 feet

Space/Reach 15 feet/10 feet

SA —

SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 feet, immunity to cold and fire, undead traits

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

Str 31, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1

Crucial Skills —

Other Skills —

Crucial Feats —

Other Feats Improved Initiative

The skeletal dragon is limited by a number of natural features. The dragon is unable to cross running water and, if forced to, will crumble to dust. If given a choice, the dragon skeleton always avoids attacking divine spellcasters as long as

possible. When moving onto consecrated or holy ground, the skeleton turns to dust (if the tooth was planted on consecrated or otherwise holy ground, the dragon will not rise up the next night). Animals can smell the dark magic that holds the dragon together and react violently to those who carry *stone dragon teeth* on their person.

Living dragons can smell *stone dragon teeth* on a creature. Dragons despise what these *teeth* represent and fear that someday their own fangs will be used to summon dragon skeletons to do the bidding of some wizard. Without fail, they attack any dragon skeletons they encounter, though if necessary, they will break off an attack. They will also do everything in their power to collect and destroy these *stone dragon teeth*.

SWORDMASTER'S GLOVES

These mid-forearm length, black leather gloves grant their wearer proficiency with all swords and a +4 competence bonus on all melee attack rolls with swords.

On command, the gloves allow the wearer to use the magic of the *greater heroism* spell (CL 10) once per day.

Moderate enchantment; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item; *greater heroism*; Price 60,450 gp.

TAMRUNE LEATHER FLASK

The *Tamrune leather flask* is a strange, but fairly predictable, device. Most of the time, it either heals the individual who takes a drink from it or provides some other beneficial effect. Ten percent of the time, however, the drinker is afflicted by a negative effect. In order for the drinker to feel any of the effects, he must take a large gulp from the *flask*; just sipping in an attempt to determine whether or not the quaff is beneficial will not work, though doing so counts as one use of the *flask*. The liquid tastes the same no matter what effect takes place. The *flask* can be used up to five times in any 24-hour period, and

Tamrune Leather Flask

d%	Flask Effect
01-40	Acts as a <i>potion of cure light wounds</i> (heals 1d8+5 hp)
41-45	Pure drinking water
46-50	Heavy rain falls on the drinker for 40 minutes
51-55	Imbiber gains +4 bonus to Strength for 15 minutes
56-60	Imbiber gains +4 bonus to Dexterity for 15 minutes
61-65	Acts as a <i>potion of neutralize poison</i>
66-70	Imbiber gains +8 natural armor bonus for 2 hours, but is also <i>slowed</i> for the same duration
71-80	Imbiber gains +8 bonus on all Fortitude saves for the next hour
81-90	Imbiber gains +8 bonus on all Reflex saves for the next hour
91-95	Imbiber gains +8 bonus on all Will saves for the next hour
96-00	Imbiber suffers 3d6 points of acid damage

a single individual can drink as many times as he wants, up to the maximum, gaining the full benefits from each drink. The *flask* never needs to be filled, though after the fifth drink, it appears to be empty (but refills when it can be used again). Roll on the Tamrune Leather Flask table to determine the effects of a drink from the *flask*.

The *flask* has AC 10, 15 hit points, and hardness 5.

Moderate enchantment; CL 15th; Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item; *confusion*, and crafter must be chaotic; Price 45,000; Weight 4 lbs.

TAMRUNE STONE ICONS

There is no rhyme or reason as to where these arcane icons can be found. Once an individual knows how to read the text inscribed upon the icon, its magic can be activated. Each of the stones is fist-sized, shaped to resemble a miniature item, and meant to be thrown; its magic is released when it lands with its area of effect centered upon the icon.

Each icon can only be used once; after use, the icon crumbles to dust.

Armor Icon: This icon, shaped like a closed helm, creates a suit of masterwork full plate that alters its size to fit the first living creature that touches it.

Moderate conjuration; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item; *major creation*; Price 2,250 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Bear Icon: This icon, shaped like the profile of a snarling bear's head, summons a brown bear that obeys the icon's user for 1 minute.

Moderate conjuration; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item; *summon nature's ally II*; Price 1,500 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Dart Icon: Shaped like a miniature dart, when thrown to the ground, darts spray forth from the icon; every creature within 10 feet is struck by 2d4 darts. Each dart inflicts 1d4+1 points of damage.

Moderate conjuration; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item; *magic missile*; Price 2,600 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Diamond Icon: This crown-cut, faceted stone transforms into three blue-white diamonds (each worth 4,000 gp) that appear on the ground where the icon landed.

Moderate conjuration; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item; *major creation*; Price 12,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Faerie Icon: This icon appears to be a butterfly-like wing ending in sharp points. When it is cast to the ground, all creatures within a 100-foot-radius burst are cloaked in *faerie fire* for 10 minutes.

Moderate evocation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item; widened *faerie fire*; Price 3,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Fire Icon: Carved to resemble three joined tongues of flame, this icon erupts in a *fireball*. The *fireball* deals 6d6 points of fire damage in a 20-foot-radius spread centered on the icon (Reflex, DC 15, half damage).

Moderate evocation; CL 6th; Craft Wondrous Item; *fireball*; Price 900 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Gold Icon: Made to look like a metal ingot, this icon transforms into a gold ingot worth 1,000 gp when tossed to the ground.

Moderate conjuration; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item; *major creation*; Price 1,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Ice Icon: When this snow flake shaped icon strikes a creature, the ground, or a body of water, it acts as a *freezing sphere* spell (CL 15). If the icon strikes a creature or the ground, it explodes in a 10-foot-radius burst that deals 15d6 points of cold damage to each creature in the area. Elemental (water) creatures suffer 15d8 points of cold damage. If the icon strikes a body of water, it freezes liquid to a depth of 6 inches over an area of 1,500 square feet. See the *freezing sphere* spell for more details.

Strong evocation; CL 15th; Craft Wondrous Item; *freezing sphere*; Price 4,500 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Restoring Icon: This stone is shaped like an egg with a crack running all the way around it. When thrown to the ground, the icon unleashes an advanced *remove curse* spell (10-foot-radius burst) capable of curing lycanthropy and any other curses involving involuntary, periodic shapechanging. The icon's magic is even strong enough to cure Tamrune's shapechanging curse inflicted on those who explore the island. Additionally, all *polymorphed* or shapechanged creatures within the area of effect are forced to return to their natural form (Will DC 23 resists).

Strong abjuration; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item; *remove curse*; Price 11,250 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Rust Icon: This icon appears as three crumbling, joined chain links. When the icon is activated, all nonmagical metal items (including armor and weapons) within a 10-foot-radius burst become instantly rusted, pitted, and worthless. Armor immediately crumbles and metal weapons affected by the spell are useless. Ferrous creatures (e.g., iron golems) within the area of effect or struck by the icon suffer 3d6+12 points of damage.

Moderate transmutation; CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item; *rusting grasp*; Price 7,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Slow Icon: This icon, carved to resemble a melting crescent moon, releases a *slow* spell that targets all creatures within 15 feet of the icon (Will DC 17 negates). Creatures affected by the spell are *slowed* for 1 minute.

Strong transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item; heightened *slow*; Price 2,500 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Wagon Icon: This wagon wheel shaped icon summons a wagon and a team of four workhorses. The team is harnessed to the wagon and ready for travel.

Moderate conjuration; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item; *major creation, mount*; Price 3,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Wall Icon: Carved to resemble three stacked, parallel rows of three blocks each, this icon creates a 4-inch-thick by 10-foot-high by 40-foot-long stone wall. The wall's dimensions are fixed, but the icon's user can determine the wall's placement and orientation; some part of the wall must contact the spot where the icon hit the ground.

Strong conjuration; CL 16th; Craft Wondrous Item; *wall of stone*; Price 4,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Water Icon: This icon, shaped like a teardrop, should be held and rapped firmly against the ground. When the user activates the icon, water begins to pour forth from it in a steady stream. So long as the user holds on, she can direct the flow of water into containers, filling many small receptacles or one large container. If the icon is simply hurled to the ground, water sprays up into the air, creating a short-lived fountain. The icon creates 20 gallons of fresh water before vanishing.

Moderate conjuration; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item; *create water*; Price 500 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Void Icon: This icon appears to be a flat, circular disc carved on both sides with a spiral pattern, traveling from the outside edge of the disc to its center. Activating this icon releases a *mage's disjunction* spell (caster level 17th) that negates all magical effects and magic items within a 20-foot-radius burst. As per the spell's description, each permanent magic item within the area is allowed a Will save to resist being *disjoined* (Will DC 23 resists). Items in the icon user's possession are not affected.

Strong abjuration; CL 17th; Craft Wondrous Item; *mage's disjunction*; Price 15,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

THAELE VESTMENTS

Thaele spellcasters are known to craft specially enchanted holy vestments, which they typically wear while working with or in close proximity

to individuals of other races (though not when performing their healing services). These vestments, emblazoned with the symbol of one of the Seven (the thaele's chosen deity), quell the disquieting aura given off by thaele and (simply because thaele remove them to heal) are thought to inhibit thaele abilities—their other properties, if any, remain unknown. The now-dead questor Thulgras of Asmrel suggested that some thaele vestments have properties unknown even to those who habitually wear them, awakening only in particular conditions of need or when a wearer “becomes ready” in some manner as her life unfolds.

While wearing these vestments, the thaele's accursed aura is completely suppressed. She no longer drains hit points from those around her, and her unsettling aura is quelled; however, this also suppresses her ability to transfer hit points from one individual to another. This ability is the basis of all thaele vestments and is the only ability present in vestments presented to thaele acolytes and novices (cleric level 1–3). Once a thaele cleric rises higher in her chosen church's hierarchy (4th or 5th level), elder thaele may present her with more powerful vestments. These vestments typically include bonuses on Charisma-based skill checks, healing abilities, or a variety of additional faith specific powers. Initiate vestments that grant a +3 bonus on all the wearer's Charisma-based checks are also included below.

Faint transmutation; CL 3rd (novice), CL 5th (initiate); Craft Wondrous Item; *eagle's splendor* (initiate only), creator must be a thaele; Price 1,200 gp (novice vestments), 7,950 gp (initiate vestments).

TOOLS OF THE MASTER THIEF

These sets of masterwork quality thieves' tools always come in long, slim black leather pouches. Much like a miniature *bag of holding*, the pouch can hold much more material than would seem possible, storing an entire set of thieves' tools in a space that would appear to hold only 3 or 4 lockpicks at best. Even with a full set of tools in the pouch, it only weighs half a pound. Additionally, like a *handy haversack*, the tool sought by the pouch's owner is always right at hand.

While one of these pouches would be a boon to many lesser rogues, the set of tools contained within is even more valuable. These magical lockpicks and other tools grant a +10 competence bonus on all Disable Device and Open Lock checks.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item; creator must have 10 ranks in the Disable Device and Open Lock skills; Price 19,500 gp; Weight 1/2 lb.

WAYMASTER'S BELT

These broad leather sword belts are usually made from black or brown leather, though some have been crafted from more exotic hides. The belt increases the wearer's overall stability. The wearer is treated as if one size larger when resolving bull rush, grapple, and trip attacks, granting a size Medium character a +4 bonus on all bull rush, grapple, and trip attacks. The wearer also gains this bonus when targeted by these kinds of attacks.

The waymaster's belt also grants its wearer a +2 insight bonus to his AC.

Moderate transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item; *barkskin*, *enlarge person*; Price 21,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Minor Wondrous Items

Item	Market Price
Fleshmask, lesser	150 gp
Fleshmask	300 gp
Tamrune water icon	500 gp
Fleshmask, greater	600 gp
Tamrune fire icon	900 gp
Tamrune gold icon	1,000 gp
Thaele vestments, novice	1,200 gp
Tamrune bear icon	1,500 gp
Tamrune armor icon	2,250 gp
Tamrune slow icon	2,500 gp
Tamrune dart icon	2,600 gp
Tamrune faerie icon	3,000 gp
Tamrune wagon icon	3,000 gp
Death candle	4,000 gp
Stone dragon tooth (1 tooth)	4,000 gp
Tamrune wall icon	4,000 gp
Harlequin orbs	4,500 gp
Tamrune ice icon	4,500 gp
Arachnulus	6,400 gp
Jamandran battlecloak	6,625 gp
Tamrune rust icon	7,000 gp

Medium Wondrous Items

Item	Market Price
Thaele vestments, initiate	7,950 gp
Metal flower, thornbloom	8,000 gp
Assassin's gloves	8,750 gp
Star ruby amulet, cursed giant attracting	9,000 gp
Amulet of warding	10,500 gp
Boots of the waymaster	10,500 gp
Star ruby amulet, cursed basilisk attracting	11,000 gp
Star ruby amulet, cursed undead attracting	11,000 gp
Tamrune restoring icon	11,250 gp
Metal flower, vine	12,000 gp
Stone dragon teeth (bag of 3)	12,000 gp
Tamrune diamond icon	12,000 gp
Star ruby amulet, cursed insect attracting	13,000 gp
Khelpae gloves	14,000 gp
Geode, shield stone	14,050 gp
Tamrune void icon	15,000 gp
Metal flower, moonflower	15,200 gp
Metal flower, hailbloom	16,500 gp
Metal flower, starpetal	18,100 gp
Tools of the master thief	19,500 gp
Dragon mask	19,750 gp
Waymaster's belt	21,000 gp
Stone dragon teeth (bag of 6)	23,500 gp
Harrag mask	27,000 gp

Major Wondrous Items

Item	Market Price
Septran face chalice	28,000 gp
Geode, sun stone	32,150 gp
Ormskarn stone chest	33,000 gp
Mask of disguise	36,500 gp
Geode, negation stone	40,000 gp
Geode, wraith stone	42,150 gp
Tamrune leather flask	45,000 gp
Geode, lightning stone	45,010 gp
Sands of time	57,000 gp
Swordmaster's gloves	60,450 gp
Crystal ball of farcasting	72,000 gp
Crystal ball of farcasting with <i>see invisibility</i>	80,000 gp
Crystal ball of farcasting with <i>detect thoughts</i>	81,000 gp
Potion mixer	90,000 gp
Crystal ball of farcasting with <i>telepathy</i>	100,000 gp
Crystal ball of farcasting with <i>true seeing</i>	110,000 gp

CHAPTER 3: RELIGION & ASTROLOGY

Though cults of the so-called Secret Gods rise and fall with the passing seasons, almost all intelligent beings know of and venerate the Seven.

To elves, Larlasse is "Laeralee the Dancer," strongest of the Seven and the Guardian Mother of all Daeree (the Elven word for "We," meaning all elves). A twelve-foot-tall, awesomely beautiful elf matron whose every movement is flowing grace, Laeralee flies about the forest as a blue-white glow and sends will-o'-wisp-like healing radiances and guiding dream visions to elves she favors, guiding the race in ways that sometimes seem whimsical to humans. Munedra and Damantha are seen as her daughters. Damantha presides over the farming of the woods without clearing them. She teaches that human ways of farming are sinful, ignorant, and despoiling. Ralaroar (as Tlessarar, the Horned One) is Laeralee's stag-headed consort, who occasionally goes mad and turns bestial (represented by the fury of marauding beasts and monsters) until she soothes him. Beyond appeasement-offerings, the elves barely worship the other three Seven, regarding them as less wise and powerful.

To dwarves, Amaunt and Haelarr are brothers and the two most powerful gods. They are seen as two broad-shouldered, ten-foot-tall dwarves—the Gold Brothers—whose massive corded arms swing hammers that can crush anything made of metal or shatter any rock with a single blow. Nurturing Munedra steals along silently in their wake, easing dwarves into the long "dream-sleep" trances that enable many Mournan dwarves to slowly regenerate, healing themselves completely of wounds. Munedra and Larlasse are sisters to the Gold Brothers, but whereas Munedra comes when needed, Larlasse must be called with prayers and offerings to bring all-too-rare good luck to dwarves. Araugh, Ralaroar, and Damantha are "the Lesser Three," only distant kin to the Four Who Watch Over Us; dwarves usually worship the trio only with appeasement-offerings in times of hunger.

Golaunt revere "the Talon," a trio of gods who they believe favor their race. The Talon arranges events in Castlemourn to test and reward golaunt who rise to their challenges, forging the golaunt into the rightfully supreme race of Castlemourn. The Talon are led by Araugh, a giant, massively-muscled and tusked, four-armed golaunt of fearsome power, and directed by Amaunt, a still-strong-in-battle golaunt elder of stern aspect, keen

wits, and eyes that miss nothing (he has extra eyes in his palms; three in each, though he opens only one at a time). The least member of the Talon is overly clever, skulking Haelarr, who brings riches through trickery and raids; he forces the golaunt to guess where "lesser creatures" keep their wealth hidden. Larlasse, Munedra, Ralaroar, and Damantha are seen as gods for weaklings. Still, desperate golaunt sometimes call on Larlasse if beleaguered in battle or trapped by foes, on Munedra if sorely wounded or facing certain dire wounding, on Ralaroar if needing to track a wild beast or flee from one, and on Damantha for food if starving.

Gnomes and halflings dwell among humans and worship the Seven very much as humans do, albeit in their own underground temples and with clergy of their own kind. They are civil with human priests, but consider the spiritual authority of human clergy below that of their own priestly elders. Their worship of Amaunt is weak, because they increasingly associate the god with the oppression of aristocrats and landowning nobility.

Humans worship the Seven in a number of different ways. Religious groups can be of any size; hundreds of organized groups have established shrines and holy sites almost everywhere in Mournra, as well as the large, well-known temples. Some humans avoid groups, worshiping as hermits or wandering waypriests, spreading news of the Seven. In general, clergy of Larlasse and Munedra are scattered everywhere, living among the people in small communities. Temples of Haelarr and Amaunt are found almost exclusively in large cities, and the two deities have their faithful in every major town. Araugh is worshiped in ports and on the Iron Isles. Small temples to Ralaroar can be found in most cities, but the faith is strongest in the backlands. Damantha's church is dominant in rural areas and almost ignored in urban centers.

All faiths preach that the actual Coming of their deity (to walk Mournra) is a wonderful thing, but every race fears the Awakening, when all Seven will arise and the Dire Time (when the world changes) begins. This deep-rooted fear has the power to terrify Mournans, and it's no coincidence that the strongest Mournan oath is "Sleepers awake!"

BEHOLD THE GODS

AMAUNT

(“Am-AWNT”), god of war, rule, dominance, retribution, and justice. *The Great Fist, The Cold Sword, The Allthrone.*

Aspect: A head-and-shoulders figure of a gigantic, apparently human warrior in full plate armor of an ever-shifting design, always topped by a faceless war-helm and dominated by oversized gauntlets wielding a hammer and sword that continuously shift from shadowy to solid and back again.

Symbol: A golden throne balanced atop a vertical, point-down silver sword balanced atop the upraised forefinger of a human right hand.

Sacred Substance: Blood

Domains: Death, Destruction, Law, Protection, Strength, War

Manifestations: The sudden, triumphant blare of a bright, clear warhorn or the single peal of a great, bone-shaking bell. Regardless of the sound, there is no visible source.

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Behavior: Amaunt represents the imposition of order through force or show of force, sometimes

for good, sometimes for evil. Regardless, such establishment of order is seen by the faithful of Amaunt as good or desirable in itself.

Primary Worshipers: Rulers and governors, warriors, and individuals seeking revenge or restitution.

Decrees: All chaos and lawlessness is weakness. Weakness unchecked leads to disaster. Order improves all things. Order is the desire of the divine. Blood must be shed that bright glory be gained. The hand that does right shall prevail in the end.

CLERICAL ORDERS

Favored Garb, Colors, and

Substances: Any garb is permissible for both laity and clergy, but priests of the Great Fist wear over-robos of silver or gray when participating in rituals; clergy of senior rank wear cutaway crimson robes over their silver ones. Their favored weapons are warhammers and spiked gauntlets. Many of Amaunt’s clergy have taken to wearing at least one gauntlet at all times. Holy substances include the skulls and bone-dust of great rulers and ruling scepters or thrones used by rulers of note.

Most Holy Time of Day and Ritual: There is no most holy time of day, but three prayers must be uttered during the day, one upon awakening



READING DEITY STAT BLOCKS

Aspect: Describes the deity’s typical appearance.

Symbol: Description of the deity’s holy symbol.

Sacred Substance: Lists a substance sacred to the deity.

Domains: Gives the domains available to the deity’s clerics.

Manifestations: Mournan deities often send manifestations of themselves to aid their followers and terrorize infidels. This section describes what a typical manifestation looks like and what kind of action it takes, if any.

Alignment: The deity’s alignment.

Behavior: Typical behavior of the deity.

Primary Worshipers: Who worships this deity.

Decrees: Adages and proverbs associated with the deity’s worship.

Favored Garb, Colors, and Substances: A description of what a typical clergy member wears or needs to perform a service.

Most Holy Time of Day and Ritual: The time of day and associated ritual required for the faithful to prepare divine spells.

Important Rituals: A description of the religion’s most sacred rituals and their effects, if any.

Taboos: A list of violations of the deity’s code of conduct, which are grounds for excommunication.

Creed: The code of conduct clerics and other church representatives are expected to follow.

Clergy: How clergy members act and where specific clergies are located.

Ascending Temple Ranks (Levels): Formal titles of clergy members by level and listings of higher-ranking clergy members.

The Seven and Divine Spellcasters

Deity Name	AL	Divine Spellcasters
Amaunt	LN	Clerics, paladins
Araugh	CE	Clerics, druids, rangers, blackguards
Damantha	NG	Clerics, druids, rangers
Haelarr	N	Clerics, paladins
Larlasse	CG	Clerics, druids, rangers
Munedra	NG	Clerics, druids, paladins
Ralaroar	CN	Clerics, druids, rangers, blackguards

(Praiseforth), one at the height of the day or when the sun is highest (Wartrumpet), and one at dusk (Just Hand).

Important Rituals: Consecration, a ritual of prayer and sprinkling of blood from two small vials. One vial contains blood from those found guilty in judicial proceedings; the other contains blood from anointed clergy. This ritual is used to begin and end trials and symbolizes Amaunt watching over the proceedings and approving of true justice. The clergy record charges and verdicts independent of court or royal records.

Affirmation is a ritual of prayer, head-washing with holy water, and bloodletting of the person being affirmed—typically a judge or executioner. Saying someone is “renounced by Amaunt” is the same as saying they are a scofflaw or outlaw—and in the view of most Mournans, disqualifies judgments or decrees made by that person from having any credence or legal force. Most rulers resist attempts by clergy of Amaunt to affirm their rule (usually by denouncing and exiling the clerics as “false priests”), but let the priests affirm or renounce judges under them.

Taboos: Do not ignore or aid criminals. Treat no person with favoritism before the law, including law-enforcers. Do not knowingly break any law, except in cases where an earthly law prevents the Anointed of Amaunt from pursuing their holy duties (divine law). Do not be governed by righteous pride.

Creed: Enforce law to the letter. Refine law. Where there is no law, create law. Establish order. Defend order. Let no lawless act go unpunished. Hunt down those who vandalize, spread false rumor, commit arson or scuttle ships, steal, incite violence, or otherwise act against the common peace.

The Seven Sleepers

Deity Name	AL	Domains	Favored Weapon	Symbol	Portfolio
Amaunt	LN	Death, Destruction, Law, Protection, Strength, War	Warhammer and spiked gauntlet	A golden throne balanced atop a vertical, point-down silver sword balanced atop the upraised forefinger of a human right hand	War, rule, dominance, retribution, justice
Araugh	CE	Air, Chaos, Death, Destruction, Evil, Strength, Travel, Trickery	Battleaxe and greataxe	A sea-green eye with no iris or pupil weeping silver tears	Death, undeath, deceit, storms, sea disasters
Damantha	NG	Air, Animal, Earth, Fire, Healing, Knowledge, Plant, Sun, Water	Flail and sickle	A flame (on the left) and a flame-shaped cluster of green plants (on the right), split by a black plow, with sky-blue water beneath the plow and encircling the flame and the plants	Farming, elemental water, purification, community, history
Haelarr	N	Knowledge, Law, Luck, Sun, Trickery	Morningstar	Three gold coins arranged in an equilateral triangle, point up, with a black anvil balanced atop the triangle's peak	Knowledge, commerce, negotiation, prosperity, worldly success
Larlasse	CG	Good, Knowledge, Luck, Magic, Travel, Trickery	Bow (any)	A cluster of tiny, silver stars or sparks with a shadow-gray feminine hand, horizontal, pointing with its forefinger to the right (thumb and other fingers curled in and facing the viewer) protruding from the cluster's right side	Luck, finding the way
Munedra	NG	Air, Animal, Earth, Good, Healing, Plant, Protection, Strength, Water	Quarterstaff	A crescent moon, always displayed horizontally with its concave edge facing down	Safety, swift healing
Ralaroar	CN	Air, Animal, Earth, Fire, Plant, Strength, Sun, Water	Greatclub	An upright three-taloned paw encircling a palm, out of which grows a plant with three arrow-head shaped green leaves	Mastery of beasts, plants, and all wild things, hunting, fertility, land-lore

Clergy: Priests of Amaunt (who always refer to their clergy collectively as “the Anointed,” and themselves as “this Anointed”) are seen by most Mournans as grim, humorless, inflexible, and stern individuals, whose speech and thoughts are cold and for whom mercy is a sinful weakness. This isn’t far from the public face most Anointed assume—but in private, they engage in agonized debate about how much they should “turn a blind eye” to small transgressions or different interpretations of law, how forcible law enforcement should be, and so on. As might be expected, this is a church of strict rules and hierarchy, which encourages an austere personal lifestyle and discourages vanity. A priest disfigured while on holy business can expect to remain disfigured, with the new looks retained as a badge of honor, so long as his mobility is not seriously affected.

Secret church rituals revolve around senior priests covertly tempting and testing lesser priests to examine their fitness for advancement (and retention of current rank). While ignorance of the law is never wholly accepted as an excuse for misbehavior, the faith concentrates on trying to follow reasonable principles of law. In this regard, they establish “good,” or rather “rightful and effective,” law across Castlemourn, instead of trying to catch priests or common folk in transgressions of small legal details. These principles of law are known as “the Holy Code” among the Anointed, and, as time passes, an individual’s understanding

of Amaunt’s Holy Will deepens and becomes clearer.

Almost every city, capital, and important mainland port has a temple to Amaunt (in the Iron Isles, the only temple to the god is in Anskellyn on Halar), but the main temples of the faith are the Just Throne at Windhollow Rise (Jamandar; headed by Godherald Duntreth Malaximur), the House of the Fist in Thamral (Foreshore; led by Lord Vigilant Aunnthorn Nortalar), the Towers of Ruling in Tyrfalcon (Lyonar; presided over by High Vambril Guldeth Larimmon), the Great God’s Throne in Tasmer (Lyonar; commanded by Great Thronesword Onstant Aumaguard), the Doors of Justice in Stormgate (Lyonar; led by Lord Vigilant Blaskadar Steelpyke), the Towers of Order in Asmrel (headed by Lady Vigilant Ruunda Tsauntyr), and the Keep of Armed Might in Shields Hard (Khalandorn; under the hand of Godherald Khelgur Nuskroun).

Ascending Temple Ranks (Levels): Novice (1–3), Witness (4), Guardian Brother/Sister (5–7), Hardy Brother/Sister (8–10), Trusted Fist (11–13), and a variety of titles above this, including Godherald, Lord/Lady Vigilant, and High Vambril. The head of the church of Amaunt is known as the Great Thronesword and is always chosen by the god, who in doing so manifests with unmistakable grandeur.

Human males dominate this priesthood. While secretly working to bring the Holy Code (common laws, ordered as the Anointed see best) to all corners of Castlemourn, they’re also—consciously

PATH OF THE DEVOUT

A devout follower is someone who dedicates his life to the service of a single god. He holds his god above all others with a devotion that most people would deem zealous or even fanatical. A devout follower is rarely a member of the official clergy or a temple priest; rather, he actively practices the ideals and champions the causes of his deity. As a reward, the follower is bestowed with a devout benefit: a divine blessing which allows him to better personify his god.

Following a devout path can be difficult. In addition to base restrictions of alignment, class, and weapons, those who want to walk the Path of the Devout must take a *devout oath* that further proves their faithfulness. If the oath is broken, the follower loses all his devout benefits and cannot progress further in his primary devout class. (Benefits and advancement potential can be regained if he receives an *atonement* spell.) A character can only dedicate himself to the devout path of a single deity. Should a character have a falling out with his god, his faith remains permanently shattered, and he can never place enough faith in a divine being to follow a new path.

PATH OF THE DEVOUT STAT BLOCKS

Devout Classes: Classes listed best exemplify the deity. In order to pursue the path of the devout, the follower must have at least one level in a devout class.

Devout Alignments: The alignment constraints which limit the devout follower, in accordance to an individual behaving in a way consistent with the deity’s will.

Favored Weapons: The weapons that best allow the devotee to emulate his deity.

Devout Oath: The personal oath that the devotee pledges to uphold in the name of his deity.

Devout Benefits: The blessing the deity bestows upon devout followers.

in the case of some senior priests, unthinkingly for most—promoting a strictly ordered society in which humans hold all the power. The Church of Amaunt is paramount in all disputes (in effect, it is the law, and therefore above it), and human females are little more than subservient ornaments. There's evidence Amaunt is working to curb this by supporting priestesses through direct manifestations (the reason for a Lady Vigilant running the temple in Asmrel, as well as women presiding over most of the lesser aerho [eastern] temples of the church), but some priests refuse to so interpret the god's manifestations.

The church of Amaunt has always had its feared holy avengers, who wander Mournra righting wrongs, hunting down outlaws, and shattering corruption and cronyism wherever they find it. It has also always had priests within its ranks who lust for "rightful war" and secretly recruit, train, and muster private armies (sometimes with the blessing of superiors, sometimes not). This is apart from the official church policy of training loyal temple guards (formidable warriors) and assembling well-guarded armories in all of its temples. The Anointed also hide weapon caches in caverns, warehouses, and disused tombs all over Mournra, sometimes placing beasts or constructs to guard them.

AMAUNT'S PATH OF THE DEVOUT

Devout Classes: Fighter, monk, paladin, wizard

Devout Alignments: Any lawful

Favored Weapons: Warhammer and spiked gauntlet

Devout Oath: Amaunt's devotees cannot break the Holy Code of their church and must always identify themselves to opponents before engaging in combat.

Devout Benefit: Once per day, any devout follower can attempt to *smite* a chaotic foe with one of his normal melee attacks. He adds his Charisma modifier (if any) to his attack roll and deals one point of extra damage per devout class level. For example, a 9th-level devout monk of Amaunt would deal 1d10+9 points of damage, plus any additional modifiers, with a successful unarmed strike. If the devout follower accidentally *smites* (as opposed to attacking normally) a non-chaotic creature, the attack does no additional damage, but his *smiting* ability is used up for that day.

ARAUGH

("ARR-ogg" or, to the golaunt and the dwarves, "ARR-awk"), god of death, undeath, deceit, storms (including fierce winter weather), and sea disasters (shipwrecks, drownings, and attacks by sea creatures). The Lord of Storms and

Shadows, The Dark Wave, Conqueror of the Grave, Lord Coldeye.

Aspect: At sea or on shore, a dark wave of water with many, black-rimmed emerald eyes. Inland, Araugh appears as a lone, vertical lightning bolt with an eye partway along its length.

Symbol: A sea-green eye with no iris or pupil weeping silver tears.

Sacred Substance: Any stone split by lightning

Domains: Air, Chaos, Death, Destruction, Evil, Strength, Travel, Trickery

Manifestations: Crackling, green-tinged lightning enveloping a weapon or favored being, fringed with many momentarily-glimpsed emerald eyes that come and go as the lightning moves; three closely-spaced peals of thunder, like a tolling bell; a fast-moving storm cloud with the shapes of three menacing dragon heads along its leading edge.

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Behavior: Araugh is violent but ever-shifting in his targets, judgments, and tactics. He is malicious towards all except faithful worshipers and quite willing to expend those faithful as tools to further slaughter and destruction.

Primary Worshipers: Golaunt, sailors (to appease), pirates and brigands, executioners, and individuals desiring success in an intended violent or destructive act.

Decrees: Nothing can stand against or rival Araugh. Strife and slaughter are natural. True growth comes from death. There is a road beyond death. The price of safe seafaring is lives taken by Araugh.

CLERICAL ORDERS

Favored Garb, Colors, and Substances: The laity wear black clothing, while the clergy wear flowing robes and cloaks of black and gray adorned with small emerald-green eyes, or black armor painted with small green eyes in random patterns. The weapons most favored by the clergy are wands powerful senior clergy spend much time crafting, enchanted to cast lightning spells. Substances holy to the faithful of Araugh include anything organic that has been shattered or sundered in a storm, from a leaf to a tree.

Most Holy Time of Day and Ritual: The Call, a private prayer made at least once a day (at any time) by every priest of Araugh, asking the god to help them "be like your holy fury" and to bless them with stormy weather. There is no most holy time of day, other than "the moment the fiercest weather strikes" (when a storm or tidal wave reaches the priest, a storm rises to its height, or lightning strikes become frequent).

Important Rituals: The Stormsong, an exultant chant and plainsong that celebrates the power

of "the Risen Araugh," which is performed as a powerful storm approaches.

The Glory, a chant in which all magic items possessed by the clergy are laid out in a storm in hopes that lightning bolts from the storm will recharge, modify, or even fuse them to each other (almost always—"by the grace of Araugh"—augmenting the power of their functions). This happens surprisingly often, even if the full ritual isn't completed, but can be very dangerous to all nearby. The magic items must be laid in closed circular formation and sprinkled with iron filings (or failing that, joined by a continuous oval path of metal tools, weapons, scraps, or non-magical metal items). The clergy then surround the items and chant for the duration of the storm.

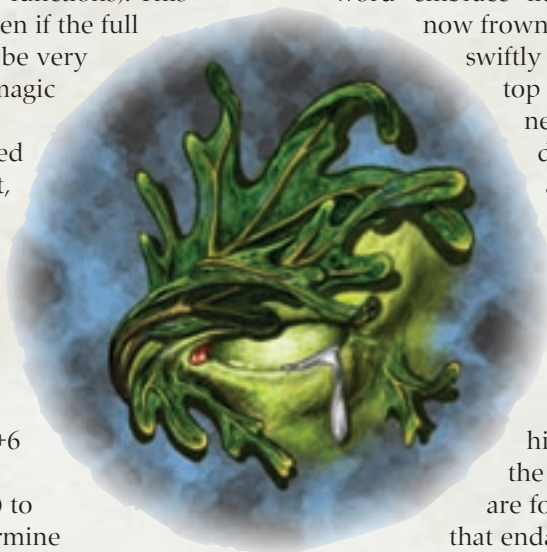
Use the Determining the Results of the Glory table 1d4+6 times per major storm (and 1d4+1 times for a lesser storm) to determine Glory results. Determine specific items or individuals struck randomly. Items struck must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or be destroyed. A magic item's save bonus is 2 + half the item's caster level (round down).

Taboos: Never take shelter from a storm, though it is fine to aid others in doing so and to protect

property. Never show fear. Never admit deceit. Never accept healing from injuries suffered from the effects of a storm, though it is acceptable to heal or assist others.

Creed: Seek storms and call them into being whenever and wherever possible. Embrace both death and undeath (some clergy have taken the word "embrace" literally, but such practices are now frowned upon.) Always travel as swiftly as possible, riding horses at top speed (changing mounts as necessary but riding horses to death when remounts aren't available) and driving coaches and wagons at foolhardy speeds.

Clergy: Clergy of Araugh are taught to disdain pain and fear, and exult in the fury of the elements (conjured or natural). They enforce a hierarchy of strict obedience to the orders of their superiors—but are forbidden to issue orders that endanger, weaken, or demean subordinates, except for orders that in some way significantly advance the church. Doing otherwise sinfully weakens the church. This in no way prohibits clergy from acting in this fashion towards lay followers.



Determining the Results of the Glory

d%	Result	Description
01–20	Lightning strikes a single item	Charged items gain or lose (50/50 chance) 2d12 charges. Items that bestow numerical bonuses (including SR and DR) have the bonus either increased or decreased (50/50 chance) by +1d4. Items that grant spell-like powers have their caster levels either increased or decreased (50/50 chance) by 1d4. Items that produce something in a radius, area, or for a duration have that effect doubled or halved (50/50 chance).
21–80	Nothing of value struck	The storm rages overhead and lightning strikes around the ceremony, but individuals and items are not struck.
81	Lightning strikes a single item	The item becomes non-magical.
82–86	Lightning arcs between two items	The properties of the two items are switched.
87	Lightning arcs between two items	The items become fused, but only function as one of the fused items (50/50 chance of either).
88–94	Lightning arcs between two items	The items become fused, but all properties are lost (d10 roll of 0 or 1) or become fused and retain the properties of both items (d10 results of 2–9).
95–97	Lightning arcs between two items	Both items henceforth function as either a randomly determined magic item or as two different randomly determined magic items (50/50 chance of either).
98	Lightning arcs from an item to a nearby individual	If the item produces a spell-like effect, the individual is struck with the full effect of the item (no save). If not, he suffers 10d6 points of electricity damage from the lightning bolt (no save).
99	Lightning strikes a nearby individual	The subject suffers 10d6 points of electricity damage from the lightning bolt (no save).
00	Lightning strikes the temple or other nearby structure	The lightning does 10d6 points of electricity damage to the structure.

Clergy members also embrace both a personal source of pain (usually some form of goad worn next to the skin but sometimes a daily flogging or beating) and secret rituals that involve pain (often scourging with nettles or branding) at each advancement in level within the priesthood. Crying out at pain or discomfort is seen as a sign of weakness, but laughing at it is deemed a mark of divine honor. Clergy who inflict pain on fellow clergy are expected to heal it promptly, so as to keep “the tools of Araugh sharp, strong, and ready.”

The main temples of Araugh are the Stormspire, crowning a headland above Anskellyn on Halar (the Iron Isles; led by Exalted Fury Dornelar Hauklar), the Rock of Storms at the mouth of the harbor in Thamral (the Foreshore; headed by Exalted Fury Ulbert Llaskryn), the Towers of Fury on the docks of Sardulkin (in Tantanthar; commanded by Exalted Fury Endeira Shalaskar), the Holy House of Storms in Tyrfalcon (Lyonar; governed by Divine Doom Onnstul Glaedrin), the Stormfang in Ghandalar (headed by Exalted Fury Ildargh Narnult), and Windroar Turrets in Chemmore (the Iron Barony; led by Exalted Fury Chellra Meirmont).

Ascending Temple Ranks (Levels): Novice (1–2), Supplicant (3–4), Rightful Brother/Sister (5–7), Stormbrother/Stormsister (8–10), Darkwind (11–13), Stormlord (14+), and a variety of titles above this, including High (Lady) Stormlord, (Lady) Master of Lightnings, and Exalted Fury. The head of the church is always styled “The Divine Doom.”

The current Divine Doom, Onnstul Glaedrin, is widely respected but aging and is expected to “join the Great Storm” in a die-by-lightning ritual whenever the right storm comes to Tyrfalcon. When that happens, a vicious power struggle among the Exalted Furies is expected, unless Araugh manifests to choose a leader—but until Glaedrin’s death, no priest of Araugh dare do anything to openly start such strife or advance one Fury over another.

The church of Araugh pursues a secret, ultra-holy goal: the creation of a rising chain of storms to bring about a Great Storm that will shatter the thrones and kingdoms of Castlemourn, leaving a lawless, broken world in which the priesthood of Araugh can rule forever, visiting storms on any army or fleet that dares to muster against them. How to precisely time the storms to create the perfect chain is a matter of frequent, hot debate within the church. Whenever they recover the bodies of storm-drowned sailors, priests of Araugh raise them as zombies and seal them into remote caves and city tombs, awaiting the day after the Great Storm when they will be needed to help the Anointed of Araugh seize power.

ARAUGH’S PATH OF THE DEVOUT

Devout Classes: Barbarian, buccaneer, fighter, ranger, rogue, sorcerer

Devout Alignments: Any chaotic

Favored Weapons: Battleaxe and greataxe

Devout Oath: A devout worshiper of Araugh must keep the same taboos as the clergy and must also perform a monthly drowning ritual whereby he binds himself with weights and throws himself into the sea to a depth of 10 feet per devout class level. Once this depth is reached (wherever possible, devout of Araugh perform this ritual in places where the seafloor is hard rock and the depths of various spots known), he must then perform a silent prayer and, only when it is done, attempt to free himself (usually by cutting his tie to the weight) and swim to the surface. Dying during this ritual is not uncommon. Faithful of Araugh consider returning from the dead after failing such a test a great disgrace and just cause for immediate excommunication and a sentence (ironically) of death by drowning.

Devout Benefits: Once per day, devout followers (except sorcerers) can attempt to discharge static electricity with one of their normal melee attacks. A devout desiring to do this adds her Charisma bonus (if any) to her attack roll and deals one point of extra damage per devout class level. This ability only works successfully when striking with a metal weapon. For example, a 9th-level devout buccaneer of Araugh deals an additional 9 points of electricity damage with a successful attack using a steel cutlass. If the devout follower accidentally strikes with a non-metal weapon, the static discharge instead targets the devotee, dealing her the full damage (and expending her use of this ability for that day).

A devout sorcerer can cast spells with the electricity descriptor as if she had the Empower Spell feat (provided she has the available spell slots).

DAMANTHA

(“Dam-AN-thuh”), goddess of farming, abundant yields, and quality of produce; the balance of the land; finding of water and avoidance of drought, purification of waters and the land from poisons, disease, foulness, and taints; civilized history, fellowship, and community. Lady Harmony, Lady Greenleaf, Lady Purestar, The Warmhearth.

Aspect: A drifting or flying, shadowy-faced, barefooted lady with a lengthy, flowing skirt; long graceful arms that drip pure water (and whose touch banishes all taint); stag-like horns; and large, dark, liquid eyes of arresting beauty, poignant understanding, and caring. She appears dancing naked and fearless in storms, seen only as a wildly-

capering silhouette when lightning storms are fiercest.

Symbol: A flame (on the left) and a flame-shaped cluster of green plants (on the right), split by a black plow with sky-blue water beneath the plow and encircling the flame and the plants.

Sacred Substance: Seeds

Domains: Air, Animal, Earth, Fire, Healing, Knowledge, Plant, Sun, Water

Manifestations: An unexpected breeze smelling of earth and flowers; rainfall or an upwelling of spring water in parched conditions; in winter, sudden warmth accompanied by three or more green leaves sprouting from the ground; rekindling of an extinguished hearth or campfire.

Alignment: Neutral good

Behavior: Damantha is helpful towards all.

Primary Worshipers: Druids, farmers, ranchers, water-seekers, healers, sages, bards and minstrels, and individuals seeking to establish families or alliances.

Decrees: Despoil nothing, lest you be despoiled. Understand every living thing, so as to know what to tend or cherish. Every raising of stone harms life, and this harm must be balanced. Show kindness to living things and kindness shall be shown to you. There is a balance to all things, and balance must be maintained.

CLERICAL ORDERS

Favored Garb, Colors, and

Substances: Both laity and clergy prefer practical homespun clothing of hide and hemp, colored with plant-derived dyes. During rituals, clergy either disrobe or don overcloaks of interwoven living plants (usually flowering vines). Mosses of all sorts are considered holy, and Damantha's followers often encourage moss to cling to their clothing, tending it and making it form a heavy, cloth-like mat. Believers favor the sickle, the scythe, and the threshing flail (heavy flail).

Most Holy Time of Day and Ritual: Sunrise, when all the hopes of a new day are to be greeted in the ritual of the Welcoming, a plainsong prayer. These are whispered when stealth is a necessity; those faithful to Lady Greenleaf consider it essential, because it brings the person into attunement with all growing things and the balance of life in Umbrara.

Important Rituals: The Thanks, a prayer performed at twilight (and at all burials, which should be completed in twilight).

The Blessing, a complex responsive-voice chanted prayer (lone worshipers can perform all the voices) to accompany all plantings.

The Saeren, a sung prayer performed during harvestings.

The Restoration, a ritual involving prayer, holy water, seeds, and human blood that must be performed on any land that has been burned, poisoned, lashed by magic, sewn with salt, reduced to desert, buried in slag or rubble, or otherwise reduced to a state hostile to the growth of living things.

The Watchguarding, a ritual of prayer, holy water, and flame (the latter kindled in the spell-protected hand of a priest of Damantha and doused with the holy water) that inhibits mildew and the decay of parchment and vellum. It is performed whenever a book is published, a library dedicated, or a large quantity of records copied or moved to a new place.

Taboos: Never raise a building or pave over ground (others can be hired to do such things). Never poison or taint anything (except washing things in running water). Never knowingly spread disease. Use fire only in moderation and never for wanton destruction (arson, burning garbage, or as a weapon). Never waste or despoil any crop or edible derived from farming.

Creed: Recycle. Reap in balance, take only as much produce or crops as are needful, and leave behind a sustainable

source of new edibles. Leave all things in harmony and treat all life with respect for its place in the great holy cycle of Damantha. Nurture and let nothing be wasted, abandoned, or wantonly destroyed; everything has its rightful function and place. Keep genealogies and written histories protected, copied against loss, and held accurate. Let fellowship be kindled and share a love of neighbors, kin, and locale. Let seeds be collected and kept safe, to be sewn with love and with regard for balance. (Collecting seeds, herbs, roots, and leaves is a daily, ongoing task for every priest of Damantha; most of them wear large hip-packs and satchels for this purpose and are never without wrappings, trowels, and sharp knives.)

Clergy: The least proud of all clergy, priests of Damantha (dominated by women at all ranks) live among the people, striving to be vital, integral members of their communities rather than holding themselves aloof. Temples of the faith are open to



everyone at all times of the day; many function as shelter for wayfarers or a place for folk to sleep apart from those who would harm them or prevent them from gaining restful sleep. A few Damanthan priests wander the backlands observing the balance of nature, collecting seeds and plants for transplanting elsewhere, but most keep to their communities and know the immediately surrounding land intimately.

There is little strife and intrigue among the clergy of Damantha; everyone can feel the balance and knows what is right and necessary. The goddess manifests to signal when individuals are ready for new tasks or ranks, and every priest is aware of the approximate level ("holy power") of another priest of the faith upon meeting without need for passwords or uniforms. Orphans, the disfigured, and the lame are taken in by the church and raised to become clergy of the goddess.

The secret rituals of the faith have to do with dying. Those who are diseased agree to be burned alive, and in return, clergy, through the Prayer of Passing, seek to reincarnate their souls into the bodies of birds and beasts. Those dying of old age lie down in the fields and, through a ritual called the Rapture, are dissolved back into the earth, bones and all, to rejoin the cycle. The other two important Damanthan rituals are for purification (priests shed their own blood over diseased persons and tainted materials in the ritual of Cleansing) and fertility (priests make love in the furrows of plowed fields to ensure plentiful yields in the season ahead).

Temples and small shrines (stone tables hollowed in their centers to form water-catching bowls) are everywhere in rural Mournra. The main temples to the faith are the Waysheaf in Glusgar (Haunthills; led by Elauthyn Daunra Maerilil), Grassgreen House at Fallentree Rise (sarrind [northern] Jamandar; headed by Elauthyn Nanuen Szistyl), the Gardentower at Dauntpool (along the road aerho [east] of Wrath Rise in sarrind Tantanhar; led by Elauthyn Maeradagh Faendrose), the Hill of Blooms (Cormithal, Lothran; presided over by Elauthyn Sashantra Duimere), Duthlake Hearth (Telner, Lothran; led by Elauthyn Jalandeire Glothkal), Greathearth Hall in Mossgreen (Lyonar; headed by Elauthyn Marlarla Ethkynd), Oldknight Hearth just sarrind north of Uskuloaks (Lyonar; led by Elauthyn Dulsarra Hardhorn), the Lushdell just sarrind [north] off the road between Nenth and Dragonhead (headed by Elauthyn Roldinor Tarnshield), the Growing Gate in Eltalon (headed by Elauthyn Daunelora Mastarach), and the Fields of Flowers just luthsurl (west) of Harbridge (Estorna; led by Elauthyn Imbrilda Mallaunth).

Ascending Temple Ranks (Levels): Seeker (1–3), Amanthuinn (4), Darauntyn (5–7), Maraskalyn

(8–10), Damanth (11–13), and a variety of titles above this, including Survarden (field commander of any holy force), Vaeraunt (second in command of a temple), and Elauthyn (head of a temple). The head of the Church of Damantha is called the Haundamanth, almost always (as now) an aged man who endlessly travels rural Mournra with an escort of senior priests, visiting temple after temple to offer aid, learn of local problems and news, and to help keep all in balance.

The priesthood of the Warmhearth pursues no secret aims beyond this: the furtherance of their public aim of preventing the spread of cities and the destruction of natural processes through over-hunting, too-heavy farming, and war. The faithful of Damantha often covertly work against the Anointed of Amaunt (destroying their weapon-caches, shattering intrigues leading towards war, and organizing farmers to speak with collective voices when laws are made or changed) or rulers who act in ways that harm or change farming and ranching in an area.

DAMANTHA'S PATH OF THE DEVOUT

Devout Classes: Cleric, commoner (farmer), druid, ranger, wizard

Devout Alignments: Any good, neutral, or lawful neutral

Favored Weapons: Flail and sickle

Devout Oath: In addition to the taboos of the faith, a devout follower must be a vegetarian, cannot wear shoes (loose boots are permitted when necessary for specialized work tasks, such as wading through bogs without falling and unnecessarily disturbing natural growth), or bind her hair.

Devout Benefit: Devotees of Damantha are ever filled by her presence. They add their devout class level to their Constitution score when determining the effects of thirst and starvation.

HAELARR

("HAIL-arr"), *god of knowledge, commerce, negotiation, prosperity, and worldly success. The Lord of Coins, The Wise One, Goldbrow, The Maker.*

Aspect: A floating, invisible torso wearing a visible, rich red tunic trimmed in gold with long, flowing sleeves and a high collar. Out of its sleeves reach two fair-skinned male human arms with golden-hued fingers that drip or shed coins like drops of water. This apparition is apparently headless; a circlet of coins swirls in the emptiness where its head should be.

Symbol: Three gold coins arranged in an equilateral triangle, point up, with a black anvil balanced atop the triangle's peak.

Sacred Substance: Gold

Domains: Knowledge, Law, Luck, Sun, Trickery

Manifestations: A golden glow that hangs over the head of a favored mortal or moves to guide that individual when necessary; a cascade of a random number (1d8+4) of gold coins that appear out of thin air (real, permanent, shiny, like-new, and indistinguishable from properly-minted ones); as a signal of disfavor, a radiant red cloud that bursts into being with gold coins spinning within it, and then rapidly goes dim and fades out, the coins within crumbling to dust and nothingness.

Alignment: Neutral (sometimes chaotic, sometimes lawful)

Behavior: Haelarr values knowledge and wealth equally. He enjoys corrupting mortals by tempting them with visions suggesting where valuables may be found, often prompting the recipients to seize or steal those valuables. He also uses visions to impart direct or indirect information to increase knowledge or chances for profit.

Primary Worshipers:

Rulers (and those desiring power), merchants, sages, inventors, investors, and ambitious individuals of all types.

Decrees: Gold breeds gold. Spend wisely and enrich all. One's true worth is different from another's, but unknown value is always worth nothing. Seize opportunity or live unrewarded. Seek to know and thus prosper.

CLERICAL ORDERS

Favored Garb, Colors, and Substances: Bright yellow armbands or gold metallic bracers are worn by the laity. White robes with yellow or gold armbands denote novices, cloth-of-gold sleeves over rich red vestments signify mid-rank clergy, and purple cloaks or over-robos of cloth-of-gold are reserved for upper clergy. Gold adornments are allowed to all faithful of Haelarr, but only upper clergy may wear masks of gold or breastplates set with gems. All gems are deemed holy things. Lay faithful of Haelarr may wield any sort of weapon, but clergy are expected to use weapons with spikes and/or more than one dangerous side (double weapons).

Most Holy Time of Day and Ritual: Sunset, when reflections turn golden, is most holy to

Haelarr. This is the time for the Salute of Thanks, a murmured personal praising of the god performed to a series of gestures that begin with upraised hands and fold down through a series of passes into a cupping of hands around imaginary wealth at the belt. The Salute is always done facing the setting sun (even if its rays can't be seen), unless underground or inside a building, when it must be accomplished facing an item of gold or at least one of golden hue. Most clergy of the Lord of Coins carry a large golden disk clipped to their belt buckle for this purpose; it usually bears Haelarr's triangular symbol on its face and a small hinged leg on its obverse so it can be placed upright on a shelf or table.

Important Rituals: At dawn or when awakening, faithful of Haelarr perform the Call for Prosperity, a kneeling prayer murmured over cupped, empty hands that are then held out in entreaty for the god to fill during the day ahead.

The Droanen is a near-silent chant, done with eyes closed, to settle, clear, and focus the mind for learning whenever a worshiper deems this needful. The chant is a prayer to Haelarr to grant knowledge.

The Cleansing is a ritual that must be done at least once a taelole (month) and may be done whenever good fortune is desired. The worshiper disrobes and rolls around in a shallow bed of gold coins while chanting praises to Haelarr. Obviously, those who venerate Haelarr at home must keep sufficient gold coins on hand for this ritual. Wealthy worshipers perform this ritual daily, while poor faithful journey to a temple to do it, paying a single coin for the privilege.

Taboos: Worshipers give nothing freely. Every act of charity must be paid for, even if only with a simple service or a promise to perform some task in the future. Worshipers must resist death unless one can die wealthy. This commandment has led many rulers to mock Haelarr-worshipers by filling their hands with coins and then slaying them, so they die rich. Worshipers must part with gold only if payment can be made in no other way. Other coins, barter, services, and even gems are preferable means of settlement.

Creed: Learn something of value every day (some snippet of information useful in future profit-taking or in increasing personal power or influence). Increase your personal wealth whenever possible. Encourage others to invest, so as to breed coins for all. Make the world richer and leave the world wealthier.



Clergy: Novices and lower-level priests tend to be ambitious, but above their ranks the church of Haelarr is a ruthless, backbiting, seething-with-intrigue hierarchy, where factions of priests vie endlessly for supremacy. No less than three temples lay claim to being the pinnacle of the priesthood.

Clatho Trleandur at The Spires of the Sun in Asmrel, Mammurt Lhakhauviar at The High House of Coins in Luuthaven, and Aumadurr Thaeloast at Haelarr's House in Zroas (in Lothran) all call themselves the Archprelate Mortal of Haelarr in Umbrara, and there are dozens of lesser claimants waiting for any sign of weakness among the three to advance their own claims of holy dominance. Most recently, Prelate Albitrur Haund of Highcoin House in Marrovar has begun energetically bribing and blackmailing clergy into supporting him.

Ascending Temple Ranks (Levels): Novice (1–2), Touched (3), Blessed (4–6), Favored (7–9), Enriched (10–12), Coinmaster (13), Prior (14–16), Prelate (17+), High Coinmaster of the Temple, and Archprelate Mortal (head of the church).

Even the lowliest priest of Haelarr is taught that he is superior to all mortals who aren't followers of the Holy Golden Way, but priests quickly learn that their lives can easily be spent in the endless maneuverings and missions ordered by their superiors, as each temple head invests for both personal gain and the greater glory of Haelarr. Some priests bind lesser priests into obedience using rituals in which their inferiors swallow gold items enchanted to allow the superior to influence, or even slay, the inferior at will. The secret (and not-so-secret) aims of Haelarr's mortal servants include unmatched, ostentatious public displays of wealth—demonstrating to all the obvious superiority of their god—and covert but complete control of all Castlemourn. Writhing in pools of cabochon-cut (softly rounded) gems, consuming the very best and rarest of wines, and collecting menageries of the most dangerous of monsters are among the luxuries Archprelate Mortals and their immediate underlings, High Coinmasters of the Temples, reserve for themselves.

HAELARR'S PATH OF THE DEVOUT

Devout Classes: Aristocrat, bard, buccaneer, expert (merchant), fighter, monk, rogue, sorcerer

Devout Alignments: Chaotic neutral, lawful neutral, neutral

Favored Weapon: Morningstar

Devout Oath: In addition to the taboos of the faith, a devout follower must never pay full price for any item (maximum 90% of cost) and always haggle to make purchases.

Devout Benefit: Devotees of Haelarr gain a +2 competence bonus on all Appraise checks and a +2

luck bonus to Diplomacy checks made to haggle over the cost of goods and services.

LARLASSE

("LAR-lass"), goddess of luck and finding the way (avoiding becoming lost, sensing directions, divining ways out). *The Mother of Hopes, The Laughing Dancer, Lady Surefoot.*

Aspect: Two glowing eyes floating in the air above a line of glowing footprints in the shape of slender, feminine bare feet. The footprints have a long stride, falling up to six feet apart, and can appear across water, mud, quicksand, sheer ice, or even empty air with the same apparent sure-footedness as solid, level, dry ground. At moments of revelation, she appears as a bright halo of radiating light that outlines a shapely, long-legged, and taller than life-size female body composed of a dark, translucent shadow. The aspect's glowing eyes and footprints are identifiable, but beyond the silhouette, no other features are discerned. In either form, the footprints may glow for a long time after their creation or may vanish swiftly at Larlasse's whim.

Symbol: A cluster of tiny, silver stars or sparks with a shadow-gray feminine hand, horizontal, pointing with its forefinger to the right (thumb and other fingers curled in and facing the viewer), protruding from the cluster's right side. If this is painted, the background is always a deep blue.

Sacred Substance: Glowfire (luminescent moss)

Domains: Good, Knowledge, Luck, Magic, Travel, Trickery

Manifestations: A trail of winking, tinkling motes of light that dances (coils and loops) in midair, outlines objects or favored creatures, denotes specific locations with its movements, or traces proper routes, safe paths, and accurate directions.

Alignment: Chaotic good

Behavior: Larlasse can be kindly to the point of carefully guiding mortals around unseen hazards or to hidden shelters. On the other hand, she is also whimsical and does not always respond to prayers and entreaties with aid, inspiration to those trying to find a means of escape, or tactics to combat a natural hazard.

Primary Worshipers: Travelers, explorers, adventurers, and persons trapped in intrigues or predicaments.

Decrees: Give no false directions. Make and keep safe maps and directions. Know your home ground.

CLERICAL ORDERS

Favored Garb, Colors, and Substances: Loose robes in shifting shades of blue are given to novices and lower-order clergy, loose robes of silver for intermediate clergy, and the upper clergy wear loose robes of ever-shifting silver and blue stitching with swirling patterns that shimmer magically. The armor of temple guards is deep royal blue trimmed with silver or polished silver for hireswords. Laity may wear anything adorned with loose scarves of blue and silver. Quicksilver (mercury) is holy and to be treasured, as is anything iridescent (such as oil in water and certain polished shells).

Most Holy Time of Day and Ritual: Twilight is the most holy time, but shafts of bright moonlight, occasions when rainbows are visible in the sky, and moments when rain is falling in bright sunlight are all regarded as times when the goddess is near. The most important ritual of worship to Larlasse is the Luckdance, a daily dance (or at least shuffling about) that is a personal prayer of thanks.

Important Rituals: The Calling Down and Gathering of Luck, a temple ritual in which clergy dance and chant around a bowl touched by moonlight, is to be performed at least once every night (four times, if the moonlight lasts long enough).

Chances, a plainsong prayer of reverence for past instances of good fortune that aided famous Mournans, is performed once in the afternoon. All faithful of Larlasse are to pray silently in private at least once a day, lying facedown and spread-eagle if possible, telling all to the goddess and hoping to receive guiding visions in return.

Newcomers to the faith must undertake the Blind Dance, done blindfolded and naked, in which they are told to advance despite feeling sharp objects, scourges, or flames (held near to them—but withdrawn before injury, though they're not told this beforehand—by priests they cannot see).

Taboos: Do not give false directions or make fanciful or false maps. Never obscure a trail or hide a door or route (no priest of Larlasse may construct a secret door). Never let a day pass without either taking a chance in something (however small) or exploring new ground (no matter how fleetingly).

Creed: Trust in the goddess, take chances, show others otherwise unfamiliar roads and trails, and constantly familiarize yourself with the paths and roads that crisscross Mournra. Be as the goddess, both bold and light-hearted, embracing the new

and the unexpected rather than always cleaving to the safe and routine.

Clergy: The church of Larlasse is the preferred faith of many priests, who often spend their time traveling between the multitude of small, simple temples (usually consisting of a stable, dormer, kitchen, and praying hall, centered around a dancing place with a large window or rollaway hatch in the roof to allow moonlight to bathe worshippers) across Mournra. Perhaps the largest of these temples, The Fortunate House, is at Shadow Rise, not far sarrind (north) of Windhollow Rise in Jamandar, where High Dancer Teshantra Muree heads a community of over a dozen clergy. There are also important temples at Ladywake in Lyonar (The Twilight Hall of Certainty led by Holy Dancer Ormril Mruthryn "Old Bells") and in Eltalon (The Luckhall led by Dancelord Elmar Urdraken). This is not a church of strict hierarchy or internal battles for supremacy. There are more female than male clerics of Larlasse, a situation common to two other of the Seven: Damantha and Munedra.

Ascending Temple Ranks

(Levels): Novice (1–3), Postulant (4), Confirmed Brother/Sister (5–7), Staunch Brother/Sister (8–10), Dancer (11–13), and a variety of titles above this, including Dancelord, High Dancer, Holy Dancer, and Waymaker. Priests are consecrated to the goddess (raised from novice levels) by a private Hooded Dance in which they must dance and pray aloud as they are scourged until blood flows, symbolizing their confidence in taking chances. Most "Faithful of the Goddess" have heard of this ritual but know nothing of its details. The church of Larlasse opposes rules and laws that are so strict as to discourage folk from taking chances or denying them the freedom to do so—but other than working against such strict regimes (e.g., attacking slavers and freeing slaves) they pursue no secret worldly aims.

LARLASSE'S PATH OF THE DEVOUT

Devout Classes: Barbarian, buccaneer, druid, ranger, rogue, sorcerer

Devout Alignment: Chaotic good

Favored Weapon: Bow (any)

Devout Oath: In addition to following the taboos of the faith, the devout of Larlasse must always devote 1 skill point per level to the Survival skill.

Devout Benefit: Devotees of Larlasse can cast *know direction* as a free action at will.



MUNEDRA

("MOON-dra"), goddess of bodily safety and swift healing from harm suffered, including that dealt by poison, disease, foulness, and other taints. Allmother, The Hand of Healing, The Whitestar, Lady Life.

Aspect: A floating, disembodied, glowing, silvery-white feminine right hand (including the wrist and forearm) that simply fades away; at a deathbed, a blindingly-bright, silver-white female figure in long flowing skirts, upwards of 12 feet tall.

Symbol: A crescent moon always displayed horizontally with its concave edge facing down.

Sacred Substance: Dew touched by moonlight

Domains: Air, Animal, Earth, Good, Healing, Plant, Protection, Strength, Water

Manifestations: Moonglow (even where there should be no moonlight) that moves to encompass injured beings, protected persons, or those in need of healing, or dances (moves in agitation) over poisonous or tainted substances or traps.

Alignment: Neutral good

Behavior: Munedra reliably helps almost all creatures who invoke her, regardless of their behavior or intent.

Primary Worshipers: Sick, diseased, or wounded beings, creatures knowingly going into danger, and those who battle or will have contact with undead.

Decrees: There is no higher aim or achievement than to purify, preserve, and protect. Forgiveness and restoration achieve more than war. Purity is holiness. To heal is to trust. The healer is a true friend.

CLERICAL ORDERS

Favored Garb, Colors, and Substances: Garments of any hue may be worn by both clergy and laity of the Allmother, so long as the hues of white (purity), red (blood), and pink (new, healing flesh) are displayed; often, ribbons are tied to the elbows, forearms, or sleeves worn over everyday garments. The church of Munedra does not favor any sort of weapon, but clergy carry small, sharp knives and long, strong needles for their mundane work, often using these to defend themselves. Holy water, tears, and uncongealed blood are all considered holy substances.

Most Holy Time of Day and Ritual: Sunrise, when the Entreaty to the goddess is made. Followers request that the world be made purer and healthier in the day ahead and pledge every effort to help bring this about.

Important Rituals: The Cleansing, in which participants, both injured persons and the clergy, are bathed naked in *everwater* (holy water) as the Song of Purity is sung. This ceremony is supposed to remove all taints from the clergy and help those injured to heal or throw off disease and poisons.

The Nightguard is held at dusk or twilight when clergy pray to the goddess to ward away death and undeath, keeping the wounded alive through the night, keeping undead at bay, and preventing the dying from passing into undeath.

Taboos: Never poison or taint any creature or material (in fact, it is best never to mix any two liquids except when following an established recipe or procedure approved, scribed, or taught by a priest of Munedra). Never wound a creature that does not harm you first or present a clear and immediate menace to you or another being.

Never let a thinking creature die alone. Never withhold care from any faithful followers of Munedra, regardless of danger, difficulties, or the extent of injuries.

Creed: Heal all intelligent humanoids. Fight only to protect individuals. Never fight to protect property or support authority. Taint nothing. End the day with a cleaner world than yesterday. Never seek to protect others by restricting their freedoms.

Clergy: Some clergy of Munedra travel constantly, tending the sick and injured where needed and sleeping in the humble dwellings of stationary priests of the faith (who live in almost every Mournan community). There are more female than male clerics of Munedra (a situation common also within the churches of Damantha and Larlasse).

The church maintains "refuges of repose," walled compounds better known as "sick farms" to the wider public. Usually converted from farmsteads, these walled areas are dominated by lush gardens where rare and fragrant healing herbs bloom in profusion. Each of these self-sufficient communities also features a temple and clergy of thirty or more priests skilled in the arts of healing, plus half again that many novices and lay supporters. Sick farms can be found in the countryside sarrind (north) of Orlsgate (Haunthills), broethsea (southwest) of Thaentree (Jamandar), on the road to the ports just sekhovynd (south) of its moot with the road from Lloadur (Tantanthar), luthsurl (west) of Raemaunt (Lothran), uddursea (southeast) of Bucklebank (Greatbellow, Lyonar), on the road sarrind of Murl (Marlstag, Lyonar), just downriver from Dragonhead, luthsurl of Glael (Estorna), on the road



just aerho (east) of Shields Hard (Khalandorn), and at the luthsur tip of Bel's Sharth (in the Iron Isles).

The largest temples to Munedra are the Houses of Healing at Darroke (Firelorn; headed by Light of the Lady Peladorna Broadsheaf), the High House of the Whitestar in Four Thrones (Lothran; led by Lord Ladylight Ondreth Maskalar), Talltowers House in Stormgate (Lyonar; run by Hand of the Lady Neirdra Belanthar), and the Home of the Healing Hand in Caeth (Estorna; overseen by Puritymaid Embrenda Louthyn).

This is a serene priesthood, dedicated to healing work and with little time for dispute and internal dissent. Sad refusal of support is the strongest disapproval most clergy of Munedra ever show each other.

Priests of Munedra do not think of themselves as better than other folk, merely wiser and "gifted by the Lady" to serve the people. They bathe and wash their clothing more often than the general populace and are more likely to shed clothing for dirty work. Embarrassment over bared bodies is something soon abandoned by those who spend most of their time healing the injured and tending the sick.

Ascending Temple Ranks (Levels): Novice (1–3), Postulant (4), Helping Hand (5–7), Skilled Hand (8–10), Healing Mother/Father (11–13), and a variety of titles above this, including Hand of the Lady, Ladylight (Lord Ladylight for males), Light of the Lady, and Puritymaid (for avowed virgins only).

The church of Munedra has no secret rituals except Ascending into the Light, by which the sentence of a dying priest who's given long, selfless service is transferred into the body of an insane or witless person, giving the priest a new and younger body to live on in. Munedrans pursue no secret worldly aims beyond working against warlike rulers and all who willingly wield poisons (including destroying written lore describing the creation of poisons).

MUNEDRA'S PATH OF

THE DEVOUT

Devout Classes: Cleric, commoner (farmer, shepherd), druid, wizard

Devout Alignments: Any good

Favored Weapon: Quarterstaff

Devout Oath: Munedra's devotees must follow, to the letter, all taboos of the clergy.

Devout Benefits: When tending an injured person, a devotee of Munedra adds her devout class level to the number of hit points the individual heals naturally. When using *cure* spells to treat an injured person, she adds half her devout class level to her caster level to determine the spell's effect.

RALAROAR

("Ralla-ROAR"), god of the mastery of beasts, plants, and all wild living things, and of hunting, fertility, and land-lore. Lord Redclaw, Old Lord Memory, Lord of the Green.

Aspect: A hairy, headless, many-legged beast lacking a tail, whose back is a tangled garden of flowers and vines (even in winter) and whose clawed feet leave no tracks while running and leaping about. Many fanged mouths open in various places all over its body and, when not biting, make endless sounds: panting, mournful howls, or loud, angry roars.

Symbol: An upright three-taloned paw (one being an opposed thumb), encircling a palm out of which grows a plant with three, arrowhead-shaped green leaves.

Sacred Substance: Oak leaves

Domains: Air, Animal, Earth, Fire, Plant, Strength, Sun, Water

Manifestations: A howling, panting, or growling coming from no obvious source. A windblown oak leaf that stares with two bestial slit-pupil eyes before suddenly blowing away to indicate a route to be followed or a location of interest. Any beast that appears suddenly in an unexpected location (such as a bear or hunting cat in a palace bedchamber in the heart of a city) to guide, menace, or reveal something—before disappearing again just as suddenly.

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Behavior: Ralaroar personifies strife, disorganization, the savagery of beasts, and the choking and decay of plants, leading to both ill and, through rebirth and renewal, good.

Primary Worshipers: Druids, herbalists, hunters, ranchers, woodcutters, and individuals who seek to study, train, or befriend wild creatures.

Decrees: The power of the land is the greatest power; the power of the land is Ralaroar. One cannot hide from Ralaroar. Slay no wild thing needlessly. Burn only what is needful, for birthing wildfires is the greatest sin. To know how crawling and flowering things live is to know their true worth.

CLERICAL ORDERS

Favored Garb, Colors, and Substances: Natural hides (cured but with the fur or hair intact) are worn by the clergy; any garb is acceptable for laity so long as it is of natural hues, and all wear some trophy of a beast (usually a preserved paw or claw strung on a leather thong as a pendant). Favored weapons include claw-gauntlets and clubs inset with beast-talons. The brains of beasts are considered holy and are devoured to the accompaniment of prayers after being touched by any faithful who are present.

Most Holy Time of Day and Ritual: High moon (that time of night when the moon is highest; on moonless nights, the onset of full darkness), a most holy time celebrated by the ritual of the Howl, wherein priests chant, dance in a circle on all fours like beasts, and howl at the moon before participating in the blood sacrifice of (usually) a small animal inside the circle.

Important Rituals: The Running, a ritual in which novices graduate to the initiated ranks of the priesthood by magically assuming (with the spellcasting aid of more powerful clergy) a beast's shape and moving into the presence of a real beast of the same type which they must either mate with or, if of the same gender, slay in battle.

The High Hunt, which every priest of Ralaroar must participate in at least annually, consists of hunting and slaying a large, dangerous monster. The Hunt begins with a special prayer and is carried out by the clergy in their favored beast shapes.

Taboos: Worshipers build no defensive walls. Worshipers may never personally repair a roof. Worshipers say nothing false about natural things (priests need not volunteer or reveal all they know, but must never mislead others as to the facts about a creature or plant, or knowingly lie about such things in even the smallest way).

Creed: Learn the land and its ways. Learn and practice herblore. Teach folk the ways of beasts and how to tame them. Run as a beast and, in doing so, stay in touch with their ways.

Clergy: The priesthood of Ralaroar follows common teachings and ceremonies, but it has poor overall organization and communication between temples. In effect, every local leader (Great Brother or higher) runs his own show except when contacted directly by higher-ranking priests, though the priests under a strong local leader may be very well organized and work very effectively. The church lacks an overall leader, and all of its leaders are to some extent figureheads—but there is very little dissent within the priesthood.

Priests of Ralaroar keep busy hunting, prowling in beast shape (the best way to spy on the non-faithful), examining nature, and working with and selling herbal preparations, beast meats, and potent wildwines (the main source of their personal income and the wealth of the church; all such takings are "one part to the priest and two parts to the altar").

The only secret ritual of the faith is the Passing, wherein priests choose to die in beast shape, hunted by fellow clergy, usually because advanced age has stolen the priest's health. In rare cases, such a hunt (involving a younger person and their death usually made long and painful) is a form of death penalty, enacted when the church has decreed execution for a great transgression (such as murdering fellow clergy).

There are many small temples to Ralaroar in villages and one in every town and city, but the largest and most important are the House of Fang and Claw in Luuthaven (headed by Divine Rage Imrim Rulandar), the Beasthall in Tasmer (Lyonar; led by Lord of Beasts Murlum Londahar), and Prowltowers in Nighdal (the Foreshore; commanded by Exalted Fangmaster Endrego Murlivven).

Ascending Temple Ranks (Levels): Novice (1–3), Initiate (4), Beast Brother/Sister (5–7), Marauding Brother/Sister (8–10), Great Brother/Sister (11–13), and a variety of titles above this, including Lord of Beasts, Great Talonlord, Exalted Fangmaster, and Divine Rage.

The church of Ralaroar has two secret worldly aims: to breed and covertly aid beasts in dominating Castlemourn and to shatter or cause the abandonment of cities so humans will dwell closer to nature, depending on the clergy of Ralaroar to protect them from fearsome monsters. No one quite knows how to bring about the second aim, but every Great Brother and Sister diligently tries to find, bring together in pairs, and provide hidden lairs for creatures of all kinds, encouraging their breeding.



RALAROAR'S PATH OF THE DEVOUT

Devout Classes: Barbarian, cleric, druid, ranger

Devout Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Favored Weapon: Greatclub

Devout Oath: In addition to the taboos of the clergy, Ralaroar's devotees must never purchase meat, but instead must hunt their own and eat it raw at least once per week as part of their rituals.

Devout Benefit: Devout followers of Ralaroar gain the Scent special ability.

THE STARRY SKY

No celestial bodies in the sky of Umbrara are bright enough to be seen during the day except the sun (Tsundarra, the ever-blazing, floating House of the Seven). However, the starry vault of the night offers Mournans fourteen nightlanterns (constellations), all sacred to the Seven. Most Mournans use these to discern direction, while those schooled in the ways of magic use the constellations in divine magic rituals. Nine nightlanterns are fixed (to Mournan eyes, they don't seem to ever move), and the other five are said to be wandering. To the folk of Mournra, starmoots, the conjunctions of the wanderers with the fixed constellations, have meanings of their own.

The night sky also holds two moons: large, pale white-green Thelseene, "the Pale Eye of the Gods" (the source of almost all moonlight), and a small, baleful red, swiftly-speeding second moon, Amaunt, "the Ruby Eye of Amaunt" (usually just "the Eye" to Mournans).

Thelseene's movements affect the tides of Umbrara and are tied to most magic and the powers of the gods. Amaunt is little understood by Mournans. Most of the time, it races along near the horizon, appearing only briefly and apparently changing little. During its rare conjunctions with nightlanterns or Thelseene, when it strays from the horizon, Amaunt heralds war and is said to lend aid to those seeking vengeance, as well as those hunting fugitives.

FIXED NIGHTLANTERNS

The locations of celestial features given below are for summer. During a year, everything rotates counterclockwise around the star Nandroth (directly overhead for a Mournan observer). From aerho (east) to luthsurl (west), the nine stationary constellations visible to Mournans are as follows:

PAERAGUS, THE WATCHER

A cluster of five bright stars, low on the uddursea (southeastern) horizon, are said to be the lanterns of five armored guards (Paeragus is the oldest and wisest of the five guards and their blademaster) who carefully monitor everything Mournans do. At the Awakening when the Seven return, the gods will stride across the land to smite those whose deeds or blasphemies have harmed Umbrara, as recorded by Paeragus and his brethren. The Watcher is associated with Amaunt, vigilance, justice, learning, and the keeping of lore.

MALAVINDOR, THE

LOST CHARIOT

Malavindor is a rectangle of four bright yellow stars, high overhead, from which runs a line of dimmer stars ending in a single very large, bright blue-white

star, Alarravin, suggesting a chariot. The yoke of the chariot points due sarrind (north) toward the star Nandroth. Mournans believe this is a chariot left racing through the starry sky when Haelarr of the Seven fell asleep and let go of its reins. His liberated steeds became the rarely-seen longfires (comets). The Lost Chariot is associated with Haelarr, failure, loss, plans shattered, and things hidden (but awaiting rediscovery to be used by the favored).

BLACKEL, THE ANVIL

The Anvil is represented by three parallel horizontal lines of small, but closely-spaced, ruby-red stars low in the sekhovynd (southern) sky. The bottom line is five stars long, the middle is three stars in length, and the uppermost numbers six stars. Dwarves, gnomes, and human miners and prospectors believe this is their sign, and those born under it will achieve great things. All Mournans believe this is what remains of the forge where all of the Seven were shaped by the One Who Came Before, a mysterious, nameless, not-worshipped figure (discovering his name is thought to not only instantly drive the finder insane but also *teleport* him to a random spot on Mournra, transformed into a horrific monster). Blackel is associated with ancient mysteries, those who pry into what is secret or search for that which is hidden, recklessness, those who shun the Seven, plain truth, and simplicity (simple life and the bare necessities).

DURBLADE, THE

FALLEN WARRIOR

This constellation is an X-shaped array of moderately bright stars above the Anvil with a cluster of bright but fuzzy stars ("the Head," most often heard in the Mournan oath, "By the head of the Fallen!") projecting aerho (east) from the center of the "X." Durblade is a famous warrior hero of the Time Before the Fall, about whom bards sing many fanciful tales of dragonslaying and princess-rescuing. All lore agrees that Durblade died after being impaled on the tusks of Rauth the Bloodboar. The Fallen Warrior is associated with Larlasse, with heroism, success in adventure, and persistence.

RAUTH, THE BLOODBOAR

Rauth is overhead in the center of the sky, an oval of stars thrusting two spurs, its tusks, off to the luthsurl (west) just beneath the large emerald star Nandroth, the pole star. Nandroth and a much dimmer white star represent the eyes of Rauth, a boar said to be able to speak and call on the knowledge of all humans it has slain. Rauth is associated with Ralaroar, strength, terror, undeath, strong foes, and personal dooms.

VILIYATHAR, THE SKY DRAGON

Viliyathar is the largest and grandest nightlantern in the sky. Immediately luthsurl (west) of Blackel, Durblade, and Rauth, it stretches from the sekhovynd (southern) horizon clear across the sky to the sarrind (northern) horizon, a web of stars forming the shape of a long-tailed, four clawed figure with a wide-jawed mouth and trailing two partly-furled wings. Viliyathar is said to be the largest, greatest dragon that ever lived and the sire of many lesser dragons. When he grew feeble with age, he took his hoard of gems upon his back and, so no dragon would ever defeat him, flew into the sky. There he died, and his flesh and bones crumbled—but the gems remained, held together by his fierce spirit, to form the huge nightlantern Mournans see today.

All the stars in Viliyathar are white except the Dragoneye—Vrrauth the Bale Star—which is large, red, and further rimmed with a halo of crimson. It denotes personal danger and approaching peril; however, the Sky Dragon as a whole is associated with Amaunt, glory, greatness, high birth, and long lifespans.

ORLUTH, THE BLIND BIRD

Orluth is a cluster of dim stars situated luthsurl (west) of Viliyathar in a band of almost-empty sky that stretches from horizon to horizon. The cluster is shaped like a bird's head with its beak slightly open and a large hole or ring of emptiness where the bird's eye should be. Orluth was a skorvar (vulture) that dared to try plucking an eye from one of the Seven (tales disagree as to just which one) and was punished by having its own eyes burned out. Munedra took pity on it, and Orluth became her messenger, sometimes perching on her shoulder. The nightlantern is associated with her, healing, endurance, daring, punishment, and failure to see consequences. Outlaws are said to have "taken shelter under the wings of Orluth," seeking cold and meager comfort because they can find (or deserve) nothing better.

CALADUTH, THE CLAWS

These are two very clear, four-taloned claws that glimmer side-by-side in the sky in the lower half of the luthsurl (western) horizon. They are all that is left of Caladuth Devourer-of-Dragons, a great flying monster that rode the storm winds, devouring dragons bite by bite and swallowing smaller creatures whole—until it ate too much, too swiftly, and finally burst. The Claws are dedicated to Araugh, approaching storms, furious attack, disaster, and destruction. Those born under Caladuth are often great war-leaders, notorious outlaws and pirates, or are able to shapechange into a bestial form once a year (and back again, though the time

between these two transformations can be as long as they desire, sometimes allowing them to escape identification or capture).

TREE OF STARS

The uppermost and an-luthsurl (westernmost) nightlantern in the Mournan sky is the Tree of Stars, a large massing of stars in the shape of a trunk rising from the broethsea (southwestern) horizon up past the Claws, branching out into wide lines of stars. At the top of the trunk are several fairly bright stars, though most of the stars making up the Tree are faint. The Tree of Stars is said to have grown from a seed hurled into the sky during the Fall, nurtured by clouds of magic rising up from all the destroyed castles. Sacred to Damantha, it represents fertility, rebirth, new life, new vigor, fresh thinking, and planning for the future. Seers, matchmakers, midwives, and thinkers are all said to be "shaded by the Tree."

WANDERING NIGHTLANTERNS

The fixed nightlanterns are circumpolar (always visible), but four of the five wanderers vanish entirely from view at particular times of the year. Only Aumounel can be seen in the Mournan sky year-round.

AUMOUNEL, THE SWIFT ARROW

Aumounel is a line of bright stars tipped by a star cluster, said to be the last shot of a dying archer who cursed the Seven as he was cut down in battle. It is just aerho (east) of the yoke of the Chariot in summer and circles counterclockwise around Nandroth (and thus around the Bloodboar) throughout the year.

QUEMENNDUR, THE OLD OWL

Quemenndur is a distinctive, large oval cluster of hazy stars. It is said to represent a lich who escaped destruction at the hands of the head priests of two churches (there is dispute as to which two faiths, of course) by taking the shape of a bone owl and flying up into the night sky. Now he flies eternally, watching over the undead. The Old Owl can't be seen in summer; however, as the leaves fall, he rises up over the sekhovynd (southern) horizon just luthsurl (west) of Paeragus and moves straeklith (northwest) into Malavindor for the early winter months, then arcs down broethsea (southwest) through Durblade in late winter, vanishing through the Sky Dragon down below the horizon during spring.

RALANDUTH, THE

SUNDERING SWORD

Ralanduth is a double line of bright stars with a cluster of stars at one end (the hilt) and two ruby stars at the other (the tip). Ralanduth is the doomed sword Araugh used to wound each of his fellow Seven until they wrested it from him and hurled it away. Amaunt further bound it with spells to prevent it from ever resting in Araugh's grasp again. The Sundering Sword rises beneath Malavindor in summer, arcing swiftly straeclith (northwest) through Blackel and Viliyathar in the fall and Caladuth in early winter. The Sword disappears in late winter and spring, only to rise over the horizon in summer again.

SARANDAR, THE

WATCHFUL SHIELD

Sarandar is a triangle of bright, reddish stars enclosing a cluster of many faint, blue-white stars. It is the "shield of eyes," crafted in legend by Amaunt to observe all the sins of humans—but snatched away from him and hurled across the sky by Larlasse, so as to give all mortal creatures the chance to err and strive for betterment. It rises through Viliyathar in summer and curves straeclith (northwest) through Orluth in fall and the Tree of Stars in winter, vanishing over the luthsurl (western) horizon only to reappear rising in the Sky Dragon once more.

VORTH URLA, THE

DEVOURING WORM

Vorth Urla is a wiggling, snakelike chain of closely spaced stars, some bright and some dim, with a head cluster of bright stars. It's said Vorth Urla was a fell wizard who was transformed during the Fall into the worm that gnaws endlessly at the divine power of the Seven, seeking vainly to slay them—in the process, unleashing godly power through the wounds its fangs make. This divine power strikes Mournra as storm-lightning and is harnessed by all manner of arcane spellcasters. The Worm is not seen in summer; in fall, it rises in Viliyathar, passes swiftly into Caladuth as winter comes, and then races through the Tree of Stars and out of sight over the horizon as the cold months stretch.

STARMOOTS

Conjunctions not listed here have a huge tapestry of ever-changing meanings in temple auguries, but no long-lasting or widely agreed-upon connotations. Starmoots may or may not have any effect on

daily life, though occasionally one may feel their influence. When this happens, the influence of a starmoot lasts for one consecutive day and night, beginning when the conjunction is "full." Given here are their common interpretations in Mournan lore, along with possible effects a GM may opt to impose.

AUMOUNEL

With Durlblade: A changing of heroes or priests in divine favor (divine spells cast gain a +2 circumstance bonus to caster level checks made to overcome spell resistance).

With (the yoke of) Malavindor: Abundant new riches for some and financial ruin for others; these two fates never have a direct connection with each other. One Mournan's riches never flow directly to another Mournan (treasure acquired from one encounter is either 50% greater or 50% less than normal).

QUEMENNDUR

With Malavindor: The discovery of means to achieve undeath and knowledge of the deeds of the unliving (+2 profane bonus to the DCs of all necromancy spells).

With Durlblade: Widespread undeath and "risings of the dead" (25% of random encounters are with undead).

With Viliyathar: Rulers die, bringing on throne-strife over successions, and undead leaders rise to power (undead gain +2 turn resistance or an additional +2 bonus to turn resistance).

RALANDUTH

With Blackel: Famine (starvation effects are doubled; base Constitution check difficulty class increases to DC 15, and failure results in 2d6 points of nonlethal damage)

With Viliyathar: War, conquest, usurpation; the execution of traitors, pretenders, or crown rivals (−2 circumstance penalty to all Bluff checks)

With Caladuth: Outlaw uprisings and pirate raids (+1 circumstance bonus to all attacks and damage against nobility)

SARANDAR

With Viliyathar: New leaders are chosen, marriages are favored, disputed lineages and heritages settled (+2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks; rulers, guildmasters, and high priests facing internal church challenges are excepted).

With Orluth: Onset of disease or plague, unless acts of mortal heroism offset this chance (+2 to all saves against magical diseases).

With the Tree of Stars: New alliances, contracts, agreements, and schemes are made or promoted (+2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy checks).

VORTH URLA

With Viliyathar (a much-feared conjunction known as "the Great Wurm"): Powerful and unusual magics are cast, new mages rise to prominence, spell wars erupt, or mighty magical experimentations are unleashed (metamagic spell slot requirements are decreased by one level).

With Caladuth: Disease (–2 penalty to all saves against disease and poison).

With the Tree of Stars: Great arcane spellcasters are born, new sources of magic are found, new spells crafted (20% chance that an arcane spellcaster receives a vision of a higher-level spell being used; this vision is so vivid it counts for purposes of having seen a spell in action should he attempt to learn it in future).

LONGFIRES

Mournans call the seven or so rarely-seen comets visible in the night skies of Umbrara longfires, and associate them with the sudden coming of good fortune for a particular person or persons in Castlemourn—due, in part, to the belief that they are Haelarr's freed chariot-steeds. The presence

in, or passage through, a particular nightlantern of a longfire during the birthnight of a human child in Castlemourn is thought to associate the newborn with the god to whom that constellation is dedicated.

SKYBOLTS & STARMETAL

Meteors seldom fall on populated areas of Mournra. They tend to hurtle down in the spring and fall of each year, falling on Tamrune and into Glamryn Bay (in an arc centered on Tamrune but shaped much the same as the crescent of the Iron Isles). They also fall into the Haeldar, just luthsurl (west) of the headwaters of the Semphril. At night, they're seen as large, bright, swiftly plunging plumes of flame in the sky and are called skybolts because Mournans believe they are literally bolts hurled down by the gods.

The passage of a skybolt through a particular nightlantern during the birthnight of a human child is thought to link the newborn to the god to whom that constellation is dedicated (even more strongly than the position of longfires, if any, in the sky at the same time). Skybolts smash into the ground with great force (one toppled an outlying tower of Nunkael some decades ago), typically creating great pits that yield up ragged masses of starmetal as large as a human-torso (see [Chapter Two: Magic](#)).

CHAPTER 4: LANDS OF CASTLEMOURN

As the sun rises on Umbrara in the aerho (east) and sets in the luthsurl (west), it's fitting to tour Castlemourn from aerho to luthsurl.

The combination of wars, passing years, generations of bards embellishing legends to tell ever-better tales, priests seeking to gain more power by swaying folk with their words, and the self-serving claims of many petty rulers have left much confusion about Castlemourn's true history. Aside from the names of the great castle ruins, Mournans have lost or forgotten most knowledge of past times. In many locales, a traveler may occasionally hear locals refer to a place by its "olden name" (used Before the Castles Fell), but any alert wayfarer can learn what follows of Castlemourn as it is today in the Fourth of the Gryphon.

The sun rises over the Dawndar, the seemingly endless aerho mountains, an unmapped savagery of jagged rock slopes studded with hidden valleys and firepeaks (volcanoes). The an-luthsurl (westernmost) firepeak of the Dawndar is Mount Sarhel, more often called Mount Firetongue by Mournans, and its towering cone is both a landmark and a source of portents for the folk of Mournra. It once marked the an-aerho (easternmost) edge of the Old Realm (the fallen kingdom of Castlemorn), and its high-constant plume of smoke almost always blows uddursea (southeast), forming the boundary of the unknown and perilous waters known as Aerho Mist. During violent storms, the thick, spicy-hot smokes turn briefly to blow luthsurl across Mournra, a sign that at least one of the Seven is unhappy with something mortals have done or are attempting.

Hard by the feet of Mount Sarhel are its lawless foothills, twisted and tortured ridges of rock known as the Harrag. Where these giant arms of cave- and quarry-riddled, monster-roamed, cracked and fissured stone descend into the vast luthward sweep of green forests, Castlemourn begins.

HARRAG

Population: Unknown (95% elf, 5% other)

Government: Republic of clans

Rulers: Council of clan elders

Capital: None

Major Settlements: None

Language: Elven

Resources: Lumber, fur, edible plants and animals, medicinal herbs (not traded)

The Harrag is a land of age-old, forested hills and valleys that is all but unknown to the rest of Castlemourn. It appears on most maps as little more than a blank area, thanks to the attacks mounted on all intruders by the native elves. The scant existing Mournan lore about the Harrag has been garnered by adventurers flying high over the region—attempting to peer through the dense, overlying cloak formed by huge blackleaf trees—or from some of the fey folk (sprites, dryads, and other sentient woodland creatures) who are able to move in and out of the forest, hiding from and outmaneuvering the elves.

Along its forested borders, gruesome piles of moss- and creeper-covered skulls can be found. Although their true nature may be hidden from afar by vegetation, a human standing in front of one heap can see the nearest heaps in either direction along the verges. The elves mark the boundaries of their lands with these grim remnants of intruders. Testaments to the power of their bows, some of these heaps are a score or more feet high and include the skulls of demons and dragons.

The birds and beasts of the Harrag are gigantic creatures, rarely seen outside the blackleaf forest—except for the packs of enormous wolves that hunt out of the Harrag every nightfall, only to return to the safety of its trees as the sun begins to rise. In recent years, other prowling beasts and cave-dwelling creatures have erupted from the Harrag, raiding the surrounding lands. The arrows of the elves discourage pursuit of raiders returning to the Harrag.

A curious, overgrown maze of twenty-foot-high stone walls rises in various spots just inside the forest, forcing travelers (including the native elves) to follow winding routes between them. Occasionally, these walls form chambers adorned with murals depicting life before the Fall. Careful study of these murals could reveal much to a sage, if any managed to find his way into the forest and survived the trip back out. Curiously, Mournan sages already agree that magic flows in the sparkling waters of the springs rising at the heart of the Harrag and are the reason its creatures grow so large—magic that fades entirely from the waters by the time they leave the shadows of the fell forest.

ELVES OF THE HARRAG

In the Fall, sages and elves agree, this land was blasted to ash, but Mournan legends whisper that great riches now lie gleaming in its green depths. If one braves the poisoned arrows of the elves and the dread that descends on all outlanders who venture into the deep, watchful gloom of the forest, one can snatch a fortune.

Legends lie. Though certain pools deep in the forest heal wounds or glow with magic strong enough to recharge wands or other magic items, the elves consider healing herbs and the vast showers of edible nuts and berries the huge trees yield to be their true treasures. The elves waste no time smelting ore or gathering outlanders' coins or "cold fire" (gems, found in some Harrag streambeds and clay streambanks). An intruder will find no more abundant gift in the Harrag than volleys of deadly elven arrows.

The elves desire most to be left alone. Their ever-present sentinels fire warning shots (deliberately *just* missing but often striking off hats, weapons out of hands, and the like) at approaching intruders. Such arrows are of masterwork quality and distinctively fletched in brilliant blue and green gorcrow and duskwing feathers arranged to form "eye" patterns. Persistent exploring bands are warned off by elves who show themselves to speak patient and very clear warnings: all who venture beneath the eaves of the Harrag die—and many others will see to that doom should anything befall this messenger.

Elves rule this land fiercely and vigilantly, seeking to slay all intelligent beings trying to enter the Harrag so as to keep the forest unspoiled, whole (undiminished by woodcutters) and for the elves. They shun the use of arcane magic, seeing it as tainted and unnatural, though they freely make use of divine magic. Those encountered outside the forest never speak of the Harrag with non-elves, and those banished never willingly risk death by returning.

The elves of the Harrag refuse to openly trade with anyone (though they secretly trade with certain traders and nearby villages, usually through "leave goods alone here, and they'll be taken when no one is near, replaced by other wares left in return;" the elves trade pelts, smoked meat, and nuts for knives, spearpoints, metal arrowheads, needles, thread, and cloth). Their unbreakable rule is that no non-elven intelligent being may ever enter the forest. Elves not born in the Harrag may visit and dwell therein for a year, at the end of which they must choose to become "of the Harrag" (never leaving) or depart and never return.

Non-elves examining the forest from ground level or by flying above it see no sign of any cities or villages in the Harrag—none exist to be seen. The elves dwell in the upper branches of the great trees, shaping out chambers within the tree trunks and using magic to make boughs thrust forth and curl back upon themselves to form great living cages. These become chambers in elven abodes and are linked to nearby trees with living walkways of vines (other interwoven vines forming handrails and even sheltering canopies). Even so, the elves are nomadic and move about almost continuously in families, clans, or task bands, seldom gathering for more than a two- or three-family feast. Families dwelling in nearby trees form clans, intermarrying to forge

strong bonds and defuse rivalries, and family matriarchs daily decide the doings of the clan.

No single ruler or war-leader holds sway in the Harrag. As the elves share a world-view of living in balance with the forest under the guidance of the Dancer, they tend to think alike, and difficulties between clans are few—and by long tradition are settled by conclaves of clan elders. Large or grave events provoke horncalls that muster the council of clan elders to meet and make policy for all. Such moots are often called to cast out elves for daring to deal too closely with outsiders. Although new ideas were formerly believed to all come from "the Taint Outside" and to be evidence of contact worthy only of banishment, Laeralee chided many elders in dream-visions to accept the ideas of the young as their own and Her way of bringing growth and renewal.

All elves of the Harrag hunt and gather, but they also garden, planting seeds, tending them, gathering seeds, and grafting plants in daily reverence to Laeralee, the Guardian Mother of all Daeree. They pray to her at dawn and dusk, and elders meditate in silent trance to receive guidance from her at every important decision-making. Her replies to the elves often come either immediately, in the appearance and behavior of forest creatures, or as visions she sends to them during their next daereth.

In addition to their worship of Laeralee, many elves are devoted to Damantha. This faith has led some to move from the relative safety and shelter of the Harrag into the wilds of the Mistcloak Forest. Here the devout of Lady Greenleaf use their divine spells to combat the surging, roiling dark pervading the forest.

MISTCLOAK FOREST

Population: Unknown (90% elf, 10% other)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: Lyx the Witchqueen (female elf [ghost] sorcerer 16)

Capital: None

Major Settlements: None

Language: Elven

Resources: Unknown

The Mistcloak Forest is filled with a dark and terrible evil that twists trees into black tangles of decaying roots and branches. Ropers and carnivorous plants abound. Though no Mournan is fully aware of the true nature of the Dark, it's a living remnant of spellcasters blasted in the raging magics of the Fall, melded together by fell enchantments into an insane, many-minded malevolent power at war with itself, corrupting all life around it. The elves of the Harrag, working in small bands or families, have made a life's work out of healing the Mistcloak, but thus far their influence has failed to shatter the Dark.

The elves on one side of Mistcloak, and the folk of Haunthills and Firelorn on the other, are aware of the bright hope of the Mistcloak: the handful of Damanthan glades scattered across the forest depths. Lady Greenleaf has taken a special interest in healing the forest, urging her clerics from all across Mournra to make pilgrimages to the Mistcloak to work on purifying small dells and individual trees. She has even imbued some of her divine essence into glades where springs rise deep in the Mistcloak.

These small, sharply-limited glades are lush wonders of faintly-glowing purity, filled with a sense of welcoming serenity by day and serving as safe havens by night. The forest's savage predators shun these glades, and their waters (by ingestion and immersion, even when carried out of the Mistcloak) can heal, regenerating flesh damage and banishing disease and poisons; the elves even believe these waters can return the unnaturally large creatures of the Harrag to normal, and restore other shapechanged beings to their true forms. No one is sure how or when these glades spring up, but legend has it that one appears whenever a highly devout cleric of Damantha dies fighting evil in the forest.

LYX, WITCHQUEEN OF MISTCLOAK FOREST

Female elf [ghost] (Chaotic Evil)

Medium undead (augmented humanoid) (incorporeal)

Sorcerer 16

HD 16d12

Init +3

CR 18

hp 148

Speed Fly 30 feet (perfect)

AC 26, touch 20, flat-footed 23 (manifested) or **AC** 22, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (ethereal)

BAB/Grapple +8/+8

Attack +10 melee (1d4+2/19–20, +2 *anarchic dagger*) or +13 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, +2 *anarchic dagger*)

Full Attack +10/+5 melee (1d4+2/19–20, +2 *anarchic dagger*) or +13 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, +2 *anarchic dagger*)

Senses Darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision; Listen +12, Spot +12

SA Corrupting gaze, malevolence, *telekinesis*

SQ Incorporeal traits, manifestation, moonglow (15 feet/30 feet), rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, undead traits

Fort +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12

Str 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 24

Languages Crown Tongue, Elven, Far Tongue, Gnoll, Sylvan, Varr

Crucial Skills Bluff +20, Concentration +18, Hide +5*, Intimidate +11, Listen +12, Search +12, Spot +12

Other Skills Craft (alchemy) +10, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Spellcraft +26, Survival +4

Crucial Feats Combat Casting, Eschew Materials

Other Feats Persuasive, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Spellcraft), Still Spell

Spells 6/8/8/8/7/7/7/6/3, save DC 17 + spell level, +8/+3 melee touch, +11/+6 ranged touch

8th—*create greater undead*

7th—*control undead, greater scrying*

6th—*create undead, geas/quest, mass suggestion*

5th—*dominate person, dream, mind fog, symbol of pain*

4th—*animate dead, bestow curse, lesser geas, scrying*

3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic, halt undead, suggestion*

2nd—*command undead, daze monster, detect thoughts, hypnotic pattern, resist energy*

1st—*cause fear, charm person, floating disk, hypnotism, unseen servant*

0—*arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, message, open/close, read magic, touch of fatigue*

Possessions +2 *anarchic dagger*, bracers of armor +6, ring of protection +3, crystal ball with telepathy

Corrupting Gaze (Su): Lyx can blast living beings with a glance at a range of up to 30 feet. Creatures meeting Lyx's gaze must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 25) or suffer 2d10 points of physical damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

Malevolence (Su): Once per round, Lyx can merge her body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability resembles a *magic jar* spell (caster level 16th) but does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, Lyx must be manifested and must try to move into the target's space (moving into the target's space to use this

HISTORY OF THE WITCHQUEEN

In days of old, these woods (collectively called the Mistcloak Forest) were the location of the Witchqueen Lyx's realm. Many say she lurks there to this day as a slyly advising, cruelly mocking voice on the wind that insinuates itself into men's minds as they sleep, working her will in the world by the deeds she drives them to do (no matter where they fare or dwell as the years pass), as much as she ever did by fell sorceries and her brutal darkhelm knights in life. What her purposes are now no one can say, though all assume them to be dark. The sages of Asmrel say she works to shatter thrones and bring down all rulership into chaos. With good reason, parents warn their sons setting forth to find fortunes in the wider world to "beware the whispers of Lyx."

ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity). The target can resist with a successful Will save (DC 22); a successful save means Lyx cannot enter the target's space, and the target is immune to Lyx's malevolence for 24 hours.

Manifestation (Su): Lyx always moves silently. When she manifests, she partly enters the Material Plane, becoming visible but incorporeal. When manifested, Lyx can readily be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons, or spells, but has a 50% chance to avoid any damage from a corporeal source. Even while manifested, Lyx can pass through solid objects at will (and her attacks pass through armor). When Lyx is not manifested and is on the Ethereal Plane, her spells cannot affect targets on the Material Plane, but work normally against ethereal targets. When she manifests, her spells continue to affect ethereal targets and can affect targets on the Material Plane normally except for spells relying on touch. Lyx's touch spells do not work on non-ethereal targets.

Telekinesis (Su): Lyx can use *telekinesis* as a standard action (CL 16th). When she uses this power, she must wait 1d4 rounds before using it again.

Rejuvenation (Su): If Lyx is destroyed, she reappears in 2d4 days somewhere in the Dark, having no spells but regaining 2d6 of them every day until fully whole again. Lyx will remain in the Mistcloak Forest until someone learns the details of her death during the Fall (Lyx herself is eager to speak of this to anyone who will listen) and brings evidence to her of the destruction of all of her slayers (she will unerringly know if any slayer remains alive or if evidence presented to her is mistaken or false). She died in the fighting of the Fall while trying to protect the Mistcloak forest. She seeks revenge against her slayers, but that revenge is unattainable for her killers dwell in other dimensions. When all her slayers are destroyed, Lyx will pass away, conferring her sorcerer abilities (the precise spells she can use daily with the ability to cast them, even to creatures who have no arcane spellcasting ability) upon her deliverers. If more than one surviving

creature was involved in destroying her slayers, her arcane ability will be distributed at random among them; if some of her deliverers perished but their remains are brought to her along with the evidence of the slayings, she will restore them to life by pouring her energies into them (each life restored randomly absorbs 6+1d4 of her arcane spells that won't be conferred upon her deliverers).

* Includes -10 moonglow penalty

FIRELORN

Population: 8,600 (85% human, 4% gnome, 4% half-elf, 2% dwarf, 2% halfling, 1% elf, 1% thaele, 1% other)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: Lord Duke Aummunast Ghelkor (male human fighter 4/expert 10)

Capital: Darroke

Major Settlements: Anath's Rock, Wathsembur

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Fish, olives, wool, wine

Just sekhovynd (south) of the Haunted Wood, the seaward reaches of an-aerho Mournra are cloven by many small, winding gorges that carry streams hurrying to find the waters of the Bay. Their slopes are often cloaked in vineyards and divide high meadows where sheep graze from the plentiful groves of olive-trees. This region is currently under the rule of the burly and scheming Aummunast Ghelkor, a one-time hiresword warrior and longtime wagon-trader whose throne seat is in Darroke.

The realm's name, Firelorn, comes from the legendary dragon slain there long ago (by valiant local warriors riding the backs of six dragon hatchlings who stretched sword-studded chains between them as they flew, using these weapons to entangle and lacerate the great wyrm).

This small kingdom's folk rely primarily on the plentiful fishing in Glamryn Bay for their livelihoods. Anath's Rock and Wathsembur are both successful fishing villages, home to roughly 800 and 500 humans respectively. Darroke, the capital



FIRELORNAN ADVENTURE HOOKS

GMs can use increasing Firelornan unrest to spur many adventures, especially intrigues aiming at overthrowing the Lord Duke.

- Folk in all three of Firelorn's major communities openly and vociferously oppose Ghelkor's taxes, growing in numbers, boldness, and violence. Tax collectors are beaten and robbed, and repeated attempts are made to pillage the Lord Duke's treasury vaults and troop pay-wagons.
- Nature-sensitive travelers sense watchful anger in Larrode Forest. The truly observant see unusual instances of beasts cooperating against hunters, drawing crude dirt maps of surrounding terrain, and conferring; they are preparing to erupt from the forest soon. They will begin with small raids designed to capture, slay, and devour everyone in a single farmhouse, seeking above all to make sure no one gets away to raise the alarm.
- Ghelkor's military buildup has outstripped the organizational authority of his chain of command. Mercenaries can get away with much (robbery, sheepstealing, and even murdering wayfarers and fellow soldiers for their coins), and those who can command capably and exhibit discipline can rise far and fast in the ranks.
- The Jamandran merchants' guild maintains undercover agents in the Firelornan army and villages. They actively oppose change by removing rabble-rousers. Those with useful skills are kidnapped by "outlaws," drugged, relocated to an-luthsurl Jamandar, and there "rescued" by kindly Jamandrans; those with little to offer are permanently removed.
- Worsening Mistcloak Forest beast raids alarm the Lord Duke, who takes to hiring adventurers to make forays into the forest to learn the strength of the monsters and blunt it. Not surprisingly, most of these bands don't return. Ghelkor's army commanders (aided and abetted by Jamandran spies) have started to steer particularly meddlesome or formidable adventurers into contact with the Lord Duke.

of Firelorn, is also a predominantly human town of some 4,000 folk. Beyond these settlements, farms and ranches dot the rolling grasslands. Given their reliance on fishing, farming, and ranching, it should be no surprise that the worship of Damantha and Munedra is common amongst the rural folk. Only small shrines to Damantha are present, but the Houses of Healing, a major temple to Munedra, is located in Darroke. Haelarr's worship has greatly increased since Ghelkor came to power. Firelornans are constantly reminded that "the strength of Haelarr makes everything possible," and the soldiers of the realm cleave almost exclusively to Haelarr's worship.

Though large forests hedge it in on all sides where there isn't sea, most of Firelorn is open, rolling grassland. The chief perils to the realm are the dark and twisted inhabitants of the Mistcloak Forest—bands of undead and fell beasts often raid out of the Mistcloak by night, returning to its depths before sunrise. In response to these threats, Ghelkor maintains an army too large (nearly 1,000 soldiers) for the yearly taxes he collects but continues to hire more outlanders into its ranks. He supplements his own taxes with funds from the grieving, widowed Lady of Baerent (Nuthlore Baerenthur), who has agreed to accept his proffered protection of her realm. Mounted Firelornan patrols range up and down the verges of the Mistcloak Forest, from the an-sarrind (northernmost) reaches of the Baerent lands to Anath's Rock on the coast. Stout log forts stand near Warhorn Well and just outside Anath's Rock; each has a hiring hall welcoming all who are willing to fight under the Lord Duke's banner (a streaming pennant of scarlet surmounting a streaming pennant of flame-orange). Along with the terrors from the Mistcloak Forest, there's a long-standing feud between the armies of Haunthills and Firelorn, marked by stealthy killings, horse-thefts, and arrow-sniping. This hasn't yet led to open battle, but it's coming; tempers flare whenever patrols of the two realms meet.

Behind its vigilant patrols, Firelorn is a pleasant, prosperous land. Vineyards cloak many of its gentle slopes, and lush olive groves fill the valleys. Farmers are dedicated and hard-working, and their farms thrive. Firelornan wines (notably the sweet, light white Aradue and the thick, oaken reds known as Darshaws) are superb and much in demand across Castlemourn. Olives and their oil are traded briskly with Jamandar. Sarthen (sheep) ranchers work the steepest, rockiest slopes, and Firelornan wool sells everywhere (even to the elves of the Harrag, who also trade for Aradue).

A hearty trencherman who hates fish and understands little about coins beyond how to spend them, Lord Duke Ghelkor barely taxes his

farmers and ranchers, so they grow and prosper while the fisherfolk and shopkeepers suffer under heavy taxation. Seeking to keep olive, wool, and wine prices low, the attentive merchants' guild of Jamandar actively works to maintain this state of affairs. They thank, praise, and financially support the Lord Duke, while the Firelornan fisherfolk smolder, particularly when they hear tales of luxurious staghunting dalliances in the Larrode to the sarrind (north) where Ghelkor courts the Lady Dusking, the lovely Nuthlore Baerenthur.

AUMMUNAST GHELKOR, LORD DUKE OF FIRELORN

Male human (Chaotic Neutral)

Fighter 4/expert 10

CR 13

HD 4d10+12 + 10d6+30

hp 123

Init +0

Speed 20 feet

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21

BAB/Grapple +11/+13

Attack +15 melee (1d8+5/17–20, +1 *keen longsword*), or +14 melee (1d4+2/19–20, masterwork dagger), or +13 ranged (1d10+2/19–20, +2 *flaming heavy crossbow*)

Full Attack +15/+10/+5 melee (1d8+5/17–20, +1 *keen longsword*), or +14/+9/+4 melee (1d4+2/19–20, masterwork dagger) or +13/+8/+3 ranged (1d10+2/19–20, +2 *flaming heavy crossbow*)

Senses Listen +9, Spot +13

SA N/A

SQ 25% resistance to critical hits (+1 *light fortification light steel shield*)

Fort +10, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Str 15, **Dex** 11, **Con** 16, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 15

Languages Dandarr, Far Tongue, Gadroar, Halfling

Crucial Skills Balance –5*, Bluff +15, Climb +3*, Escape Artist –5*, Hide –5*, Intimidate +15, Jump +3*, Listen +9, Move Silently –5*, Search +3, Sense Motive +14, Spot +13

Other Skills Appraise +15, Diplomacy +16, Forgery +12, Gather Information +13, Handle Animal +9, Knowledge (local) +12, Profession (merchant) +9, Ride +7, Swim –3*

Crucial Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm

Other Feats Alertness, Endurance, Negotiator, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Appraise), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Possessions +1 *keen longsword*, masterwork dagger, +2 *flaming heavy crossbow*, 20 bolts, +2 *banded mail*, +2 *light fortification light steel shield*, *amulet of health* +2, 3 *potions of cure serious wounds*, *potion of lesser restoration*, *potion of resist energy (fire)* 10

* Includes armor check penalty

BAERENT

Population: 7,500 (90% human, 4% halfling, 3% half-elf, 2% gnome, 1% other)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: Lady Nuthlore Baerenthur (female human sorcerer 9/aristocrat 5)

Capital: Warhorn Well

Major Settlements: None

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Grain, livestock, produce

The cool, curvaceous, and enigmatic Lady Baerenthur is the widow of Nestarl Baerenthur, and her large estates now make up most of sarrind Firelorn. Before Lord Nestarl's death in the Ninth of the Drusthorn, those estates and the marketmoot of Warhorn Well, just to their sekhovynd, made up the independent realm of Baerent. The grieving Nuthlore accepted Ghelkor's offer of protection if she joined his realm but has thus far resisted his attempts to claim her person. Firelornans and Baerentaen are similarly civil but guarded in their dealings with each other.

Baerent is a land of hundreds of farms, its rolling hills covered with small steadings. Something in the magical battles of the Fall left the soil supernaturally rich; local crops seemingly grow twice as fast and with significantly larger yields than in the rest of Mournra (making Baerentaen prosperous despite their relative lack of gold, silver, or magic). Merchants often sadly observe that Baerentaen seeds never seem to grow as well elsewhere. Most of the realm is either sown with crops or given over to grazing lands for livestock. Fittingly, Baerentaen and their ruler, the Lady Dusking, worship the goddess Damantha.

Baerentaen are unusually tall folk, often topping seven feet or more. Always eager for news from afar, they welcome strangers with open arms—and often with a hearty plate of food. They're simple folk, content with farming "the best land anywhere, beloved of the gods;" rarely does a son or daughter of these lands turn to a

life of adventure and travel. Baerentaen live close to the land, in tune with its ways and cycles, and are naturals to become rangers. As the land lacks ores, there are no mines in Baerent, but the realm musters many accomplished sculptors, stonemasons, and woodcarvers. Baerentaen tend to be calm, wise, slow to anger, and capable of occasional, remarkable feats of peaceful strength (such as single-handedly lifting loaded wagons so broken wheels can be replaced, halting runaway horses with their bare hands, or bending bent iron tools straight); a farmer doing such a thing will later become very sleepy and staggeringly weak, sleeping for much of a day (awakening unhurt and back to normal).

Farmsteads line the wagon-roads that wander all over the realm, but Baerent has only one true town: Warhorn Well, home to 2,000 folk who would rather craft wood and stone than farm—and 500 very bored Firelornan soldiers garrisoned here to defend Baerent against raids from the Mistcloak Forest (which are rare in Baerent but frequent in Firelorn).

The forces from Firelorn are also present, Baerentaen grumble, "to slowly and quietly conquer us while they help their spineless Lord Duke try to win the heart of Our Lady, who's not such a fool as to fall for the likes of him for all his handsome bluster!" Their fears are well-founded; courtiers in Firelorn and elsewhere in Mournra now consider Baerent a sarrind province of Firelorn, rather than an independent realm. Firelorn could militarily seize Baerent overnight—or upon any night of the Lord Duke's choosing—but Ghelkor truly wants the love (and fears the sorcery) of the widowed Lady Baerenthur, who welcomes his company yet coolly keeps him at bay.

Baerent has always been ruled by the Baerenthurs, a line of vigorous kings, and though the Lady Nuthlore Baerenthur is the rightful ruler, Baerentaen expect her to remarry, so they can have a king to rule "properly" once again. Whoever marries Nuthlore will take the Baerenthur

COUNTRYSIDE OF BAERENT

The very countryside of Baerent is enchanted, a strong, protective magic that manifests constantly in many odd, usually minor, ways. Plants of all sorts grow with astonishing speed, and the land seems to actively protect native-born beings. Intruders, invaders, and outlanders visiting Baerent with ill intent often trip on inconvenient roots and outcroppings and are beset with duststorms and harmful weather (from inopportune gusts of wind to lightning strikes). The realm seems to mirror Nuthlore's mood: the sun shining brightly when she is happy, fog and gloom marking her sadnesses, and storms rising when she is angry. She knows this and tries to stay cheerful (deriving pleasure from her flirtations with Ghelkor of Firelorn despite her well-hidden personal distaste for him and her anger at his persistent, grasping blandishments and expectations), fearing that terrible storms will destroy crops and farms if her mood turns dark. When she sleeps, outlanders who are also asleep in Baerent sometimes share, as visions, some of the memories and fictions of Nuthlore's dreams and may learn surprising things.

name, and their heirs will be considered fullblood members of House Baerenthur (courtiers, the clergy of Damantha, and Lady Baerenthur have seen to that, firmly rooting the belief in their people). Lady Baerenthur is a skilled diplomat; even before her husband's death, she surrounded herself with a capable court of sages and advisors to aid and guide in the rule of Baerent.

Some Mournans say Ghelkor romances Baerenthur rather than simply wedding and slaying her (so as to gain her lands and wealth) because the Lady Baerenthur is a sorceress, having both minor magics enough to defend her person and some magical means—a talking, floating skull, most tales say, though there's some disagreement on just what sort of ancient item she possesses—of communicating swiftly and privately with the ruler of the Lordland of Haunthills, immediately to the sarrind.

NUTHLORE BAERENTHUR, THE LADY DUSKING OF BAERENT Female human (Chaotic Neutral)

Sorcerer 9/aristocrat 5

CR 13

HD 9d4+9 + 5d8+5

hp 59

Init +2

Speed 30 feet

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 16

BAB/Grapple +7/+6

Attack +7 melee (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork dagger) or +10 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow)

Full Attack +7/+2 melee (1d4–1/19–20, masterwork dagger) or +10 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow)

Senses Listen +5, Spot +5

SA Spells

SQ Summon familiar

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +12

Str 9, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 17, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 21

Languages Crown Tongue, Draconic, Elven, Far Tongue

Crucial Skills Bluff +15, Concentration +13, Intimidate +10, Listen +5, Sense Motive +14, Spot +5

Other Skills Appraise +5, Diplomacy +21, Gather Information +15, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +9, Ride +3, Spellcraft +17

Crucial Feats Augment Summoning, Greater Spell Penetration, Spell Focus (conjunction), Spell Penetration

Other Feats Brew Potion, Negotiator

Spells 6/8/7/7/5, save DC 15 + spell level (+1 conjunction), +6 melee touch, +9 ranged touch

4th—*stoneskin*, *summon monster IV*

3rd—*gaseous form*, *hold person*, *summon monster III*

2nd—*acid arrow*, *invisibility*, *summon monster II*, *web*

1st—*mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *summon monster I*

0—*arcane mark*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Possessions Masterwork dagger, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts, *bracers of armor* +4, *ring of protection* +2, *bracelet of friends* (one charm is keyed to Daeren Tarmor, Lord of Haunthills), *silver raven figurine of wondrous power*

HAUNTHILLS

Population: 43,000 (60% human, 12% halfling, 10% gnome, 6% elf, 4% half-elf, 4% thaele, 4% other)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: Lord Tarmor (male thaele rogue 17)

Capital: Orlsgate

Major Settlements: Glusgar, Owltree

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Lumber, mushrooms, nuts

Lord Daeren Tarmor rules Haunthills from the walled city of Orlsgate, where he keeps both his ruling seat and two armies: a small force of heavily-armed and armored warriors known as the Skarnhelms (*skarn* means “watchful” in the Crown Tongue) and a much larger one of spies and merchant traders under duress. Most of these latter Watchful of Tarmor owe the Lord of Haunthills large sums, and thus must from time to time do his bidding in small, discreet acts such as carrying messages or payments, hiding and transporting other agents, and conveying poisons or contraband to certain persons in Firelorn and elsewhere.

Orlsgate, home to 22,000 inhabitants split evenly between all the major races, stands in an-*sekhovynd* (southernmost) Haunthills in an arm of land that runs *sekhovynd* around the luthsurl end of the Larrode Forest to descend halfway down the luthsurl border of Firelorn. To the *sekhovynd* of Orlsgate lies the great Marsh of Mists—the Raedranth—with its deadly, wagon-swallowing, sucking bogs and its slithering whisperlips. The Raedranth stretches for miles, from Orl Wood *sekhovynd* to Glamryn Bay, and although there are many legends of secret ways across its stinking, insect-haunted fens, no man can safely count on traversing it. As such, Firelorn's access to overland trade (via the Thaalride) depends on free passage through Orlsgate—and hence continued peace. Of course, both Firelornans and Hauntrans, if speaking in ungarded or overly trusting moments, will admit that the longstanding peace between Firelorn and Haunthills seems to involve many stealthy stabbings and disappearances of persons suspected of being agents of either Ghelkor or Tarmor.

HAUNTHILLS PORTALS

Though pleasant to the eye, this land is extremely wild. Dire creatures of all types are native to Haunthills and have a strange tendency to appear and disappear, especially by day. This is due to *portals*, which spontaneously appear and vanish again amidst the trees throughout the Haunthills. The wild Hauntran creatures neither create nor control these translocations, but are often plucked from one place in the realm to another (it's very rare for Hauntran *portals* to connect to any other region of Mournra). A visitor to the realm who enters a stand of trees or wood in Haunthills has a 20% chance every round of having a *portal* open close by (this chance increases to 50% if she is carrying a magic item). Opening *portals* are heralded by a sudden bluish cast and a melting, wavering look to the air; creatures feel a faint tugging or sucking, pulling them towards the *portal*. Unless unable to move, they can easily move so as to avoid being taken by a *portal* or just cling to a tree. (An opening *portal* often disgorges one or more creatures, which may well attack anyone they see. Most wild Hauntran creatures have been caught in many *portals* before and aren't afraid or disoriented by the experience; if the opening *portal* reveals a foe or potential prey, their reactions will be immediate.) Hauntran *portals* are uncontrollable, and lead to unknown, random destinations; if a creature caught in one is carrying magic, that particular *portal* seldom takes the individual very far before opening again to expel him. Hauntran *portals* usually carry one or two creatures at a time, but they seem capable of translocating up to two dozen beings at once, if the beings are closely grouped together.

Haunthills itself is a wooded, largely wild realm of hunters, smallhold farmers, and woodcutters. The hunting is good but dangerous, and the longbow is a favorite weapon amongst Hauntrans who keep their skills sharp with frequent archery contests during feasts and holidays. Prowling monsters are common. Outlaws flee into its green fastnesses to hide from pursuing death, and wagonloads of nuts and the fleshy, human-torso-sized edible mushrooms known as kleefae rumble out of its remote reaches to the markets of Orlsgate. Outlaws have in the past been bold enough to openly rule the Hauntran settlements of Owltree and Glusgar, but Lord Tarmor—a shrewd, ruthless, ordinary-looking and quiet man, whose only appearance of formidability is his colorless eyes—now rules Haunthills as firmly as rulers having thrice his coins and five times his warriors at their command.

Primarily a land of tiny hamlets and farmsteads, Orlsgate is considered a bustling metropolis by most Hauntrans. The next largest city, Glusgar, is home to 5,000 humans and 2,000 elves, gnomes, and halflings. The only other village of any size (population 900 humans) is Owltree. Surprisingly, the populace of Orlsgate includes many merchant golaunt, who work the caravan runs between the city and their native Yarhoon.

This tolerance—and a rise in theatrical entertainments, fashions, dance, and “mock courtships” (elaborate dalliances, undertaken for mutual entertainment, involving gifts)—are due to the influence of the charismatic Lord Tarmor. Since his recent rise to power, thaele have prospered in Haunthills. Tarmor doesn't allow temples in the realm—existing temples were rebuilt into orphanages and homes for the sick and “halt” (disabled folk)—but does allow clerics of all orders

to preach as they will in the inns and taverns of every community. Clergy can camp together to confer and tend the sick, but they must not preach in such camps or keep a camp in one place for more than twelve nights.

DAEREN TARMOR, LORD OF HAUNTHILLS Male thaele (Chaotic Neutral)

Rogue 17 **CR 17**
HD 17d6+34 **hp** 117
Init +7 **Speed** 30 feet

AC 25, touch 17, flat-footed 25

BAB/Grapple +12/+15

Attack +17 melee (1d6+5/19–20, +2 short sword) or
+16 ranged (1d4+4/19–20, +1 dagger of distance)

Full Attack +17/+12/+7 melee (1d6+5/19–20, +2
short sword) or +16/+11/+6 ranged (1d4+4/19–
20, +1 dagger of distance)

Senses Low-light vision; Listen +11, Spot +11

SA Blood thirst, sneak attack +9d6

SQ Accursed aura (5 feet), defensive roll, evasion,
improved evasion, improved uncanny dodge,
thaele traits, slippery mind, trap sense +5,
trapfinding, uncanny dodge

Fort +11, **Ref** +17, **Will** +10

Str 17, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Languages Crown Tongue, Far Tongue, Halfling,
Thaelen, Vrrar

Crucial Skills Balance +12, Bluff +23, Hide +18 (+28
with *ring of chameleon power*), Intimidate +24,
Jump +5, Listen +11, Move Silently +18, Search
+13, Sense Motive +18, Spot +11, Tumble +12

Other Skills Appraise +12, Diplomacy +25, Disguise
+9, Forgery +15, Gather Information +20,
Knowledge (local) +18, Open Lock +13, Sleight
of Hand +15, Use Magic Device +11, Use Rope +8

Crucial Feats N/A

Other Feats Improved Initiative, Leadership (24), Negotiator, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Intimidate)

Possessions *Tellanis* (luck blade [+2 short sword], 1 wish remaining), +1 dagger of distance, +2 mithril shirt, ring of protection +4, ring of chameleon power, amulet of natural armor +2, cloak of resistance +4, wand of cure serious wounds (23 charges), wand of dispel magic (42 charges), wand of magic missile (CL 9th, 36 charges)

Cohort Skarnhelm Commander Suldrin Nuskroun (Ftr 10/Rog 5)

Followers The Skarnhelms (90 1st-level fighters, eight 2nd-level fighters, four 3rd-level fighters, two 4th-level fighters, and one 5th-level fighter) and Tarmor's personal spies (20 1st-level rogues, four 2nd-level rogues, two 3rd-level rogues, one 4th-level rogue, one 5th-level rogue, and one 6th-level rogue)

* Includes armor check penalty

JAMANDAR

Population: 120,000 (90% human, 3% gnome, 3% halfling, 2% elf, 1% half-elf, 1% other)

Government: Monarchy

Rulers: Lady Balastaera Glassfeather (female human aristocrat 3/expert 4) and Lord Martial Dlezendor Harroen (male human fighter 14/aristocrat 2)

Capital: Windhollow Rise

Major Settlements: Yarnar's Well, Thaentree

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Edible tubers, livestock

To the luthsurl of Haunthills, the land opens out into broad fields fenced with stones and stumps and crisscrossed by meandering dirt lanes. The forests here are smaller but numerous, and ponds and short streams are abundant. This is Jamandar, famous for the plentiful annual harvests of raudeeks (radishes), dalclaws (parsnips), and earthfists

(potatoes) which find their way onto Mournan tables in the form of wines as well as solid food. The boar that roam wild in Haunthills have been domesticated in Jamandar and bred for their flesh. Jamandrans never have empty bellies or need pay high coin for a meal.

Jamandar is more populous than many Mournan lands, but almost all of its folk dwell under the cloak of smallhold farms that cover almost the entire realm, rather than clustering around mills and lane-moots. Beyond the throne town (a thriving, predominantly human community of 90,000), the waymoots of Yarnar's Well (a town of 3,000, best known as a trading crossroads whose warehouses are filled with goods from all over Mournra), and Thaentree (an off-the-road farming center; home to a market, many butchers, several tanneries, and 1,000 humans), a traveler consulting a map will see no Jamandran villages.

Though there's a longstanding tradition in Castlemourn of deriding Jamandrans as fat, happy, somewhat lazy, dung-witted farmers, most Mournans speak such sentiments with caution (save when moved beyond caution by rage or drink), because Jamandar is the birthplace of many of the merchant traders who wander Mournra. More than a few of these waymasters are swift with their fists or blades. Jamandar has an old tradition of small, private schools of the sword where retired warriors teach local youths, whose parents have enough coin, true mastery of the blade. "As deadly as a sword of Jamandar" is a phrase still widely used across Castlemourn when speaking of beasts, persons, and deeds truly dangerous. Indeed, many believe that it is the prevailing worship of Ralaroar that lends Jamandrans such fierce pride and quick blades.

As a people, Jamandrans share a passion for dueling (not as bloodletting but as a debonair sport of nimble blades, personal style, and repartee; in other words, acrobatic exercise, blade-skill, and entertainment for onlookers). They sometimes use

JAMANDRAN MERCHANTS' GUILD

The merchants' guild is a mystery to most outlanders. Locally, its work is practical; through guild dues, it provides warehousing, harvesting, and wagon use (to cut costs for all). Yet, covertly, it does far more: spying for the courtiers who advise the Lord and Lady and, occasionally, carrying out these courtiers' orders (to steal or examine an outland merchant's wares, delay him, or prevent him from accomplishing certain things). Neighboring lands are to be kept as favorable to Jamandran trade as possible, and the attitudes of their folk friendly to Jamandrans by spreading rumors and providing aid where such gestures will be seen and widely remembered. Competitors are to be watched closely—and sometimes harmed. Senior guild merchants obey the courtiers so as to keep Jamandar's trading strong. Jamandrans generally appear easygoing and content, but miss little that outlanders (particularly adventurers) do in their land.

Most of them are skilled swordsmen and enjoy wagering.

duels to settle scores and disagreements but only duel to win respect, coerce, or slay others when dealing with outlanders.

Jamandar enjoys the rule of a Lord Martial and a Lady of the Land who are not husband and wife (though some have been known to carry on romances with each other). The Lady is a hereditary position belonging to the large and fertile Glassfeather family. Bearers of this title tend to be fat and jovial women of great practicality and strength; the current Lady, Balastaera Glassfeather, stands taller than most large warriors and has been seen to turn and stop a trotting horse by hauling hard on its bridle with one hand. More shrewd than she looks, Balastaera subtly manipulates the incumbent Lord Martial, Dlezendor Harroen.

The Lady of the Land oversees domestic justice, the health of the land, the tending of crops, livestock, and people, and the activities of the merchants' guild. The Lord Martial (officially her champion and equal) is the defender of the realm, in charge of enforcing its laws and defending the citizenry. While most Lords Martial are younger than the matronly Glassfeather women they serve with, Harroen, having served the realm with Jhalaera (Balastaera's predecessor), is the more experienced ruler and Balastaera occasionally turns to him for council. He commands the small (and considered comical by Mournans well out of its reach, who see the Jamandarswords as a bunch of grossly fat, bumbling farmers wearing mismatched and clanking relics of ancient hand-me-down armor; a mistaken impression gained from observing local farmers contesting in jousts at feasts) Jamandran army from the throne town, Windhollow Rise. The town is named for the large whaleback hill that stands like a sheltering wall immediately to its sarrind, crowned by the squat, massive, and ancient ramparts and turrets of the Lord-and-Lady-House. ("Hills" appears in Mournan nomenclature almost exclusively as a collective term; individual hills are almost always known as "rises.")

While Ralaroar's worship dominates and centers on many small temples and shrines throughout the realm, major temples to three other gods are also located in Jamandar. The tall spires of the Just Throne, a temple of Amaunt, are prominent features of Windhollow Rise. Fallentree Rise in sarrind Jamandar is home to the Grassgreen House (Damantha), and one of the largest temples to Larlasse is located at Shadow Rise, not far sarrind of the capital.

The Lady and Lord of Jamandar hold four annual tournaments of the sword, one on each of the Jamandran high religious holidays—Coinrain, Fiercefend, Fangward, and Swordfire. Blades come

from across Jamandar (and other realms, too) to test their skills at these "breakblade tourneys."

The long, rocky cliffs of the Stoneshield form the sekhovynd boundary of Jamandar, falling sharply six hundred feet or more to a rocky, inhospitable strip of coastland known as the Foreshore. The haunt of fisherfolk, outlaws, and merchant traders, the Foreshore is no realm but rather a collection of independent (and largely lawless) ports, both large and small.

BALASTAERA GLASSFEATHER, LADY OF THE LAND OF JAMANDAR Female human (Neutral Good)

Aristocrat 3/expert 4

CR 6

HD 3d8+3 + 4d6+4

hp 45

Init +0

Speed 30 feet

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 14

BAB/Grapple +5/+8

Attack +9 melee (1d4+4 plus 1d6 cold/19–20, +1 *frost dagger*) or +6 ranged (1d4+4 plus 1d6 cold/19–20, +1 *frost dagger*)

Senses Listen +9, Spot +7

SA N/A

SQ N/A

Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +10

Str 16, **Dex** 11, **Con** 12, **Int** 17, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

Languages Far Tongue, Halfling, Vvarr

Crucial Skills Bluff +12*, Intimidate +8*, Listen +9, Search +6, Sense Motive +9, Spot +7, Use Magic Device +12*

Other Skills Appraise +9, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +18*, Gather Information +17*, Heal +15, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +8, Profession (herbalist) +8, Spellcraft +8, Survival +5

Crucial Feats N/A

Other Feats Great Fortitude, Self-Sufficient, Skill Focus (Gather Information), Skill Focus (Heal)

Possessions *Frostfang* (+1 *frost dagger*), *amulet of armor* +2, *ring of protection* +2, *circlet of persuasion*, 4 *potions of cure light wounds*, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, 2 *potions of invisibility*, *wand of detect magic* (30 charges), *wand of light* (22 charges), *wand of magic missile* (CL 5th, 28 charges)

* Includes +3 competence bonus on Charisma-based checks from her *circlet of persuasion*

DLEZENDOR HARROEN, LORD MARTIAL OF JAMANDAR Male human (Lawful Good)

Fighter 14/aristocrat 2

CR 15

HD 14d10+42 + 2d8+6

hp 167

Init +9

Speed 20 feet

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (never flat-footed while holding *Mandranna*)

BAB/Grapple +15/+19

Attack +22 melee (1d8+8/19–20, +2 *longsword*) or +20 ranged (1d10+3/17–20, +3 *heavy crossbow*)

Full Attack +22/+17/+12 melee (1d8+8/19–20, +2 *longsword*) or +20 ranged (1d10+3/17–20, +3 *heavy crossbow*)

Senses Listen +4, Spot +5

SA N/A

SQ Electricity resistance (10)

Fort +12, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

Str 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 17, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

Languages Far Tongue, Halfling

Crucial Skills Balance –4*, Bluff +9, Climb +5*, Intimidate +16, Jump +5*, Listen +4, Search +8, Sense Motive +5, Spot +5

Other Skills Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +9, Handle Animal +10, Knowledge (local) +6, Ride +11, Swim +12**

Crucial Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload (heavy crossbow)

Other Feats Improved Critical (heavy crossbow), Improved Initiative, Investigator, Leadership (21), Persuasive, Weapon Focus (heavy crossbow), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Possessions *Mandranna* (+2 *longsword*; grants +4 competency bonus to initiative and wielder is never caught flat-footed when the blade is worn or held), +3 *heavy crossbow*, 20 bolts, +2 *electricity resistance* (10) *full plate*, +2 *light steel shield*, *ring of the ram*, *ring of swimming*, 3 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, 2 *potions of neutralize poison*

Cohort Kylandra Hardhorn (Ftr 2/Rog12)

Followers Jamandarswords, the militia (60 1st-level fighters, six 2nd-level fighters, three 3rd-level fighters, two 4th-level fighters, one 5th-level fighter, and one 6th-level fighter)

* Includes armor check penalty

** Includes armor check penalty and bonus from his *ring of swimming*

FORESHORE

Population: 127,000 (65% human, 10% dwarf, 7% gnome, 6% golaunt, 4% half-elf, 4% halfling, 2% elf, 1% thaele, 1% other)

Government: Oligarchy

Ruler: Thusker Orlin (male dwarf buccaneer 10/wizard 12)

Capital: Thamral

Major Settlements: Nighdal (independent city), Endeluth, Maerlur, Marag's Pool, Stormstay, and Warhorn Rock (ports)

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Fish, mercenaries, ships

Travelers to the Foreshore will find a string of small fishing villages, each ruled by a council of elders who name a "thorm" (a headlord) to hire mercenaries for defense when needed. Collectively known as the Coves, from aerho to luthsurl, these settlements are: Warhorn Rock, Endeluth, Marag's Pool, Stormstay, and Maerlur. The Coves are very much alike—small shore-edge villages each home to approximately 240 humans with an additional 200 gnomes, dwarves, and halflings. These villages are dominated by their docks and small shipyards. All of the villages maintain at least one ship for defense, and many of them have one or more arcane spellcasters among their crews. Many buccaneers and out-and-out pirates call at the Foreshore ports, so long as they pay all tariffs (and make special payments [bribes] to the dockmasters who board and inspect all ships on the docks, even the most notorious seacaptains can expect to sail free).

Between Marag's Pool and Stormstay stands the larger city-state of Thamral and luthsurl of Maerlur stands the old, crumbling port city of Nighdal. Bustling Thamral is a hilly, sprawling city of 85,000 folk; it changes rulers often and was long ago described as a "boiling cauldron of intrigue, drunken sailors with drawn knives, and ruthless swindlers who skulk from alley to backdoor manipulating those swift-to-stab seadogs"—words that capture its character even today. Thamral is also the site of two major temples—the House of the Fist (Amaunt) located within the city and the Rock of Storms (Araugh) situated at the mouth of the harbor. Nighdal is an old, rotting, mist-shrouded place that's said to be haunted by strange magics, human-devouring monsters worshiped by local cults or imprisoned in long-forgotten enchantments that are beginning to fail, and wizards whose minds long ago crumbled away and who now meddle in things that may well doom all Castlemourn. Whatever dark truths lurk behind the spoiled public face of Nighdal, mists certainly cling to it when natural sea fogs should be driven away by the winds.

Many small, perilous, and meandering pack-trails ascend the Stoneshield from the Foreshore. The banditry that used to plague all such routes has lessened markedly since the white-haired former seacaptain (turned ruthless, brooding wizard) Thusker Orlin became Sealord of Thamral and sent slaying spells after most of the outlaws who dared to attack travelers on the trails. Styling himself "The Shorelord," Orlin also sent envoys, maroon-cloaked, ruthless ex-adventurers and pirates to the thorms and elders of the other ports, giving them

NIGHDAL, CITY OF SECRETS

Nighdal is an old, crumbling, mist-shrouded stone port reeking of evil. Its odd-angled buildings and city wall are broken in many places, and more than a few mansions and foundries have been abandoned to rats, snakes, and worse. Some of these ruins glow eerily at night—when most citizens keep behind bars and shutters, abandoning the streets to smugglers, adventurers, and the creatures that feed on them, leaving large tracks on the beaches or flapping overhead in the darkness (some adventures swear that leering demons have swooped low over them).

Nighdal lacks a master, wardens, navy, or swords; no one patrols its streets or guards its gates. What little order the city has comes from armed mobs led out of taverns by men offered coin to quell troubles. The Prowltowers, one of the three major temples of Ralaroar in all of Castlemourn, is located here, attracting all manner of men, half-men, and beasts but providing little guidance or order to the city. What little rulership there is comes from the clerics of the ebony-hued stone temples to Larlasse and Damantha, who represent dark aspects of those goddesses worshiped with blood and flame and preach cruel sermons promising harsh punishments to any disobeying their commandments. Everyone knows the darker, more bloodthirsty cults meet deep in city ruins by night to enact even bloodier worship.

Despite its ever-present air of menace and slithering harbor monsters, Nighdal is a working port, and home to some 40,000 folk who deal in curios and concoctions (drugs, scents, cure-alls, lubricants, and intoxicants) they make from cargoes of fungi, fish, and plants brought from the Iron Isles. Nighdal is the place to buy caged monsters or trained war dogs (or stranger guardian beasts) and seek outlaws, treasure maps, or wizards who dabble in death magics. Nighdal is where monsters hide their inhumanity behind masks, sleeves may cover tentacles instead of hands, and folk often just disappear.

The city has become a haven for slavers, powerful wizards and sorcerers seeking to work experiments too dark to pursue elsewhere, and the undead such experiments sometimes create. It is home to intrigues, mysteries, and the crawling evil of summoned horrors in enough abundance to fill years of adventuring.

the choice of becoming Orlin's allies—or corpses. It should be noted that Orlin takes no action against brigands who stab, swindle, or beat senseless folk in the ports of the Foreshore—and takes no action whatsoever against Nighdal or even mentions its existence. Thamrites have seen him fly into rages and spell-slay those who persisted in mentioning the city to him or proposed expeditions thereto; some folk believe he fears provoking something that slumbers (or broods, very much awake) therein.

There is gossip that the Shorelord holds secret meetings with mysterious "Others" who advise him, give him orders—or both. Some say these "Others" are wealthy Foreshore merchants, while others insist they're vile outlanders—still others swear they're monsters in human guise.

THUSKER ORLIN, SEALORD OF THAMRAL

Male human (Neutral Evil)

Buccaneer 10/wizard 12

CR 22

HD 10d8+20 + 12d4+24

hp 140

Init +2

Speed 30 feet

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 27

BAB/Grapple +16/+19

Attack +22 melee (1d6+5 plus 1 Constitution damage/15–20, +2 *keen starmetal scimitar of wounding*) or +21 ranged (1d8+3/19–20, +3 *light crossbow*)

Full Attack +22/+17/+12/+7 melee (1d6+5 plus 1

Constitution damage/15–20, +2 *keen starmetal scimitar of wounding*) or +21/+16/+11/+6 ranged (1d8+3/19–20, +3 *light crossbow*)

Senses Listen +5, Spot +10

SA Acrobatic charge, drop attack, improved scrap fighting, throw weapon

SQ Familiar, great leap, improved uncanny dodge, rapid climb, roll with the blow, uncanny dodge

Fort +9, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 22, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 10

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Crown Tongue, Draconic, Far Tongue, Gadroar, Infernal

Crucial Skills Bluff +13, Climb +11, Concentration +16, Intimidate +22, Jump +13, Listen +5, Sense Motive +8, Spot +10, Tumble +5

Other Skills Craft (alchemy) +15, Decipher Script +18, Diplomacy +8, Forgery +13, Gather Information +13, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (geography) +14, Profession (sailor) +13, Spellcraft +20, Swim +13

Crucial Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Expertise^B, Dodge, Improved Feint, Mobility, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload (light crossbow)

Other Feats Craft Wand, Deceitful, Epic Reputation, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll^B, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Spells 4/6/6/5/4/4/3, save DC 16 + spell level, +19/+14/+9/+4 melee touch, +18/+13/+8/+3 ranged touch

- 6th—*disintegrate*, maximized *fireball*, quickened *protection from arrows*
 5th—*dimension door*, *fear*, quickened *magic missile*, *phantasmal killer*
 4th—*baleful polymorph*, *cloudkill*, *cone of cold*, maximized *magic missile*
 3rd—*blink*, *dispel magic*, *fly*, *vampiric touch*, *wind wall*
 2nd—*detect thoughts*, *flaming sphere*, *glitterdust*, *levitate*, *spider climb*, *web*
 1st—*animate rope*, *endure elements*, *magic missile* (x2), *reduce person*, *shocking grasp*
 0—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*

Possessions Jezzraele (+2 keen starmetal scimitar of wounding), +3 light crossbow, 20 bolts, bracers of armor +8, ring of force shield, ring of protection +4, amulet of natural armor +3, boots of teleportation, cloak of the manta ray, wand of hold person (CL 3rd; 20 charges), wand of lightning bolt (CL 8th; 23 charges), wand of magic missile (CL 9th; 45 charges)

THE DEBATABLE LANDS:

TANTANTHAR, LOTHRAN, ORMSCAR, & IRONFELL

The slow, broad, meandering, and barge-navigable (as high as the rock-studded falls at Lhoadur) River Semphril forms the luthsurl borders of Jamandar and the Foreshore (where it sweeps around the end of the Stoneshield to find Glamryn Bay at the port of Sardulkin) and also marks the aerho border of three small, strife-haunted realms: Tantanthar on the shores of the Bay, the Grand Duchy of Lothran immediately to its sarrind, and Ormscar of the Many Rises an-sarrind of all. Sages and merchants collectively refer to them as “the Debatable Lands.”

The boundary between Tantanthar and Lothran is the infamous Stormstars Wood, a thick forest of old, gnarled, blackleaf trees that cloaks many stream-carved gorges descending the steep slopes between Lothran and Tantanthar. It is said to be the home of many fey creatures, unquiet magic, and powers that snatch and swallow overbold wayfarers—whisking them far across Mournra, or sending them to fates unknown, forever gone from the gazes of Mournans.

The boundary between Lothran and Ormscar is the deep, cold, star-mirroring Ildrakewater, a lake



with depths said to hold all manner of monsters (from serpents that snatch fisherfolk from boats and devour them in the deeps to fell creatures that can take the shape of beautiful humans ashore—for years if need be—impersonating those they’ve dragged down beneath the surface and slain in night raids). Over the years, so many boats have been dragged down or swept clean of sailors by large lake-dwelling monsters that few now dare to sail or fish the lake. Its depths also hold at least one sunken castle, Orn Doalryn, whose drowned chambers still glow with mighty magics. After strong storms, daring folk comb the Idrakewater’s shores, seeking strange wrack and often finding fist-sized gems, broken fragments of golems, and other strange magical objects. Intact golems have been found just beneath the sand after a few particularly violent storms.

TANTANTHAR

Population: 23,000 (84% human, 14% gnome, 1% halfling, 1% other)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: High Lord of Tantanthar Belgarophaun Ensemmer (male human rogue 10/waymaster 8)

Capital: Sardulkin

Major Settlements: Amrest, Lartharford, Rulverjack, Sakymouth, Tel Harbor, Ullscove

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Crafts, fish

Tantanthar is a land of mists, ever-present clinging damp even when opaque mists aren’t present, and many stinking, treacherous swamps. Its higher ground consists of many long, finger-like ridges running from Stormstars Wood down to Glamryn Bay. Of old, the numerous tall, straight, black thornbeam trees (ideal for masts) made this land a mighty naval realm, but the woods that formerly covered Tantanthar thickly have now been cut down. The few surviving thornbeams are too

small to use in ships of any size. The once plentiful herds of swamp-larthar (moose) have dwindled with the forests. Nowadays, the only large herds are domesticated, and the massive specimens of bygone days are little more than legend—attested to by the enormous antlers adorning mantle-walls in taverns and great houses.

Tantanthar today consists of Sardulkin and six once-bustling ports that survive as shrunken shadows of their former selves with many abandoned warehouses and cottages crumbling into ruin. Ruthless bands of merchant traders rule most of what’s left, operating largely free of laws and scrutiny. The most notorious of these merchant leagues is the Swift Hand, but newly formed rivals, the Red Casket and the Urcantle, are challenging the twenty-year supremacy of the Hand.

From aerho to luthsurl, the Tantanthar ports are Sardulkin, Lartharford, Ullscove, Sakymouth, Tel Harbor, Rulverjack, and Amrest. The rest of Tantanthar consists of small market-garden farms where notoriously close-mouthed and insular folk grow marrows and other edibles that thrive in the cool damp. Muddy roads wander from ridge to ridge across a myriad of rickety bridges and treacherous fords. Foreigners usually hire local guides when moving about; few forget that several golaunt and Stoneshield armies have been swallowed by the Tantanthar swamps.

Tantanthar is nominally ruled by a High Lord (the Larthar Lord), based in the crumbling backland keep of Wrath Rise, but his writ extends only as far as the sword points of his small but loyal High Guard. The ruler’s nickname derives from the Guard’s practice of riding trained larthar as mounts. The current High Lord is a fat, aging, once jovial but successful cloth merchant by the name of Belgarophaun Ensemmer, who retired to Tantanthar from the intrigues of Marrovar.

Ensemmer seems to have acquired some magical means of changing his face, build, and

FENS OF TANTANTHAR

The fens of Tantanthar are often shrouded in drifting fogs; the black, rotting trunks of drowned and dead trees stand everywhere like the masts of a massive fleet of abandoned ships. Weird calls echo across the pitch-black swamp waters, and everywhere vines, broadleaf wetbarks, and other vegetation rise in hillocks that range up to the size of small buildings.

Many of these hillocks are mobile, unstable masses of floating vegetation, and some actually grow on the backs of dragon turtles and other huge, half-submerged creatures. Mingled among these moveable eminences are dozens of dry, solid hills and ridges, especially in the interior of the realm where folk from many Mournan lands who came to Tantanthar to disappear now dwell, keeping to themselves (and in some cases, working on automatons, powerful magics, or schemes to conquer all of Castlemourn). Among these hidden are shapechangers and even dragons (who lair here, bothering no one, and use the mists for concealment as they fly low over the swamps out into the Bay to hunt). The GM should remember that the swamps of Tantanthar can conceal almost *anything*.

even apparent gender on occasion and has used this ability to attend Swift Hand meetings at which his own downfall was plotted, allowing him to avoid assassination attempts and further his own intrigues. Ensemmer is said to have far more coin than he needs or knows what to do with, to love manipulating others, covert deals, and other subtle uses of power for their own sake.

Sardulkin, the capital of Tantanthar, is a well-maintained stone city (a place of tall, balconied buildings whose vine-cloaked stone walls tower over narrow streets), home to 10,000 humans and 3,000 gnomes. The Towers of Fury, a temple to Araugh, looms over the docks, reminding all to appease Lord Coldeye before setting off on any voyage on Glamryn Bay or to praise him for arriving safely in Sardulkin. The shrewd, capable, and dangerous Ensemmer rules Sardulkin, and thus Tantanthar, largely through the local guild masters. Seemingly remote from the capital in his backland keep, Ensemmer passes tax monies to the guild masters in return for information and the mustering, training, and equipping of local militias. Of course, he also maintains his own network of spies—including outlander adventurers—to seek corruption in the guilds, to arrange unfortunate accidents for certain individuals, and to ensure that he has the means to control the guild masters.

Most Tantanthar are crafters, doing exacting work that takes much time and skill (such as needlework, jewelry-making, the construction of fine locks, painted adornments, mold making, and intricate woodcarving). They pass their days in their workshops, burning swamproot in their lamps (producing eerie yellow-green and blue-green flames) and using great quantities of the crumbling mauve stone called “dulkan,” quarried in pits and tunnels at the sarrind of the realm (under the roots of Stormstars Wood), that absorbs moisture.

In general, the common folk keep their heads down, worship all of the Seven (generally the most evil aspects of each; “If I make this sacrifice, will the god do this for me?”), work hard at getting rich one coin at a time, and mutter wryly that gold will rain down on their heads “the day the land turns dry.” Aerho of Wrath Rise at Dauntpool is the popular Gardentower, one of the main temples of Damantha, presided over by Elauthyn Maeradagh Faendrus.

BELGAROPHAUN ENSEMMER, HIGH LORD OF TANTANTHAR

Male human (Chaotic Good)

Rogue 10/waymaster 8

HD 10d6 + 8d6

Init +8

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 20

CR 18

hp 78

Speed 30 feet

BAB/Grapple +15/+16

Attack +21 melee (1d6+3/18–20, +2 *speed rapier*) or +20 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger)

Full Attack +21/+21/+16/+11 melee (1d6+3/18–20, +1 *speed rapier*) or +20/+15/+10 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, masterwork dagger)

Senses Listen +18, Spot +13

SA Precise strike +1d6, sneak attack +5d6

SQ Canny defense, elaborate parry, evasion, immune to *detect thoughts*, *discern lies*, and magical attempts to discern his alignment, improved reaction +2, improved uncanny dodge, merchant lore, opportunist, slippery mind, trap sense +3, trapfinding, uncanny dodge

Fort +11, **Ref** +19, **Will** +8

Str 13, **Dex** 18, **Con** 11, **Int** 19, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 17

Languages Dandarr, Far Tongue, Gadroar, Vrrar, Halfling

Crucial Skills Balance +6, Bluff +25, Intimidate +16, Jump +12, Listen +18, Sense Motive +23, Spot +13, Tumble +18, Use Magic Device +15

Other Skills Appraise +24, Decipher Script +16, Diplomacy +29, Disguise +18, Forgery +18, Gather Information +25, Knowledge (geography) +15, Knowledge (local) +13, Profession (merchant) +18, Sleight of Hand +18

Crucial Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Quick Draw

Other Feats Deceitful, Improved Initiative, Negotiator^B, Persuasive^B, Weapon Finesse

Possessions +2 *rapier of speed*, 4 masterwork daggers, *bracers of armor* +4, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, *ring of mind shielding*, *mask of disguise* (see Chapter Two: Magic)

LOTHRAN

Population: 300,000 (74% human, 11% gnome, 6% halfling, 4% dwarf, 3% elf, 1% half-elf, 1% other)

Government: Feudal duchy

Ruler: Grand Duke Haramandras (male elf rogue 14/assassin 5)

Capital: Four Thrones

Major Provinces: Cormithal, Landaen, Randathjet, Septrur, Telner, Waern

Major Settlements: Lhoadur, Raemaunt, Zroas

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Education, fruits, manufactured goods, wine

The Grand Duchy of Lothran is a large, wealthy realm of numerous walled estates containing whimsical faelorn (fael means “fancy” or “ornamented” in the Crown Tongue, and orn is “castle”) or private mansions, home to many exiled rulers and retired adventurers who have been known to murder the former inhabitants of such a

fortress so as to seize it for their own. The duchy has a long and bloody history of warring dukes, both self-proclaimed leaders whose titles die with them and the hereditary dukedoms held by the Houses of Cormithal, Landaen, Randathjet, Septur, Telner, and Waern. Any duke (not just the heads of the six Houses) who can muster enough of an army to take and hold the Greatkeep that towers over Four Thrones can proclaim himself Grand Duke—though the incumbent Grand Duke must be hunted down and slain, or forced to formally renounce the title, for a new Grand Duke to be recognized by the two senior Houses, Cormithal and Randathjet.

The current Grand Duke (having held this title for over 200 years) is the tall, strikingly-handsome Zorthsel Haramandras, whose flowing white hair and blazing amber eyes are readily recognized at a distance by Lothrannen. Indeed, as few ever see him in his favored sea-green (with gold trim) *samrathen* finery (*samrathen* is a shimmering, luxurious woven cloth used in fine garments) but instead view him in his ornate barbed and horned armor, those features are all that they *can* recognize. He's said to be shrewd, fearless, and always vigilant for potential and unfolding intrigues.

Around and between the walled estates of the great families are many orchards and flower gardens, for Lothran produces both the majority of fruits in Castlemourn—notably grapes, umlathen (plums), and kaumals (apples)—and spices, remedies, and heady wildwines (all yielded by the prepared blossoms of various floral plants). These are the source of the land's wealth and (as the long-

dead sage Haddanszul of Asmrel once put it) one of the "two legs of its importance"—the other being its central crossroads location and good roads, which bring the wagons of many merchants to Raemaunt, a town of 3,600 hard-working crafters and finery makers, and Zroas of the Many Markets, where the Thaalride meets Raudar's Way.

In the dead of winter, Zroas is a crossroads market-town of only 2,000 inhabitants who maintain many inns, stables, horse-ponds, and paddocks. However, during the warmer months, its population swells to 6,000 or more, because many transient peddlers and wagon-merchants are always present, journeying here to set up tents and stalls in the paddocks and squares or just sell out of their wagons in the many markets for which Zroas is famous. Not only do many traveling traders swap goods at Zroas, picking up news of fads and the latest fashions and styles, but many Lothrannen and Jamandrans make frequent trips to Zroas to shop (as do merchant shippers from Lhoadur, who load their purchases aboard ships when they return to that port, for shipment all over Glamryn Bay).

Ducal patrols of well-trained, disciplined armsmen (who know well the land they travel) keep the roads of Lothran safe with their constant mounted watchfulness. They communicate with an elaborate system of horn-calls, signaling other patrols for support when pursuing miscreants attempting to flee or hide. Much coin and many goods change hands in Lothran, and wise Grand Dukes leave the long-standing "tax everything lightly" system untouched; foolish ones have

LOTHRANNEN POLITICS

A great deal of behind-the-scenes maneuvering happens in Lothran; the old-money and the ducal families, known as the "Thronelar," control (by means up to and including murder) who earns the greatest wealth. Interest in diplomacy and dealings with other countries is a passion amongst Lothrannen, and the Thronelar are wise enough to let everyone make deals and profit from their own trade-skills and creativity in crafting new products—but they buy out merchants who become wealthy very quickly and quietly control who gets the best contracts with merchants of other lands (the wealthy Starhaven Reach cities in particular). The more loyal and useful you are to the Thronelar, the more lucrative your opportunities tend to be. Most urban Lothrannen play the game to some extent, but there's no widespread unrest; the Thronelar have always allowed even the lowliest Lothrannen a chance to make riches, try new wares or ways of trade, and sponsored most who need backing and ask for it in the proper manner.

When a Grand Duke is replaced or disputes erupt among the Thronelar (the latter almost always happens when a younger scion becomes head of one of the grand families and seeks to gain even more power than his predecessor was content with), Lothran undergoes short, violent turmoil—largely behind the scenes, confined to Four Thrones, and ignored by the farmers and sages—as the Thronelar and their servants, hired spies, and slayers struggle to establish a new pecking order. These battles are marked by murders, flights into exile, and disappearances, and take a high toll on bodyguards and bloodbucklers (hired adventurers). As a result, each is followed by a period in which new adventuring bands are hired, covertly tested by arranged temptations, often targeted by the bloodbucklers of rival families, and sent on spying, trade-escort, or dirtier missions.

tried to take more, and soon thereafter met with unfortunate accidents.

Cormithal is the wealthiest duchy, dominated by orchards, wealthy merchants, and investors whose fanciful castles dot the countryside, especially along the Thaalride. It is home to more than 55,500 Lothrannen, including 8,000 gnomes, 7,000 elves, 4,500 halflings, 3,000 dwarves, and 2,000 half-elves, in addition to a handful of thaele and others scattered throughout the region. Golaunt are forbidden to move about freely (and are often actively prevented from even entering the duchy).

Landaen is the most lawful of the duchies, treasuring order above all else. It maintains its own military; the mounted land knights of Landaen are among the best cavalry in all Castlemourn. Some 30,000 humans and 9,000 gnomes dwell here. The common folk, referred to as Landaem, labor hard and long making clothing and smallwares (everyday household items from shovels to stools, and sewing-needles to metal coffers) for export.

Randathjet, largest of the six duchies, is given over to ranches, small woodlots, and vineyards. More than 76,000 folk (64,000 of them human) live and work here, making wines, cutting timber, and raising livestock for food and hides; local tanners and leatherworkers are numerous. Like other Lothrannen, Randathen largely abhor city life; the important trading-port of Lhoadur, where caravan roads meet the navigable head of the River Semphril, is home to only 5,000, roughly half of whom are human. The countryside is home to nearly 6,000 dwarves, 4,500 halflings, and a fair number of elves.

Septrur is farm country, known for orchards and a preponderance of arcane spellcasters (by law, every Septran family having more than three accomplished wielders of magic must assign one family member to serve on road patrols throughout the realm). There are over 18,500 human Septrons and another 1,000 of each of the other Mournan races. Local legends say magic is so strong in this duchy, because the mightiest sorcerers dwelt here before the Fall; their ghosts infuse the sap, soil, and water of the countryside, as well as running in the veins of all Septrons. For proof of such tales, Septrons point to the fact that some magic items occasionally glow when touched by a Septran—and the eyes of some Septrons glow briefly when they come into contact with magic.

Telner is a land of smoke-plumes and ringing anvils. Telnans devote themselves to forgework (they are the most skilled moldmakers and crafters of alloys in all Castlemourn) or learning. The renowned scribes and sages of Telner attract students from all over Mournra, compile known land-lore in endless books, and actively gather and

attempt to confirm new knowledge. Native-born Telnans are taught to read and write in childhood, and must daily copy out a page or more of a good book onto blank pages that are eventually bound into a whole new copy of the book. In addition to forgework, Telnan craftsmen are skilled at manufacturing rag and reed paper and book binding. Several libraries are maintained in the duchy (there are fees for joining); sages belong to informal evening clubs for debate and lore-sharing, and wealthy Telnans hire adventurers, wayfarers, and traveling merchants to find out specific facts for them about distant places, events, and things. Some 8,000 humans and 11,000 gnomes dwell in Telner; most of them are always learning, trying a variety of professions and skilled tasks throughout life.

Waern is widely thought of as a region of dirt-poor farms where stone-headed, barely-able-to-mumble backland bumpkins dwell. It is the poorest, most rural, and an-aerho duchy, and the 8,000 or so Waernar are almost entirely human farmers. However, the soft-spoken local manner is not mated to stupidity, and Waern has always been where most Lothran military training takes place. As a result, the duchy has always produced hardy soldiers who know how to hunt, live off the land, and use maces and shields with skill.

Four Thrones is a bustling metropolis with crowded streets and tall, leaning-on-each-other stone buildings with roofs of tile or local slate. It's a place of eager dreams, energy, and a rush toward the bright future, where an ever-growing, enthusiastic populace of 63,000 humans, 8,000 halflings, 4,000 gnomes, and 2,000 dwarves jostles for coins, status, and opportunities. Grand Duke Haramandras rules well and is well-respected (though newcomers are often warned in a murmur, "It's unwise to make a foe of the Grand Duke"). One of the few things Haramandras strictly controls is the city's growth; though there are no walls surrounding the city, sprawl is forbidden, and new streets must be approved by the Grand Duke. One of the reasons Haramandras does this is to preserve the vast vineyards that surround the city, producing some of the best fruity wines in all of Mournra.

As a people, Lothrannen are religious folk, and small temples and shrines to all of the Seven are found throughout the realm and frequented by Lothrannen daily. Four particular temples are worthy of note. Two major temples to Damantha are found in the Grand Duchy: the Hill of Blooms in Cormithal and Duthlake Hearth in Telner. Haelarr's House is an important site in Zroas of the Many Markets, and the Munedran High House of the Whitestar is located in Four Thrones.

ZORTHSEL HARAMANDRAS, GRAND DUKE OF LOTHAN

Male elf (Lawful Evil)

Rogue 14/assassin 5 **CR 19**

HD 14d6+28 + 5d6+10 **hp** 174

Init +5 **Speed** 30 feet

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 21

BAB/Grapple +13/+15

Attack +19 melee (1d6+3/19–20, +1 *short sword*) or
+19 ranged (1d8+1/x3, +1 *seeking longbow*)

Full Attack +19/+14/+9 melee (1d6+3/19–20, +1
short sword) or +19/+14/+9 ranged (1d8+1/x3, +1
seeking longbow)

Senses Listen +10, Spot +11

SA Crippling strike, death attack, sneak attack
+10d6, spells

SQ Elf traits, evasion, improved uncanny dodge,
moonglow (15 feet/30 feet), poison save +2,
poison use, slippery mind, trap sense +4, trap
finding, uncanny dodge

Fort +7, **Ref** +18, **Will** +6

Str 14, **Dex** 20, **Con** 14, **Int** 15, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16

Languages Elven, Far Tongue, Halfling, Vvarr

Crucial Skills Balance +16, Bluff +19, Climb +11,
Disable Device +14, Escape Artist +15, Hide
+21*, Intimidate +7, Jump +10, Listen +10, Move
Silently +17, Search +14, Sense Motive +6, Spot
+11, Tumble +17, Use Magic Device +11

Other Skills Craft (alchemy) +8, Diplomacy +15,
Disguise +11, Open Lock +17, Sleight of Hand
+13, Use Rope +10

Crucial Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Feint,
Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack

Other Feats Agile, Weapon Finesse

Spells 4/3, save DC 12 + spell level, +13/+8 melee
touch, +18/+13 ranged touch

2nd—*darkness, invisibility, pass without trace*

1st—*feather fall, jump, obscuring mist, sleep*

Possessions +3 improved shadow leather armor, amulet
of natural armor +1, sword of subtlety, +1 *seeking*
longbow, ring of spider climb, ring of chameleon
power, immovable rods (2)

* Includes moonglow penalty and improved
shadow bonus from his armor

ORMSCAR

Population: 113,000 (65% human, 12% gnome, 10%
golaunt, 8% dwarf, 3% half-elf, 1% thaele, 1% other)

Government: Republic

Ruler: Lord Imperial Imdurr “Longaxe” Toroth
(male dwarf fighter 11/rogue 6)

Capital: Dauntcastle

Major Settlements: Longknock, Roserook,
Stauntstone

Languages: Far Tongue

Resources: Iron ore, mercenaries

Ormscar is a gray, rocky land of endless hills, sarthen (sheep) herds, rock-faces, quarries, miners, and forgelords (smiths). Peopled by hardy, independent folk, it’s ruled only lightly by a Lord Imperial whose seat of power is the imposing fortress of Dauntcastle—built over the dungeons and cellars of an ancient keep said to still crawl with fell magic that keeps folk who died hundreds of years ago alive as flying, speaking skulls and bony arms (see the Drifting Dead, **Chapter Six**). Legends say that within the castle lies a hidden pool that can return to life and make whole again persons who have been reduced to mere bones or vials of blood—though why the pool doesn’t restore the Drifting Dead, none can say. Beyond the fortress walls, some 26,000 Dauntrans (predominantly human) live and work. They are folk of old loyalties, long-standing habits, and long-held suspicions. Like the majority of Ormskarn, Dauntrans are short, stocky humans who chiefly venerate Araugh as the lord of death and darkness. They value smithing skills, endurance, quiet (not boastful) strength, and battle-prowess.

Dwarven traders from Ironfell, and the coins flowing to them, make Ormscar wealthy, so its ruler need not levy taxes; its folk need not strive to do more than feed themselves and take shelter in winter (often holing up for the cold months in caverns, abandoning the realm to the howling winds, deepening snows, and prowling wolves). Despite the lack of taxes, the current Lord Imperial of Ormscar—the Ironar dwarf Imdurr “Longaxe” Toroth—is not popular. Surly and ruled by greed, he thinks always of amassing more wealth and is quite willing to slay folk to get it if he thinks the consequences light enough (just as he slew his predecessor, the also-unloved human warrior Feskarr “the Furious”). Toroth won’t strike down a traveling merchant unless he can make such a victim disappear without a trace, because he rightly fears Ormscar would be shunned by other traders for a dozen seasons or so. Also, the Ironar dwarves (whom he is careful to serve ably in every way) would move to replace him as Lord Imperial, arguing with their axes.

Toroth’s rule extends only as far as his ever-present bodyguard, the fierce and heavily-armed Guard Imperial, made up of one-third dwarves of House Toroth and two-thirds hired human warriors from across Mournra. The Guard are a hard-drinking lot who think more of maintaining their high-coin jobs than they do of Toroth’s continued survival. Toroth, however, is a shrewd and wary mountain of physical strength almost as wide as he is tall (far larger than most dwarves). He never leaves his fortified home in anything less than half-

MYSTERIES OF IRDRAKEWATER

Orn Doalryn is a huge castle submerged beneath the waves of the Irdrakewater. Roiling with unleashed magics that cause it to rise above the waves on some moonlit nights, its roofless, semi-ruined chambers hold jewelry, ancient coins, and magical treasure—but are roamed by deadly monsters.

The Drifting Dead beneath Dauntcastle seem to greatly fear the Irdrakewater; most Ormskarn sages believe they would like to seize control of the realm, but their fear of something in the dark, icy lake keeps them from doing so.

The Irdrakewater is also home to what local folk call sharae, but some ancient lorebooks refer to as khelpaes. These strange creatures appear as strikingly beautiful human women or men and try to lure the unwary into the water (to drown and devour them). Sharae are said to have magic powers and to be able to walk on the surface of the Irdrakewater, even when storms lash it up into great waves. Some ballads describe sharae as smelling of rotting, drowned things, but local folk disagree; some sharae have dwelt in human form ashore for years, deceiving everyone into thinking them human. No one has smelled anything amiss.

Many other odd, half-human creatures with tentacles, scales, and similar features dwell along the lake's shores. They love the Irdrakewater and refuse to leave it—but greatly fear swimming in it or boating on it, lest they be dragged down by the sharae or something worse.

plate armor, though he seldom wears a helm of any sort. There are whispers of him having some sort of magic that can behead persons near him, making those who must deal with him both fearful and careful.

The largest settlement in Ormscar isn't Dauntcastle but rather the busy trade city of Stauntstone, which lies to the sarrind of Dauntcastle and directly above the subterranean Ironar town of Forgedeeep. The two towns are linked by descending tunnels large enough to accommodate wagons and built with sharp turns whose walls are riddled with firing-ports to allow dwarves in guard posts to control access to their realm. Peopled by folk more open and less set in their ways than the Dauntrans, Stauntstone's population has steadily grown (currently standing at 42,000 humans, dwarves, gnomes, and golaunt), and it is now more influential than Dauntcastle.

The only other settlements of any size and importance in Ormscar are Longknock and Roserook. Longknock is an important caravan town with a mixed population of 23,000, including many mercenaries who hire out as guards for merchants traversing Wind Pass (where one caravan in ten faces a fierce golaunt raid). The traders keep using the pass despite the danger, for the coin is too good to pass up; food flows luthsurl from Jamandar, while sundries move aerhoward from Lyonar. Roserook is a frontier town of 15,000 gnomes and peaceful golaunt. Many prospectors, seeking ore-veins in the Haeldar (or quietly plundering mountainside ruins from Before the Fall), call Roserook home. Local legend tells of a lost, monster-roamed "City of Dead Sages" in the mountains that holds "all the knowledge of the past," and a tightly-knit, secretive group of hardy miners—the Gauntlets—carve

out red marble slabs highly prized by the Ironar dwarves from mountainside quarries around Mount Glath. Beyond the sheltering walls of these few communities, travelers can find inns about a day's slow wagon-lurch apart along all of the realm's major roads. Like Ormskarn farms, these are spartan, unfriendly, stone-walled compounds sited, whenever possible, against hillsides to shelter them from the winds.

Ironfell, a vast subterranean dwarf-realm of linked mines and caverns, lies beneath Ormscar. Its forges cause the plumes of smoke that rise from Mount Glath and Mount Urbarr sarrind of Ormscar at the an-sekhovynd edge of the Haeldar. These sarrind peaks of the Mournra-encircling mountains stand like ever-present sentinels walling Castlemourn off from the fabled Beastlands beyond (said to be a land of endless mountains, icy lakes, and hidden valleys, where dragons fly and feast at will, and thriving monsters aplenty dwell, breed, and make war on each other). The deep gorge of the River Semphril divides the Haeldar from the Dawndar, just as the gorge of the River Lulace divides the Haeldar from the luthsurl shield range, the Duskadar (also called the Windhowl, and of old, the Vrauntdar).

IMDURR "LONGAXE" TOROTH, LORD IMPERIAL OF ORMSCAR

Male dwarf (Neutral Evil)

Fighter 11/rogue 6

HD 11d10+44 + 6d6+24

Init +6

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 20

BAB/Grapple +15/+19

Attack +21 melee (1d10+9/19–20/x3 plus severs head on a natural 20 confirmed critical, +1

CR 17

hp 168

Speed 20 feet

vorpall dwarven waraxe) or +18 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow)

Full Attack +21/+16/+11 (1d10+9/19–20/x3 plus severs head on a natural 20 confirmed critical, +1 *vorpall dwarven waraxe*) or +18/+13/+8 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow)

Senses Darkvision 60 feet; Listen +7, Spot +8

SA Sneak attack +3d6

SQ Dwarf traits, DR 3/–, evasion, trap finding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

Fort +13, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

Str 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 19, **Int** 14, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

Languages Dandarr, Far Tongue, Gadroar, Vrrar

Crucial Skills Balance –1*, Bluff +10, Climb +7*, Hide –3*, Intimidate +18, Jump +9*, Listen +7, Move Silently +7*, Search +10 (+12 for stonework), Spot +8, Tumble +9, Use Magic Device +11

Other Skills Appraise +8 (+10 for stone or metal), Craft (gemcutting) +10, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +10, Knowledge (local) +7, Swim –6*

Crucial Feats Cleave, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Rapid Reload (light crossbow)

Other Feats Improved Critical (dwarven waraxe), Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Tumble), Skill Focus (Use Magic Device), Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization (dwarven waraxe)

Possessions *Tursurok* (+1 *vorpall dwarven waraxe*), masterwork light crossbow, +1 *dwarven plate* (damage reduction 3/–), 3 *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Developments Imdurr enjoys ruling Ormscar and ensures that merchant caravans give the dwarves of Ironfell (beneath his realm) the best goods coming through Ormscar. Merchants from both sides of the Yarhoon are more than willing to pay his tariff; dwarven armies have quelled great golaunt invasions many times in the past, and skilled Ironar dwarves are in great demand throughout Castlemourn. Imdurr may blunder often in diplomatic matters but, thus far, has kept the rich and powerful of his land from rising up against him by keeping the coin-bringing caravans rolling across Ormscar.

* Includes armor check penalty

IRONFELL

Population: 1,250,000 (96% dwarf, 2% gnome, 2% other)

Government: Oligarchy run by a council of clan elders

Rulers: Elder Arrandur (male dwarf monk 9), Elder Bellowforge (male dwarf bard 11), Elder Farront (male dwarf fighter 12), Elder Gelkorl (male dwarf fighter 8), Elder Kadaunth (male dwarf monk 4/fighter 12), Elder Stonehammer (male dwarf cleric 13 of Amaunt), Elder Toroth (male dwarf monk 7/faithless 4), Elder Yarraun (male dwarf monk 3/cleric 6 of Haelarr)

Capital: Forgedeep

Major Settlements: Diamond Caves, Hammerhall, Halls of Light, Imundar

Languages: Dandarr, Far Tongue

Resources: Granite, gems, gold, ore, armor and weapons

Ironfell has always been the subterranean home of the majority of Castlemourn's dwarves. During the Fall, thousands of its caverns collapsed. Ironar dwarves are still working to literally uncover the past, expanding their workings into the rubble of the Fall. They frequently unearth great treasures and strange artifacts as they delve—and even more often uncover shattered dwarven bones (it's said millions of dwarves died in the Darktime). These remains are taken to a place of honor: a vast memorial chamber called the Cavern of Time.

Today, Ironfell is once again a busy place where skilled smiths of rival dwarven Houses craft much of the armor, weaponry, metal tools, and cookware used throughout Mournra (as the old Mournan saying has it, "as hardy as an Ironar cauldron"). After many bloody wars, the Ironfell dwarves forged a governing council that works through diplomacy first, and battles between champions when all else fails, to settle disputes between its Houses. Many resentments, rivalries, and intrigues simmer beneath the surface in Forgedeep, the council seat of the realm, but the Houses of the Realm (Arrandur, Bellowforge, Farront, Gelkorl, Kadaunth, Stonehammer, Toroth, and Yarraun) no longer make war on each other. Thanks to the strife, three former Houses (Haurhammer, Jorlorth, and Mauroid) are mere memories with only a few handfuls of wanderers claiming those surnames. The badges of the Fallen Houses are preserved in many places in the caverns and tunnels of Ironfell to remind Ironar dwarves of the folly of giving in to anger and waging war on each other in earnest. The realm itself uses an anvil as its badge, and this mark can be found stamped on many metal items throughout Mournra.

The dwarves are open in their dealings with others and even allow folk of other races to explore the wild ways (those parts of Ironfell devastated in the Fall and not yet restored to use). These explorations have become important in the lives of young dwarves; in the wilding, a dwarf goes on his first adventure, accompanying non-dwarf

outlanders in forays into the rubble-choked caverns and tunnels on the verges of modern Ironfell. (The term wilding arose because so much wild magic is still active in the tunnels that explorers often fail to return).

Dwarven weapons and armor are everywhere in the old caves, but many magic items have also been found—although Ironar dwarves now have little magical skill. They often barter these found magics for other goods, particularly those they cannot determine how to use. Many of these magic items are simply fashioned of stone: a deep red granite that does not appear in the rocks of Ironfell.

Ironfell's four largest settlements are located directly beneath Ormscar's four largest settlements. Deep below Stauntstone, Forgedeeep is home to almost 500,000 dwarves (mostly of the Arrandur and Bellowforge houses) and is where the great Conclave (council of elders) meets to rule over all Mournan dwarves. Conclave members know many underways (notably passages to the sarrind and into the Beastlands) but never speak of them to outsiders.

The Diamond Caves (rich in gems of all sorts) beneath Dauntcastle are home to 300,000 primarily Farront dwarves. Almost all of the 190,000 dwarves of iron-rich Hammerhall, beneath Roserook, are of the Gelkorl and Kadaunth clans. Nearly 200,000 Stonehammer and Toroth dwarves dwell in the Halls of Light (labyrinthine stream-caverns dominated by veins of soft, naturally-glowing crumblerock) under Longknock.

Some 60,000 Yarraun dwarves, the most spiritual of all the dwarven clans, live in Imundar under Mount Glath. Several hundred years ago, a powerful artifact was discovered in what is now a temple cavern; to this day, the dwarves don't know its true powers or purpose and worship it as a tool of the gods. All any dwarf knows is that dwarves heal faster (1d3+1 hit points per character level or

1d3+1 ability points are regained in an eight hour rest period, rather than just 1 point, and magical healing effects are doubled) when the light of the Great Secret shines on them. Since a daring band of human adventurers reached it to heal themselves and tried to take it away with them, the Great Secret has been constantly guarded by vigilant dwarven defenders.

The Secret is about seven feet long and three feet wide, has the rough overall shape of a broad, massive, sheathed sword, and is a complex construct of interlinked, blocky pieces of different sorts of stone and various alloys (most of unknown composition) bristling with oddly-located handles and gloth-lok (sliding switches). Only holy dwarves (clerics and paladins) may touch it or approach it closely; it is customarily left enshrined on a specially-fashioned stone block.

Very wide, smooth-floored tunnels connect the large dwarven settlements of Ironfell. Thousands of lesser tunnels and many dead ends, now largely blocked, branch out from these main ways. Handfuls of shunned dwarves, mostly remnants of the Haurhammer, Jorlorth, and Maurold houses dwell in the outermost verges of Ironfell; the largest such outhold numbers eighty-some dwarves, and most are peopled with less than half that. Most Ironar dwarves barely tolerate the Shunned (and will be cold, wary, and hands-on-axes in their presence) and will never allow them to hold a single Conclave seat.

Most dwarves in Ironfell dwell in droevonn, small family caverns with stout, inward-opening stone doors that can be chocked shut from the inside with socket stones dropped into the floor or slid into wall-cavities. Interior walls and ceilings of droevonn, their outer walls flanking (and sometimes concealing to a casual glance) all entry doors, are almost always covered with beautiful carvings of abstract knotwork weavings framing

IRONFELL, THE ULTIMATE DUNGEON CRAWL

Ironfell can be the ultimate dungeon crawl. It has thousands of wild levels, plentiful water, and some natural hot rifts used by dwarves in forge-work and to heat dwellings. It also has lurking monsters, many active mines and quarries, and scores of naturally beautiful sites (such as frozen rivers of gemstone). Much is happening in Ironfell that the dwarves know nothing about, notably:

- The golaunt have been exploring aerho Ironfell for centuries, carefully avoiding the dwarves (or exterminating dwarf parties they can easily handle).
- Deep, deep beneath Ironfell dwell creatures who have been mining the dwarven chambers for metal and magic since the Fall. They almost feel ready to make their presence known—especially as they seek some of the powerful magic items the dwarves are now uncovering.
- For centuries, the tunnels linking Ironfell with the Beastlands have occasionally filled with unorganized raiding bands of monsters. Some fell, intelligent leadership is now organizing and battle-training these beasts into the greatest threat Mournan dwarves have seen since the Fall. Interesting and very hectic times for the dwarves are just beginning.

scenes of dwarves battling monsters, trees and flowers growing in clusters, dragons and other great beasts depicted emerging from the rock, and tales of family deeds and events. A coldwall is any rock surface not yet covered with carvings; these are usually to be found only in newly-carved caverns or expansion-niches.

Barter is the most common means of exchange in Ironfell. Mournan dwarves value gold for its beauty, not as a means of exchange, but fully recognize that gold is considered precious among other races and will use it in barter or even fashion it into handsome trade-token coins. Ironar dwarves prize woven fabrics of all kinds and will often pay up to ten times the caravan price (average selling price all across surface Mournan lands) for a bolt of colorful silk when buying it from non-dwarves or bartering it among themselves.

To dwarves, Amaunt and Haelarr are brothers (dwarves of giant size) and the two most powerful gods. They are to be worshiped in droned personal prayers at least four times a day, and are thought to disagree on only one thing: when to let worthy dwarves know and use the powers of the Great Secret (which is why, dwarves believe, the artifact yet remains a mystery).

YARHOON

Population: 350,000 (95% golaunt, 5% other)

Government: Matriarchal clan-based, nominally ruled by chieftains beneath a tyrannical overchieftain

Ruler: Orilhaurlen Gorog Kairagh Lokhlar (male golaunt fighter 15)

Capital: Mahrokh

Major Settlements: Araugheg, Gloun, Klael

Languages: Gadroar, Far Tongue

Resources: Gemstones, gold, minerals

Running from sarrind to sekhovynd, the luthsurl edge of the Debatable Lands is marked by the steep, cavern-riddled ridge known as the Yarhoon. Its towering flanks block all roads from the waters of Glamryn Bay sarrind as far as Wind Pass in Ormscar (where the Thaalride weaves through it, following an old stream-gorge).

The Yarhoon has always been a dangerous place. The depths of its interlinked caverns are said to harbor all manner of monsters, though the beasts aren't as numerous as they once were and raid the surrounding lands less often. The caverns are rich with gems; tales are told of miners finding lumps of precious stone as large as a man's head (the reason many adventurers come to the Yarhoon) and ore-veins stretching for more than a day's travel.

Abundant life flourishes along the ridge's entire length. Warmfires (lava flows and pools) deep

beneath the Yarhoon and countless hot springs flowing through its subterranean reaches to emerge onto its surface, give rise to a steamy jungle climate atop its sekhovynd end. As a result, mosses, lichens, and larger fungal growths thrive in its underways, growing with astonishing rapidity and providing food for all; on its surface, vines and broadleaf jungle plants grow just as quickly.

In the sekhovynd jungles, snakes (many poisonous), birds, and stinging insects are plentiful; huge lizards munch on the vegetation, and swift prowling predators (or silent, deadly carnivorous plants) eat everything that moves. Some of the Iron Isles have jungle vegetation, but the salt, cold winters and ever-present wind keep their forests puny in comparison to the overgrown, perfumed and rotting, thickly-tangled, steambath jungles of the Yarhoon. Well-armed golaunt sometimes hunt in the jungles for sport, but their brief forays are often more deadly for the hunters than their intended prey.

For the last hundred years or so, the Glamryn Bay end of the Yarhoon has been under the control of the ever-numerous golaunt, who are ruled by chieftains known as haulen and call themselves the Aathur ("Foremost" in the Crown Tongue). The Aathur burst forth from the Yarhoon during storms, usually by night, to raid the Debatable Lands—though some mysterious magic clinging to the swamps luthsurl of Amrest dissolves golaunt (and all goblin-kind) flesh, so they seldom fare down into Tantanhar. They've learned to race past the well-defended folk closest to the Yarhoon and travel as far as they can from the great plateau before attacking and plundering, seldom striking the same place twice in a season. These raids are both entertainment and a source of honor for the Aathur and gain them weapons and other items unavailable through open trade. They also serve to inform the golaunt of building and military activities in the Debatable Lands to the aerho and Lyonar to the luthsurl and to blunt the swords of neighboring states through pre-emptive strikes (lest they muster armies to slaughter the golaunt, so as to capture the gems that gleam and glitter in the deepest cavern walls).

Other Mournans believe the golaunt rule all of the Yarhoon, but this is more golaunt boasting than anything close to the truth; since the Fall, warfare for control of the subterranean Yarhoon has raged constantly. Thanks largely to their swift birthrate and warlike nature, the golaunt rule firmly in Mahrokh (located about a third of the way sarrind from Glamryn Bay and home to some 78,000 golaunt) and everywhere sekhovynd of that city. Beyond the golaunt holds of Gloun (population 36,000) and Klael (population 33,500) at the

METALS AND PLANTS OF THE YARHOON

A labyrinth of lava tubes riddles the entire plateau, providing both numerous lairs for native creatures and a natural underground transit system. All manner of creatures roam these tubes, from kobolds and goblins to dragons and giants. What the hard blackscorch rock of the Yarhoon lacks is veins of workable metal ore for the making of tools, armor, and weapons. Following age-old clan traditions that warn of doom if they do not, golaunt keep themselves skilled at metalsmithing but lack a ready supply of metal to construct weapons and armor. Hence the golaunt and monster raids on the caravans traversing Wind Pass: by trade or by the blade, these passing merchants serve the races of the Yarhoon as their primary source of metal and weapons.

The climate of the Yarhoon makes it unusually rich in plants (useful as food and in the makings of dyes, medicines, glues, and poisons) and monsters. Plant growth and beast breeding both go on at speeds beyond the belief of Mournans from elsewhere. Great lizards and carnivorous plants all but rule the rich jungles of the sekhovynd Yarhoon.

midpoint of the plateau, their rule extends only as far as the blades of their axes.

Roughly midway between the holy city of Araugheg and Mahrokh lies the Horaundarrh, a series of linked caverns frequented by the golaunt. These caverns provide easy access to the luthsurl slopes of the Yarhoon, making it a perfect staging area for raiding parties and regrouping after forays into Lyonar. It also serves as a temporary camping spot for golaunt families and caravans traveling between the two cities.

The golaunt of the Yarhoon dwell in large families or clans called horndyn, each having a governing haurlen (who names an heir, though such individuals rarely become haurlen unless strong or wily enough to avoid the assassination attempts of rivals). All of the haurlen answer to the orlhaurlen, or overchief, whose word is law—and the orlhaurlen answers to the maeraedra, or mothers of the realm, the eldest females of all the horndyn. Golaunt females never leave the Yarhoon, and it is the worst crime among the golaunt to slay a female of their race (punishable by slow torture and dismemberment). The maeraedra seem capable of short-range mind-to-mind speech among themselves (sometimes touching foreheads) and confer on all major matters of golaunt collective behavior, delivering their decisions to the orlhaurlen as firm orders. There have been overchieftans who decided to be more than merely judges and war-leaders to the golaunt, but the maeraedra have brought about the deaths of such over-ambitious orlhaurlen.

Like most to hold his post, the current Orlhaurlen, Gorog Kairagh Lokhlar, is shrewd, cunning, and capable of iron self-control; when he chooses to show emotion, it is premeditated and calculated. He is an accomplished warlord who reacts ruthlessly to signs of defiance to his orders, and before every battle-foray he always takes care to give clear and exacting commands.

Orlhaurlen Lokhlar has wisely established training barracks for the young of his race around fortified armories well-stocked with weapons and armor (fruits of their raids into Ormscar and Lothran). Golaunt constantly fight a war they cannot afford to lose, for defeat will mean their elimination from the Yarhoon—and they rightly believe that golaunt confined to the surface lands would soon be set upon from all sides and exterminated.

For the last thirty years or so, successive golaunt leaders seeking to foster trade in weapons and armor have enacted a great ruse on the rest of Castlemourn. The most self-disciplined golaunt, able to seem peaceful in outlook and actions, have been allowed to travel the rest of Mournra in trading bands, presenting modern golaunt as peaceful and reasonable. This is an act. The golaunt may seem tame but, in truth, are just as vicious and dangerous as the worst horror-tales paint them to be.

The golaunt have another significant secret: three more or less parallel tunnels running down the center of the Yarhoon. Dug by enslaved giants, these “Gorau-horaunt” (Roads of Victory) allow large numbers of golaunt to move rapidly to anywhere in the Yarhoon (so an army mustered in the golaunt hearth-caverns can reach Wind Pass in an astonishingly short time). The Roads can be walked, but more often thunder with the rumbling wooden wheels of long trains of linked wagons pulled by giant lizards. These pack-trains usually transport goods and their guards but, if need arises, can move thousands of golaunt at one time. Elite bands of well-armored golaunt guard the three Roads at all of the relatively few connecting tunnels with orders to immediately slay any non-golaunt who discover the Roads.

With roaring hymns and sacrifices (or a little of their own blood spilled into flames), the golaunt worship Araugh, the Lord of Storms and Shadows,

fervently and often. His greatest golaunt temple lies in a huge, natural sea cave at the an-sekhovynd end of the Yarhoon. This temple has grown (by ringing the upper parts of the sea cave with ascending tiers of dwelling-caverns to form a great covered cauldron) into the large holy city of Araugheg, now home to 50,000 golaunt. Long ago, the ceiling of this immense sea cave cracked, forming a narrow fissure that lets in a little surface light, air, and rain. The jungle won't overgrow this fissure, as two large black dragons (too large to burst into the sea cave below) have laired in the fissure walls and hunt the great lizards of the Yarhoon at will.

Many fell monsters roam the old and unstable caverns at the sarrind end of the Yarhoon, and the golaunt have slain and driven these horrors back slowly and at great cost. Cavernfalls (cave-ins) are frequent during cave-battles, and there have even been occasions when subterranean races such as the darraudan (cloakers) and the tauroon or slitherers (troglodytes) have come up from deeper caverns and driven the Aathur back sekhovynd. Disgraced golaunt, and those hiding from the vengeance of others or punishments decreed by the Orlhaurlen, also lurk in the sarrind Yarhoon.

GOROG KAIRAGH LOKHLAR, ORLHAURLEN OF THE YARHOON

Male golaunt (Lawful Evil)

Fighter 15

HD 15d10+45

Init +5

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19

BAB/Grapple +15/+21

Attack +26 melee (3d6+16/19–20/x3, Large +3 *human bane greataxe*) or +28 melee versus humans (3d6+18/19–20/x3 plus 2d6, Large +3 *human bane greataxe*) or +17 ranged (1d8+7 plus 1d6 electricity, Large +1 *shocking javelin*)

Full Attack +26/+21/+16 melee (3d6+16/19–20/x3, Large +3 *human bane greataxe*) or +28/+23/+18 melee versus humans (3d6+18/19–20/x3 plus 2d6, Large +3 *human bane greataxe*) or

CR 15

hp 146

Speed 20 feet



+17/+12/+7 ranged (1d8+7 plus 1d6 electricity, Large +1 *shocking javelin*)

Senses Darkvision 60 feet; Listen +4, Spot +4

SA 1/day—indomitable spirit

SQ Golaunt traits

Fort +12, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

Str 22, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16,

Int 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Languages Dandarr, Far Tongue, Gadroar, Giant

Crucial Skills Balance –4*, Bluff +9, Climb +12*, Intimidate +22, Jump +13*, Listen +4, Ride +3, Spot +4

Other Skills Diplomacy +4, Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (local) +5, Swim +4*

Crucial Feats Cleave, Combat Expertise, Great Cleave, Improved Feint, Power Attack

Other Feats Alertness,

Greater Weapon Focus (greataxe), Greater Weapon Specialization (greataxe), Improved Critical (greataxe), Improved Initiative, Leadership (20), Persuasive, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe)

Possessions Gharkuhn "Head-Eater" (Large +3 *human bane greataxe*), Large +1 *shocking javelin* (6), mithral full plate of speed

Cohort First Son Thorokh Lokhlar (Ftr 13)

Followers Immediate family and oathsworn warriors (50 1st-level followers, five 2nd-level followers, three 3rd-level followers, two 4th-level followers, and one 5th-level follower)

* Includes armor check penalty

LYONAR

Population: 960,000 (78% human, 7% gnome, 6% halfling, 4% dwarf, 2% half-elf, 1% elf, 1% thaele, 1% other)

Government: Ducal monarchy

Ruler: King Alsandyr VI (male human cleric 6 of Amaunt/fighter 6)

Capital: Stormgate

Major Provinces (Duchies) and their Capitals:

Greatbellow (Bucklebank), Larancel (Raddanth), Norntree (Ladywake), Marlstag (Murl), Palandmar (Amruneth), Raumarl (Ormreth)

Major Settlements: Estel, Lancerake, Mossgreen, Tasmer, Tyrfalcon, Uskuloaks, Yarnd

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Crops, education, manufactured goods

On the luthsurl flank of the Yarhoon lies the kingdom of Lyonar, founded and ruled by the family of the same name. A land of verdant farms, good roads, and strong patrols of splendidly armored knights, Lyonar is divided into six dukedoms surrounding the central Throne Lands (which are sometimes called the “seventh dukedom,” the reason the King of Lyonar is also known as the Sevenscrown Lord).

The current monarch of Lyonar is Alsandyr VI, son of the late Sandror III and the thirty-seventh king of the realm. He rules from the soaring castle of Shalaunce (a corruption from the original name Sharlaunce, recently made official) in the heart of Stormgate—an immense city home to some 500,000 folk. He is loved by his people and at least two of his dukes: Raumarl to his straeclith (northwest) and Greatbellow to his anarrlith (northeast). From the aerho, sekhovynd around the Throne Lands to the luthsurl, the other dukedoms of the realm are: Larancel (whose young, sardonic, athletic duke is actively, though not openly, hostile to the crown); Norntree (whose duke died in a recent hunting accident, leaving the dukedom to his beautiful daughter whom Alsandyr is now courting); Palandmar (whose ancient duke is sunk into the twilight of his days and the slumber of his wits

and is plagued by ambitious rival nephews who are busily raising private armies and street gangs of supporters so as to seize the ducal throne when their uncle dies); and Marlstag (whose hunt-loving duke is rumored to dabble in dark magics and to trust and befriend no one).

The King commands a number of direct means for dealing with folk who do not respect him: well-paid spies, the many bailiffs who administer the extensive royal landholdings (collecting rents and selling land yields of crops, timber, and livestock), and the Truesword Knights. The Trueswords are the king’s own bodyguard; elite guardians of the realm empowered to judge guilt, deliver royal commands to the dukes, and act as secret agents for Alsandyr in his own realm and elsewhere. Many ambitious young men aspire to become Truesword Knights and will do most anything to gain that rank (and the privileges that go along with it).

The ducal seat of Raumarl is Ormreth, a city of 20,000 inhabitants. Raumarl is a fertile duchy of many wealthy farmers (“if the sun shines anywhere, it smiles most on Raumarl”), oxen, huge grain-barns, and mills. The farmers stand secure in the vigilant protection of the frequent mounted patrols sent forth by the Duke of Raumarl, who maintains a web of good wagon-roads and keeps the wide Thaalride as safe as a priest’s loving prayer.

Greatbellow (named after the ruling family of a fallen kingdom that once flourished where this duchy is now; there are rumors that the regal line

LYONAR, CROSSROADS OF CASTLEMOURN

Lyonar is the crossroads of Castlemourn; facts, rumors, and innuendo flow constantly through the Kingdom and being “in the know” (and bargaining for and with inside information) is socially vital for courtiers and the ambitious.

Stormgate is especially rife with intrigue now, as the dukes of Marlstag and Larancel (both independently and in an uneasy covert alliance) and the various nephews of the aging Duke of Palandmar, all operating on their own, seek to overthrow or at least weaken King Alsandyr by making the populace suspicious of him. The nephews want to kill loyal courtiers and family retainers so as to isolate the King (and then blame mad Alsandyr for the murders), but the traitor dukes want to expose him as a devourer of Lyon babies, a poisoner of loyal Lyons whose land he wants, or something else; they can’t yet agree on just what to smear him as (their first attempts were utter failures). Nearly one in five Stormrans has some inkling of this, as *everyone* has or hires spies in the city who sell or trade information constantly.

Among the patrons of spies are various wealthy, local mercantile families (such as the Taermoronts, the Balanturs, and the poison-using Maelgaunts) who are busily maneuvering to ally themselves with these potentially winning nobles without becoming *too* closely linked to them, in case the traitor dukes openly fail and get exiled or executed. At the same time, the dukes of Raumarl and Greatbellow (who know very well what the traitors are up to and want to foil it) have their own spies and agents at work—as do the holders of valuable crown contracts, who are also vying for position. Any or all of these cabals may view adventurers as the perfect hires to serve as dupes, strike forces, or unfamiliar spies.

All of the poison, accidents, and daggers by night have recently caused heavy losses in the ranks of the Truesword Knights. Characters who demonstrate loyalty to the King may (after some covert testings) be brought into royal service as Trueswords. Their days may well be spent in far more dangerous and active missions than merely serving as sworn royal bodyguards.

survives, and a true Greatbellow king lives quietly in the duchy under another name, plotting) is the wildest land of Lyonar, rife with raiding golaunt, ducal warriors riding hard to intercept them, and all manner of merchants and hireswords involved in the caravan runs through Wind Pass. They throng the ducal seat of Bucklebank (population 10,000), a rough place of barbarians and traders of all races. The duchy has many sarthen (sheep) farms and horse ranches; the large town of Mossgreen is home to their livestock markets, butchers, and tanneries. Mossgreen is also the site of Greatearth Hall, one of the main Mournan temples to Damantha.

Larancel is a rolling, wooded duchy of many streams, small bridges, and coppices; its upland folk produce poles, canes, staves, and much finished furniture. Larancen are almost all human with a handful of half-elves; among the 22,000 citizens of the ducal seat of Raddanth, perhaps three dozen in all aren't human. Most Raddanthen are fisherfolk, using small boats to net just offshore in Glamryn Bay or digging clams and crabs out of the ever-changing sand of the beaches.

The stone-and-slate city of Tyrffalcon stands on both sides of the River Yaroun and is claimed by both Larancel and Norntree. The 18,000 folk on the aerho bank are under the sway of the Duke of Larancel, and the 16,000 on the luthsurl bank are in the duchy of Norntree. Many high-arched bridges link the two halves of this bustling city of craftworkers (level bridges were swept away in every spring flood until no more were made). Two major temples are also located in Tyrffalcon—the Holy House of Storms (Araugh) stands in the aerho portion of the city, while the Towers of the Ruling (Amaunt) is located in the luthsurl Tyrffalcon.

Norntree is a land of orchards where its many farmers are considered more important than its far fewer fisherfolk. Though much of the duchy's wealth can be found in Tyrffalcon, the ducal seat is in Ladywake, home to some 15,000 human merchants and folk who work with food (makers of jams and jellies, cheesemakers, cider-makers, sausagemakers, and makers of spices and herbal sauces). Ladywake is also home to one of the main temples of Larlasse.

Palandmar is the most populous duchy of Lyonar. The ducal seat of Amruneth, home to 56,000 folk, is a thriving port where trade is brisk, wealth is abundant, and both diversions and new ventures are ardently pursued. By tradition, royal law is lightly enforced, discreet smuggling flourishes, and citizens take a keen interest—in both outlook and investments—in events all across Mournra.

There are five other Palandmarran cities, all predominantly human and all greatly grown in size from a generation ago. Estel is a crossroads

city of 41,000, sitting squarely on Shalantiir's Way and connected to Stormgate (and thus the Thaalride) by the Lyonride. It is dominated by the shops and warehouses of busy merchant shippers, wagonmakers, harnessmakers, horse-traders and tamers, coopers, and carpenters.

Lancerake is a farm market and brewers' city of 28,000, where many riding schools have recently been founded to train mounted warriors for all the duchies. Tasmer is a trading port of 26,000 fisherfolk, leatherworkers, dyers, and (thanks to a strong local tradition of arcane magic use) many wizards, sorcerers, tutors, and seers. This port city is also host to the Great Gods Throne (a major temple to Amaunt) and the Beasthall (one of Ralaroar's three largest temples).

Uskuloaks is now a city of 21,000 but, less than a decade ago, was a sleepy farm market town. Several Luuthar alchemists hastily relocated here after unfortunate intrigues at home, and around them Uskuloaks has rapidly become a thriving center for the making of potions, ointments, cleansers, remedies, and physics (medicinal drinks). There are ongoing rumors that poisons are also made in this City of Flasks, along with cheap wines and spirits blended or touched with other substances to make them taste better and last longer. The Damanthan temple known as Oldknight Hearth is situated just to the sarrind of Uskuloaks.

Yarnd is the quietest, busiest port of Lyonar, home to some 42,000 dyers, jewelers (who work with local pearls and polished, carved shells), and fisherfolk. Yarnd is notable for its long-flourishing weirs where crabs and oysters (both edible and pearl glaent) are reared using secret local spells, foods, and constant tending to establish (and repair after storms) the right conditions for rapid replenishment of wetstocks. So successful has such shallows-work become that more and more local fishing-boats have been beached to rot in the sun, providing places for children to play and thieves to lurk.

Marlstag has always been a dark and mysterious duchy, best known for its many walled monasteries and their surrounding sheep farms and vineyards. These holy houses of worship are dedicated to the darker aspects of the Sleeping Seven.

The Duke of Marlstag is an urbane, distant man whose days are spent in hunting—and whose nights are spent in pursuits that often make screams ring out from locked chambers in, and dungeons beneath, his dark-spined castle, Rauntspire. A dark, ominous fang, the castle sits atop the prow-like cliff thrusting well into the ducal seat of Murl, an intrigue-ridden city of some 44,000 secretive and often suspicious inhabitants. There are many tales of the duke's decadent deeds and cruelties, many

of them far too wild to be true (the duke mates with dragons; the duke eats the flesh of kidnapped maidens; the duke is really this sort of monster or that), but most Murlarr agree on two things: the duke can either shapechange or has some sort of magic item that can shoot forth long, dark, and powerful tentacles; and the duke lives with many beautiful female companions but is seldom seen in the company of more than four at a time. A great deal of coin flows through Murl, some from investments in other lands and some, it's said, for shadier reasons.

A generally tolerant realm, temples dedicated to each of the Seven can be found in every city and in the countrysides of most duchies. In fact, the duchies of Lyonar are home to many of the major temples of the Seven, including the Doors of Justice (Amaunt) and Tall Towers House (Munedra), both located in Stormgate. As well, the inns and taverns of the realm welcome all races and offer a wide variety of food and drink. Both accepting and prosperous, Lyonar is admired as the Golden Realm by distant Mournans (who've never actually visited or dwelt in it) and regarded as the safest, happiest, most peaceful, and most luxurious realm of Castlemourn. The truth, as with glimpses behind the masks of most lands and cities, is less clear and straightforward.

Lyonar's luthsurl border is defended by a line of many risecrest (hilltop) castles that march along the summits of the Summerstar Hills. Local legends insist that outlaws lurk in the Summerstar Hills, dwelling in former bear-dens and other shallow caves, and in ancient times many folk were buried with gems and magic in stone tombs beyond counting now hidden beneath those hillsides.

On their luthsurl flanks, the Summerstars plunge into a huge gorge, the Rakmiir, carved out by the Vanished River—also known as the River That Went Below—that used to run on the surface, but some centuries ago fell into the depths. Today the river is a series of cascades in the an-sarrind Summerstars that culminates in a swift-flowing, icy river plunging into the depths at the mist-shrouded place known as the Jaws. Glamryn Bay's tides flood a great expanse of the mouth of the Rakmiir, leaving behind treacherous quivering mud (quicksand) bogs that swallow men, wagons, boats, and reputedly dragons with equal ease. Only beasts dwell in much of the gorge.

ALSANDYR VI, KING OF LYONAR

Male human (Neutral Good)

Cleric 6 of Amaunt/fighter 6

HD 6d8+12 + 6d10+12

Init +5

AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 25

CR 12

hp 87

Speed 20 feet

BAB/Grapple +10/+12

Attack +16 melee (1d8+5/19–20, +3 *holy longsword*) or +12 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow)

Full Attack +16/+11 melee (1d8+5/19–20, +3 *holy longsword*) or +12 ranged (1d8/19–20, masterwork light crossbow)

Senses Listen +4, Spot +4

SA Turn undead 7/day

SQ SR 13

Fort +12, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10

Str 14, **Dex** 13, **Con** 15, **Int** 12, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 18

Language Dandarr, Far Tongue

Crucial Skills Balance –5*, Climb +3*,

Concentration +8, Intimidate +7, Hide –5*, Jump +4*, Listen +4, Move Silently –5*, Sense Motive +5, Spot +4

Other Skills Diplomacy +12, Handle Animal +10, Knowledge (religion) +7, Ride +11, Spellcraft +7

Crucial Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mounted Combat, Ride By Attack, Spirited Charge

Other Feats Improved Initiative, Leadership (20), Maximize Spell, Negotiator, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Domains Law, Protection

Spells 5/4+1/4+1/3+1, save DC 13 + spell level, +12/+7 melee touch, +11/+6 ranged touch

3rd—*daylight, dispel magic, meld into stone, protection from energy*

2nd—*calm emotions, delay poison, hold person, resist energy, zone of truth*

1st—*bless, detect evil, divine favor, protection from evil, sanctuary*

0—*detect magic, detect poison, guidance, light, purify food and drink*

Possessions Truthstriker (+3 *holy longsword*, 3/day—*detect thoughts* as a free action), +1 *glamered full plate*, +2 *spell resistant* (SR 13) *heavy steel shield*, *ring of protection* +2, *holy symbol of Amaunt*, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts

Cohort Lord Valet Bleys Horndaun (Ari 6/Ftr 4)

Followers Personal retinue of Truesword Knights and bodyguards (50 1st-level fighters, five 2nd-level fighters, three 3rd-level fighters, two 4th-level fighters, and one 5th-level fighter)

* Includes armor check penalty

THE STARHAVEN REACH:

ASMREL, GHANDALAR, & LUUTHAVEN

On the luthsurl side of the Rakmiir, the land rises into the Torsornar (or Torsornar Hills), a lower, gentler range of hills than the Summerstars. Luthsurl of their rolling heights, the land descends swiftly to the waters of the Starhaven Reach with its great independent port cities of Asmrel, Luuthaven, and Ghandalar.

Glittering Asmrel considers itself the height of wealth and culture in all Umbrara, but Ghandalar (its great rival across the Reach), through a less haughty—and less law abiding—attitude, has grown larger and wealthier. Both cities rule the surrounding coastal lands, mainly rich darksoil farms, and have been kept from open warfare with each other by the oft-repeated promise of the merchants of Luuthaven (which, along with the Rivers Esplander and Dreuline, separates the lands of the rival cities) to beggar either or both of them if they overstep into open strife.

The Reach is a long deepwater bay teeming with ever-moving schools of fish. Sailors traversing it only need worry about staying clear of two islets: the bare, tumbled rocks of the Gauntrys—Halagaunt and Mergaunt—where thieves and malcontents are often set ashore. Such maroonings seldom last long, given the other uses to which the Gauntrys are put; they're neutral ground for slave sales, pirate bargaining, and other transfers of cargoes better done away from the eyes of law-enforcers and tax collectors. The seaward sides of both islets can be approached safely, and ancient but massive mooring-rings have been set into many rocks on both isles.

The cold waters of the Reach are dominated by dramatic tides. At the head of the Reach, silt brought down by the Rivers Dreuline, Esplander, and Luuth make the waters murky ("fitting," some merchants say, "given the dark minds of those who dwell in Luuthaven").

ASMREL

Population: 207,500 (95% human, 2% half-elf, 1% gnome, 1% thaele, 1% other)

Government: Republic (monarch advised by a council of Lord Vraezers)

Ruler: Palandrin the Just Warrior (male human paladin 9 of Haelarr)

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Fish, magic, ships, trade

Asmrel is a towering city; tall, narrow stone buildings crowd together around a central core of the soaring, balcony-studded stone towers of the wealthy merchant princes. The cobblestone streets are narrow and winding, and the ground level of almost every building is given over to wagon-garages and loading docks. Gardens consist of bowls of flowers, trailing vines, and dwarf trees slung between buildings on great chains above the streets. The outermost buildings climb the insides of the city wall, which is much wider at its base than at its top. The outer face of the wall curves gracefully inward some thirty feet as it rises, forming a slope that flaming oil can readily be poured down to dissuade besiegers. In both living and recorded memory, Asmrel has never been besieged.

Life in the Tall City (most often called just The Golden by its citizens as in "here in the Golden, we..." or "I am of the Golden, mightiest city of all") centers around the pursuit of both the latest fashions (dress, cuisine, manners, and diversions of which the city offers an endless, ever-changing parade) and private interests, which may be anything from collecting the petrified dung of a particular rare or extinct monster to preparing performances of magically animated sculptures, living musicians, and spell-spun images and phantasms. Many sages, scholars, poets, and composers of note dwell in Asmrel, which prides itself on being the epitome of cultural achievement (bluntly expressed in the old Asmran saying: "Ours is best"). The rest of Castlemourn knows Asmrel through its reputation, witticisms, and by the fine goods produced by its many boot-makers, cobblers, taylors (tailors), and swarashers (makers of hats, cloaks, and gloves).

The Just Warrior, Palandrin, rules Asmrel. Long ruled by the Braeror family, descended from the legendary warrior Palandrin, it has been considered fashionable for the Asmran ruler to take the title Palandrin when ascending the city's Zamosarr Throne; however, the current ruler was truly named Palandrin at birth. His decree is law, but his dozen Lord Vraezers (advisers; positions won by wealth, eloquence, performance, and sheer persistence) hold much power by controlling what information reaches Palandrin. By tradition, Palandrin is a tall, imposing, male human warrior, but many occupants of the Zamosarr Throne have done nothing more warlike than hold a sword grandly after assuming office; at least two Palandrins have been women employing magical disguises. A Palandrin rules until death, but many are quietly made to disappear, either because they've angered too many of the merchant princes or Lord Vraezers to continue their duties or because they desire to

relinquish the gold-shimmering samrathen robes of office and go into seclusion—often to avoid being slain.

The surrounding Torsornar Hills are rocky, storm swept wilderlands prowled by many predatory monsters, so while Asmrel maintains some patrols to safeguard its farmfolk, it long ago turned its eyes to the Reach, becoming a sea power (gem veins in the broethsea [southwestern] Torsornar were discovered only recently). The relative shelter and large size of the Starhaven Reach allow seamen to swiftly and safely learn their trade, and Asmrel's seacaptains have been the owners of the largest, fastest, most prosperous shipping fleets for centuries. Today, experienced captains make the dangerous iron run from Asmrel to the Iron Isles across Glamryn Bay. Aging and poorer sailors work the Reach, running people and cargoes, and a large Asmran fishing fleet works the Reach and the coast beyond it with many boats carrying sorcerers or wizards to discourage piracy. Some of the Reach ships of Asmrel are oared vessels; most of the rowers are prisoners, as many local court sentences involve time spent on the rowing benches.

Asmrans openly worship Haelarr and Amaunt; the Spires of the Sun (Haelarr) and the Towers of Order (Amaunt) are both tall, graceful, lavishly decorated temples, just as one would expect in the Tall City. Hidden temples to the other deities also exist. Folk of the Golden typically worship the darker aspects of all these gods.

PALANDRIN, THE JUST WARRIOR, RULER OF ASMREL

Male human (Lawful Good)

Paladin 9 of Haelarr

CR 9

HD 9d10+27

hp 94

Init +5

Speed 20 feet

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21

BAB/Grapple +9/+11

Attack +14 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 nonlethal plus 2d6 holy, +2 *holy merciful morningstar*) or +11 ranged (1d10/19–20, masterwork heavy crossbow)

Full Attack +14/+9 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 nonlethal plus 2d6 holy, +2 *holy merciful morningstar*) or +11 ranged (1d10/19–20, masterwork heavy crossbow)

Senses Listen +3, Spot +3

TRUE RULERS OF ASMREL

The true rulers of Asmrel are the heads of its merchant guilds. The guilds bear such names as The Aviathar, The Splendid Basilisk, and The Serpent's Tail, because they long since ceased to be confined to a single profession or ware, becoming clubs of like-minded merchants or crafters dealing in a great variety of business, both legal and illicit. Their Lord Masters are chosen in a great variety of ways (each guild is different) and have great influence in the city. However, they usually lack the time to challenge or try to control the Just Warrior, because their time is taken up in dealing with the intrigues within their own guilds (as the Asmran saying has it: "Every Lord Master has seventy guildren who all think they'd be a better Master than he.")

Recently, the traditional power of the Lord Masters has been increasingly eroded by a number of independent splendorpalm, so-called because the first of them, the clothier Alurlan, claimed to be able to capture at will the splendor of the very best of luxury in his palm. These rising merchants seek wealthy patrons and design garments, furniture, accessories, and distinctive adornments to create new fashionable looks for them. If a look catches on, everyone in the city suddenly wants it and flocks to the offices of the relevant splendorpalm to buy the latest.

Some Lord Masters have responded to this loss of their most overpriced, local luxury business by having splendorpalm killed, while others have bought splendorpalm, allowing them to do nothing but design and dally in public (whilst the guild makes and sells the garments, splitting profits with the splendorpalm).

Most Asmran buildings are huge, slim spires of stone, with ornate oval windows of the clearest glass and spell-hardened crystal to be found anywhere in Mournra. They have cage-in-shaft elevators worked by cables, winches, and pulleys, so the users pull repeatedly on levers to make the cages rise and fall or ring bells to signal to beast-keepers in the cellars, who start trained and confined beasts to moving in great wheel-cages, to power cage movements. Yet, they use magics known nowhere else in Castlemourn, for these slender, seemingly-fragile buildings stand unchanged for centuries while massive fortresses crumble and crack. The spells used are the most closely-guarded guild secrets—yet it seems some sorcerers and wizards have fled the city and their guilds with those spells, intending to sell or use them elsewhere. Asmrel has sent forth agents to hunt down and recover these spells, becoming desperate enough to begin hiring outland adventurers.

SA Turn undead 7/day

SQ Aura of courage, *detect evil*, divine grace, divine health, DR 5/magic, empathic link with mount, evasion, heavy warhorse mount, lay on hands (36 hp/day), share spells with mount

Fort +13, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

Str 15, **Dex** 12, **Con** 17, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18

Languages Celestial, Dandarr, empathic link, Far Tongue, Vrarr

Crucial Skills Balance -5*, Climb -4*, Concentration +11, Escape Artist -5*, Jump +1**, Listen +3, Move Silently -5*, Sense Motive +13, Spot +3

Other Skills Diplomacy +16, Handle Animal +10, Heal +11, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Ride +11, Swim -10*

Crucial Feats Cleave, Power Attack

Other Feats Improved Initiative, Leadership (13), Weapon Focus (morningstar)

Paladin Spells Prepared (2/1; save DC 13 + spell level; CL 4th; +11/+6 melee touch, +10/+5 ranged touch)

2nd—*zone of truth*

1st—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*

Spell-Like Abilities At will—*detect evil*, 2/week—*remove disease* (CL 9th)

Possessions *Haelarr's Gift* (+2 *holy merciful morningstar*), masterwork heavy crossbow, 20 +2 bolts, +1 *full plate of invulnerability* (DR 5/magic), mithral heavy shield, *ring of evasion*, *ring of sustenance*, *boots of striding and springing*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, holy symbol of Haelarr

Cohort Rethan Eledorn (Clr 7 of Haelarr)

Followers Personal bodyguards (10 1st-level fighters, and one 2nd-level fighter)

* Includes armor check penalty

** Includes bonus from *boots of striding and springing* and armor check penalty

JUSTICE (HEAVY WARHORSE)

Large magical beast (augmented animal)

Lawful Good

CR 3

HD 8d8+24

hp 44

Init +1

Speed 60 feet

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19

BAB/Grapple +6/+15

Attack +11/+11 melee (1d6+5, 2 hooves)

Full Attack +11/+11 melee (1d6+5, 2 hooves) and +6 melee (1d4+2, bite)

Space/Reach 10 feet/5 feet

Senses Low-light vision, scent; Listen +7, Spot +6

SA N/A

SQ Empathic link, improved evasion, improved speed, share saves, share spells

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Str 20, **Dex** 13, **Con** 17, **Int** 7, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6

Languages Empathic link with Palandrin

Skills Jump +17, Listen +7, Spot +6

Feats Endurance, Run

GHANDALAR

Population: 150,000 (94% human, 2% gnome, 1% halfling, 1% half-elf, 1% thaele, 1% other)

Government: Oligarchy of four princes

Rulers: Bhel Alessra (female human expert 8), Bhel Delsarra (female human expert 8), Bhel Jemesrelle (female human expert 8), Bhel Orbra (female human expert 8)

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Horses, crafted wares (paper, textiles), thaelstones

In contrast to Asmrans haughtiness, the prevailing attitude in Ghandalar is "import everything and encourage all trade, so as to get better prices and selection." Facing its glittering rival across the Reach, the Coin-Cauldron (as everyone, including its citizens, calls Ghandalar) is a sprawling, unvalled port city of many docks—a bewildering maze of streets and bustling chaos. Farms and fallow fields lie amidst clusters of warehouses and crafters' shops; there seem to be a dozen city centers rather than a single grand core of streets, and a visitor could very easily miss the crumbling old mansion known as the Halark altogether—despite the fact that it houses the Halark Throne from which Ghandalar's Four Princes rule. Thanks largely to Bhel Orbra, some of this is starting to change, beginning with the recent renovation and widening of the four major avenues that divide the city into its four roughly equal districts. Her plans include the creation of many parks and public squares throughout the city.

Less than ten years ago, the guilds incited the Coin-Cauldron's citizens to rise against the worst in a succession of cruel lords, Baerlyn Morthar. When Morthar's tyranny became too great to bear, a dozen merchants publicly butchered him and installed the four ruling Princes. To an outlander, these rulers might seem something of a joke. Mounted knights keep order in the streets in their name and appear at merchants' doors without warning to collect "fill the cauldron" taxes (usually proffering helm-sized pots), but aside from ruling in matters of dispute between merchants and hiring builders to dig drainage ditches and create or improve roads, the Four Princes seem to do nothing; no one pays them much attention. Moreover, they aren't princes at all—they're princesses or, more precisely, beautiful courtesans sponsored by certain wealthy merchants to champion the causes, schemes, and pacts of that merchant and his cronies. They entertain visiting envoys and important merchants (often intimately),

otherwise indulge in revelry and pampered idleness, and have no influence beyond that which the sword points of their knights and ambitious Ghandalan merchants desiring to use their contacts give them.

Meanwhile, none of this misrule seems to bother Ghandalans, who are always working or trading in avid pursuit of coins, coins, and more coins. Few of them have any interest in the preening pretensions of fashion (except as fickle dictates of which goods to produce in order to make more money) or the ostentatious displays of wealth indulged in by the merchant princes of rival Asmrel. The most successful Ghandalan merchants buy property elsewhere, either dabbling in the politics of distant lands and towns for entertainment (as well as profit) or with an eye to retiring as a ruler in such a place. The only places where their investments tend to be rebuffed or sabotaged are in Asmrel and in nearby Luuthaven and Marrovar.

Ghandalar is divided; by four diagonally-crossing, broad avenues that meet more or less in the city's center; into four districts named for revered city rulers from long ago. Thulver Quarter, home to grand houses, well-maintained parks, and some neighborhood shops, is the an-sarrind district, bordered by Soulorr Street to the luthsurl and Randelver Street to the aerho. Torreskro Quarter, to the luthsurl, is bounded by Soulorr Street to the sarrind and the Way of Riders to the sekhovynd. This district is filled with warehouses and workshops, but its an-straekliith (northwestern most) corner is home to Prince Delsarra's zoo. The sekhovynd district, Mulvaer Quarter, is the city's mercantile center. Bounded to the luthsurl by the Way of Riders and to the aerho by Eel Street, this quarter is full of bustling shops, moneylenders, business offices, hiring halls, and dining houses (where much daily business is transacted over meals). Finally, bounded by Eel and Randelver Streets, Storlin Quarter is the smelliest, noisiest, and roughest part of the city, given over to the port (complete with sailors' taverns, brothels, and short-stay rooming-houses—much used by sailors—that seem to be favorite sites for brawls and murders), caravan-mustering pens and yards, and the stockyards where livestock is sold and slaughtered. Storlin lacks a central court, but such courts grace all of the other quarters.

The Coin-Cauldron is home to four major merchant guilds. The masters of these guilds, as most Ghandalans suspect, actually rule the city, presenting proclamations to the citizenry through the offices of the four ruling princes. While the princes speak and act in minor matters, the guild masters oversee all major dealings and encourage trade rather than seeking control over it. Currently,

business is brisk; Ghandalan merchants are well-organized and very wealthy.

The Gemcutters' Guild (symbolized by a white crown-cut faceted gem in a forest green oval) does a thriving business in thaelstones—and ruthlessly persecutes anyone else seeking to deal in them. They administer locksmithing, engraving, jewelry-making, and the making of most adornments such as painted tiles, sculpture, and furniture.

The Equine Guild (symbolized by a side-on purple horse head facing to the right, blowing puffs of white steam from its nostrils, on a gold shield) sells trained warhorses to the most affluent military leaders across Mournra. Two centuries of careful guild breeding has yielded a powerful, aggressive, yet biddable warhorse that commands a price ten times the usual rate. The guild also seeks to influence all livestock prices and administer tanning and leatherworking.

The Iron Guild (symbolized by an upright steel-gray vertical right-hand metal gauntlet, making a fist with fingers and palm to viewer, on a white rectangle) hires—and expends—many warriors guarding ore-shipments from the Iron Isles to the smelters of Storlin Quarter. Procuring iron is difficult, dangerous, and vital to the continued prosperity of the city.

The Browncloaks (symbolized by a horizontal brown wavy band, bisecting a crimson shield; band is straight at both ends but bends symmetrically down in a "U" in the center), newest and poorest of the Ghandalan guilds, represents not just hatters and cloakmakers but all the craftworkers and smallshop owners of the city. It also secretly sponsors pirates and thieves (to operate not in Ghandalar but everywhere else in Mournra) to try to wrest as much iron-trade coin from the Iron Guild as possible. There are secret Browncloak agents in every port of mainland Mournra.

Ghandalans worship all of the Seven, and the city hosts multiple temples to each, the largest of which is the Stormfang (dedicated to Araugh) in Storlin Quarter.

THE FOUR PRINCES OF GHANDALAR— ALESSRA, DELSARRA, JEMESRELLE, ORBRA Female human (Chaotic Neutral)

Expert 8

CR 7

HD 8d6

hp 32

Init +3

Speed 30 feet

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13

BAB/Grapple +6/+7

Attack +8 melee (1d4+1/19–20, adamantite dagger) or +10 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, adamantite dagger)

Full Attack +8/+3 melee (1d4+1/19–20, adamantite dagger) or +10/+5 ranged (1d4+1/19–20, adamantite dagger)

Senses Listen +3, Spot +3

SA N/A

SQ Available funds

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 11, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 19

Languages Far Tongue, Halfling, Vrrar

Crucial Skills Balance +8, Bluff +14, Intimidate +8, Listen +3, Search +8, Sense Motive +13, Spot +3

Other Skills Appraise +5, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +10, Forgery +11, Gather Information +12, Knowledge (local) +10, Sleight of Hand +10

Crucial Feats Dodge

Other Feats Leadership (15), Negotiator, Persuasive

Possessions *Amulet of natural armor* +2, *ring of protection* +1, adamantite dagger

Cohort Attendant/bodyguard (Ftr 2/Rog 4)

Followers Personal spies and contacts (20 1st-level followers, two 2nd-level followers, and one 3rd-level follower)

Note Initial use of this template for all four Princes is suggested, modifying them individually from this base as their actions and experiences dictate in an unfolding campaign.

Prince Alessra has an interest in sailing and watercraft and so concentrates her efforts at the waterfront. Her primary responsibility is maintaining and improving the city's navy, but she also supervises the docks and the light wharf fees Ghandalar charges ship captains.

Prince Delsarra is interested in creatures of all kinds and maintains a large zoo. Her task is to quell the bands of monsters constantly raiding the city and surrounding lands from the nearby wild wood known as the Tharksun. She maintains the city's armories and defenders: street patrols, gateguards, and 5,000 elite cavalry known as the Riders of Ghand who patrol the surrounding countryside and the Ghand Way—the overland route between Ghandalar and Thornar in Estorna.

Prince Jemesrelle is a consummate diplomat and tries to personally greet all of the city's influential visitors. She is involved in important trade negotiations and dealings with diplomats from across Mournra. While many Ghandalans joke and grumble about her lavish parties, few realize just how many important political negotiations and trade deals have been sealed amidst the revelry.

Prince Orbra is a lover of art and architecture. She has endeavored to renovate Ghandalar, creating a safe, modern city with lavish architecture and steadily improving roads. Thus far, she has ignored Storlin Quarter, the seedy port district, while working to improve the other three quarters. Orbra seeks to transform all waste ground within the city's boundaries into parks or public squares. As a result, the majority of the cauldron taxes are spent

on city-wide renovations. Architects and builders come from across Mournra seeking opportunities to design and build in Ghandalar.

Despite being enthroned as mere figureheads, the four have proven to be intelligent and skilled. They rule Ghandalar with style and poise—rather than the heavy hand of military force—and serve the citizenry well. The Princes have become very popular and have been given the title Bhel (which means honored).

LUUTHAVEN

Population: 35,000 (97% human, 2% half-elf, 1% other)

Government: Republic of merchants headed by an elected spokesman

Ruler: Targen Sorbel (male human rogue 8/expert 12)

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Pearls, oysters, alchemicals

The River Luuth winds through the heart of the always damp, mold and mildew dominated city of Luuthaven with its many bridges, bustling warehouses, and confusing tangle of streets. It's said across Castlemourn that if you need to buy anything—anything at all, even the lost tombstone of an ancestor—there'll be several merchants in Luuthaven eager to sell it to you. Luuthaven is home to four strong and two fledgling merchant leagues that operate from the Luuth up to the busy inland trading-town of Dragonhead and thence via the Thaalride and Shalantiir's Way to all the Mournan lands. This trade route, together with league investments in ports all over Mournra (including Asmrel and Ghandalar), means the leagues could—if they ever acted together—bypass and impoverish Asmrel and Ghandalar. The Lyonar port of Amruneth would benefit greatly from such an occurrence, and the Lyon Throne has already promised to support the Leagues of Luuthaven in such an endeavor.

Accustomed to life in a canal city, Luuthar traverse their city on boat decks, either strolling across the decks of the vessels of others from canal-walk to canal-walk or guided about the city on their own boats. To them, this is the daily norm of life and work. Around them, the faint, ever-present swamp reek clings to the tile-roofed, many balconied stone buildings, each set on massive columns of stone driven deep into the muck. Mule-driven pumps work everywhere, barely keeping pace with the continual seep of brackish water.

Secure in the heart of a vast swampland, Luuthaven has never faced serious attack. Of old, it was a haunt of pirates and dealers in stolen goods and slaves; today it wears a slightly decaying facade

of respectability. More than a score of powerful merchant families have mansions in the Haven; each mansion stands on its own walled island, defended by private security forces. Visitors are seldom welcome except by invitation.

The current Master of Luuthaven, Targen Sorbel (a largely-powerless spokesman for the city elected every summer), spends most of his time playing Asmrel and Ghandalar against each other by promising the aid of the leagues to one city or the other (and so keeps the overboldness of both in check). The rest of his time is spent dancing the same delicate word-games to keep the leagues similarly balanced. The Master of Luuthaven is a darkly handsome but small and aging man who's both shrewd and urbane. Targen Sorbel has a wry, sly sense of humor that he shares only with friends or those he likes. As far as anyone knows, he never leaves the Haven.

Sorbel maintains a fleet of over forty battering-ram-equipped war galleys, but he keeps half the fleet in sheltered Duskadar shore anchorages out in Glamryn Bay to hide its true nature and size from prying eyes. His captains somehow communicate with him from afar, as has been proven several times when the massed galleys have arrived to defend the city.

In addition to its shrewd merchants, the alchemists of Luuthaven are renowned across Castlemourn. Their skills at blending and improvising new mixtures are peerless; they know just the right molds and fungi to make the most potent healing draughts, and the best life-extending elixirs in all Mournra are said to come from their shops. Most have their own mushroom cellars where they grow all manner of fungi.

After drugs (pain deadeners, pleasure quaffs, sleep inducements, addictive behavior-alterations, and poisons), medicines, and love-potions, the Haven's most valuable exports are pearls and oysters. Secret beds out in the Reach, known only to certain Luuthar captains, produce red pearls, highly prized by royalty and nobility throughout Castlemourn. The edible oysters of the Reach are considered delicacies—and again, Luuthar captains know where the best are to be found. Spellcasters are paid well to use cold magics to keep barrels of Luuthaven oysters fresh, even after months of travel, on their way to every backroad inn, village allwares shop, and farm market of Mournra.

The silty, opaque brown waters of the Haven's canals widen into several internal ornpools (basins) within the city, and the oldest, most powerful merchant families of the city have their own private oyster beds at the bottoms of these basins. The Luuthar swear the sewage and dead of the city impart a certain superb something to the oysters. The most notorious of those families include the houses of Calantorn, Doarove, Irjet, Lharsk, Marhaen, Nilpiir, and Qaraunt.

Larlasse, goddess of luck, is the city's patron deity. Long ago, citizens erected the Dancer's House, a huge temple to her on the largest central island of the city, and it has become the social center of the Haven. Every year, strange infestations of giant rats erupt from the temple's flooded cellars (because of those waters, no one knows quite where the rodents come from). The temple priests handsomely pay anyone willing to aid them in killing the vicious vermin; the corpses are collected in order to be cooked and fed to the Haven's poor. Despite these problems, Larlasse remains the city's patron largely due to the Master's tastes or

LUUTHAVEN INTRIGUE

GMs should treat this city as the epitome of intrigue, decadence, wealth, and spying in Castlemourn. Although the land around Luuthaven is bleak and dreary, the city is prosperous, and its people are content; most Luuthar either dedicate themselves to developing ever-more potent (or flavorful, or traceless) alchemicals or engage in endlessly exciting intrigues and investments, enjoying a merry game of spying, misdirection, information-gathering, and spreading (and modifying) rumors. In Stormgate, intrigue is all about the throne, but in Luuthaven, intrigue is about *everything*, matters both large and small.

- Master Sorbel and his advisors are very tolerant of visiting outlanders. They rely on what such persons say and betray to remain fully abreast of news from wider Castlemourn. Sorbel handsomely rewards those who serve him well and has been known to put particularly useful information gatherers on the city's payroll.
- Pixies and sprites occasionally venture into the city when they require the help of big folk to deal with perils in the swamps that are beyond their powers.
- The potions made by Luuthar alchemists attract attention from wizards all over Castlemourn; demonstration, or mere rumor, of a powerful new quaff brings spies and buying agents out of every passing boat.



so the public thinks. In truth, Sorbel's strategy is to support the priests of Larlasse and encourage her worship, neatly preventing the local clergy of Haelarr or Ralaroar from gaining enough power to control him or affairs in Luuthaven.

Two other major temples grace Luuthaven: The High House of Coins (Haelarr) presided over by self-proclaimed Archprelate Mortal Mammurt Lhakhauviar (one of three priests currently attempting to claim the title) and the House of Fang and Claw (Ralaroar) led by Divine Rage Imrim Rulandar.

Upriver from Luuthaven—along the navigable River Luuth, kept clear of snags and rocks by order of the Master of that city, and bounded on both banks by splendid towpaths and flanking cart-roads of the best quality—stands the notorious trademoot of Dragonhead. The open country between the two cities is a vast swamp claimed by neither and left to the flocks of wild birds, multitudes of croaking frogs, and swarms of dancing, stinging insects; those who seek to explore it always seem to vanish. Unbeknownst to most Mournans, such disappearances are usually due to the many smaller races (goblins and kobolds, even pixies and other fey creatures) dwelling in the swamp and hiding from humans as much as possible.

TARGEN SORBEL, MASTER OF LUUTHAVEN

Male human (Neutral good)

Rogue 8/expert 12

CR 19

HD 8d6+16 + 12d6+24

hp 118

Init +3

Speed 30 feet

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 20

BAB/Grapple +15/+14

Attack +22 melee (1d6+3/18–20, +4 defending rapier) or +20 ranged (1d4+2/19–20, +2 seeking hand crossbow of distance)

Full Attack +22/+17/+12 melee (1d6+3/18–20, +4 defending rapier) or +20/+15/+10 ranged

(1d4+2/19–20, +2 seeking hand crossbow of distance)

Senses Listen +16, Spot +15

SA Sneak attack +4d6

SQ Available funds, evasion, immune to *detect thoughts*, *discern lies*, and magical attempts to discern his alignment, improved uncanny dodge, trap finding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

Fort +12, **Ref** +17, **Will** +15

Str 9, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 18

Language Dandarr, Far Tongue, Halfling, Vrarr

Crucial Skills Bluff +26, Disable Device +23*, Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Intimidate +18, Listen +16, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +23*, Search +13, Sense Motive +22, Spot +15

Other Skills Appraise +15, Decipher Script +13, Diplomacy +30, Disguise +16, Forgery +23, Gather Information +26, Knowledge (local) +14, Profession (merchant) +14

Crucial Feats Dodge, Rapid Reload (hand crossbow)

Other Feats Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hand crossbow), Leadership (26), Negotiator, Persuasive, Weapon Finesse

Possessions Shartheen (+4 defending rapier), +1 spell storing dagger (contains vampiric touch), Longshot (+2 seeking hand crossbow of distance), bracers of armor +4, cloak of resistance +4, ring of mind shielding, ring of protection +3, boots of teleportation, tools of the master thief (see **Chapter Two: Magic**), 3 potions of invisibility, 4 potions of cure serious wounds, 2 potions of protection from arrows (15/ magic)

Cohort Personal bodyguard, "Silent" (Ftr 7/Rog 10)

Followers The Dusks (135 1st-level fighters and rogues, seven 2nd-level fighters and six 2nd-level rogues, three 3rd-level fighters and four 3rd-level rogues, two 4th-level fighters and two 4th-level rogues, one 5th-level fighter and one

5th-level rogue, and one 6th-level fighter and one 6th-level rogue)

Developments Sorbel spends his days ferreting out treacheries; pondering possible consequences of changing trade, political situations, and new wares; and using his considerable acting skills and deft manipulations to play all the cities near Luuthaven against each other. Many rulers, guilds, and rich merchants lust to control the alchemicals of Luuthaven, but thus far Sorbel has been able to foil both military attacks and coups, in addition to magical attempts to directly control or influence his decisions. He maintains a large cadre of spies, many of whom travel in the guise of merchants, to keep him apprised of news from across Castlemourn. Very little happens around the Starhaven Reach, from a single missing person to a warehouse theft, which Master Sorbel doesn't know about.

* Includes bonus from *tools of the master thief*

DRAGONHEAD

Population: 45,000 (27% human, 18% dwarf, 15% halfling, 11% gnome, 10% elf, 8% golaunt, 5% half-elf, 4% thaele, 2% other), increasing to 80–90,000 in summer

Government: Magocracy

Ruler: Largrymm, the Wizard of a Thousand Faces (male human [lich] wizard 18)

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Education, information, manufactured goods, trade

The Head is a sprawling, lawless trading crossroads named for the rocky tor—shaped like a gigantic dragon's head—that rises just to the sarrind and luthsurl of the trading-town, sheltering it from the worst of the winter winds. The Thaalride and Shalantiir's Way meet in Dragonhead, and wagons rumble through its streets day and night, traders bargaining by lamplight whenever the sun is down. It's a place where the usual races of Castlemourn rub shoulders with golaunt, half-monsters, and even unique crossbreeds.

Dragonhead functions as a neutral trading ground for all manner of outlaws and known thieves and swindlers in a largely peaceful and respectful manner. This ongoing miracle is the result of the rough and sudden justice of the mysterious Largrymm, a reclusive wizard whose true face no one knows (hence his nickname, the Wizard of a Thousand Faces). For the last 111 years, the trade city has been overseen by Largrymm, who magically spies on all of Dragonhead and often punishes open violence, vandalism, and deceit—and *always* punishes poisonings and

arson—by using some unknown magic to cause the heads of miscreants to explode. As a result, small pickpocketings and minor exaggerations regarding the value of goods are the worst deliberately-inflicted misfortunes a visitor to Dragonhead can expect to face. Longtime residents have noted that one merchant cheating another in business deals or fighting with another merchant generally doesn't seem to bother the unseen Largrymm. Even drunken tavern brawls, if they don't get too far out of hand, seem to escape his notice—or at least his justice.

No one knows where Largrymm dwells (the dark, slender stone tower high on the flanks of the tor—the only structure there—is believed to be his, since explosive beheadings always befall those who try to build on the Head itself, but that lone structure is empty, its rooms abandoned to the whistling winds) or whether he is a single man, or a man at all, but his rough justice has been occurring in Dragonhead now for over a hundred years, leading some folk to believe he must be a lich.

Despite Largrymm's protection, everyone with wealth and power enough in Dragonhead hires armed guards and spellcasters for personal security. The wealthiest of those well-protected people—the greatcoins who can afford to dwell in large walled fortress-houses with their own private armies—are trade envoys for most of the powerful realms of Castlemourn. Dragonhead is where Mournans meet openly to transact business that would be unlawful at home. It's also where wily, coin-grubbing caravan kings have their bases, right next door to the mercenary bands they so often hire. Particularly in spring, when the first rush of caravans is mustering, the Head is one huge hiring-fair.

Larlasse, the goddess of luck, is by far the most popular deity in Dragonhead; she has both a grand and a low temple, and even dwarves and golaunt raise statues to her in front of their homes. There are local temples to all the other deities, but they have small congregations and even less local influence.

To the aerho, sarrind, and luthsurl, gently rolling grasslands—used by Dragonhar merchants to graze their livestock and by bandits for hard-riding raids and getaways—stretch as far as the eye can see. There are even a few nomadic barbarian clans who wander the sarrind grasslands in accordance with the season, grazing their horses, barlbar (goats), and sarthen (sheep) and living on the wild birds and beasts. To the broethsea, Shalantiir's Ride continues toward the River Esplander and Estorna, but due luthsurl of Dragonhead are the rolling, largely wild hills of Sparruk (pronounced "Sparr-OOK"), where monsters roam and the crumbling stones of a long-vanished kingdom can be seen.

DRAGONHEAD — START HERE

Dragonhead is an ideal starting place for a Castlemourn campaign. Dragonhar typically love adventure, thriving on the mercantile and social chaos of their city.

- Every summer, local adventuring bands and newly-arrived adventurers scour the rolling wilderlands of Faerel, the caverns and slopes of Mount Tharclaw, and the dark depths of the Winterwood for treasure. In winter, howling blizzards, ice storms, and prowling monsters forced down out of the mountains in search of food make such forays suicidal. All three places are infested with monsters, and all three contain riven, overgrown ruins of once-extensive buildings where magic, riches, and strange artifacts from Before the Fall have been found. Every year, some bands bring back more loot, and every year some bands don't come back at all. There are rumors that an outlaw from Lyonar, bolstered by other outlaws and magic items useful in battle, has set himself up as the Wild Duke, and is dwelling somewhere in these wild sarrind-lands.
- Legends often retold in the Great House of the Laughing Dancer (the high temple of Larlasse) and the Luckflame (the low temple of the goddess) claim Larlasse dwells atop Mount Tharclaw. Those who've climbed to the summit report finding many gigantic, roofless ruins and the bones of scores of dragons. Some say ghosts of dragons haunt the ruins, but others say something else—something deadly, unseen, and whispering—haunts them. A few priests of Larlasse not welcome in either temple say the goddess has gone away, but will return to the mountaintop (and to smiling on Dragonhar) if people of the city climb to the summit and do the right things to call her back. The priests heatedly disagree over just what those right things are.
- The small, battered-in-battle mercenary armies in and around the city are always looking for new recruits and new business. Agents of the Duke of Marlstag seem to be interested in hiring several armies—cheaply and soon. Interestingly, several unnamed parties of the Foreshore, acting through local agents, also seem to be in a hiring mood.
- Newcomers to Dragonhead continue to foolishly attempt to explore the Dragonhead itself. Largrymm instantly slays anyone trying to build on it (and build seems to include stairs, rope-ladders, and even tents). The wizard's lonely tower stands empty and has been searched many times over; few find anything more than the occasional hungry, hunting monster. However, local legend insists that the Dragonhead contains a vast underground dungeon—probably accessible from some hidden entrance in Largrymm's tower—filled with great gleaming heaps of coins and gems, some taller than a man, some only as high as a man's waist. The way to reach this cache, many tales insist, is by means of some clue, door, or aid visible only at the rising of the full moon. Some say this is a reward left for clever mortals by Haelarr, the god of prosperity. Others say it's haunted gold that will magically change those who handle it, giving them magical powers they may come to rue.

LARGRYMM, THE WIZARD OF A THOUSAND FACES

Male human (lich) (Lawful Evil)

Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Wizard 18 **CR 20**

HD 18d12 **hp 120**

Init +3 **Speed 30 feet**

AC 26, touch 13, flatfooted 23

BAB/Grapple +9/+9

Attack +9 melee (1d8+5, negative energy plus paralysis [Will DC 23])

Full Attack +9/+4 melee (1d8+5, negative energy plus paralysis [Will DC 23])

Senses Darkvision 60 feet; Listen +10, Spot +10

SA Damaging touch (1d8+5 negative energy; Will DC 23 for half), fear aura (Will DC 23 negates), paralyzing touch (Fortitude DC 23 negates), spells

SQ DR 15/bludgeoning and magic, immune to

cold, detect thoughts, discern lies, electricity, polymorph, mind-affecting attacks, and any attempt to magically discern his alignment, undead traits, +4 turn resistance

Fort +10, Ref +13, Will +17

Str 10, Dex 16, Con —, Int 22, Wis 14, Cha 18

Languages Abyssal, Crown Tongue, Dandarr, Draconic, Far Tongue, Gadroar, Infernal

Crucial Skills Concentration +24, Hide +11, Listen +10, Move Silently +11, Search +14, Sense Motive +18, Spot +10

Other Skills Craft (alchemy) +26, Decipher Script +18, Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +12, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +14, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (local) +17, Knowledge (religion) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Knowledge (undead) +26, Spellcraft +30

FAEREL, THE FALLEN REALM

Due sarrind of Dragonhead lies the fallen realm of Faerel, an infamous, monster-prowled, treasure-studded wilderland. Though most Mournan maps show only its name on an otherwise blank area, visitors find that the realm of Faerel has vanished, but the land where it once stood is very much alive. Too much alive for most visitors.

The Faerel of today is a series of rolling hills overgrown by scrub forest and roamed by all manner of prowling, predatory monsters, a seemingly-endless menagerie of strange beasts that only veteran hunters and treasure-seeking adventurers dare to face. It's quite common for one predator to stalk another and attack intruders—alone or in packs—when busy fighting the first predator. Many hunting bands have been attacked by three or more different monsters at once.

Every year, the once-grand, ruined stone buildings of Faerel crumble a little more, frozen and blizzard-blasted in howling winters. Every summer, they yield up coins, small and strange magic items, and relics of unknown powers and purposes. Forests hide most of the walls and cellars, but those who persevere have found fortunes in fallen Faerel.

Crucial Feats Greater Spell Penetration, Spell Penetration

Other Feats Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Spellcraft), Widen Spell

Spells 4/6/6/5/5/5/5/3/3/2, save DC 16 + spell level, +9/+4 melee touch, +12/+7 ranged touch
 9th—dominate monster, time stop
 8th—demand, power word stun, protection from spells
 7th—greater scrying, Largrymm's doom (x2)
 6th—chain lightning, disintegrate, eyebite, freezing sphere, greater dispel magic
 5th—cloudkill, cone of cold, feeblemind, hold monster, waves of fatigue
 4th—bestow curse, black tentacles, contagion, ice storm, shout
 3rd—dispel magic, fireball, hold person, ray of exhaustion, vampiric touch
 2nd—acid arrow, blindness/deafness, darkness, fog cloud, hideous laughter, spectral hand
 1st—magic missile (x2), obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement, reduce person, shield
 0—arcane mark, detect magic, ray of frost, read magic

Possessions Bracers of armor +8, cloak of resistance +4, crystal ball of farcasting (see Chapter Two: Magic), brooch of shielding, mask of disguise (see Chapter Two: Magic), ring of freedom of movement, ring of mind shielding, Largrymm's staff

SPARRUK

Population: 7,000 (92% human, 3% halfling, 2% gnome, 1% dwarf, 1% half-elf, 1% other)

Government: None

Cities: None

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Crystals, lumber, thaelstones

Sparruk is a blasted, hilly land where only stream valleys and bogs are verdant, and loose scree and stunted brush cloak higher ground. What few trees cling to the slopes and stream banks are short and twisted, stunted by the poor soil and scouring winds, appearing tormented, dark, and menacing. Fragmentary stone walls and cracked, fallen pillars—bleak remnants of past kingdoms—lie scattered across the realm. The vegetation and soil are both unusually dark, and reflected light in Sparruk is inexplicably muted. Though the land had a king,

LARGRYMM'S STAFF

Carved from a twisted blackleaf limb, *Largrymm's staff* is topped with what appears to be the skull of a large raven. *Largrymm's staff* allows the use of the following spells:

- *Blindness/deafness* (1 charge)
- *Bestow curse* (1 charge)
- *Feeblemind* (1 charge)
- *Eyebite* (2 charges)
- *Largrymm's doom* (2 charges) (see Chapter Two: Magic)

Strong necromancy; CL 13th; Craft Staff; *bestow curse, blindness/deafness, eyebite, feeblemind, Largrymm's doom*; Price 110,250 gp.

HIDDEN THAELSTONES

Many Sparran holds contain well-hidden caches of thaelstones, kept for when starvation is the alternative to bartering for wagons of food for the winter ahead or emergencies when they can be exchanged for the life of a loved one.

Every spring, wizards and merchants send treasure hunters and other individuals looking for quick wealth or adventure to Sparruk in search of these valuable crystals. Thaelstone-seekers unprepared for battling wolf packs or prowling monsters seldom last long.

Local legend claims that Before the Fall, Sparruk was a vast, flat, arable plain and something during that time of tumult made the earth bubble up into hills. Strangely, no legends elsewhere in Castlemourn mention Sparruk at all. Most sages agree that, aside from yielding thaelstones, Sparruk is a wasteland best left to the wolves.

who ruled from the saddle, constantly leading mounted troops against the worst of the marauding monsters, as recently as a hundred years ago, it is devoid of all but a few hardy farmers and ranchers.

In summer, these tough Sparrans harvest berries in the bogs and farm root and leaf crops along the stream-banks, but in late fall they retreat inside their fortified stone steadings (usually built on the foundations of ruins that still have good wells) atop the bleak hills, hoping their food-stores will last until spring. Outside the walls of these grim holds, wolf packs scour the land for food, attacking even large and well-armed caravans. Only the starving venture out of their holds, seeking meat for their cook fires.

The wide, fast-flowing rivers Lulace and Esplander carry dark, gritty earth from the sarrind mountains down through Sparruk and into Estorna. In a few places along both rivers, the tops of huge crystal towers gleam under the water, visible only in darkness. None who've attempted underwater explorations of them have yet returned.

Many wild creatures call Sparruk home in summer and migrate down the Tharksun in winter, pursued by the wolves; in the warmest months, rabbits and deer are plentiful, and prowling hunting cats are heard screaming everywhere by night. Sages believe the bleak countryside supports so much seasonal life in part because of the unusually plentiful fish in its rivers and bogs, fish with unusually large, dark eyes.

Fish of all sizes often surface and look all around as if intelligent enough to ponder their surroundings. Fisherfolk swear they hide from

those who fail to take them by surprise. The usual means of fishing success involves stoutly-weighted and anchored nets across the river and spearmen followed by men towing a second barrier net approaching the first net from far upstream, trapping fish between and hurling them far out onto the banks to suffocate. Travelers who eat fish from the two rivers often comment on the bitter, greasy taste of the flesh. Eagles, hawks, and ducks preying on the fish also have bitter tasting flesh.

As an earlier Palandrin of Asmrel once said, "Sparruk is too poor to be worth ruling." Few folk venture there, save prospectors and adventurers seeking the fabled thaelstones. The Sparrans, feeling largely forgotten by the rest of Castlemourn, always welcome strangers. However, visitors who attack or mistreat Sparrans are warned that a particular local herb, artarma, is a virulent poison and is often added to the food or water of such belligerents. Afflicted persons are customarily slain or have all their joints broken and are left lying helpless in the wild countryside to die or be devoured by waiting wolves.

There are no roads or settlements in the land; only from the air can one see traces of the broad roads that once crisscrossed Sparruk in all directions. Likewise, there are no temples or shrines in this desolate, hilly land. Nearly all Sparrans worship Larlasse in private shrines set up within their holds and believe deeds of heroism and endurance attract her notice and favor. At the heart of the land, the River Lulace bisects a huge expanse of ruins—obviously once a city—that consists of huge, smooth stone slabs joined by crystalline

ARTARMA POISON

Created from artarma, an herb found only in the bogs of Sparruk, this poison, whether powdered or simply crushed leaves, is extremely virulent. The powdered form dissolves easily in water, while crushed artarma leaves are often combined with other spices or herbs in food or hot, spiced drinks. (Ingested; Fortitude save DC 18 resists; Unconsciousness/Paralysis; Price: 100 gp [this only reflects the cost to purchase artarma outside of Sparruk]).

masonry. In high summer, as the reflected glint of the sun betrays the locations of overgrown crystal, Sparrans and traders from Dragonhead come to mine what crystal they can and often rob or slay each other in vicious skirmishes. Most of the fabled, fabulously expensive thaelstones come from these ruins.

A line of wooded hills, the Tharksun runs sekhovynd out of Sparruk to form a border between the rich coastal farms ruled by Ghandalar and an-luthsurl (more westerly) realms of Castlemourn, Estorna and Khalandorn. Foresters cut trees from its edges, but few dare to trek deep into its gloom, for wolves—and stranger, darker creatures—dwell there.

ESTORNA

Population: 90,500 (28% human, 28% gnome, 28% halfling, 5% dwarf, 5% elf, 4% golaunt, 2% other)

Government: Republic (council of guildmasters)

Capital: Caeth

Major Settlements: Glael, Harbridge, Thornar

Languages: Far Tongue, Vrarr, Halfling

Resources: Art, fish, lumber, crafted wares

Estorna is a rolling land of quarries, iron-smelting, and villages of industrious and accomplished artificers and crafters who have no time for war. Many gnomes, halflings, half-breeds, and outcasts from other realms dwell in Estorna, where no one cares what one's heritage is so long as one's work is skilled and one does no harm to others or their craftings.

It is bounded by Sparruk to the sarrind and natural barriers to aerho and luthsurl; luthwards lie the wild foothills and frowning cliffs of the Haunt of Eagles, and to the aerho is a thick, monster-infested forest, the Tharksun (save for a gap where the city of Thornar stands on the road between Estorna and the Starhaven Reach lands). The River Mar, flowing from the luthsurl hills down to the independent port of Marrovar, forms Estorna's sekhovynd border.

The well-maintained Shalantiir's Way links Dragonhead with Marrovar. Estornar value the trade a wide, stone road in good repair brings and tend it well, especially in winter. They clear snow and repave as needed (reseating heavy stone slabs on the gravel underbed and replacing cracked ones) and plant and tend rows of tall fruit trees on both sides of the road, providing shade, protection, and food for the length of the road within Estorna.

Thrice conquered by Khalandorn, the Estornar won their independence each time through widespread acts of domestic vandalism: armor fastenings, locks, hasps, and water-pipes broke; wines, lamp-oils, and perfumes proved to be

tainted; accounts and records were found to be awry or lost; and so on. Baffled by ever-increasing calamities on all sides while eagerly servile Estornar professed bewilderment as to their causes, the Khalandornar finally retreated, and the troubles abruptly ceased. Thrice they had to learn this hard lesson, but since the third failed takeover, they have left Estorna to its government of village consensus (and, in times of strong disagreement, formal voting councils).

Nowadays, the crafters of Estorna hire mercenaries for defense and concern themselves with making simple but elegant ladles, storage-coffers, lanterns, and thousands of other small household wares. Everything the Estornar craft is adorned or made beautiful but never at the expense of practicality. The great majority of Estornar worship the crafting aspect of Haelarr, so priests in the land see to local healing, comforting, and burials rather than trying to influence politics. Even so, Munedra's worship is especially popular in Caeth where her clergy also offer healing and comfort within the Home of the Healing Hand.

Bustling Caeth is home to 18,000 crafters, a fairly equal mix of halflings, gnomes, and humans with a sprinkling of elves, dwarves, and even golaunt craftworkers. Within Estorna, crafts are administered by guilds, and the guildmasters of Caeth sit on Estorna's ruling council. Their chief duties are to keep the land peaceful, law-abiding, and protected and to enforce common standards in mercantile trade, pricing, and measures (those with a taste for shady dealings travel to Dragonhead).

The council defends Estorna with a well-organized army of skilled, disciplined mercenaries. Hireswords flock to Estorna every year in hopes of earning positions in its army. The Council pays well and outfits its soldiery with the finest armor and weaponry. The Horse (a 5,000-strong cavalry) continuously patrols Shalantiir's Way and mounts hill patrols along all of the realm's borders except in the sekhovynd. All four cities have a 5,000-strong garrison, above and beyond their stated populations, that functions as a local police force: the Shield of Caeth, the Shield of Glael, and so on.

Glael is a predominantly halfling city of 13,000, famous for its weavers, tailors, and fine finished clothing. The local, exclusively elven Garment Guild makes some of the finest robes and cloaks in all of Mournra.

Harbridge, a walled city of 11,500 gnomes and halflings, is renowned as a source of fine furniture. Its wooden buildings delight the eye with highly-detailed carvings, trim, and statuary. Eight large squares are scattered across the city, each centered on a wondrous fountain. Local tales describe miraculous events surrounding these fountains

ESTORNA'S MERCENARY GUARDIANS

The denizens of the Haunt of Eagles and the Tharksun remain constant dangers to Estorna. Most Estornar are crafters; aside from crafting static-defense traps for homes and businesses, they aren't fighters. Typically, they hire mercenaries and adventurers for protection. Soldiers in the army are paid well in coin, but private bodyguards, escorts, and "go-and-slay" bands are usually paid in the form of finely-crafted (masterwork) weapons, armor, and equipment of a form agreed to beforehand by the hireling, who can often order armor of different sizes or sets of matched swords for resale, not just personal gear. This practice benefits everyone; superbly-made goods are gained by the hirelings at less than open-market prices, and the Estornar crafters can readily craft acceptable payment for their guardians.

(healings, teleportation of all the waters in the fountain pools to the heart of burning buildings when a guildmaster and a person at the fire speak the same linking word, and so on). Just luthsurl of the city is the Field of Flowers, a sprawling wild garden complex, with numerous natural paths and fountains featuring flowers from all across Mournra, and temple to Damantha. The Shield of Harbridge maintains constant patrols to the aerho to thwart monster and bandit raids from the Tharksun.

Thornar is home to 13,000 Estornar, as well as trade envoys and merchants from all over the Starhaven Reach. Halflings and gnomes make up most of the year-round citizens, while a slightly more numerous group of humans come and go with their mercantile activities. Folk come from across Mournra to Thornar to trade for Estornar lumber, ornate wood carvings (many a Mournan wall has a relief-carved, lovingly-oiled wooden scene rather than a painting), wooden bowls, mugs, and barrels. Thornans need wood, wood, and more wood, and their woodcutting bands have made such inroads into the Tharksun that they must now work heavily-armed, as the furious beasts of the forest gather repeatedly to attack. Anyone familiar with the Tharksun is impressed by a claim of being a woodcutter from Thornar.

Many halfling fishing thorps line the rivers Mar, Lulace (below Harbridge), and Sundrin. The fish from Lulace require a great deal of seasoning, especially by halfling standards, and tend to end up as oil and spiced fish-paste rather than smoked or dried for table use.

MARROVAR

Population: 205,000 (95% human, 2% gnome, 2% dwarf, 1% other)

Government: Republic (council of merchant lords)

Languages: Far Tongue, Dandarr, Vrarr

Resources: Banking, contracts, information, magic, trade, shipbuilding

On a small wedge of land between the Rivers Mar (the sekhovynd boundary of Estorna) and Sundrin (the sarrind boundary of Khalandorn) lies

the independent port city of Marrovar. Ruled by a council of merchants known as the Stonehall, this stone-walled, rather spartan city of gardens, cobbled streets, creaking wagons, and shipyards is home to close-mouthed, dispassionate men of coin who will back any investment they deem favorable in overall effect on Castlemourn (even if not profitable in and of itself) and make contracts with anyone, from golaunt to pirate. The shrewd coinmasters of Marrovar have become legendary for their foresight, contingency plans, nimble negotiations, and manipulations of unwitting business partners, abetting or augmenting each other's achievements to attain results only the Marrovians have foreseen.

Three former shore-marshes have been dredged and linked into a great harbor entered through two cuts on either side of a sheltering island (itself a walled naval base). No less than six rival shipyards crowd the harbor, which works night and day, secure in the protection of Marrovar's powerful war-fleet, whose vessels patrol not just the harbor-mouths but well out into Glamryn Bay. Hundreds of docks also line the harbor, surrounded by thousands of warehouses separated by concentric arcs of wide wagon-roads. Where the warehouses end, guildhalls, large shops, temples, and many-towered rooming-houses take their place along the roads, giving way in turn to the shops and modest homes of the bulk of the populace. Only near the outer walls do the walled mansions of guildmasters, wealthy Marrovians, and the merchant lords of the Stonehall rise up above the more common buildings.

Marrovians have a grim public manner and dress in dark clothing. They are secretive in regard to their trade dealings as a matter of habit but are unusually law-abiding. There are only three local penalties for lawlessness: a period of servitude on a Marrovian warship, hanging, or banishment from the city. It should be noted that the Stonehall doesn't care what a Marrovian does outside Marrovar; those desiring to deal in slaves, order killings, or work trade-swindles often travel quite openly to Dragonhead or Luuthaven to engage in such dark work. As long as it isn't done in Marrovar

(which includes the harbor and all Marrovia ships, no matter where they may be at the time), the law of Marrovar remains silent. As a result, the city is openly home to several thieving organizations that operate throughout Castlemourn but take care never to work in Marrovar itself.

The city maintains several lances of horsemen to patrol the immediate vicinity of the walls. By cordial agreement with Estorna, Marrovar controls all the land around it to a distance where a keen-eyed human not using magical aid can clearly see an approaching group of walking or riding travelers. Only the best riders and alert mounted warriors are accepted into the Marrovia lances; as a result, retired Marrovia lancers are often able to secure comfortable, if not affluent, lives in private forces across Mournra.

On entering the city, visitors are required to sign-in with a gate clerk, stating their full name and business within the city. Thereafter, they must check-in every rathren with clerks in the Stonehall while resident and notify the gate clerks when they depart. If they don't, they are hunted down, stripped of their possessions, and thrown out of the city, unless they can prove bed-forced illness, injury, or confinement by a third party prevented them from reporting in. Street policing in the city—and spying—is performed by the Ratings (naval officers usually called the Rats by Marrovians).

Outlanders can attain Marrovia citizenship by joining one of the numerous city guilds, of whom

the most prominent are the Guild of Seafarers, the Trusted Fellowship of Docklars, the Wise League of Shipwrights, and the Masterful Order of Smiths and Metalwrights. The crews of outland ships docked at port need not report in, even if the ship is laid up through the winter, but their captains must provide a list of all of their names to a dockmaster and pay a copper coin for each crew member if docking for longer than to unload and load. Marrovia dockmasters, who tend to be gruff or crotchety lancers too old or injured to ride, board and inspect every ship to ensure there are no stowaways or list-forgotten persons aboard.

Marrovar is home to grand temples devoted to each of the Seven, Ralaroar being the most popular, and small shrines to many lesser-known deities; an old sailors' joke claims Marrovar is where someone has a nightmare and invents a god every rathren. The city shore beyond the an-sarrind harbor cut is crowned by a castle whose battlements bristle with naval defense catapults and ballistae. This fortress, The Cold Fist (better known just as The Fist to Marrovians), contains barracks, armories, stables for the lances, and a roofed-over dry-docks entered through a ship tunnel from the harbor. Directly across the cut from the prow-like walls of The Fist is Storm Island, the naval base where ready-to-sail ships are always anchored at docks, and a constant watch is kept out to sea.

Every year in late spring and early fall, Marrovar sponsors a huge martial tourney outside its walls

ODD MARROVIAN INVESTMENTS

Marrovia merchant leaders are becoming known for financing the oddest projects and expeditions, not just undertakings that will bring financial returns. Quietly building contacts and making investments and agreements so as to increase personal influence across Castlemourn is the life goal of Marrovia merchants.

Since the ruling Lords of Marrovar were exterminated over two hundred years ago and replaced by the guild-elected Lords of the Stonehall, suspicious coincidences have played a large part in Marrovia life. Two large city blocks of warehouses recently burned to the ground—the very day large supplies of squared timbers arrived in the city. Several years back, some warships mysteriously disappeared not quite a rathren after ten new keels were set in the shipyards. And more than just Marrovia folk find it odd indeed that an invasion a decade ago by a cabal of Knights from Khalandorn, backed by some ambitious Foreshore sorcerers, was hurled back by a Ghandalan army who'd sailed to the city to engage in friendly war games with the forces of Marrovar.

Several times in the last two hundred years, unknown magics have affected the waters of the River Sundrin where they flow into Marrovar Bay, causing the foam cresting them to transform into formidable winged fiends of many sorts who have promptly attacked Marrovians. These happenings caused the Lords of the Stonehall to encourage the foundation of the Circle of Sorcery, a sorcerers' guild, and the High Hall of Magecraft, a wizards' guild. And although these guilds have flourished, they as yet have been unable to explain the cause of the Fiendwaves or craft spells that seem likely to prevent or quell them. According to temple visions and oracles the Dark Wave comes again soon; the Stonehall has already announced, by proclamations fee-carried by ships departing its docks to all other ports they've called at since, that it will pay handsomely all who wet blade or hurl spell and manage to smite fiends of the wave before the watching Holy Ones of Marrovar.

on land and sea. These rathren-long contests of riding, sailing, archery, lance-hurling, and various forms of combat are known as “Greensword” (spring) and “Winterblade” (fall). Warriors from all over Mournra come to test their mettle against the city’s sailors and lancers. Even pirates and golaunt raiders are welcome as participants as long as they follow the rules. Large cash prizes are awarded to the victors and the especially valorous, financed by the Stonehall (who levy copper-a-room rental and copper-a-serving meal taxes during the tourneys to recoup the prize payouts). The city’s wizard and sorcerer guilds are paid well to act against sneak pirate attacks or other violence associated with the tourneys, and the temples provide healing but not raisings; the combats tend to be bloody and contribute new graves to the large and growing grimyards in the lands luthsurl of Marrovar.

KHALANDORN

Population: 29,000 (98% human, 2% other)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: High Knight Sapphiera Telmantle (female human fighter 10)

Capital: Shields Hard

Major Settlements: None

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Food, leather, livestock, timber, wool

The neighboring Khalandornar are the opposite of the shrewd master merchants of Marrovar. Khalandorn is a small, haughty realm of fierce knights who place great stock in their personal honor and spend much time galloping up and down the realm’s small valleys battling the many monsters that raid from the woods surrounding the vales of Khalandorn. A Knight of the Realm of the Flame (the banner of Khalandorn is a crimson sword sheathed in amber flames on a white field) strives to do something valorous, large or small, every day. It is said in Khalandorn that folk are reborn elsewhere in Mournra after death, and the Seven see to it that those who serve the greater good are rewarded by rebirth into ever-greater wealth and power.

Khalandornar commoners live simple, practical lives cutting firewood and tending their walled gardens, vital to survival in a land where open fields are frequently galloped through, and the only safe use for such terrain is open pasture land for sarthen (sheep) and barlbar (goats). Most of the commoners admire the knights, but they think of them as rash children who must be steered aside from disasters born of their own reckless enthusiasm.

The countryside is a rolling patchwork of forested hills separated by cleared grassy valleys

through which streams wind to end in ponds. Nameless dirt lanes wind everywhere, and there are no settlements larger than a cluster of five or six homes except for Shields Hard, a large town cloaking the slopes of a high knoll topped by Flame Keep, the stout castle of the ruler. From her throne in Shields Hard, the High Knight (who is always a woman elected by the other knights from the relatively few females among their ranks) rules the Realm of the Flame, though her time is dominated by smoothing over the inevitable and constant disputes that arise between knights. Outstanding High Knights tend to be masterful diplomats, but in the end their legal decrees (including exilings, imprisonments, and demotions from rank and title) and open disapproval are the brute-force tools keeping the knights in check.

Anyone who owns land, a horse, armor, and a lance can style himself a knight of Khalandorn, but established knights test stranger knights constantly in tourneys, and incompetent warriors rarely hold the title of knight for long. There’s no shortage of danger for the knights to go seeking. Wolves and other beasts raid out of the Tharksun constantly and in such numbers that many folk in nearby lands believe evil wizards, or perhaps even the fell, monster-birthing remnants of a fallen god, dwell within those woods.

Men and women are social equals in Khalandorn, and decades of strife have left women more numerous than men—all Khalandornar women are independent, capable, and never hesitate when faced with a difficult task, even when men are nearby. Challenges and to-first-blood duels are commonplace among youthful Khalandornar, but older folk (except the knights and their families) view such behavior as madness if practiced by adults. Khalandornar tend to be xenophobic; they are accepting of half-elves and halflings but *very* wary of other races and openly hostile to golaunt.

Even the smallest farmstead has a stockade, an earth-covered root cellar, and a dry moat; Khalandornar are used to battle. If the knights aren’t skirmishing with each other, more marauding bands have come down from the Tharksun and the Broken Lands. Like so many before, they’ll be hurled back after tasting the swords of the knights—and the traps and night-daggers of the simple farmers of Khalandorn.

The current ruler of the realm, High Knight Sapphiera Telmantle, is a tall, beautiful, raven-haired, manipulative actress who’s seldom seen wearing anything but gleaming silver full plate armor. She spends much of her time riding around the realm visiting the other knights, trying to deepen her friendships (and in some cases, love affairs) with them, and trying to discover any attacks

KHALANDORN EAGER FOR WAR

Khalandorn is a realm both eager and ready for war. Outlanders—human outlanders, at least—have many opportunities to train, be trained, hire on as bodyguards, make weapons, or take coin as scouts. Armorers, weaponsmiths, and warhorse-trainers of skill can almost name their own monthly salaries.

Khalandorn is a constant target for marauding bands of monsters from the sarrind and luthsurl—and the knights not only meet them in the fields, but often mount raids of their own up along the Haunt of Eagles and into the Broken Lands. If it wasn't for the treasure hoards won by the knights of old, the constant warfare would long ago have left the realm coinless and depopulated, yet the coins and strife continue to lure adventurers and would-be adventurers from across Mournra.

Visitors will find Khalandorn a beautiful mix of pleasant, peaceful forest glades, grim castles crowning heights, and rolling ranchland where arched wooden bridges span wandering streams. Its knights like to feast, drink good wine, and watch skilled acrobats and beautiful dancers when they're not hunting or fighting. Skilled cooks, vintners, entertainers, and stablehands can all find ready employment and all too much excitement.

they're contemplating on each other, Marrovar, or Estorna. She's the least battle-accomplished High Knight yet to rule and is desperate to appear capable, warlike, and commanding, in order to avoid any knight scorning her as "a mere green, untried slip of a lass better suited for my knee than a commander's war-saddle." One old steelface (as Khalandornar call veterans) made the mistake of uttering those words and paid with his life, slain by the High Knight in a duel. However, she has no doubt that other knights think similarly, even if they dare not give voice to their thoughts.

Sapphiera knows she can't keep her knights from open battle forever, so she's started rumors

that the Iron Barony is the foe of Khalandorn and is arming to invade. The reaction of the knights has been about as she expected; they sent a minimal number of young, untrained warriors to answer her call to assemble an army at Shields Hard and set about furiously training, mustering, and equipping their own forces in private—as well as sending a stream of spies into the Barony.

All of these preparations have reduced the annual Sword Tournaments to three: First Flame in late spring, Sunder Shields in midsummer, and Last Blades in early fall. When no war is raging or expected, the knights hold many smaller local tournaments of wrestling, archery, jousting, and



bluntblade sword-and-dagger contests. They typically give bodyguard jobs, or pay increases to those who already work for them, as prizes with swords and purses of coins for the poorest winners, but the three big tourneys (the spring and fall contests move from one knight's castle to another, chosen by decree of the High Knight, but Sunder Shields is always held in Shields Hard) have coin prizes, awarded by the High Knight from the ancient dragon hoards won by her ancestors, large enough to make the winners rich.

Surprisingly, Khalandorn does important trade exporting the plumage of many brightly colored local birds. These feathers are in great demand throughout Castlemourn, leading to a steady stream of merchant caravans with wagons full of live birds (captured wild birds are now barn-bred) flowing to Marrovar and from there out to the rest of Castlemourn.

Khalandornar typically worship Amaunt, the god of war, and Shields Hard is home to the Keep of Armed Might. The lore of the realm is one long series of great battlefield acts of valor; wherever knights miraculously prevailed over greatly superior foes, fountains have sprung up, their waters reputed to have magical powers (among other things, bathing in their waters heals any weapon wound and even reattaches weapon-severed body parts; vials of the waters taken away retain such powers for most of a day). Shrines to Amaunt have been constructed at every one of these sites, and ten such shrines flank the road between Shields Hard and Great Sword.

SAPPHIERA TELMANTLE, HIGH KNIGHT OF KHALANDORN

Female human (Lawful Good)

Fighter 10

CR 10

HD 10d10+20

hp 93

Init +7

Speed 20 feet

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18

BAB/Grapple +10/+13

Attack +17 melee (1d8+5/19–20, +2 *aberration bane longsword*) or +19 melee versus aberrations (1d8+7/19–20 plus 2d6, +2 *aberration bane longsword*) or +15 ranged (1d8+4/x3 plus 2d8 sonic plus Fortitude DC 14 or deafened, +1 *composite longbow of thundering*)

Full Attack +17/+12 melee (1d8+5/19–20, +2 *aberration bane longsword*) or +19/+14 melee versus aberrations (1d8+7/19–20 plus 2d6, +2 *aberration bane longsword*) or +15/+10 ranged (1d8+4/x3 plus 2d8 sonic plus Fortitude DC 14 or deafened, +1 *composite longbow of thundering*)

SA N/A

SQ Immune to *detect thoughts*, *discern lies*, and any attempts to discern alignment

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

Senses Listen +1, Spot +2

Str 16, **Dex** 17, **Con** 15, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17

Languages Dandarr, Far Tongue, Halfling, Varr

Crucial Skills Bluff +8, Climb +4*, Intimidate +10, Jump +5*, Listen +1, Ride +12, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +4*, Spot +2

Other Skills Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +8, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +8

Crucial Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Other Feats Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Improved Initiative, Leadership (15), Negotiator, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Focus (longsword)

Possessions *Khalan* (+2 *aberration bane longsword*), *Thunderbolt* (+1 *composite* [+3 Strength bonus] *longbow of thundering*), 20 arrows, +2 *breastplate*, masterwork light steel shield, *ring of mind shielding*

Cohort Personal attendant/bodyguard, Caedra Blacksaddle (Ftr 8)

Followers High Knight's personal retinue (20 1st-level fighters, two 2nd-level fighters, and one 3rd-level fighter)

* Includes armor check penalty

HAUNT OF EAGLES

Population: 6,500 (88% human, 10% halflings, 2% other)

Government: Occupied by Khalandorn

Ruler: Garig Hautun, Knight-Governor of Khalandorn (male human fighter 13)

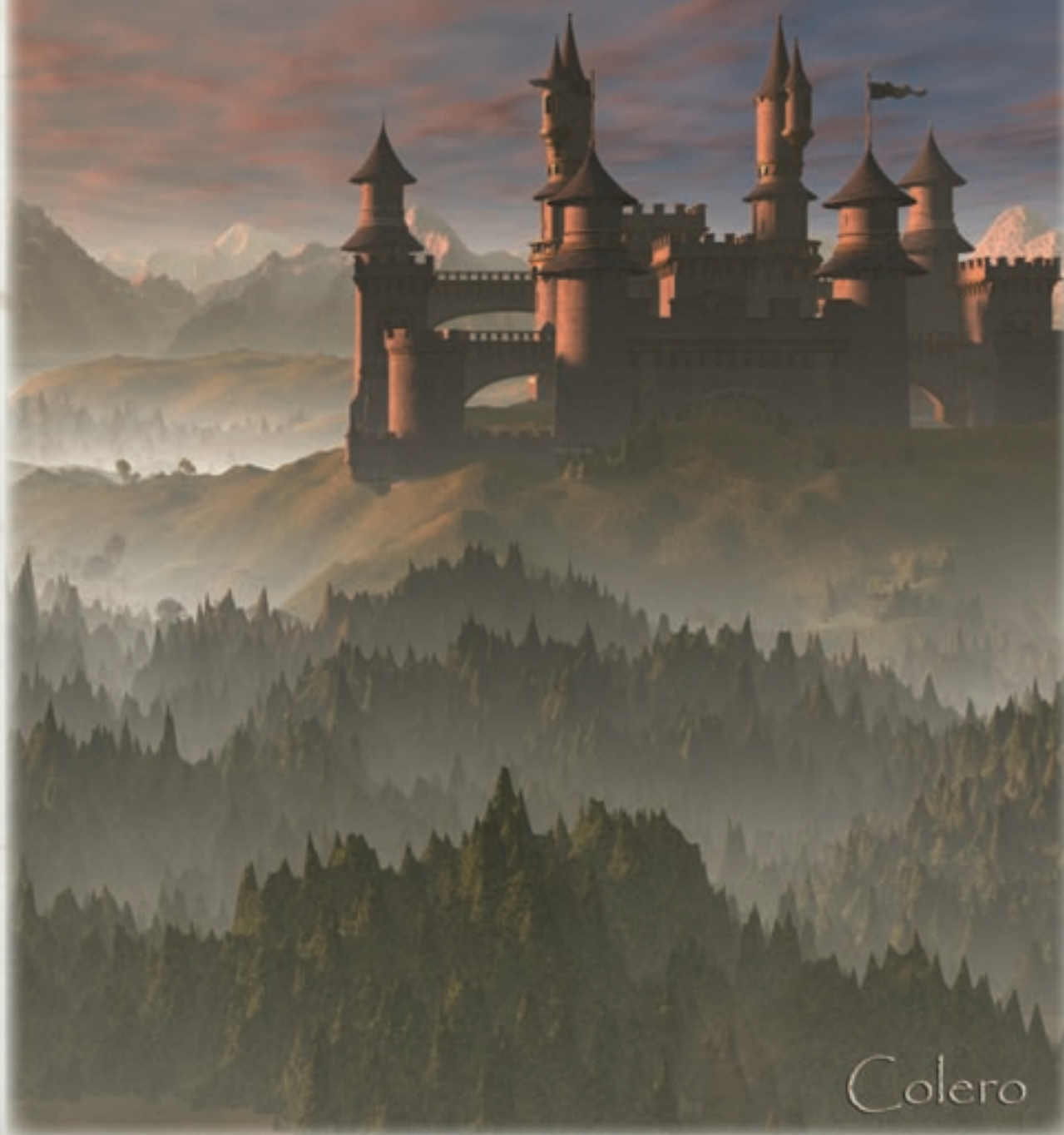
Major Settlements: Great Sword, Gryphon's Ledge

Languages: Far Tongue, Halfling

Resources: Eagle feathers, griffon training, hospitality, ore, metals

A knife-edged sarrind-sekhovynd (north-south) ridge, the Haunt of Eagles forms the abrupt luthsurl boundaries of Khalandorn and Estorna. The cracked and fissured cliff runs far to the sarrind into remote Sparruk and nearly to the edge of the Haeldar. Home to many eagles, vultures, and other soaring birds, the cliffs are names for the giant crimson-feathered eagles, whose plumage is prized by mages and alchemists, unique to this region. The eagles know they are hunted, and climbers high in the Haunt are likely to be attacked by many eagles and other flying creatures acting in unison or taking turns swooping, pecking, and plucking. In addition to the common raptors and giant eagles, the Haunt is also home to rocs, griffons, and hippogriffs. On days when the skies are clear and storm-free, all

CHAPTER 4



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ARHDAHKAUN CASTLE

Arhdahkaun, one of the few remaining castles from Before the Fall, stands on the mainland of Mournra. Crowning the Haunt like a great stone fang stabbing into the sky (an appearance that has earned it the bardic nickname Old Stone Fang), it is visible from six days ride or more away. No one knows who built it or why. No trails lead to it, and some sages believe it was thrust upwards along with what are now the Haunt and the Broken Lands during the devastation of the Fall, creating the massive cliffs and leaving the ancient castle isolated. Many treasure-hunters have explored Arhdahkaun over the years and report that it is built of massive stone blocks somehow fused together and sculpted. Its great, empty rooms continue to yield surprises, as old spells expire and reveal hitherto-hidden chambers, stairs, and passages—often bristling with deadly tricks and traps. Any treasure still in the Old Stone Fang must be either entombed in solid stone or lie deep in the many levels of dungeons beneath it that run far under the Haunt, often connecting with natural caves and stream-fissures. The lowest levels were flooded long ago by an underground spring or lake, and fell creatures slither out of the waters to attack folk in the dry caverns. Those who drink or are touched by the waters lose much sanity, and none who have entered the waters to explore their depths are known to have survived.

Thanks to busy bards' tongues, Arhdahkaun is best known for terrible nightmares. Anyone who sleeps within its halls dreams vividly of a furious battle between veteran human defenders and terrifying fiends in which the castle is overrun and all the humans slaughtered, many crying out to Allethloan for aid. Unlike other dreams, this bloody slaughter stays fresh in the mind forever. Those who have the misfortune to dream in Arhdahkaun wake with the Fanged Scar, a deep, hook-shaped wound on their right cheek—the same mark that adorns every treasure ever reclaimed from Arhdahkaun's halls.

The bards also tell of strange occurrences within the castle. Doors open and close by themselves, seemingly at random, and whenever any living creature comes within ten feet of a door, it opens silently, no matter what spells or physical means may have been used to keep it shut. Magical radiances spontaneously fill chambers from time to time, occasionally accompanied by music. Voices murmur words in unknown languages. Staircases vanish, only to reappear later. Corpses, spilled blood, body parts, and even half-eaten, cooked meat all vanish with the coming of dawn, slowly fading away into nothingness.

Along with the common rumors and adventurers' tales, the castle features in countless legends and ballads. The most popular tell of Allethloan, the lord who gorged himself at a grand feast instead of leading his warriors in defense of his castle and whose heart burst when he saw all his beloved knights lying dead, torn apart by fiends. Other haunting tales speak of Arhdahkaun Castle as sentient and hold that it judges all who enter its halls by an ancient, forgotten code, either helping or harming them. Questors (those who seek lore of the unknown) consider the Fanged Scar a badge of honor.

A large shrine to Larlasse occupies one entire section of the castle: a grand chamber with an altar, over which looms a huge carving of the goddess dominated by her great eyes that seem to see into the very thoughts of everyone in the room. Curiously, her silhouette is distorted with shadowy echoes of many leathery wings, tails, and scales. While these carvings have been defaced by Larlasse-worshipping explorers over the years, they can still be seen by the observant.

Arhdahkaun can be a deadly test for both novice adventurers and veterans. To some it seems empty, though every visitor experiences a feeling of being watched by a calm, unseen presence at all times. No one knows if the fortress has been robbed of all of its treasures yet, so its thousands of halls and chambers continue to lure those with the courage—or foolishness—to enter.

Mournans believe this is but one of many similar castles that existed Before the Fall. But why did Arhdahkaun survive the catastrophe seemingly unscathed? Why was Orn Doalryn plunged to the bottom of an icy lake, and why do no other mainland castles remain intact? What causes the nightmare and the mysterious Fanged Scar? Is there any connection between Arhdahkaun and the five castles on Tamrune Isle?

of these magnificent flying creatures take to the air, wheeling and circling aloft, soaring over the cliffs on the strong thermals. Their collective beaks and talons long ago exterminated snakes, sarthen, barlbar, and other docile or slow-moving mountain creatures, leaving only the most agile and crafty rock-dwellers. A goblin foolish enough to show itself openly by day is likely to be snatched up in sharp-taloned claws, taken far out from the cliffs to where it's a fatal fall to the foothills far below, and dropped—screaming—to its doom. Nights along the Haunt are little safer; as the sun sets, wyverns and small dragons emerge from their lofty caverns and take to the skies to hunt. In fact, there are so many and such a great variety of deadly monsters lairing in the Haunt that even the golaunt have never established a presence here. If one believes bards' tales, hidden amongst the cavern-riddled crags of the Haunt are lairs heaped with ancient magic and coach-sized, gleaming mounds of gems.

The headwaters of the River Sundrin, located high in the Haunt, are cavern springs; the caverns make up the hidden halfling village of Gryphon's Ledge, so named because the villagers long ago learned how to tame and ride the golden griffons native to the Haunt. As aerial steed-and-rider messengers and spies, the Ledgers make good coin selling their services to the wealthy across Mournra.

The ridge is pierced by only one proper pass wherein stands Great Sword, the only settlement found on maps in the Haunt of Eagles. Though perilous foot trails cross the Haunt in several places, the wagon-road of Great Sword is the only way through the ridge for anything larger than a pack animal. Perched atop the largest of the grass-girt coastal hills trailing down from the an-sekhovynd cliffs of the Haunt, this unwallled frontier town is ruled by a Knight-Governor of Khalandorn, Garig Hautun. Hautun maintains the Khalandornar garrison that patrols the lone, winding pass through the hills, linking Khalandorn with the Iron Barony. In addition to securing the pass, it is Hautun's job to maintain firm and ever-present policing over the drunken rowdiness that dominates the trade-town, home to miners and prospectors from all over Mournra who come in search of treasures of Arhdahkaun and gems found in occasional fistfuls among veins of soft rock in the caves that fissure the sekhovynd end of the Haunt.

Ruling from his stout stone fortress on the summit of Great Sword Hill, Hautun is a shrewd, capable leader who believes firmly in knowing thy foe and knowing the country so as to choose the best possible battlegrounds. Politically unambitious, he's widely respected among the knights who consider Great Sword an outstanding proving ground for inexperienced Khalandornar warriors.

Great Sword is a tangle of dirt lanes, middens, stone burial crypts, overgrown burnt-out and never rebuilt buildings, and unique cottages. Two tall, splendid temples flank the Knight-Governor's fortress on the summit: the Hunting Hall, a temple to Ralaroar, and the Lawhouse, a temple to Amaunt. Over the last two hundred years, several aging dragons have flown down out of the Haunt to present artifacts from Before the Fall to the clergy of both temples.

GARIG HAUTUN, KNIGHT-GOVERNOR OF KHALANDORN

Male human (Lawful Neutral)

Fighter 13 **CR 13**
HD 13d10+26 **hp** 97
Init +5 **Speed** 20 feet

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 18

BAB/Grapple +13/+16

Attack +20 melee (1d10+9/19–20, +2 *bastard sword*) or +16 ranged (1d8+1/19–20, masterwork light crossbow)

Full Attack +20/+15/+10 melee (1d10+9/19–20, +2 *bastard sword*) or +16 ranged (1d8+1/19–20, masterwork light crossbow)

Senses Listen +4, Spot +4

SA N/A

SQ DR 3/–

Fort +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Languages Far Tongue, Halfling, Vrrar

Crucial Skills Climb +0*, Intimidate +10, Jump +2*, Listen +4, Ride +23**, Sense Motive +8, Spot +4

Other Skills Diplomacy +6, Gather Information +4, Handle Animal +11, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Swim –6*

Crucial Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Power Attack

Other Feats Alertness, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Greater Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Greater Weapon Specialization (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Leadership (16), Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)

Possessions *Teskellan* (+2 *bastard sword*; grants a +10 competency bonus to Ride checks and increases the attack bonus for higher ground to +2 when wielder is mounted), masterwork light crossbow, 20 +1 bolts, adamantine half-plate (DR 3/–), ring of protection +1, cloak of resistance +2

Cohort Personal attendant/bodyguard, Gask Andaen (Ftr 11)

Followers Knight-Governor's personal retinue (25 1st-level fighters, two 2nd-level fighters, and one 3rd-level fighter)

* Includes armor check penalty

** Includes bonus from *Teskellan*

BROKEN LANDS

Population: Unknown

Luthsurl of the Haunt lie the Broken Lands, an uninhabited region of cliffs, ridges, rock outcrops, and breakneck ravines “where monsters are as plentiful as water,” as the long-ago bard Amraea Summerstar once put it. An astonishing variety of wild beasts frequently attack the heavily-armed wagon trains hastening along the winding cart-road between Great Sword and Ruthstay, and even hotly-pursued outlaws are seldom reckless enough to hide in the Broken Lands. To bards, this is where the most desperate outlaws (and dying elf and human kings) flee to hide their treasures and where dying dragons fly to do the same.

Since the destruction of Maurkaun, the Broken Lands have grown ever wilder. Bands of monsters erupt to raid the coastal lands and cities and, as quickly, return to the countless caverns and hidden valleys of the Broken Lands. Only the natural barrier provided by the Haunt of Eagles has checked the beasts of the Broken Lands from swarming into the aerho (easterly) lands. Now that the Gem Queen is no more, and the forces of the Iron Barony are the weakest they have ever been, the fell creatures of the Broken Lands are eager to dwell elsewhere—where prey is plentiful and they can ravage and feed.

Nothing has yet risen to unite the various monsters in the Broken Lands. “Yet,” the wisest adventurers warn, adding that monsters from this wilderland boldly stalk into an-sekhovynd (more southerly) lands almost daily.

The Broken Lands are rugged; loose rock is everywhere, making mounted travel, wagon use, or pack trains impossible and footing treacherous.

Thorny shrubs, vines, lichens, tuft-weeds, and stunted trees are the only abundant vegetation, and travelers are warned that many plants have poisonous leaves (Contact or Ingested; DC 18 to 22; 1d3 Dexterity/Paralysis or Unconsciousness). Heaped and tumbled rocks that might once have been stone buildings dot the landscape, and long caves—old lava tubes—pock hillsides and cliff faces everywhere in the region, providing lairs for countless creatures. No creature native to the Broken Lands is placid, docile, or anything less than always alert. Most Broken Lands beasts are twisted, larger than elsewhere in Mournra, or both—perhaps due to exposure to magical discharges that erupt from time to time, crackling along the ground as buried magic items or wards cast long ago decay and release their energies.

More legends describe the horrors of the Broken Lands than any other land of Castlemourn. The grimmest tales describe the Buried Cities, soaring-towered cities of sorcerers. Those spellcasters tried to quell the spell-storms of the Fall, protecting the rest of Castlemourn, but they were left with too little magic to protect their own cities when the backlash came; the uncontrolled magical destruction slaughtered them in waves, thrusting their towers beneath the earth in a great crushing and shattering. Bards say the now undead sorcerers command lumbering, corporeal undead juggernauts in the centuries-long digging to reach the surface and vow revenge on all Castlemourn for failing to aid them in their time of need. Some dismiss these tales as mere bardic fancies intended to frighten the weak-minded, but many Mournan priests and wizards aren't so sure.

BROKEN LANDS ADVENTURES

Bandits, fleeing outlaws, and adventurers may fleetingly visit the Broken Lands, but none dare to dwell there. The region offers nothing but peril and death, and GMs should stress the numbers and power of the prowling monsters. The Broken Lands are not a place for low-level adventurers and should challenge even the most powerful characters. Not much treasure awaits, but opportunities for combat experience abound.

- There are indeed four large underground cities beneath the Broken Lands, filled with all manner of undead. Until now, they have been disorganized, the most formidable seeking only to rule the rest. Now, they seek more. Someone or something is bringing order to the buried undead—and clawing to the surface.
- A dream plague flows out of the Broken Lands. The people of the Iron Barony, Khalandorn, Estorna, and Sparruk all suffer terrible nightmares at the rising of each full moon, dreaming of the destruction of one of the four cities. They see the city burned by bursts of arcane magic that rain down and melt the living and stone structures alike and feel the agonized deaths of those doomed folk. The dreamers awaken, screaming, as the cities are driven down and great walls of tortured rock rise on all sides like closing hands or storm-driven waves to plunge down and bury the city. When they awaken, they are left with a menacing threat, sent to them by a fell and unfriendly watching sentience: the cities will soon rise again and reach out to wreak terror and destruction on all Castlemourn.

IRON BARONY

Population: 44,000 (96% human, 2% dwarf, 1% halfling, 1% other)

Government: Feudal barony

Ruler: Iron Baron Rorldarr Carmeirnar (male human fighter 16)

Capital: Chemmore

Major Settlements: Hawkhunt, Ruthstay, Wyrmwell

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Coal, iron, forged goods

The Broken Lands descend at last into the an-luthsurl (westernmost) realm of mainland Mournra, the Iron Barony. It is a land of dense alpine forests, small, icy rushing streams, hardy hunting families who dwell in small fortified homes to protect themselves from the fierce wild boar and prowling cats, and forges and foundries where iron from the nearby island of Nor UMBER is made into cheap, serviceable, everyday weapons, tools, pots, and cauldrons. The majority of Staele (as Mournans call the folk of the Barony; sages believe the name is a corruption of steel) work in the production of forged goods as smelters, smiths, or crafters.

The Iron Baron rules from the only sizeable town in the realm, Chemmore, a port linked by dirt wagon-roads to the outlying villages of Ruthstay, Wyrmwell, and (in the remote upcountry) Hawkhunt. Chemmore rings with forge-hammers day and night; its nearly 5,000 citizens are used to the din, hardly hearing it and easily sleeping through it. Staele learn from birth to concentrate on particular sounds (such as speech), separating what they want to hear from most louder noises.

A sprinkling of all intelligent Mournan races can be found in Chemmore, where everyone works either in shipping, government, or iron-work, but Staele elsewhere in the Barony are almost entirely human. Araugh, god of the seas, is the patron deity in Chemmore, while Damantha's worship holds sway in the rest of the Barony.

Most Staele are stocky and well-muscled, and all are hardy and inured to the cold. Staele dwell in small steadings of one to three families who subsistence-farm together and do iron-work. These steadings are plentiful along the coastal mule-trails (the only steady overland traffic are the daily runs of rugged, articulated-floor, locally made, six-axle boneshatter wagons that rumble between Chemmore and Great Sword), with few isolated elsewhere, reached by countless small trails winding through the alpine forests.

The an-aerho (easternmost) village in the Barony is the waymarket and trademoot of Ruthstay ("ROOTH-stay"), home to 900 weaponsmiths and cheesemakers, where a 1000-strong garrison has just been established in a newly-built keep. Ostensibly,

this force is to guard against the aggressions of Khalandorn and the nigh-constant monster raids out of the Broken Lands, but it also exists to give the Baron some real authority. Previously, the eager-for-war Staele of Ruthstay obeyed the Lord of Chemmore only to his face. Even now, many men of wealth and power in Ruthstay quietly ignore his laws and desires as much as possible, operating like lordlings in their own right. Until recently, the Baron's rule here had been light, and he had more spies than warriors stationed in Ruthstay.

Wyrmwell (population 750), the an-luthsurl village named for the deep, spring-fed, purewater pool at its center, is built on the inner slopes of a natural bowl-shaped valley. The Wyrmwell is oval, about six wagonlengths across at its narrowest, and has cold, clear, drinkable water that is strongly magical; however, water taken from it very quickly loses the healing properties of the Well, and Wyrmmen actively discourage close study of it for fear that meddling will disrupt its magical properties. Most sages and local folk believe many powerful artifacts lie at the bottom of the well, infusing its waters with healing powers. At least twice a year, huge flying creatures—from dragons to griffons—dive out of the sky into the Well to take advantage of its healing properties. These dangerous creatures immediately fly off, leaving the town alone, much to the relief of Wyrmmen. It is unlawful to take water from the Well for use in metal-working or to wash or slake finished or partly-finished goods in the Well; Wyrmmen make use of many small springs around the edge of their valley for such needs.

Several mule-trails link Wyrmwell with almost a dozen small coal mines on the edge of the Duskadar. These diggings provide all the fuel needed to heat homes during the cruel winters and keep the forgefires hot year-round. Coal is inexpensive in the Barony but sells for a high price in other lands.

Located on the anarrlith verge of Hawklar Forest is the an-sarrind (northernmost) Staele village, the rough-and-ready logging center of Hawkhunt (population 640), where monster raids are common, folk always go armed, and dwellings are stockaded. In addition to logging, Hawkhunn are trappers and furriers, and make extra coin hosting and equipping adventurers bent on exploring Maurkaun in search of the Gem Queen's riches.

The Iron Baron, a ruthless but just and level-headed warrior of dark good looks and still-mighty warrior's thews despite his sixty-some winters, faces constant challenge from restless warrior knights among his troops. Many of his men desire the Barony to be more aggressive like the nearby knights of Khalandorn and do such things as

WYRMWELL

The Wyrmwell's healing is strong; all living beings who soak in its waters regain 2d12 lost hit points per round; this magic extends to purging poisons and regenerating lost body parts. Any who drink its waters are affected as if by a *heal* spell (this benefit works on the same creature only once every nine days). These properties of the Wyrmwell only function when the water remains within the Well or within an hour of being taken from the pool. Such water loses its magic instantly if subjected to *teleportation*.

conquer the island of Nor Umber and occupy and settle Maurkaun. They rightly claim that the Khalandornar see the Iron Barony as a weak, backward, easily-conquered land, and a bold stroke or two would change that, earning the Barony respect.

While the Baron concedes that many folk do see the Barony as weak and backward, he cleaves to the view that bold moves on the part of the Iron Host (as his small, ragtag army is over-grandly termed) will alarm the Khalandornar into supporting the over eager flameheads who have long seen the Barony as a close and easy target.

On this and other matters, the hardy folk of the Barony hold strong personal opinions, but respect, if not love, for the Baron is widespread among them. They see his transformation of the underlordships of the three villages from hereditary posts into short-term warriors' duties as necessary to maintain order among the Host and, like the Baron, view all large parties of armed strangers entering their realm with suspicion. Such outlanders aren't likely to be Khalandornar for where's the honor in creeping into a land by subterfuge? Yet such strangers could well be hireswords in the pay of rich merchants of the Reach, seeking to conquer the Barony by replacing the Baron with a new ruler who might well care only for coins and forge-work, not for the lives of Staele.

The Iron Host consists of 3,000 footmen (the Shields) armed with irontongues (pikes), and 2,000 fast, lightly-armored lance- and crossbow-armed cavalry (the Steel Wind), who ride sure-footed mountain ponies. Though the Iron Host is

predominantly human, warriors of every race are welcome; the pay is good and morale is high. Lord Rorldarr delights in riding with his troops and can often be found on the road talking to visiting outlanders and Staele alike.

The Iron Barony ends where the peaks of the Duskadar, the seemingly-endless luthsurl mountains, rise quite suddenly out of the forests in a great wall that makes an abrupt luthward end to Castlemourn. Legends insist that rivers of fire flow through deep caverns in the Duskadar and that those caverns are extensive enough to hold at least one entire realm of fell subterranean creatures. Tales differ sharply on just what those creatures might be; some insist they're tentacle-armed spiders, others that they're cruel elves with midnight-black skin, and still others that they're giant, long-tailed bats or similar flapping, flying creatures. Whatever beasts inhabit the Duskadar, they seldom venture down into the Iron Barony (though many folk insist monsters in profusion wander through Maurkaun into Sparruk and beyond).

The sharp peaks of the Duskadar march a long way out into the sea, forming a great arm sheltering Glamryn Bay. It ends in the narrow, treacherous Roaringwater Strait that separates the Seamount (an-sekhovynd of the Duskadar peaks) from the closest of the Iron Isles, Nor Umber.

RORLDARR CARMEIRNAR, THE IRON BARON

Male human (Lawful Neutral)

Fighter 16

HD 16d10+16

CR 16

hp 117

THE GEM QUEEN

Nurnlarra, the Gem Queen, was a sorceress who ruled Maurkaun, a remote realm to the sarrind of the Iron Barony. She was destroyed—and every tower of Maurkaun thrown down—in a single night of mighty spell-battles some sixty summers ago. Since that time, all trace of Maurkaun has disappeared, swallowed by the wilderness, and strange monsters have arisen from the region in which feeble, wandering glows of stray magic can be seen by night.

Spells are said to be unreliable in the wilds of Maurkaun, and some adventurers have returned from forays into the region strangely changed, their eyes burning red or orange and commanding strange sorcerous powers. Recent discoveries of chests of gems and potions of unknown powers have kept the intrepid coming to investigate fallen Maurkaun.

Init +4**AC** 25, touch 10, flat-footed 25**BAB/Grapple** +16/+20**Attack** +25 melee (2d6+13/17–20, +3 *greatsword*) or +17 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 *composite longbow*)**Full Attack** +25/+20/+15/+10 melee (2d6+13/17–20, +3 *greatsword*) or +17/+12/+7/+2 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 *composite longbow*)**Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7**Fort** +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7**Str** 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13**Languages** Crown Tongue, Dandarr, Far Tongue, Halfling, Vrrar**Crucial Skills** Balance –6*, Bluff +8, Climb +6*, Intimidate +14, Jump +2*, Listen +7, Ride +13, Sense Motive +10, Spot +7**Other Skills** Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +8, Handle Animal +6, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +9, Swim +6***Crucial Feats** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Combat Expertise, Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot**Other Feats** Greater Weapon Focus (*greatsword*), Greater Weapon Specialization (*greatsword*), Improved Critical (*greatsword*), Improved Initiative, Leadership (20), Negotiator, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (*greatsword*), Weapon Specialization (*greatsword*)**Possessions** *Oathkeeper* (+3 *greatsword*; wielder of lawful alignment may activate at will—*hold person*, *zone of truth*; CL 10th), +1 *composite longbow* (+4 Strength bonus), 20 arrows, +2 *half-plate*, *Arrowbreaker* (+2 arrow deflection *heavy steel shield*), *amulet of natural armor* +2, *ring of freedom of movement***Cohort** Iron Host Captain-General Gowlath Londahar (Ftr 14)**Followers** Personal attendants and staff (50 1st-level followers, five 2nd-level followers, three 3rd-level follower, two 4th-level followers, and one 5th-level follower)

* Includes armor check penalty

Speed 20 feet

defy any outlander seeking to coerce or deceive them.

From luthsurl to aerho, the Iron Isles are Nor Umber, Arshroon, Bel's Sharth, Halar, Orthmael, Blackoon, Dunnklaer, and Stormsharr. Mainland Mournans know little of the Iron Isles and the Islanders beyond their prevalence of iron, their eagerness to buy foodstuffs, and their fierce manner. Some folk insist the islands are unspoiled paradises where folk can live free, and others just as firmly believe they're bleak wilderlands ruled by tyrant wizards. Everyone knows that the encircling chain of islands encloses the only island in the midst of Glamryn Bay—magic-shrouded and mysterious Tamrune.

NOR UMBER

Population: 46,500 (67% human, 8% dwarf, 7% halfling, 5% gnome, 4% elf, 4% half-elf, 3% golaunt, 2% thaele)**Government:** Magocracy (high king advised by a council of wizards)**Ruler:** High King Nauntlar Embreon (male human buccaneer 7/bard 3)**Capital:** Bhellen**Major Settlements:** Nasmul**Language:** Far Tongue**Resources:** Arcane lore, education, iron, magic

Nor Umber, ruled by High King Embreon, has the largest population of all the Isles. The city of Nasmul is home to 28,000 humans and several thousand elves, dwarves, gnomes, and halflings. It is sometimes called the Smoke City or the City of Iron; because iron ore from the mountains is smelted into rough iron ingots and wagon-bars here for shipment to the mainland. Most of Castlemourn's iron began as ore in the central peaks of Nor Umber.

Bhellen is widely known as the Wizard City because so many of its 13,000 folk are sages and arcane spellcasters. Bhellaen are evenly split among all the Mournan races, and many of them make good coin crafting small, useful magic items (such as daggers or light-hooded stones that glow for illumination and warning stones that glow a particular hue if a living creature, undead, or active magic is near) or copying spellbooks for sale on the mainland. Others ride the coins they already have as the seasons pass and experiment with new spells, trying to piece together long-lost secrets from old, fragmentary lore-texts. The High King rules the island from a soaring castle in the center of Bhellen, though it's an open local secret that handsome old Embreon, bard-tongued scourge of the ladies, does and says nothing not approved by his council of wizards.

THE IRON ISLES

From Nor Umber, the Iron Isles curve in a great arc, like a row of teeth, sekhovynd and aerho to enclose Glamryn Bay by almost reaching the seaward arm of the Dawndar. All of them are windy, salt-rimmed, rocky lands where the sand and rocks are red with iron, mines are everywhere (and often flooded by the questing sea), and all growing things are small and stunted. Iron Islanders tend to be fierce folk, swift to aid anyone in peril on the wave or shore, but always armed and equally swift to

Over the last two hundred years, the forested, cave-riddled sekhovynd end of Nor Umber has attracted a lawless crowd of banished criminals who often come to the gates of Bhellen trying to hire adventurers to fetch items or do dirty work for them on the mainland.

The rocky cape on the sarrind end of the isle is home to a family of red dragons who fish the bay but avoid humans and their ships. There are tales of vast treasures in the dragons' lair-caverns, but Nor Umbrans have no eagerness to become dragon food. Outlanders who have risked the wrath of the dragons have all—thus far—disappeared.

ARSHROON

Population: 9,000 (48% human, 32% gnome, 9% halfling, 7% half-elf, 2% elf, 2% other)

Government: Magocracy (high king "advised" [controlled] by a council of wizards)

Ruler: High King Hawklorn Yaustyr (male human bard 9)

Capital: Roel

Major Settlements: Downwyvern, Dunstorn, Melnask, Muruld

Languages: Far Tongue, Varr

Resources: Alchemical goods, arcane lore, education, iron, silver

Arshroon is known throughout Castlemourn as the breeding ground of mages and sorcerers. Haughty, secretive senior wizards choose their king, seeking a charismatic, obedient diplomat, and control every detail of the isle's laws and social customs. Only fear of falling victim to concerted spell-attacks from the more ambitious Arshrite sorcerers who dwell in Roel and spend their days in

dark schemings and bitter feuds keeps the wizards united. They treat everyone with cold, precise courtesy, and each work at subtle manipulations designed to bring one or more mainland realms under their personal control. Adventurers who come within their reach may well end up as unwitting or helpless tools in such plots. Arshroon's capital, Roel, is a sinister, secretive place, thanks to the influence of its sorcerers who make up the majority of its 2,000 inhabitants.

The mercantile port of Muruld has a sheltered harbor and is the favorite anchorage of many mainland seacaptains. Home to 900 humans and over 500 gnomes, it exports iron and silver from nearby mines. On a high bluff overlooking the harbor stands a magical academy that welcomes mainland students who can pay well. Some of the tutors, pupils say, are slightly mad.

Downwyvern is a market town for the farmers and woodcutters who dwell around it; its wares feed the rest of Arshroon, shuttled to other ports in small local fishing boats when catches are light. There are 1,500 Downwurr, all of them human, and many of them are family-taught wizards of few spells who practice useful everyday magic.

Dunstorn is where the smiths and crafters of Arshroon dwell in a walled, immaculate, and very orderly port. There are exactly 999 gnome and human Dunstarr, and they live by strict laws and personal codes of conduct. New residents are only allowed to settle in Dunstorn when one of the 999 citizens dies or departs forever.

Melnask is a shipbuilding port and trading-center where 2,000 folk of all races (many of them of mainland origin) work, trade, and brawl. The place is rough and would erupt into

IRON ISLES KNOWLEDGE

Most folk of mainland Castlemourn know little of the Iron Isles. While some merchants and shipcaptains know the isles and their folk fairly well, most Mournans regard the isles and their inhabitants with suspicion. Considering them places better left alone, ruled by fell sorcerers and populated by all manner of strange folk.

- The iron produced by these islands is desperately needed by mainland Mournans. Traders and seacaptains are constantly looking for folk willing and able to crew or defend cargo ships to voyage to and from the islands. Oftentimes storms, poor navigation, or headlong flight from pirates causes such ships to make landfall on different isles than planned.
- As the Iron Isles are known for their magic, wealthy merchants often dispatch heavily-armed trading groups to purchase and bring back enchanted items of all kinds.
- While the Glamryn Bay coastal waters of the Isles are dangerous, it is the open sea, the Vaerath, that even the hardiest sailors avoid. The Storm-Mother Sea is home to kraken, huge water elementals, and other fearsome monsters of the deep.
- Many clerics and fervent believers come from the mainland to spend time as watchers on Stormsharr, and mainland arcane spellcasters often visit the Isles to find guidance and resources in conducting magical experiments or crafting magic items.

lawlessness and gang strife if not for the vigilance of watchwizards sent from Roel to keep order (and spy on outlander activities to make sure no covert invasions are taking place). Melnask has a huge arena at its heart, used daily as a market. At the end of each month, the stalls are cleared away for six days, during which novice spellcasters engage in spellcasting contests and more accomplished magic-wielders fight grudge-duels with rivals for public entertainment. These contests are overseen by scores of watchwizards to make sure no one runs amok with magic and to prevent rioting or any other trouble among the boatloads of revelers who arrive from the mainland to watch the fun (temporarily tripling the city's population).

Arshrite architecture is often unsettling to those not native to the isle: dwellings resemble giant trees made of black stone, being tall, narrow, and cylindrical with balconies that branch out like lopped-off boughs. They are sealed against driving rain and sea-spray with black pitch mixed with rock dust; the result is fissured like the bark of many trees. Roofs are steep and conical, of slate or tile, and large houses are simply several towers linked by enclosed horizontal bridges two or three floors above the ground.

BEL'S SHARTH

Population: 7,600 (93% human, 3% half-elf, 3% gnome, 1% other)

Government: Mixed; magocracy (Jelvet, Aumeir) and democracy (Llornak)

Rulers: Wyrnath Shadeling (male half-elf wizard [illusionist] 16), High Ombudsman of the Illusionists' Guild, rules Jelvet; Shivonna (female human buccaneer 14) rules Llornak

Major Settlements: Aumeir, Jelvet, Llornak

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Arcane education (illusion), diamonds, iron, platinum

Like many of the Iron Isles, Bel's Sharth is home to many arcane spellcasters. It also has the richest platinum mines in all of Mournra. Although Sharthen spellcasters study every known discipline, a huge illusionists' guild, the Circle of Mysteries, effectively rules the island by dominating the ranks of law enforcers and civic officials in each of the island's three settlements. Each settlement also has an academy entirely devoted to the teaching of illusions, but these three establishments (Shadowhalls in Jelvet, Mistgates in Aumeir, and Darkspires in Llornak) are fierce rivals. In olden times, they played pranks on each other that often escalated into open warfare with many fatalities, but the Circle now forbids and firmly crushes such practices.

The mountains in the sarrind half of the Isle are riddled with mines that produce seemingly endless iron, smelted in the hills above Jelvet and exported to all of Castlemourn from Jelvet's docks. As a result, the 5,000-plus Jelvauntans trade extensively with the wider world, and are always eager for news and interested in the latest fashions, practices, and gewgaws.

Aumeir has a great natural harbor, known as the Jaws, where entire fleets can shelter from storms between two high, parallel headlands. Most of the platinum is mined in the peaks behind Aumeir and shipped out through Aumeir's docks. Diamonds are also exported through Aumeir, though no one quite knows where the diamonds come from before the local carters deliver them to Auman gemcutters' shops or the dockside warehouses. They are mined in the same surrounding mountains, but by whom and just where those secret mines are remain mysteries no Auman or visitor has yet solved. The reason for this is that the mines are owned by some of the wealthiest ruling illusionist families of Jelvet, whose junior members guard the mines, magically command the beasts doing the mining, and control Auman politics.

Llornak is an isolated fishing port of 1,300 human females where men aren't allowed to dwell, though there are several inns where male traders can stay. Llornak is administered by a mayor elected by public vote, and is a generally quiet, placid place; Llornans fish on good-weather days, do a little hunting, vegetable gardening, and woodcutting to see to their needs. They spend the majority of their time crafting magic items for sale on the mainland. Most Llornans are spellcasters of great power.

HALAR

Population: 10,000 (50% dwarves, 40% gnomes, 6% human, 4% halfling)

Government: Republic (council of guildsmen)

Major Settlements: Anskellyn, Boldrovar, Thandle

Languages: Dandarr, Far Tongue, Varr

Resources: Coal, steel, weapons, and armor

Halarren are the least magically-inclined folk of all the Iron Isles. Halar ("HAIL-arr") has instead risen to dominate the metal trade. Its three towns are famous across Castlemourn for producing the finest steel. Excepting Ironar-work, the best weapons and armor are forged from Halar steel.

Anskellyn, Thandle, and Boldrovar are hard-working towns of about 3,000 crafters each (primarily gnomes and dwarves with a smattering of humans). They work hard, drink hard, and devote their spare time to hobbies like adorning steel with ornate chasings, making miniature model monsters for sale as curios on the mainland,

becoming expert blindfolded pinpoint knife- and axe-hurlers, and so on.

Few non-Halarren know that a tribe of lizardfolk inhabits the swampy high valleys of Halar's mountain ranges and are well paid by the crafters of the three ports to do most of the metal and coal mining (the ports do the smelting). These lizardfolk, who call themselves the Rarlaukg ("RARR-log"), travel to the ports only by night and avoid outlanders.

ORTHMAEL

Population: 17,000 (40% human, 30% gnome, 14% elf, 10% halfling, 4% half-elf, 1% dwarf, 1% other)

Government: Republic (two Highmasters elected by the Masters of their Conclaves)

Rulers: Highmaster Thasmit Hammerwynd (male gnome wizard [evoker] 15), Highmaster Daeral Riventree (male human wizard 13/lore master 4)

Major Settlements: Delnask, Ormree

Languages: Far Tongue, Vrrar, Elven

Resources: Arcane and divine lore, education

The wild, mountainous isle of Orthmael is largely left to the birds and beasts, but it is home to two conclavia (colleges of learning), each surrounded by a walled town that bears its name.

A central mountain, Arathael, towers over the island, and on its summit is a strange artifact in the shape of two translucent, semi-visible horns about two wagon-lengths apart, curving in toward each other and joined by tapering cross-bonds. Called the Stormhurler by Orthmaar, this construct is of unknown origin, can't be moved or even properly touched, absorbs (without apparent effect) all magic, natural fire, and lightning brought into contact with it, and defends all Orthmael from attack.

No one knows how the Stormhurler determines just which approaching ships and creatures are hostile to Orthmaar, or even if it thinks or not (many longtime Masters of the conclavia believe it is sentient and communicates with sleeping beings through dream-visions), but whenever pirates or other foes try to approach the island, the Stormhurler blasts the aggressors with powerful lightning strikes that continue until the foe is destroyed or flees. Masters and students of the conclavia may debate furiously about how the Stormhurler works, but none of the Orthmaar want anyone really trying to find out for fear they'll manage to disable it or destroy most of Arathael in a great explosion, burying the Orthmaar in raining-down rubble. The two conclavia have grown capable and wealthy in the Stormhurler's protective shadow, and all manner of individuals, primarily sages and spellcasters, come to Orthmael to study.

Trusting in the security of the conclavia vaults, many outland Mournans have brought magic items, crowns and regalia, stolen items, inheritance documents, and other items of great value to the conclavia for secure storage. The conclavia charge stiff fees (1,000 gp a year and up for each item) and refuse to allow clients access to the vaults if their payments are past due. The ancient vaults are labyrinthine, equipped with traps and guarded by stone golems and other constructs—plus a few small, stealthy, predatory monsters who've slithered in from subterranean depths. Natural underways descend deep into the earth, and there's some evidence that the vaults were enlarged from long-ago mine workings.

Through the years, a succession of Highmasters have wisely decided not to allow prisoners, exiles, or kidnapped victims to be brought to Orthmael for incarceration, desiring to hold themselves neutral and aloof in Mournan politics.

In the past, the two conclavia were fierce rivals; thefts from each others' libraries, violent or even deadly pranks and raids, and many similar actions were common. The strife grew so bad that both institutions hired adventurers and a wizard to defend themselves and smite their rival. However, the two wizards met, decided this was foolishness they'd not support, and together lectured the Highmasters of the day to put an end to it, starting with rules and dismissals for their students and masters who engaged in such behavior. The wizards aided in slowly changing these attitudes, and today Delnask and Ormree engage in nothing fiercer than academic sneering (on a personal, rather than institutional, level).

Delnask is home to roughly 10,000 inhabitants of all races, while over 5,000 folk, primarily humans, dwell in Ormree. The mountains of Orthmael contain rich deposits of iron ore and even gems, but these stand untouched by decree of the Highmasters, who don't want their conclavia to get caught up in the difficulties and entanglements of mining and trading.

BLACKOON

Population: 8,900 (82% human, 6% dwarf, 4% half-elf, 3% gnome, 2% golaunt, 1% elf, 1% halfling, 1% other)

Government: Republic (guild-elected lord)

Ruler: The Dusk Lord (male human wizard [necromancer] 15)

Major Settlements: Marthmur, Zaentso

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Arcane lore (necromancy)

Blackoon is almost wholly dedicated to the study of the necromantic arts. The town of Zaentso

has some 5,500 human inhabitants, many of whom actively seek to bring back to life anyone born Before the Fall. The town of Marthmur has a mixed-race population of more than 3,000 who devote much effort to uncovering the secrets of the past through necromancy. Like the neighboring Orthmaar, Blackoonar all but ignore their island's iron deposits.

There are many overgrown, roofless stone ruins in Blackoon's forested foothills and on the slopes of its two mountains—ruins that allegedly hold many ancient relics. Blackoonar guildmasters and ambitious independent traders frequently offer significant rewards to those willing to explore the ruins. After three centuries of deaths, disappearances, and dire tales, Blackoonar are usually too wary of ruins to enter any themselves. Visitors will find Blackoonar callous and even ruthless; many necromancers treat life casually, and some Blackoonar think nothing of killing a stranger to obtain organs for dark studies. As a result, few outlanders visit the isle.

The Dusk Lord is a soft-spoken, urbane, rail-thin man of dark good looks and darker robes. Many Blackoonar have skeleton and zombie porters and doorguards, and the Dusk Lord (his real name is unknown; every elected ruler serves for a dozen summers and then quietly steps aside) has such undead as doorguards and jailers—but he also commands far more formidable undead as envoys, bodyguards, and assassins.

DUNKLAER

Population: 10,000 (94% human, 3% gnome, 2% half-elf, 1% other)

Government: Republic (council of merchants)

Major Settlements: Ghalmant, Stantel

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Alchemical goods, magic items

Dunnklaer is the flattest, most forested, and quietest of the Iron Isles, lacking the dark reputations of many of the other islands. It has some high hills but no mountains, and it has never been home to dragons. Of old, it was the haunt of many pirates who beached damaged ships here for repairs, pillaging the local forests for planking and mast timbers. Some mainland merchants grumble that Dunnklans are still pirates today, considering the prices they charge for the scrolls, potions, and simple magic items they make.

The ports of Ghalmant and Stantel each have about 4,000 inhabitants (mostly human). Both towns welcome outlanders and do a brisk trade in magic crafted by Dunnklan wizards. Temples to all of the Seven stand in both towns, and for many years clerics have come to Dunnklaer in search of

peace and contentment. There is a huge, ruined all-faiths temple complex in a forest glade at the center of the island; its every moss-girt stone and crumbling statue radiates a feeling of peace and serenity. Many priests—and lay persons facing large decisions, like joining a priesthood, choosing a life partner, or renouncing a family, guild, or faith—make pilgrimages to this place to pray and hear the gods. The statues have been known to speak, and vivid visions, complete with movement and sound, appear to everyone present, not just in the mind of one worshiper, to indicate divine will. If any piece of the stone temple is removed from the glade, its mood of peace fades before nightfall or before dawn if the theft occurs during the night. It returns instantly if the relic is brought back or, failing that, regenerates slowly over the next seven days.

STORMSHARR

Population: 5,000 (20% human, 18% dwarf, 14% golaunt, 12% elf, 10% halfling, 8% gnome, 8% thaele, 6% half-elf, 4% other)

Government: Theocracy (Order of the Seven)

Ruler: High Priest Ediram (male human cleric 8/ servant of the Seven 8)

Major Settlements: Ardrel, Unduin

Language: Far Tongue

Resources: Divine education

Stormsharr Isle is home to several religious orders and, in the words of High Priest Ediram, is the place “where Mournan priesthoods meet, confer, and establish mutual policy.” The High Priest and ruler of Stormsharr Isle is appointed by the heads of the various religious orders, who debate in private until they reach consensus, not even informing potential candidates who are being considered. This holy administrator is always called Ediram after the hermit who first worshiped all the gods on this island.

Monasteries and temples to the Seven dot the rolling farmland and few mountains of the isle. There are two small fishing-ports, but Stormsharr is essentially rural and self-sufficient. Almost all Stormsharn are priests or fanatical lay worshipers.

Stormsharr is the first bastion against attack from Tharlta, the fell city of sorcerers somewhere in the mists far to the aerho of Castlemourn. When Stormsharn clerics join together in prayer, they awaken ancient magics anchored in the isle (by the Seven, everyone believes—except for sages who say it's an *estemel* and commanding compulsion surviving from Before the Fall, and may in fact be arcane in origin and just one of the many devastations unleashed in the struggles that brought about the Fall) and are able to summon a host of all sorts of dragons to fight the enchanted

fleets of Tharltar. These dragons appear out of individual blossoming radiances in midair and fly to strike at foes the chanting priests bend their wills upon—never each other or on any Stormsharn. Ten times in the past two hundred years, Tharltar has attacked, and ten times, their dark flying ships have been driven back or torn asunder in midair by dragons called by the clerics of Stormsharr.

GLAMRYN BAY & THE ISLE OF TAMRUNE

Seafarers' songs refer to the rolling waves of Glamryn Bay and its deep, sparkling waters. Of course, the Bay is the only major body of water most Mournans ever see, dominated by long, rolling swells sweeping in from the open sea beyond the Iron Isles called Great Umbar by some mariners, and the Vaerath or the Storm-Mother Sea by others.

Glamryn Bay is lashed by many brief, brisk storms, especially in winter, when ships have been known to sink under the weight of ice-rime forming on their masts, sails, and decks, but the bay is generally pleasant to sail. The ships most at risk during a storm are those moored or docked; the Bay is spacious enough (and largely free of shoals) that ships out on its waters can usually ride out a storm with ease.

Despite the daily voyages of innumerable fishing boats, the waters of the Bay yield plentiful catches of fish. These include the near-shore catches of haelag (crabs caught in pots lowered on lines) and the deepwater takings of weighted drag-nets. Dool are large, green sea-snails whose oily flesh is very much an acquired taste, though it can be boiled down to derive lamp-oil and waterproofing. Zarseel are ribbon-thin, long, black, edible eels that have a vicious bite but are flavorful eating. Shellfish are also abundant; the most plentiful and popular is the small, brown, spiral-shelled lorwinkel. Its flesh is nutlike and rich, and is plucked out with a long, curving, pointed hook after boiling; the shells also yield a greenish, water-resisting dye frequently used on clothing made within coastal settlements. Another popular shellfish is the lathake, a hand-sized edible oyster.

In the open waters, typical catches include a number of different fish. Silverheads are small but numerous and easily netted in large schools; they stink when dried in the sun, are beloved by seabirds, and serve well as fertilizer for farm fields. Silverheads are good eating, though their taste is very strong; if smoked and soaked in wines, they can be made milder and more palatable. Darhoon are large, blue-gray fish with tangy flesh; most

darhoon are the size of large dogs, but they can grow to be larger than men. Datchet are small, tough, nourishing fish, easily scooped up in shallow shore pools when the tide recedes or netted near shore in large schools. They are best when fried over a fire with spices and butter. Ammarzel are long, sleek, swift sturgeon-like fish that are hard to catch—though they can be ridden by those daring enough to thrust a knife into one when it's basking in the shallows, an act that always sends it racing along the surface. They are incredibly flavorful, even when the flesh is sun-dried into leathery sides that can be carried for more than a season before rotting. Ammarzel prepared in this way can be eaten dry and tough or dropped into simmering water to once again be made soft and fresh-tasting.

The plentiful fish also provide food to many other creatures of the deep. True sea serpents, kraken, and other large denizens of the deep don't seem to enter the Bay, but are common along the outer, seaward shores of the Iron Isles. Likewise, merfolk and other intelligent aquatic creatures seem to avoid Glamryn Bay, even though they are known to swim the windswept waters of the Vaerath. Even so, there are plenty of other fearsome aquatic beasts living within the sheltered ring of the islands.

TAMRUNE

Dense jungle covers the fabled isle of Tamrune. Five huge fortresses, scattered across the island, rise above the jungle canopy. As explorers sail near the island, they can see chimerae, owlbears, ettin, and even a few fiends moving about the island's beaches. The isle is clearly a deadly place. Many rumors and tales cling to Tamrune where it's believed things are strange and magic from Before the Fall, or twisted magics unleashed in the Fall, still rages strongly. Tamrune is where the worst monsters and most frightful ghosts come from, and Tamrune is where dooms await and prowling dangers that will soon come to the mainland are gathering strength. So infamous is Tamrune that it's a rare night when it doesn't feature foremost in bardic ballads and whispered tavern tales. One of those tales, stripped of most of its embellishments, goes like this:

THE DWARF AND THE FIVE CASTLES

An old and powerful dwarf was nearing death and voyaged to Tamrune for one last adventure. The dense jungle proved an ordeal of many combats for the dwarf, who lost count of the many strange and fearsome beasts that attacked him. The only landmark he could see as he battled was the tall,

black main tower of Melrauth; he fought his way thence but reached its huge gates reeling from his wounds. Nigh unto death, he collapsed.

He awakened on the topmost battlements of the soaring central tower, both healed and changed. He was now an elf.

This so disgusted him that he raged about Melrauth, ignoring piles of gold and gems in its chambers. Charging out of the castle, he went

on a slaying spree across Tamrune, hacking and slaughtering his way to the tall maroon spire of Nunkael, where he again fell senseless from his wounds at the castle gates.

Again he awakened atop the battlements, this time healed and transformed into a bodak, which enraged him even more than being an elf. The twice-changed dwarf rampaged through the castle, battling many undead and again ignoring vast

TAMRUNE, ISLAND OF INSANITY

Tamrune is a sentience aware of all intelligent beings upon it. The isle is also chaotic and insane, governed by whimsy and caprice. Any who come to Tamrune must deal with the results of its nature if they are to have any hopes of surviving. Tamrune can sense the alignments of all creatures in physical contact with it and unleashes subtle magics to influence such visitors. Chaotically-aligned beings don't attract much attention, as Tamrune regards them as in harmony with itself rather than being true visitors.

During every night in which a non-chaotic creature sleeps on Tamrune, she must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or suffer an alignment shift one step towards chaotic. This change will only become permanent if she remains on the isle for a continuous taelole (40 days). Explorers also face this same Fortitude check whenever they enter one of the five ancient castles.

If an individual succeeds at two successive Fortitude checks, the island shifts tactics and instead tries to use transmutation magics on the individual, launching these attacks at every nightfall. The target must make a Fortitude save (DC 22) or suffer a random permanent change. This alteration of the individual's body won't incapacitate the victim (at least initially). If this initial save fails, the victim's face slowly changes during the night into the visage of a random creature (of the GM's choice).

Only the face is changed, but the victim must make Fortitude saves every nightfall in which she's on Tamrune, suffering another change with each failed save; roll 1d6 to determine which of the creature's features the target takes on:

d6	Result
1	Head
2	Hands
3	Legs
4	Senses
5	Torso and/or tail
6	Special attacks/qualities

As long as the victim remains on the isle, these transformation attacks continue. Once the target suffers six changes, she completely and permanently becomes the selected creature in all but sentience, as if subject to a permanent *baleful polymorph* spell. If a transformed victim leaves Tamrune before suffering a sixth successful attack, she begins to revert to her original form, one attribute changing back every 24 hours from the moment of departure.

While this is certainly the most common course of Tamrune's transformations, it is by no means the only course. Some folk, like the dwarf in the tale, are completely changed overnight into another creature (usually while sleeping in one of the castles), while others are permanently transformed into misshapen, hodge-podge creatures. These twisted folk are truly grotesque, with not one the same as another. Some have tentacles or long haelag-like claws for arms, though both arms are never the same, patches of scaly or leathery skin, melting flesh, or any number of other horrible disfigurements. Some sages speculate that these unfortunate changes are brought on by the use of certain protective spells meant to ward off just such transformations while on the isle or the casting of other specific (but unknown) spells in certain (but equally unknown) locations on the island. What is known is that these misshapen individuals seem strangely drawn to Nighdal when they return to the mainland.

treasures scattered throughout the citadel. Plunging back into the jungle, he killed, maimed, and mutilated his way aerho.

Finally, covered in terrible wounds, he reached the white fortress walls of Oldhorn, where he swooned before the open gate. Rousing again, he found himself transformed into a human knight. There before him were many enchanted mounts, and, as a dwarf, the very presence of horses had always made him violently ill. Insulted even more deeply, the dwarf hacked even trees and vines this time as he hewed his way on to Stonesword.

So shrieking was his rage and floodingly ceaseless his spewed insults that he attracted the attention of all the gods as he slew his way onward. Vastly amused by the entertainment he was affording them, the Seven caused a guard of golaunt to appear at the gates of Stonesword. Seeing them gave the transformed dwarf pause for the first time in days; so revolted was he at the thought of being turned into a golaunt, he turned away from Stonesword and charged on aerho to the last ancient castle of Tamrune, Thaunkeep.

He reached it barely scratched, still in human form and, in a darker mood than he'd ever felt,

strode inside. There he found strange creatures and fountains glowing and singing with magic, and so he found hope that perhaps he might find magic enough within its walls to become a dwarf again. At the thought, the castle seemed to rise against him, guardian creatures stalking and gliding out of every doorway.

He slew them all, fighting his way through their gore to the topmost turret of Thaunkeep—where he found nothing of interest. So he fought his way back down through the castle into its dungeons and then the vast underground caverns beneath, where a great glowing doorway in the air beckoned him. Hastening to it, he found it to be the door in and out of the treasure-filled lair of a huge old dragon who lay athwart his path.

They conversed, and the dragon took pity on the embittered dwarf. With magic, the dragon restored him to his original body. Overjoyed and capering in glee, the dwarf asked the dragon how he could possibly repay him.

"Like this," the dragon replied and swallowed the dwarf in one gulp. Tamrune, the Seven, the old dragon, and even the spirit of the dwarf were well pleased with this end to the dwarf's last adventure.

CHAPTER 5: LIFE IN CASTLEMOURN

Castlemourn is home to hardened, unlettered backcountry hunters who wear furs and beast-skins, dwell in caves, and spend their days desperately tracking down and spearing (or snaring) edible beasts. It is also home to glittering sophisticates who dwell in cities and take part in endless revelry, displaying their wealth and fine breeding. Most Mournans, of course, live their lives somewhere in between. So what is typical working garb, food, and daily life like?

THE CALAUNTURA

The common calendar of Castlemourn is formally known as the Calauntura but, in daily speech, is referred to as the Telling (as in the Telling of the Years, a ritual still observed at funerals in rural villages in which village elders list events of local note, one for each year).

For reasons that have been lost to passing time, the calendar of Castlemourn consists of Times of a dozen years, each identified by the name of a creature. Individual years are termed the First of the Gryphon, the Second of the Gryphon, and so on. At the end of every dozen years is a single day, the Haelhollow. It's not considered part of any year, and is a day when wrongs can be righted, revenge taken, laws are considered suspended, married couples can seek new partners for one night, and violence and pranks govern, so much so that even private bodyguards have trouble keeping control over their own masters' homes. After Haelhollow passes, a new Time begins. Though rarely used by any but

sages and loremasters, a dozen dozen is known as a daunt, thus a period of 144 years (twelve Times) is one daunt. The Fall of the Castles occurred just over two daunt ago.

It's rare for humans in Castlemourn to survive more than fifty years; most who avoid serious injury or misadventure die of natural causes in their forties. Few Mournans alive today recall the Time of the Huthbear or even the Time of the Swiftwing that followed it. After the Time of the Swiftwing came the Time of the Ornserpent, and after that came the Time of the Thantoad. There then followed the Time of the Khornalysk, the Time of the Drusthorn, and of course, the current Time of the Gryphon. When this Time is spent comes the Time of the Stormbird, and after that, the Time of the Windragon, followed by the Time of the Warserpent.

DAYS AND MONTHS

A year consists of twelve taeloles (months) of forty days each, which coincide with the lunar cycle of Thelseene. These taeloles are in turn divided into four ten-day periods known as rathren. The four rathren are always named Rising Rathren, Green Rathren, High Rathren, and Withering Rathren. The taeloles are Adaunth (the first month of spring and of the Mournan year, equivalent to our March), Vaerryl, Maepranth, Nornee, Wendthorn (the first month of summer, equivalent to our July), Aumbril, Jalandth, Orstara (equivalent to our October, this is the month of fall, which in Umbrara is a swift



plunge into hard winter), Vrauntur (equivalent to our November, this is the first hard winter month), Darkhaunth (equivalent to our December, the other month of hard winter), Standrath (equivalent to our January, this is the first month of a wet, slushy, cold, windswept, rain-thaw-followed-by-icestorm period of weather sometimes called the Trarthar, which means the Despair), and Orthenkho. Individual days are called First Rising, Second Rising, First Green, Second Green, and so on, so the equivalent of our last day of August would be Tenth Withering, Aumbril.

TIMES OF DAY

Mournans do not have clocks and, outside a holy community, do not mark time with temple horns or bells (though there are tales of such customs being practiced in particular locales long ago). Throughout a day, times are referred to as follows: shadows (the lightening of night's gloom before dawn), dawn, mormar (morning), highbright (noon), longsun (afternoon), waning (when the sun visibly begins to lower and the day can be seen to be seeking an ending, some Mournans also call this longshadows), sunfall (sunset), dusking, and darkcloak (night).

Local rulers, from village elders on up to self-styled Lord Highkings, tend to call feasts to mark occasions of importance in local life, from battles to dragon-slayings to ascensions of thrones. However, there are a number of feasts all Mournans observe; the Days of the Seven. These are:

Brightstar (First Rising, Adaunth) is dedicated to Larlasse. Participants hope to win good fortune and clear choices in the year ahead. Taletellers, bards, minstrels, and loremasters are guested (given shelter and personal service), gifted (given handsome gifts of musical instruments, books, quills, ink, parchment, or bound blank books), and heeded (listened to intently, for words that will be used in guidance throughout the year).

Coinrain (Fourth Green, Maepranth) is dedicated to Haelarr and celebrated in hopes of prosperity. Folk give coins to strangers in the belief that when they are in need in the year ahead, coins unlooked for will come to them.

Gentlehands (Tenth High, Nornee), dedicated to Munedra, is celebrated in hopes of avoiding disease, wounding, and heart-strife. Entire communities bathe together wherever possible, and trade fairs are held where herbal medicines, cordials, firepot-vapors (inhaled medicines), and even magical cures are sold.

Fiercefend (Sixth Green, Wendthorn) is dedicated to Araugh. Participants hope to avoid storms and watery peril in the year to come. Storm dances are performed and prayers intoned over sites

of known shipwrecks. Dead or dying outlanders and strangers are often buried at sea, so Araugh will have dead enough this year and not feel the need to come looking for more.

Fangward (Tenth High, Wendthorn) is dedicated to Ralaroar in hopes of avoiding beast attacks (and the successful taming of beasts). Great hunts and monster-slayings are re-enacted by costumed commoners, real beasts are set to fighting (though the outcomes of such matches must *never* be bet upon during Fangward for fear of earning the displeasure of all the Seven), and humans wrestle bears and other creatures for public entertainment.

Swordfire (Sixth High, Aumbril), dedicated to Amaunt, brings hope of avoiding misrule and false justice. Many pacts, agreements, and contracts are made this day. By tradition, no priest, ruler, court clerk, or scribe can charge fees for drafting or witnessing such documents during the feast of Swordfire.

Fullsheaf (Tenth Green, Jalandh) is dedicated to Damantha in the desire that the harvest will be plentiful and the food wholesome. If such results seem unlikely, the people sacrifice livestock in hopes that food comes to the hungry from somewhere in the lean days at the end of winter when larders are bare. In some cases, village elders sacrifice themselves to the goddess. The death must occur when bare-bodied, touching both dirt and water, and must be self-inflicted by a willing creature, never a killing done by another being.

THE PASSING YEARS

Mournans know their history through bards' tales, orations at feasts, and family-told histories. Birthdays are known as Turnings, and are occasions for privately remembering promises, advice, and past achievements—not celebrations or gift-givings.

DIRECTIONS & DISTANCES

Traders tend to speak of directions and distances in the words of the Far Tongue, represented here by north, south, east, west, and their combinations. All Mournans understand these words and use them or their local Crown Tongue equivalents interchangeably. Crown Tongue is a fragmentary, lost language used as mutter-before-strangers shorthand by some Mournans, as well as in local verses and chants.

Compasses in Castlemourn always take the form of lodestones suspended from thongs or fine cords, allowed to turn to find north. These home-made, pocket-pouch devices are known as lodestars. Possessing a lodestar marks one as a traveler, hence

the term lodeblown for a restless wanderer. In contrast, there are lode-eyes, potentially-dangerous, not-to-be-trusted persons who have traveled far, seen much, and may have acquired all sorts of strange habits, beliefs, and items. Road tales claim lode-eyes steal and eat babies, believe there are other gods besides the Seven, and even own daggers that fly on their own to slay or come to their owner's hand in times of need.

To a Mournan, a compass rose is a lodestar, and if one "circles the star," he looks in all directions. The Far Tongue words are as follows:

Mournan Directions

Real World Direction	Mournan Direction
North	Sarrind
Northeast	Anarrlith
East	Aerho
Southeast	Uddursea
South	Sekhovynd
Southwest	Broethsea
West	Luthsurl
Northwest	Straeklith

Because many Mournans travel little, distances tend to be stated vaguely, except by mariners and experienced travelers. A typical villager in upland Mournra (away from the shore; the corresponding term for downland or shore areas is "saltview") will say far (loehoe in Crown Tongue) or not far (dussloe), elaborating by appending starl (most of a day's travel is needed to get from here to there) or a night (meaning a full day's ride with a sleepover and then some travel the next day), two nights, araethe (many nights), and so on.

Travel times, of course, vary widely by one's gait when walking, the speed of a mount or conveyance, and the terrain. Trails run just about everywhere but are often watched over by outlaws and predatory beasts, and dense forest or tharag (breakneck ravine-and-ridge country) can make striking out away from trails difficult or pointless. On the best roads in Mournra (the east-west Thaalride, Shalantiir's Way, and most of Raudar's Way), constant, heavy wagon-traffic makes travel steady and safe—if not brisk—and settlements can be found a day's travel apart.

Seafarers tend to be far more precise on travel times but not distances. Prevailing winds govern how long it takes to get from a given anchorage to a particular strait, and this is reflected in their talk and thought.

Although there are few kings in the countries of Castlemourn, the people of each land often refer to measurements in terms of a King's (insert

unit of measurement here) (see Mournan Units of Measure table).

TRAVEL

Most Mournans walk everywhere. On long trips, they typically negotiate a place in a wagon, with costs as high as 1 gp/day if food is provided and the route runs through dangerous terrain. Horses, mules, and wagons can readily be bought at most inns and coopers; a typical town has a wheelwright, a cooper who can also craft wheels, a cabinetmaker who can do rough repairs and modifications to wagons, and a wagonworks (usually the only source of good replacement axles). Horse and wagon rentals are almost unknown these days, except within the borders of Lyonar, Lothran, Jamandar, or

Mournan Units of Measure

Distance		
King's inch	=	1 inch
King's finger	=	3 inches
King's step	=	3 feet
King's mile	=	10,000 steps or 30,000 feet
King's tall	=	6 feet high

Weight		
King's coin	=	weight of one gold coin*
King's pound	=	10 king's coins
King's crown	=	100 king's coins
King's basket	=	250 king's coins
*Mournan gold coins are roughly 1 king's inch by 1 king's inch by 1/2 king's inch thick		

Fluid		
King's cup	=	a roughly fist-sized volume of fluid weighing about 3 king's coins
King's tankard	=	a volume of liquid weighing 7 king's coins
King's barrel	=	a roughly bushel-basket sized volume of liquid weighing 100 king's coins
King's drum	=	any large container of liquid weighing more than 100 king's coins

Time		
King's eyeblink	=	the time it takes to blink an eye
King's second	=	"in a king's second" means "it's going to take as long as it takes" (anywhere from one minute to several days)
King's measure	=	the time it takes from first light until the sun has risen fully above the horizon at dawn, or the time it takes the sun to disappear behind the horizon at dusk
King's day	=	sunrise to sunset, usually 12 hours unless the gods are angry

within the walls or boundary-poles of Dragonhead, Luuthaven, and Ghandalar, but rentals are always by the day, which means from now until next dawn.

Smiths who can shoe horses and harness makers who can make and repair saddles and harnesses are found in most towns and all settlements along the Thaalride, Shalantiir's Way, and Raudar's Way. The best horses are bred in Lyonar, Lothran, and the Haunthills, and the best wild horses are found in Sparruk. Good carriages (typically 100 gp, always smaller than coaches and offering little stowage space), enclosed coaches (500–800 gp, depending on size and luxuries), wagons (35–50 gp, depending on size and ruggedness), and carts (12–16 gp, varying by size and durability) can be purchased in any mainland Mournan city, and rattleboards (crude wagons, typically selling for 30 gp) can be found in most towns and villages. Winter sleds and sledges (10–20 gp, depending on size and sturdiness) can also be found anywhere, because they're so simple to make and can double as trade-goods pallets until sold. Feed for mounts and draft animals is readily available wherever one travels.

Typical replacement prices start at 8 gp for a ready (in stock, take-our-size) wheel, 6 gp for a ready axle, and go up sharply according to three factors: sturdiness of construction, any custom-building or modification work that must be done to make it fit the specific conveyance (if done by the seller), and how desperate or helpless the buyer seems.

Small handcarts capable of carrying a few strapped-on sacks, satchels, or a hand-keg are the only conveyance owned by most city dwellers. City businesses may have a small wagon, two to four draft horses or mules, and carrypoles (for pairs of strong men to sling on their shoulders and carry heavy bundles lashed between them).

Most Mournans follow and trust in the Law of the Road, an unwritten code that says innkeepers won't rob guests or permit thieves to enter their inns and stables to steal or slay. No one, once settled in an inn room, can be evicted for a better-paying or more influential guest.

In addition, apples and other wayside fruit can be freely taken if they can be reached without stepping off the road. Farmers often dig deep ditches to minimize losses from this practice, and the traveling poor sometimes sleep in these culverts, rolled in their cloaks beneath a heap of freshly-torn up reeds and grasses. Water may be freely drawn from wells. Ferries must post their tolls, typically 1 cp, and ferrymasters can't attack or threaten folk trying to ford or swim the river on their own.

Inns are generally kept separate from taverns, though they may be owned and run by the same persons, to cut down on brawls and fires. Inns

always offer common bunkrooms and private rooms, the latter having doors and windows that can be barred from the inside. Most inns also offer secure storage, consisting of a stone-lined storage pit reached by an in-the-floor trapdoor that the renter sleeps on top of and has a locked, iron bar cover whose keys are kept in a hidden place by a local priest paid 1 cp/night by both the innkeeper and the storage-renter. Many temples rent out vigilant (watched over by underpriests) storage cells and even rooms that can be rented for days at a time by those able to pay (2 gp/day or more), with typical rules including: failure to pay means forfeiture of stored goods and no living thing or corpse can be stored. Many temples do, however, rent sleeping rooms or sick chambers and even provide nursing care.

FOLK BELIEFS & CUSTOMS

Across Castlemourn, local folk cling to a bewildering variety of curious beliefs, sayings, and customs so numerous that sages busily compile tomes upon tomes of them without showing signs of covering them all. A few of the more widespread include:

- Disturbing a grave, or taking valuables belonging to the recently dead, will cause the deceased to rise as an undead and stalk the thief.
- Deliberately tainting a well, stream, or pond with poison, vomit, blood and guts, perfumes, or human waste will cause the Seven to bring sickness on the perpetrator.
- Wraiths and other flying or intangible undead can't cross running water.
- Dogs can always find their masters, no matter how dismembered, burned, or well buried.
- The eyes in the severed head of a murdered person will open, or fall out if already open, if the murderer is forced to gaze directly into them.
- To take anything more from a lone woman than she freely offers, from her charms right down to a single berry or grape, causes the Seven to mark the taker for notice by all outlaws and prowling beasts.
- A false heritage or lineage, or denied or suppressed true lineage or kinship, will always be found out.
- Treasure always lies where glowing lights dance by night, except when such lights are seen in swamps or over boggy ground.
- If the true love of a missing person goes to the spot where the person is known to have last stood and "spills blood for the Seven" (prays to their god while cutting themselves so as to shed blood), some hint of the direction and distance to the location of



the missing person, or their remains, will rise in the mind of the true love.

COOKING & FOOD

Folk rise around dawn and use either a special clawhand or the rusty shaft of some old and broken tool to hook back chunks of turf from the coals of their hearthfire. The turf is cut from the ground the day before with a machete-like greatknife, a cleaver also used for splitting kindling, basic whittling, and butchering carcasses for the pot or spit. Kindling is added, the fire blown to flame, and fresh smallcuts of wood loaded on. Most Mournan dwellings have a wall recess filled with smallcuts, located close enough to the fire to take in warmth and drive out the damp.

Then a blackened iron pot, typically a small cauldron slightly larger than a human head, is swung over the fire on a hook or, if on the road, set on a tripod of wedged rocks above, but in the center of, the fire. This pot holds leftover night-before stew, strengthened with gnawed bones, the dregs of wine and beer, and so on. Warmed, it's the staple breakfast of most Mournans, augmented by a drink, usually of small beer or fresh milk, and fried bread. As the fire cools, drippings are scraped

up with the greatknife and saved in a metal cup for frying. Fryings are done in a metal pan, often an old upturned shield, that's held over the flames on a succession of fresh-cut boughs or on a longfork in the kitchens of the well-to-do. Portable iron spits are moved over most hearths to cook roasts or as chain-slings for larger simmer-cauldrons.

Most folks in cities walk everywhere and own no mounts or livestock. Well-to-do city families may have a yard goat or cow to provide milk, or raise clipped-wing doves or chickens for eggs and flesh. All upcountry farm families have such necessities unless they've recently been raided by thieves, outlaws, or hungry beasts.

All manner of cuisine can be found in Castlemourn, from the fish-fry prevalent in ports to the roasts popular in ranching countries such as Lyonar. The usual pattern is to dine at midday on something portable like a length of sausage, a wheel of cheese, a slab of bread, and a flask of mulled wine, water, or beer and have a large sit-down meal at dusk. The morning meal is typically called risefeast, the midday meal highbite, and the evening meal duskingfeast. Highbite is either bought on the spot or assembled during risefeast and taken out to work. It'll be eaten at the best time for a work break, not necessarily right at midday

(just as farmers usually work until light fails, so their duskingfeast is after dusk).

Soups, stews, and roasts are the backbone of Mournan domestic cooking. Fresh eggs and meat are normal staples. A typical, swift, light farm meal is a slab of bread over which has been ladled fried onions and fried green-picked tomatoes, crowned by two soft-fried eggs and all their drippings. Cheeses, sausages, pickled onions, parsnips, peppers, and eggs (plus large joints of smoked meat for those who can afford it) form the foundation of Mournan larders. In season, fresh fruits are eaten at every home meal, usually in simple handbowl of berries form.

By and large, food is plentiful and cheap in Castlemourn; only in severe winter weather will most Mournans know hunger. There's usually enough provender to easily feed unexpected guests and to hand to street beggars (who are almost exclusively the diseased and maimed).

DRINK

Small beer is made at home. Most farmers also make their own wine, and gnomes and halflings typically run their own stills and sell the fiery, potent result, known as arslag, to everyone. It's rumored that every gnome and halfling family prepares special drinks that induce sleep at a drop, so as to handle unruly guests or more easily rob unsuspecting clients—and it's certain that dwarves buy and combine arslag in great casks to mature to even greater potency and enjoy a result that would reduce most humans to reeling, eye-watering helplessness at a swallow. Dwarves always invent fanciful names for their concoctions, which are collectively known as forgeswallow. A dwarf utters that word proudly, but others speak it with derision or fear.

Elves make the best wines, with the far less numerous and spoken-of halfling vintages running a close second. The most expensive wines command 12 gp/bottle, but most good wines are priced in the 6 to 8 gp/bottle range, with everyday swallowgulp about 1 gp/bottle. Small beer and lowdark ale run 1 or 2 cp/tankard, rising to prices of 6 cp/tankard for the best brews. Handkegs, holding about 20 tankards, sell for 2 sp for the worst swill, and up to 2 gp for the best ale.

In descending order of reputation, notable wines include Elven everclear (translucent blue, minty, and incredibly cool and throat clearing, thanks to the addition of secret-recipe lichen suffusions); Palandmar golddrop (a rich, golden white wine, sweet and fruity); Fire of Estorna (an amber-hued, dry white wine); Larancel Black (a black-hued, syrupy-sweet berry wine); Zroasan (a stout red from

FALCON FAR

[Sung to the tune of the traditional English folksong "John Barleycorn" the with words of the chorus sung spaced slow and drawn out.]

Once o'er many bright castles tall
Came winging falcons three
High and swift to kiss the sun
Flying far, flying free

Chorus

Without magic to trust in we must fail and fall
Know nothing, cast nothing, fall down and crawl

On proud rampart watching wizard smiles
Falcon takes fire as it flies
Burns swift away to falling man
Down, down to earth he dies

[Chorus]

Grim turret dark sorcerer holds
Two falcons past do race
Spell unfurls, feathers fall
Bone falling without trace

[Chorus]

Lonely maiden last looks up
One falcon left to see
Raises hands in gentle weave
Oh, beauty, come down to me

[Chorus]

Together stand, regal strong
His dagger cuts his hand
Three drops fall, three falcons rise
To hunt wizard and sorcerer on command

[Chorus]

Oh, once over many bright castles tall
Came winging falcons three
High and swift, soar to kiss the sun
Flying far and free

[Chorus, strong and loud]

Zroas in Lothran); and Jamandran Greengem (an emerald-hued sour wine made with apples, mosses, and green berries).

Notable beers (also listed in descending order of reputation) include Heart of Arshroon (a thick, heady stout of a distinctly nutty flavor); Blackoon (a smooth, remarkably consistent-tasting ale that keeps for years, making it popular with innkeepers everywhere); Firemug (a fiery, spiced beer from Firelorn that a few people hate, but most folk rave about); Gluslake (a dry, bitter pale ale that tastes almost as if white wine has somehow been made into a beer); Waernscar (a dark, nutty, bitter ale that's an acquired taste and keeps for years); Stormstay Dark (a rare ale that's sometimes terrible but in good brewings is the golden sip of the gods); Yarnd (a thin, rather sour beer produced in prodigious quantities, travels and lasts well, and is viewed by many as unexciting but safe); Glaelan (from Glael in Estorna, an earthy, herbed beer that's both intriguing and soothing on the stomach); and Vale Amber (a fiery, bright orange, gut-warming, cider-laced brew from Khalandorn).

Falcon Far is the oldest known Mournan drinking song and is usually sung before every meal whereat a bard performs. It's widely known across Castlemourn. Elves and dwarves sing very different lyrics to the tune and consider the human version typical disrespectful human silliness.

TOILETRY

After a day's consumption, bodies must eventually make room for more. The chamber pot, augmented by handwater and a darkrag to wash one's behind clean, is the usual means of Mournan indoor toiletry, kept under beds or in corners behind screens, and introduced under the holed seats of wooden chairs for the elderly and unsteady. Grand houses have jakes, closet-like rooms fitted with gravity-drop toilet benches flushed with large ewers of flower-scented water; users have scented handwater and stacks of single-use darkrags for cleaning. When outdoors, leaves, moss, and a darkrag carried in one boot and washed in streams or ponds usually suffice.

BEDDING

The poor may sleep on simple piles of moss, straw, or cut rushes, sometimes raised up off a dirt floor on a platform made of a row of cut logs kept from rolling apart by pegs driven into the ground and chinked with mud into a more-or-less level platform. However, most folk are used to beds.

In simple households, a bed is a rope crisscross web frame, with the ropes nailed across a corner

where two walls meet (akin to a triangular spiderweb), or the same thing done with wooden cross-slats tied between two hammock-like long ropes. In either case, over this frame is placed a mattress made of sacks of linen or sewn-together old rags stuffed with straw and scented with floral oils to deter bedbugs. The walls are often hung with blankets or rugs for additional warmth.

The next step up is to have a free-standing, moveable carved bed frame for the rope slings, and in the coldest regions and the most luxurious inns or city homes, this is either an elaborate affair hung with side-tapestries or a wooden box with side-doors for as much warmth and privacy as possible. Silken sheets and pillows are marks of luxury, since most folk use their rolled-up cloaks and jerkins as pillows. In summer, most folk sleep bare-skinned, though women sometimes keep their slips on for modesty. Boots are removed but kept in the bed to avoid theft or pranks. In winter, most folk sleep fully clad.

DRESS

Mournans of high coin and fashion may wear just about anything, daring cutaways, fanciful sleeves, and hats being the usual order of the day, but everyday working garb in Castlemourn is as follows.

Starting at the head, women tie a scarf or kerchief, augmented in cold or wet weather by a long, prow-brimmed leather hat known as a lonefeather for its usual ornament. Men wear a longclap, a broad-brimmed leather hat something like a pointed-prow cowboy hat.

Women wear a smock or fitted gown on their bodies, gathered at the waist with a cord or broad sash. In winter, this is augmented with a mantle of thick wool, often with a water-proofing substance painted over it. This is an over-the-shoulder, breast-length garment that overlaps at the front, buttons up the front, and drapes like a shawl. Scarves are often wrapped around the throat under the mantle for additional warmth.

Commoners who want to dress up a gown add an embroidered tharmashe over it (a laced up corset, like a bustier or a medieval stomacher) and tie on similarly splendid over-sleeves.

Under their gowns, most women wear a simple linen rith or slip (in winter, perhaps two quilted heavy slips) and a clout (soft leather briefs, often held up by long leather thongs that crisscross over the hips or go up the body, front and back, to encircle a large, low neck collar). Leggings, tucked into boots, are worn in winter or in muddy conditions.

Everyone in Castlemourn wears calf-high boots, slippers, or stable-clogs indoors and boots out-of-

doors. Every traveler typically wears one pair of boots and carries another pair slung from a leather shoulder-harness. Cobblers are among the busiest and most essential wayside service-providers.

Men wear leather breeches over clouts typically made by a wife or lover, held up with suspenders that are always worn under a smock, tunic, or dath (shirt). Broad waist belts are always for ornamentation or to carry weapons and tools, almost never to hold the breeches up.

Both genders wear light over-cloaks for show and against evening chill and large, heavy, wool and leather stormcloaks and muffler-type greatscarves for cold winter weather. Men sometimes prefer quilted jerkins instead, garments akin to modern leather bomber jackets, only with bulkier shoulders.

Clothing and bedding are typically stored in tharchests (stout foot-of-bed chests with rope end-handles that double as seating) and large, stand-up wooden wardrobes. Poor folk may use wooden wall-pegs and cross-the-room or rafter-slung ropes with whittled hooks that fit over the lines like an inverted horseshoe but have up-curving ends on both sides to hang the clothing on. Everyone has shaped wooden or metal drying-racks of various sorts to dry out damp clothing by fires.

CARRIED GEAR

Both genders typically carry knives (at the belt, inside the boot, and sometimes in neck or forearm sheaths), an eating fork and ladle, whetstones, and a punch awl or needles. Women typically carry several fangs (tiny daggers for personal defense) sheathed in hair-combs or on thin leather thongs worn under their clothing.

Merchants also carry a small-hammer (one-piece metal gavel) and an honormark (a short metal punch with their personal mark-of-trade on one end). When the honormark is hit with the hammer, its mark is impressed on leather, parchment, or thick wax to seal a deal or sign a contract. Literate merchants, of course, carry quills and ink, typically in carved wooden cases to inhibit breakage. Everyone carries fire-flints in steel striker-boxes.

Trade goods are carried in saddlebags on a horse or mule, but personal belongings are always carried in a backpack, which may have rolled blankets or cloaks lashed to it and satchels dangling from it. The satchels are used for food (packed in a cauldron) and for kindling-gathering along the road.

CURRENCY

Coinage is the usual copper-silver-gold-platinum scale known to many felar, with gems used for larger denominations—most often moonstones or

sard for 50 gp and pieces of amber and garnets for 100 gp. Many such stones are encased in chased silver or iron edgebindings to prevent their being chipped or shattered in everyday handling. Every realm does its own minting and has local names for its coins, but, in the last century, Asmrel's rise to wealth was aided by its minting of huge numbers of good coins, now circulated widely all over Castlemourn and accepted as a standard. The copper piece is the rued (a triangular coin punched in the center so it can be strung on rings), the silver piece is the oval smiling eye (because it bears a dragon's eye on one side and an image of a fanged, scaled smile on the other, with the legend "I watch for trickery"), the gold piece is a shield-shaped coin known inevitably as the shield, and the rarely-seen platinum piece is a turret (shaped like a squat, crenellated castle tower).

Promissory notes are known and used in Castlemourn, under the name lackcoin bonds, and may be sold or traded to third parties. They always stipulate the specific minting or coinage (or other goods) acceptable for payout. Called simply clasp bonds, they also serve in barter ("I'll repay you with one healthy milk cow in the spring of X").

WAGES

Most Mournans see actual coins only when selling goods to merchants or city folk, using barter much of the time. Wages and rates of pay in the country tend to be built around this model: room, board, and clothes mending plus 1 cp every so many days (the every so many usually being six or seven). If room, board, and clothes mending aren't provided, the rate will be 1 sp every three days or two days for a guard or a veteran craftworker. In the city, daily rates of pay of 2 to 4 sp for veterans trusted and able to run the business alone for short periods are the norm, although 1 sp/day or even 1 sp/two days is more common if room, board, and uniform clothing plus mending of same is provided. In the city, written contracts, drawn up by hired "street scribes," read aloud to both parties in front of witnesses, and signed by the illiterate with their thumbprints in keep-dyed wax, are the norm. Typically, there's a signing bonus of a good full roast meal. Skilled craftsmen (smiths, jewelers, trained and fully-equipped guards, counterfeiters, and any crafter able to mend or reproduce duplicate-seeming items) can demand much higher wages, often 1 gp/day. If anyone underpays them, they can readily find another employer willing to hire them away for more.

CHAPTER 6: SCHEMERS AND THEIR SCHEMES

Castlemourn is rife with intrigue, and its ever-changing patchwork of petty realms and rulers frequently transforms folk into fugitives—a few of whom become brigands of some lasting success and notoriety.

Yet aside from the struggles for power that swirl around every ruler and court, for social standing that permeate the loftier strata of every city's society, and the petty revenge and foe-crushing maneuverings of business rivals and warring families, there are

individuals whose plans and actions bid fair to change Castlemourn—for good or ill—with an even wider reach than that of some rulers who can muster formidable armies.

A few of these currently-active persons are noted here. Thander is fast becoming a figure of legend, and there's much talk of, though little real knowledge or agreement on, what Sedmond's up to. The others are unknown to most Mournans, and the true natures of their schemes are well-concealed.

ULDRINATH SEDMOND

CRI2

NE MALE HUMAN CLERIC I2 OF HAE LARR

Uldrinath Sedmond is a renegade priest of Haelarr who recently claimed to have been visited by a hitherto unknown god, Kuldoun the Lord of All Magic. He has sent florid invitations to most known wizards throughout mainland Mournra and the Iron Isles, bidding them come to various local hilltops and ruins to join in the worship of the True Flame.

Unbeknownst to Mournans, Sedmond is a fraud who grew tired of temple politics and clinging to a minor position as the years flowed past. He lost faith, deciding that while the Seven grant divine spells and therefore must be real, the teachings of priests—from how the Seven are perceived to what clergy are expected to eat and wear—are all just so much elaborate invention. In league with a handful of unscrupulous mages, he set out to found his own new cult. The Church of the True Flame is a sham Uldrinath hopes will gain followers; his secret cabal of wizards puts spells into the minds of mages and priests who pray to Kuldoun.

During his years of divine service, Sedmond became a master of poisons and their antidotes and found, in a temple crypt, a crown of great magical power that can “brainblast” specific beings from afar whose blood the wearer has touched in the past. Making a harmless blood ritual part of initiation into the cult, as a bond guaranteeing that no member of the inner ring can harm another, he has managed to both come into contact with the blood of all members of his cabal of wizards and poison them. Sedmond intends to covertly control the wizards by providing doses of the antidote (that will sometimes actually be poison, so as to weaken them further) in return for their obedience—and using the crown to blast all who defy his attempts at control to drooling idiocy. He has used pilfered temple funds to buy many buildings on various Iron Isles and throughout Lyonar.



AUNDRETH LORORN CRI8

CN MALE HUMAN WIZARD
(NECROMANCER) I8

Aundreth Lororn is reportedly a mad wizard who experiments on the ferocious beasts in his menagerie with foul life-draining magic. His infamous trap-spells have ensnared even the mightiest creatures sent by foes to defeat him. Seemingly a genius at creating new spells, Lororn is a recluse some believe powerful enough to threaten all Castlemourn.

The Mad Beastmage owns dwellings in many lands, from ramshackle back country farmsteads to crumbling wilderland towers and backstreet city homes, often teleporting from one to another. He dabbles endlessly in trade cabals and intrigues and frequently hires adventurers to undertake odd missions, such as fetching seemingly small, everyday items of little value. Lororn also offers huge bounties to those who can bring him the most dangerous sorts of magical creatures—captured alive and relatively unharmed. Those who've watched him for years insist he's following a secret, personal master plan that may yet plunge all Castlemourn into crisis.



THANDER "THE BLACK FLAME" CRI6

N MALE HUMAN BUCCANEER I2/
FIGHTER 4

Thander is an outlaw swordsmith and sometime smuggler banished (in absentia, because he fled in time to escape execution) from Lothran for trying to slay a Swift Hand agent. Unfortunately for Thander, this slaying was very public, and the local authorities are currently under standing orders from the Grand Duke to execute swift and firm justice to ensure traders view Lothran as a safe and attractive place to do business, as apparently rumors of all the slayings in Lothran had begun to unnerve some influential merchants. He's now somewhere in the Haeldar, trying to gather and rally many outlaws, and has led some very successful raids on Ormscar, taking over the village of Roserook in the Twelfth of the Drusthorn, only to retreat when the entire army of the Lord Imperial was mustered against him.

Thander is now planning to seize or buy a ship in the Foreshore and raid the port of Raddanth, pillaging it in a wild night by releasing beasts into the barracks of its bailiffs and ducal guards and shooting down any who try to flee those stronghouses with an encircling ring of crossbowmen. The backbone of his outlaw army is 120 crossbowmen and almost 200 swordsmen—but their loyalty will last only as long as Thander's gold.



ESGRYM DESPER

CR6

LN MALE HUMAN EXPERT 7

Good Esgrim is a charismatic, earnest man who believes the castles fell because of human arrogance, overly powerful magic, and rulers who made laws at whim and weren't beholden to the people or any common code of decency and right dealings. He believes Castlemourn will fall again—and farther this time, into an outright, possibly endless savagery of twilight—unless strict laws are made governing the use of magic and rulers' treatment of people, enforced or adhered to by all rulers.

Any such laws will inevitably become hollow armor cloaking the perfidy of kings and lords, Desper argues, if they aren't rooted in commonly held beliefs of how everyone; wizards, priests, and rulers included; should behave. He's determined to forge such a common code, not by arguing endlessly over the details of such laws—which he sees as a trap the churches of the Seven have fallen into, and one of the reasons they can't be trusted to ever bring about this Code—but by recruiting common folk all over Mournra to become his eyes.

All Desper wants these Eyes to do is report (to wayfarers and traveling merchants he introduces to them as Folk of the Code) any acts of governance or magic use that they personally believe offend against what's just and right. Folk of the Code then spread word of such offending practices wherever they go with all their disgust and disapproval attached. In this way, Desper believes, a Code will slowly evolve and, along with it, a common way of thinking. Eventually, he hopes rulers, wizards, and priests will know whenever they're doing something wrong, and if they continue, will be deliberately doing evil the Seven can punish.

Desper is a wealthy dairy and chicken farmer of Jamandar, whose cheese, eggs, and fowl sell very well. His parents were the sole heirs of two successful farming families; he inherited the lands of both and so has never wanted for coin. He spends his days traveling Mournra and is said to be patient and kindly, not fanatical, confident that he's doing the right thing but expecting many folk to believe otherwise.

He's been slain by local rulers at least twice but raised from the dead by unknown hands (though his deaths and returns are whispered rumors, not common knowledge). Many Mournan rulers secretly admire Desper and some covertly aid him when they can.



WREN O' LOTHAN CRI6 NE FEMALE HUMAN ROGUE I6

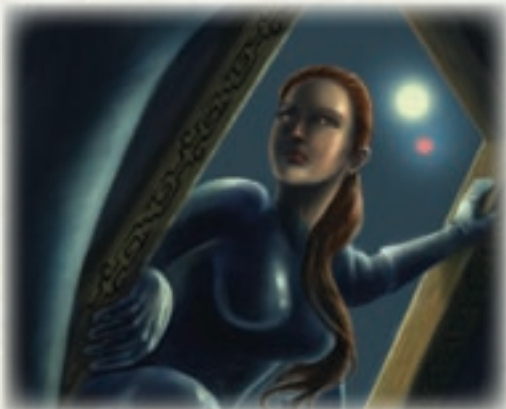
Wren was a rising young trader, a glib-tongued merchant of shrewd bargaining skills. However, her family's fortune was wiped out in two bad years on the caravan routes, and she watched her parents wither and die of shame, starvation, and the rigors of unaccustomed hard menial work.

Blaming the merchant guilds, Wren set out to avenge her parents, learning to steal with bold, observant skill. Time and time again, she slipped into guild halls, plundering their coffers at will, until she tired of this hollow revenge and began seeking new and dramatic ways to punish the guilds.

One stormy night, an envoy from Nighdal visited Wren. Shocked that she'd been watched, identified, and so easily found, Wren listened. Intrigued by his tantalizing offer of employment, she accompanied him to the cursed port and discovered it shrouded with fear—and ruled covertly by dark wizards and darker fiends. One of those wizards offered her a bargain: he would instill powers in Wren (such as magics to let her briefly fly, turn invisible, slip through solid doors or bars, and fall without harm) if she would carry out specific thefts over the next twenty summers.

Wren agreed and has received two powers already: the ability to walk up, cling to, and move along walls and ceilings without falling and the ability to pass a hand over her face and briefly make her features blur into a smooth mask pierced by two eyes. The wizard has told her these powers are permanent, unless something should happen to him, but Wren suspects he can strip them from her at will. She has carried out several thefts from nobles and wealthy merchants in Lyonar, Jamandar, and Asmrel, yielding up her takings (certain books, scrolls, and an odd assortment of battered old curios and trinkets) to the nameless mage.

At his bidding, Wren has founded a thieves' guild hidden within the depths of Stormstars Wood. Under her leadership and direction, Wren's Shadow continues to grow in power and influence.



DARTHAR CRI6 LN MALE HUMAN WIZARD IO/ LOREMASTER 3

Darthar is a fussy, studious sage, bristle-white-browed and mellifluous of voice, an impressive speaker. Fifty years ago, he founded The House of Wisdom in the city of Stormgate in Lyonar. It has grown into the largest center of learning in all Castlemourn, a massive labyrinth of gloomy, vaulted stone chambers and dim, winding corridors. Anyone is welcome; for a fee, they can have a question answered, the cost depending on the question. There is little the sages don't know or can't find out—at least on matters since the Fall of the Castles. The Fall is the only taboo topic in the House of Wisdom: Darthar claims that lore about the Fall is cursed by the Seven, and he won't allow his college to be tainted by it.

House sages actively hire adventurers to explore and map remote areas of Mournra, verifying the locations and descriptions of ruins noted in tomes within the House library. The sages take the security of the House very seriously; when war leaders arise in nearby lands, they are more than willing to order assassinations or work intrigues to head off open warfare.

Every spring, Darthar departs the House to travel, seeking explorers and well-traveled merchants he's hired in the past in order to query them anew on what they've learned and heard since his last visit. However, increasingly the Founder is discovering much of the lore he's paying for is wrong. His hirelings are amusing themselves by concocting lies, inventing things to avoid having to do the work he is paying for, or are too feeble-witted to properly interpret what they see or to ask the right questions. Whatever the cause, much of Darthar's "reliable lore" is wrong. The trouble is, he doesn't know what is correct and what isn't, and a sage's living depends on dispensing facts....



ILMURTH MALANDAR

CRI8

LN MALE HUMAN BUCCANEER I8

Ilmurth Malandar is the most feared pirate in Glamryn Bay, on the Iron Isles (on some of which, it's rumored, he's regarded as something of a hero and a local landholder worthy of respect), and in the Mists—where it's whispered he dwells and even makes regular voyages to Tharltar, fell city of sorcerers.

Malandar boldly visits many Mournan ports in a variety of disguises, using repainted ships from the fleet of captured vessels he's amassed over the years. Assisting him is a crew of malcontents—men left for dead by kin wanting to seize family fortunes, women who've fled abusive parents, husbands, or arranged marriages they wanted no part of, and various not-quite-human outcasts—who, with the help of their captain and fellows, seek revenge on those ashore who harmed them. Malandar is said to be a large-boned, fat, jovial man possessed of the fading remnants of dark good looks as well as a swift mind.

Malandar invests his gains in the mainland and engages, through agents, in legitimate trading. It is widely believed that he often uses his influence, warehouses, and covert port agents to arrange temporary gluts and shortages of specific goods so as to control prices and thus increase his own earnings. His ultimate aims seem to be to corrupt and control the rulers of every major port and, in doing so, rise to rule an unofficial shoreline kingdom. Malandar enjoys battles of wits, daring adventures, and the charms of women (the haughtier and higher-born the better).

Few know Malandar is an important member of Jamandar's merchant guild (if asked, members will say his piracy has made him a former member), and his depredations help the guild gain power in mercantile disputes with other Mournan merchants. As both traders and raiders, Malandar's ships work every port of Glamryn Bay.



THE DRIFTING DEAD CR VARIES

The floating skulls that dwell beneath Dauntcastle are, by all accounts, helpful and knowledgeable in many diverse topics. However, they secretly desire to seize and rule Dauntcastle, and then all of Ormscar, collecting all of the magic they can find before committing their energies to the long process of regaining flesh-and-blood bodies for themselves.

While acting as advisors, the Dead have slowly gathered lore on transformation magic, especially magic from Before the Fall, to aid them in rebuilding their lost bodies or possessing and then reshaping the bodies of others. Thus far, they've learned much about the lands around Ormscar but little concerning more distant Castlemourn. As a result, the Dead are beginning to hire out their services to travelers to Ormscar. They seem particularly interested in Tamrune's magic-rich ruins and will take any opportunity to go there or learn more of the island.



THE SKULL CR22

LE MALE HUMAN (AUGMENTED)
WIZARD 18/ARCHMAGE 4

The Skull is a wizard who long ago lost a magical duel, fell victim to his own faulty spell experimentations, or chose an impressive disguise (the tales vary) and somehow ended up, despite being very much alive, having a bare, ivory-white skull for a head. He has no visible eyes in his sockets or tongue in his head, yet can see, breathe, taste, speak, and eat just as normal humans do. He abandoned his real name, outlived all the folk who knew him (as far as sages can say, he's almost three hundred years old, and some even believe he lived through the Fall), and moved to Luuthaven. Today, he dwells in rotting, dockside hovels, moving from port to port along the coast of Glamryn Bay, often using magic to whisk himself to a new locale. The Skull's personal plans are unknown; he lends coins to pirates and lawful merchants alike and has made some handsome profits, because his spells and conjured monsters make short and bloody work of any who try to swindle him. Unseen bodyguards accompany the Skull everywhere, springing into visibility and swift action whenever he's threatened.

The Skull speaks in a cultured voice, enjoys fine wines and good food, and is known to magically protect himself against drugs and poisons, two of the many substances he trades in. He also fences stolen goods, often vanishing them swiftly with magic as authorities close in.



ARKAMMA RUENDEIR

CRIO

NG FEMALE HUMAN (AUGMENTED) COMMONER 6

Arkamma Ruendeir is a nondescript, middle-aged woman who never stops traveling Mournra and usually manages to be present anywhere riots or throne-strife occur. Well-dressed but afoot and alone, she simply appears in the mobs present when lords are slain or mages go mad and hurl slaying spells wildly. She doesn't trumpet her presence or her habits, but spies in the employ of merchants' leagues and various rulers started to notice her presence at such chaotic events some years ago, even taking to calling her Mother Misfortune. That nickname, however, swiftly fell out of favor as it was also applied to several unfortunate dowager queens who lost all their sons to slaughter and ended up outliving the rest of their royal kin.

Arkamma remains an enigma. She appears to have no magical powers or significant lineage (she was born to now-dead bakers in Orslgate) and is part of no organization. Traveling unarmed, save for the belt knives most folk eat with and the tiny hidden daggers that many women bear to defend themselves against molestation, she lives off the rents of many city properties she's inherited, which were in turn inherited by her parents from an uncle who was a traveling merchant from Orslgate, that are scattered across eastern Mournra. She freely tells anyone who questions her that she goes where it feels right to go. She's quite honest in this,

but some sages believe she must be an unwitting creature of the Seven. Something draws her to sites of strife before the unpleasantness happens; something heals her whenever she's hurt, tortured, or maimed (some rulers have had her blinded, her tongue cut out, or various hands and feet severed, often while trying to get her to tell the truth); and something sets her free whenever she's imprisoned (minor earthquakes shatter jail walls, ironbound doors fall out of their frames, and so on). She's even risen, unblemished and without any aid, from several known deaths (including being bound, weighted with rocks, and then drowned; pushed off high castle parapets; and impaled on the swords of several guards).

Arkamma believes the Seven, or perhaps just a lone mortal wizard of great power, is watching over her. For years she didn't want to know why and didn't consider herself special in any way, but she's been rescued often enough now that she wants to know and is actively trying to find out. Her travels now take her to sages, wizards, and bards, whom she asks for any information they know about her. She refuses to pay high fees for their answers but instead offers to perform some task or quest in exchange (even dangerous ones, though she sometimes hires adventurers to help her in these). Thus far, she's learned nothing, but her activities have caused letters of fire (that only she can see and only for short periods) to repeatedly appear on walls or stones that say: "The hidden treasure must be found. By you."

What this means, and what fate the future holds for her, Arkamma still doesn't know—but she's befriended adventurers, prospectors, hunters, and others who know how to find lost knowledge in the hopes of discovering some answers. This has caused some alarm among certain rulers, who've dispatched agents to follow her closely and see what might ultimately befall this mysterious wandering woman.



TELLOTHEER

UNSHROKH CRI3

LE MALE HUMAN EXPERT 8/
ROGUE 3/ASSASSIN 3

Keelmaster Unshrokh is a descendant of the long-ago Lord of Ghand, Mandro Thulver, whose rule ended nearly two hundred years ago. More importantly, old family stories and a little research have convinced him that he is also a direct descendant of Ruel Tharlon, the last Overduke of Jamandar who died in battle defending his realm in the 3rd of Brightbird from upstart merchants. While he makes no claims to the throne of Ghandalar, Unshrokh does dream of someday reclaiming his rightful throne in Jamandar. A shipwright in Marrovar, he has slowly grown wealthy by building hidden smuggling chambers into various ships of his making. Seacaptains of the Iron Isles, desiring to avoid mainland taxes, are dedicated clients of the Keelmaster, as are a number of notorious seacaptains and outright pirates.

His coin has bought him respect and some sophistication—he's taken lessons in speech, deportment, and changing fashions—and he strives to mirror the haughtiest folk of Asmrel. Of course, he never sets foot in the Tall City, where its folk would sneer at his presumption and imposture. Instead, he acts the grand noble in Luuthaven and Ghandalar, where he'll allow minstrels, thieves, and curious merchants to accompany him to the richest feasts and revels. Unshrokh misses no chance to cultivate the truly wealthy, powerful, or highly-socially-regarded and works hard at being the uncaringly stylish and drawlingly idle life of the party.

For many years, Tellotheer has arranged kidnappings, murders, and body disposals for stiff fees. He's not above selling corpses to folk desiring to experiment with human remains—after all, that way he gets paid twice for the same goods.



DORATH

DEEN CRI3

CN MALE GOLAUNT FIGHTER 9/
RHYMESWORD 4

Dorath Deen is an intelligent and influential golaunt, one of the first to study the history of his race. He is determined to lead his people to ultimate rule over all Castlemourn. To this end, he has assembled the Black Cabal: an enclave of like-minded golaunt in the port of Raddanth. There, Deen is exposing his people, who are posing as peaceful merchants, to the ways of humans, so in time to come they will be able to effectively rule humans.

Deen is a well-traveled adventurer among golaunt, with a knack for making and keeping allies. Through such means, he's begun to build a secret golaunt army in the wild northern Yarhoon and is providing his troops with arms and armor stolen from Luuthaven warehouses and seized from human adventuring bands exploring out of Dragonhead.

Deen is determined not to become just one more name in the long golaunt history of battlefield failures and is patiently building his forces and awaiting the right moment to strike. In his own forays into the mountains, he has made allies of several giant families and has welcomed them into his army, commanding his war-golaunt to treat them with all honor. Currently, Deen is seeking ogres and trolls he can trust, or manipulate well enough, to add to his war-host. He won't hesitate to hire humans to serve as scouts and agents in this endeavor, though he'll tell such hirelings (before their work is done, and he quietly orders their deaths) that his army is being mustered to attack the golaunt who rule the southern Yarhoon.



AUMUN

CRI3

NG MALE HUMAN BARD 9/RHYMESWORD 4

Aumun is an increasingly forgetful, aging, wandering bard beloved by many across Castlemourn. No one knows how old he is, and there are rumors that he was an aging, traveling minstrel over seventy years ago. Others scoff at these claims, saying Aumun was just named after an earlier wandering bard who was famous in his day, and folk now are just confusing one with the other.



Many believe Aumun was a merchant who lost his wealth through foolish dealings and was left with nothing but restlessness and his love of song. He took to traveling Mournra, composing bad songs and telling good tales in exchange for a night's food and shelter.

Hidden in a deep valley in the green depths of the Winterwood is the Songhouse, a bardic academy founded recently by Aumun. The tale they tell there is that Aumun has been a wandering bard for many years and long ago found a magical cavern beneath Mount Tharclaw, where the rock walls radiate heat and springs of water trickle endlessly down—an ideal place in which to winter over. Aumun dubbed it Deep Cave, and often spends winters there. When he first discovered it, food was scarce; he grew weak foraging and hunting and almost didn't last until spring. These last few winters, however, he has journeyed to the cave laden only with a pack heavy with flour and cheese. Many deer forage close to the cave, edible roots thrusting up through the snow in profusion, and piles of cut firewood—that no one ever seems to return for—appear every summer. It's almost as if someone is looking after Aumun.

The Songhouse isn't a fortress but rather a cluster of rustic log cabins nestled under the trees. The Voices, a handful of bards grown too old for the road, dwell there, teaching songs to The Young. These students are vagabond younglings of all races, except the golaunt, who have good singing voices and perfect pitch. They are brought to the Songhouse from all over Mournra by certain wandering minstrels, former apprentices of the Voices.

Aumun founded this academy to improve the skills of all bards, gather and preserve songs, and encourage bards to band together to aid each other in times of need. Via the wandering minstrels, the Songhouse gathers news and lore from across Castlemourn, filtering and dispersing it back to specific Mournan ears as Aumun and the Voices see fit.

Aumun is very forgetful, so much so that he often doesn't even remember that he founded the Songhouse. Yet he does manage to return there every few years, receiving the honor and praise his fellow bards feel he deserves—even if he doesn't sing very well.

AZUULAE SADARA CRIO

CE FEMALE HUMAN SORCERER 7/
ROGUE 3

Azuulae Sardara is a minor sorceress and superb actress who travels Mournra befriending, marrying, and murdering husbands. Patient and careful to avoid arousing suspicions or breaking laws, she's slowly acquired a large fortune in this manner. Sardara uses magic to alter her appearance from time to time and has been known to abruptly take a ship to the Iron Isles if she thinks someone who knew her from a former marriage or locale has recognized her.

In recent years, with her body count approaching thirty men and trailing an increasingly complicated web of agents and companies to administer all the landholdings she now owns, Sardara has taken to choosing increasingly influential husbands in larger ports and cities—and may even be seeking to gain some political power as she settles down. Recent voyages suggest she's been inspecting each of the Iron Isles, and one sage who began to piece together her career speculated, before his abrupt disappearance, that she might be deciding which one to purchase or conquer. Sardara's age must be approaching fifty, but she still looks surprisingly lush and youthful.



JALANDAR BLACKLOCK CR22

LE MALE HUMAN CLERIC 7 OF
RALAROAR/WIZARD (CONJURER)
IO/THAUMATURGIST 5

Jalandar Blacklock is a haughty, icy-tongued, evil wizard of Ghandalar who's busily perfecting spells to wield control over various monsters, so he can use them as his personal agents, bodyguards, and enforcers. As soon as he can reliably create magical portals, he intends to send these creatures forth to take over large areas of Mournra and transform them into beast-roamed wilderness—ruled, of course, by him.

Blacklock breeds monsters in his cavern warrens in the hills west of Ghandalar and pays adventurers well to bring him living, relatively unharmed specimens of fearsome creatures to add to his growing stock. Word of this has gotten around, and though Blacklock still sends trusted groups out to procure specific beasts, more and more strangers are showing up unannounced at the gates of his walled, many-towered city mansion to sell him monsters they've captured.

Blacklock enjoys sending his beasts to hunt specific targets as much as he enjoys manipulating his rivals into attacking each other. He's said to have two female shapeshifters (whose true nature, human or otherwise, is unknown) as his consorts and only trusted companions. Blacklock is very much aware of the schemes of the wizard Lororn and is actively plotting his death.



ADARRA SHANROONE

CRII

N FEMALE HUMAN ARISTOCRAT 9/SORCERER 3

Adarra Shanroone, the Lady of Dark Laughter, is breathtakingly beautiful, a shrewd judge of character, and a master manipulator whose talents involve ardent lovemaking, accurate mimicry, and capturing the hearts of scores of men—including adventurers and veteran merchants who do her bidding throughout Castlemourn. Through them, she's built a vast web of property holdings and investments, and she delights in loving each and every one of her heroes, spurring them on to undertake ever-more-dangerous missions for her. Her wealth is unknown but believed to be extensive, as are her plans to use her influence in many of the lands of Mournra beyond the everyday parade of whimsical acts and achievements.

Bards swoon over Shanroone, and she's been so besieged by folk seeking to catch a glimpse or somewhat more of her in her mansion in Asmrel that she's been forced to assemble a bodyguard, the Masked Knights, who patrol her splendid and extensive gardens of groomed trees, ponds, mossbeds, and arched bridges and chambers, capturing and ransoming all the intruders they find—unless the Laughing Lady orders them to release particular intruders so they can reach her person.

Adarra is the rebellious daughter of one of the wealthiest merchant houses of Lothran. In her younger years, her reckless behavior and hedonism caused a rift with her father that has yet to heal. Following a particularly scandalous episode involving the suspected burglary of one of his close personal friends, Lord Shanroone publicly disowned his daughter and had her ostracized from local society. Undaunted, she has since thrown his scorn back at him ten-fold.

It may seem that the Laughing Lady is interested only in acquiring more gold. Secretly, she is the leader of a band of aristocrats working to bring back the times of glory from Before the Fall. She and her fellow Glory-royals secretly promote exploration into the ancient places of the land. She's personally sent hundreds of parties to the castles on Tamrune Island, though few of these explorers have returned.



INDUL DARAMIR CR8

LN MALE HUMAN EXPERT 5/
FIGHTER 4

Indul Daramir “the Old” is an aging, lion-like, iron miner of Halar, one of the largest and proudest of the Iron Isles. He is a man of striking looks, dominated by his great natural size (he stands nearly seven feet tall and is magnificently muscled, known for his ability to pick up men one-handed and hurl them considerable distances); his stern, kingly features; and his mane of long, flowing white hair. Daramir is widely respected in the Isles. He mistrusts mainlanders because he believes all of them—commoner and noble, alike—consider the Isles as their rightful possessions to be seized and exploited whenever convenient. This, as he tells his fellow islanders often, is the peril they must always watch for and guard against.

Yet Daramir is not a fanatic and doesn’t oppose seacaptains and envoys from the mainland. He simply believes islanders should always deal with mainlanders as equals and should resist all agreements and practices that dictate terms to them, lessen their freedoms, or exploit Isle resources in ways that wouldn’t be tolerated ashore (on the mainland). Whenever anyone unusual or known to be a fugitive from mainland law docks in the Isles, it is customary to treat them with wary friendliness, but an additional custom has recently arisen: to quietly send word to the Old so he knows of the arrival and can come to judge the person himself if he desires. Daramir has his enemies on the Isles, but no one speaks openly against him or questions his judgment. If the Old deems visitors untrustworthy or dangerous, they’ll be treated as such across the Isles, as quickly as word of this judgment can spread.



MUNDARTH THE CLOAKED TRAVELER CR33

CN MALE* HUMAN (AUGMENTED)
WIZARD 20/RANGER 2/ARCHMAGE
5/ELDRITCH KNIGHT 6

Mundarth is a living legend across all of Castlemourn; everyone knows his story. An apprentice to an old wizard, he was caught in a magical backlash years ago (no one knows how long ago, but some claim it happened during the Fall of the Castles).

Cursed by the twisted magics, Mundarth’s body continually shifts and changes, seldom holding a whole form at all. For example, his right arm might become the limb of an ogre, while his face and torso shift into those of a woman. Meanwhile, his left arm becomes a greenish tentacle, wings sprout from his shoulder blades, and his feminine characteristics slide away to be replaced with something else. As a result, Mundarth travels constantly, wearing a large, shapeless black robe with its hood up to conceal his face. He knows he was part of something glorious long ago, but can’t remember where or even what his life was like. He realizes that the mists of forgetfulness claim him often and that he’s aware of himself only for short periods.

Whenever he comes to a large city, he lingers for a time, talking to local spellcasters and clerics about transformational magic. He is known to have hired expeditions to explore Tamrune, paying in advance (in gems, of which he seems to have an unending supply), but won’t go to the island himself, as he is terrified of the place. Packs of meek dogs and cats follow Mundarth wherever he goes; when asked about them, he responds: “These were folk who tried to rob me of my gems.”



CHAPTER 7: MYSTERIES OF CASTLEMOURN

Almost three hundred sixty summers ago, a magical war raged for months across Castlemourn, sending waves of roiling magical chaos washing over the populace and ultimately blasting and twisting the land beyond recognition. The few dazed survivors had no coherent memories of what had happened. Terrible destruction was everywhere they looked—what had caused it all? Could it happen again?

The devastation looked like the aftermath of a war, so when the survivors set about rebuilding, they first raised fortified compounds and fortresses. Yet a hundred years of rebuilding passed in relative peace with no sign of titanic outbursts of magic or strange foes hurling them. Prosperity slowly returned, and Mournans finally found time and will enough to consider the causes of the great destruction. Speculation ran rampant until priests of various of the Seven spoke out about remarkably similar divine visions sent to them, visions sent by the Seven of a war waged with magic. The Fall of the Castles became recognized as the terrible heritage of all Mournans. Tales and plays about the past and the Fall became favorites in fairs, inns, and alehouses.

Another two hundred years passed as Mournans explored the land and started to delve beneath its surface. Folk found and learned enough to know what had happened and something of how (this tor of fused rock was once a stone fortress on a knoll, and was melted by a spell no longer known), but were still unable to piece together enough to determine who made war on whom, with precisely what, and why. Some folk, from every land and walk of life, continued to seek answers and useful items and magic from Before the Fall; these searchers into the past became known as questors. There are many questors in Castlemourn today.

MYSTERIES AND QUESTORS

Questors signal their dedication by wearing black tabards, or black armbands when tabards are not convenient, in public. Most Mournans respect and honor questors. The priests of all the Seven preach that the strivings of such individuals—however self-serving—benefit all Castlemourn.

The life of a questor is dangerous. The only new places to search for answers to the mysteries

of the past are wilderness or subterranean ruins (though many elder Mournans collected and kept hidden curios and fragments of elder lore, passing them down as family secrets, coming to light only in emergencies or when a lineage dies out), so most questors become adventurers and novice sages. Questors too badly injured in their travels to continue questing often turn to sagecraft in earnest.

Almost every Mournan knows at least one questor by name and reputation, if not personally. And all Mournans know who questors are and what they do. Questors willing to share their lore often trade a long talk with their host for an evening's lodging. Most Mournans are fascinated by tales of the golden days Before the Fall and the speculations, observations, and debates of questors about what's been seen and found in ruins. They listen eagerly for hours, all the while barraging the questor with questions.

A few questors travel with large retinues and display wonders of the past beneath great canvas tents in a festive atmosphere; the mere hint that artifacts from the Realm of the Castles can be viewed causes eager Mournans to gather. There are, of course, false questors who invent lore and even fabricate artifacts to take advantage of this eagerness for the stuff of legends, but frauds are rarely able to hide their lack of knowledge for long. Priests watch for such charlatans, who tend to be laughed out of inns, beaten in the streets, and chased out of town.

Within the ranks of questors, deceit can be far more deadly. It is expected that a questor will keep some speculations, theories, facts, and even relics secret, even from a more senior questor he's working with—though such things will, upon his honor, never be matters directly linked to items the senior questor lent him to examine or tasks the senior questor set him to do, such as dig out the door and report back what you find in the chamber beyond. However, any questor who willfully destroys a relic, except to prevent an immediate magical cataclysm, deliberately lies to or misleads another questor, or advances speculations as proven facts is shunned and may even be attacked by other questors. A Shunned One is truly a social outcast and, to avoid becoming an outlaw living wild and raiding just to eat, typically has to renounce his life as a questor and move to a distant backland spot to take up a life as a shepherd, forester, farmhand, miner, or the like. In many cases, a questor, having

murdered a Shunned One for deceit, has been deemed justified in his actions and escaped all punishment. The ethical guide every questor must follow is this: choosing to keep some information secret is alright, but lying or twisting the way one speaks to deliberately confuse or mislead is not alright. Most priests of the Seven preach that a questor who acts unethically, even in small matters, or who keeps too many secrets, even if otherwise helpful, earns the disfavor of the Seven and will suffer increasing misfortune, in questing and in life, until he atones for his failings. A questor isn't obligated to aid all other questors, just those with whom she is working or trading lore.

Novice or apprentice questors work with sages, spellcasters, and other questors to move from simple fascination with the past to knowing how to look in order to successfully find and how to properly interpret what they unearth. Apprentices learn the commonly accepted theories and interpretations of relics from the past, studying the few fragmentary texts, maps, verbal histories recorded by bards and questors, and relics that are available. Before an apprentice can venture forth with any real chance of success, she must develop a basic understanding of the question that will become her life's work.

Journeyman questors spend years learning what they can from books (mainly tomes written by sages and questors or family histories written down throughout the years) and working alongside a more experienced questor. They have explored many parts of Mournra and created their own extensive maps and logs. Journeymen typically possess some items of historical significance found during their journeys, though they may not fully understand the nature of these items or how they work.

Master questors typically establish a permanent base of operations. They have other questors working for them and may be very close to discovering answers related to their chosen mystery. Kings and other folk of power often pay handsomely for a fraction of the knowledge in a master questor's head.

USING MYSTERIES

Mysteries are a great way to interest a group of new players in Castlemourn and to quickly immerse them in the setting. Mysteries are also ideal foundations on which to build adventures or an entire campaign. Yet, mysteries are an entirely optional concept that GMs can readily



omit if using Castlemourn for more traditional dungeon-crawl, wars-between-realms, or city and mercantile intrigue campaigns. This section gives GMs the basic information they need to design adventures around some of the major mysteries of Castlemourn.

Mysteries are designated as either lesser or greater. Lesser mysteries are local puzzles, ruins, or strange events that cannot be readily explained. Often a lesser mystery, such as a strange circular pattern of stones, is duplicated in different parts of a realm or across Mournra, so answers found in one locale may be useful elsewhere. Greater mysteries are deeper and more dangerous matters—so dangerous that questors who investigate one may well wonder if their lives won't end at the hands of the same powers that caused the Fall.

Each mystery entry follows a standard format. Common Knowledge is just that: information known by anyone even remotely interested in the mystery. Questor Path literally indicates the way taken by most individuals seeking information about the mystery. A specific skill set (Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge [arcana], Knowledge [geography], Knowledge [history], Listen, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival) is of value to nearly all questors; however, studying some mysteries requires other skills as well. Where this is the case, such skills will be noted in this section of the entry. Geographic Clues suggests where questors may find clues about the mystery. Secrets provides GMs with additional subjects related to the mystery that characters may stumble across or want to pursue further. Finally, Prizes of Interest describes items or artifacts questors may well come across during their delvings and may also help solve some portion of the questor's chosen mystery.

These are not the only mysteries of Castlemourn, but they are the most popular ones, masking other, greater or more obscure mysteries (unless a GM deems otherwise, of course).

MYSTERIES

WHAT HAPPENED TO CASTLEMOURN? (GREATER)

This is the most talked about topic throughout Castlemourn, and everyone has his or her favorite theory regarding the Fall.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

There are a number of commonly accepted facts regarding the events preceding the Fall. Everyone knows fiends and other extraplanar creatures came to do battle in Castlemourn. Everyone knows there were great spell storms, raging out of control across the land. Everyone knows that as the wave of destruction washed across the continent, the earth rippled and groaned in pain, resulting in drastic changes to every land and kingdom. People often identify six huge fortresses as surviving the Fall: the five on Tamrune Isle and the sixth, Arhdahkaun, perched atop the great cliff that is the Haunt of Eagles. Many folk say that what is now Glamryn Bay was settled land four hundred years ago, but much of it was deliberately driven down by great spells in the fighting, sunk under the intruding seas to drown the inhabitants. The city of Nighdal is said to have endured the Fall as a shattered ruin, but of the questors who venture there, few return.

The question everyone who ponders this central mystery asks is, "Could this destruction ever happen again?" Clerics of every faith often lead prayers beseeching the gods to prevent the fiends from ever returning. Sages and wise men watch the heavens and the land itself for signs that devastation might once again ravage Castlemourn.

QUESTOR PATH

In addition to the standard questor skill set, individuals researching the cause of the Fall, and exactly what happened, often focus on the following skills: Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (the planes), Speak Language (Abyssal), and Speak Language (Infernal).

QUESTOR TOMES

These tomes of lore, both authoritative and speculative, are widely sought and coveted by nobles, rulers, temple libraries, and eminent sages. When these books are written, several hundred copies are usually made, but aging questors constantly hand-scribe (and in the process alter the texts, both accidentally and intentionally) new copies to support themselves. Peddlers and passing caravan merchants pay well for such copies, even fragmentary ones, and sometimes recopy them (when harsh winter weather makes traveling-trading impossible) to turn one copy into a dozen or more. It is largely due to these merchants that tomes are widely circulated throughout Castlemourn.

Some of the most accessible information focuses on the fiends and other extraplanar creatures—accessible, but not safe—requiring questor caution, knowledge, and swift intellect. As a result, most questors who pursue the Fall, or at least information about the creatures who apparently precipitated the Fall, are spellcasters.

Apprentice questors typically start their careers with a grand tour of Mournra, beginning at home and progressing through all the mainland realms and then the Iron Isles. Usually, a questor spends a month at most in any land, unless something of interest is found—whereupon the questor takes all the time necessary to investigate leads. Typically, once the apprentice has found or learned something of value, she approaches a more experienced questor and offers her services (and what she's learned, though not necessarily relics she's found) as an assistant. At this point, some find satisfaction working for a master questor and give up pursuit of their individual quests. Others, more driven by their own quest, continue on to become journeymen questors.

Journeymen questors finally strike out on their own. By this time, the questor has typically explored many aboveground ruins and has turned her attentions to extensive subterranean passages and buried cities. She has gathered information from many sources and possesses many clues that may lead to as yet unexplored sites. When striking out on their own, many journeymen begin in Ironfell. The underground dwarven realm is rich in ancient relics and is relatively easily reached, though questors would do well to heed the dwarves and honor their ways and laws.

Master questors are interested in specific objects, artifacts, or artwork from before the Fall of the Castles. They tend to know what these objects look like and often employ magical means in locating them. They have pieced together a working understanding of life before the Fall in a particular locale, or in a particular family or profession, and can shift large amounts of gathered lore from “not well understood” to “virtual certainties” if they can find answers to the specific questions they pursue. As one sage put it, “Master questors have learned enough to ask the right questions, precise and useful, and thereby extend all our understandings.”

Many master questors are paranoid about rivals learning what they're working on—but it's widely expected that all master questors will write at least a detailed log (and often, several widely-circulated books that earn them much coin for their declining years), setting forth all that they have learned, along with their speculations and hunches. Copies of such tomes are found in many royal libraries and are among the most prized possessions of successful merchants.

GEOGRAPHIC CLUES

When a farmer uncovers a huge mosaic plaza under his fields, a surprisingly frequent event, people from across Mournra flock to see the discovery. It is not a matter of “if” but rather “when” another buried city or fallen tower will be found. Ruins, hitherto-unknown caverns, and even large underground catacombs are discovered every year, often revealed by the scourings of wind and rain. One well known legend claims that what is now the Yarhoon was once the site of an enormous city, but few know if the city's foundations still exist.

To a questor, it's a great honor to discover or be the first to explore a new site. Many questors paint or engrave their mark somewhere on the outside of newly discovered or explored ruins, so all know who has first claim to the site and the relics it may hold. Just as with falsifying relics and misleading others, it is considered reprehensible to deliberately obliterate a questor's mark from a set of ruins.

SECRETS

The effects of the Fall are still felt today, strongly reflected in the fears all Mournans have that some magical cataclysm could strike again and in their fascination and overwhelming desire for knowledge of the past. The mere sight of a flickering, pale blue or green glow by night, a common sign of awakened magic from Before the Fall, sets Mournans trembling in fear and anticipation.

- The great questor Quorlyn Zarrazel frequently tours Castlemourn, displaying five magical constructions; each is a city in miniature, roughly five feet square. As Thelseene's light falls upon them, tiny ghostly figures appear, moving about the streets and within the buildings. Zarrazel claims that each is a miniature replica of a real city—as it was four hundred years ago—and the movements, dress, and activities of the phantom people depict their daily lives. Are there more of these miniature cities to be found? What clues can be gathered by observing the tiny figures going about their lives? Is it possible for someone to enter one of the miniature cities to learn about the past? The figures fade away as soon as sunlight or artificial light shines on the cities and appear insubstantial at all times. Certain spells directed at the cities are absorbed—apparently by some protective magics—without any noticeable effects; others are turned back at their casters as crackling small lightnings.

- Aumanthus Thelwood of Lyonar, an impressive man whose black spade beard is streaked with white, is both a necromancer and a questor. He maintains a collection of zombies, at least one from every Mournan realm. Once a year, these undead speak, voicing

memories from the years past. What they say, if true, is of vital interest to all questors. How does Aumanthus find these zombies? Are they actually undead created before the Fall, or would a necromancer be able to animate corpses entombed before the Fall with the same results? Can zombies created from the recently dead speak with accuracy about the past? The zombies all speak on the same day, but just which day varies from year to year; Aumanthus can feel it approaching. The zombies speak unbidden, not answering questions or heeding commands. They never repeat their utterances; if no one is present, their messages are lost.

- The mountains surrounding Castlemourn are riddled with lava tubes and large cavern complexes. The folk of every land adjoining these peaks pass legends down from generation to generation of ruins accessible only through these caverns. Some caves are said to hold entire castles, somehow swallowed whole and intact—perhaps magically transported into the caverns for hiding or safety—hundreds of years ago. What relics of the past can be found in these castles? Are there Mournans from Before the Fall still alive in these towers, perhaps in spell-sleep?

PRIZES OF INTEREST

Many notable artifacts from Before the Fall have been discovered over the last three hundred years, though none have led to significant answers about whether or not the fiendish hordes will return. Nevertheless, riches and fame await those who find relics such as these:

Dithurlabe of Orzen: This roughly globular, head-sized device was made by the wizard Orzen to predict coming dangers. It chimed and floated in the air when active and could move about to bring warnings to its master. The *dithurlabe* is said to have been crafted from many different metals, but was somehow transmuted into solid platinum by the roiling magics of the Fall.

Grand King's Map: There are thousands of maps said to represent Castlemourn's geography Before the Fall. According to legends and songs of old, the *Grand King's Map* is a huge tapestry drawn by loremasters of old and enchanted by wizards. The map changes color with the seasons, reflecting the current physical state of all the lands it covers. If this map were found, it would reveal the locations of every major ruin from Before the Fall and prove an invaluable tool for sages and treasure-seekers alike.

High King's Golem: Crafted from solid gold (or, according to some tales, gold-hued but actually made of some now-unknown alloy), this impressive golem stood as tall as one-and-a-half of the tallest

men in the land put together. Created for the entertainment of the greatest courts in ancient times long before the Fall (or as a guardian, some ballads suggest), this construct was impervious to magical tampering, hurling all magic striking it back at the casters. As a result, or so the sages claim, the devastating spell storms of the Fall couldn't have harmed this golem—so it may well still exist! As it is sentient, it could reveal important secrets of the past!

Damantha's Disks: According to her faithful, the coming devastation of the Fall was revealed to Lady Greenleaf in a dire premonition. To keep the land itself from being rent asunder and forever destroyed, she created a set of *disks* of some glowing, pearly-white, unknown substance, imbuing each with some of her divine essence, so as to anchor the lands, and caused one to appear on each of her major altars across Mournra. As the chaos of the Fall transformed everything, the *disks* resisted change but were scattered across the lands and lost to her faithful. Tales differ widely on how many *disks* were created.

Undead hate the *disks*, feeling their power from miles away, and intelligent undead have sought to destroy the *disks* for years, though none have yet succeeded. The *disks* remain unscathed after attempts to hack, burn, crush, or shatter them, and their touch sears undead (inflicting 2d8 point of damage per contact or per round of continuous contact). Arcane and divine necromancy and transmutation spells fail to function within 100 feet of any of these *disks*; spells from these schools simply fail and are lost or wasted. All other spells function normally, and according to some sages, cryptic writings hint that the *disks* augment certain spells and alter the effects of others—just which spells is unknown and most likely could only be determined through experimentation. What is known is that unleashing some magics (again, which ones is a matter of debate) near one of *Damantha's disks* will cause the *disk* to vanish, randomly *teleporting* away from the caster. Priests of the goddess have learned that such *disks* will only remain on one of Lady Harmony's altars through a single major ritual, gently fading away thereafter.

REIGNING LONG YEARS (GREATER)

One of the Greater Mysteries hidden in plain view in Castlemourn, which few dare to probe, are the curiously long lifespans enjoyed by most Mournan rulers.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Although it's something either not talked about in public, or usually considered just something the land does to people or the work of the gods, anyone who considers how long a particular ruler has reigned will realize that most Mournan rulers, if not killed violently, rule (with apparent good health, perceptions, and sanity) for many more Times than most people—no matter how coddled and ultimately enfeebled—live through.

QUESTOR PATH

Questors devoted to investigating the long lifespans of Mournan rulers often focus on the following additional skills: Bluff, Disguise, Forgery, Hide, Intimidate, and Knowledge (nobility and royalty).

Inevitably, those who ponder long reigns and lifespans speculate about conspiracies of shared magic, secret rituals of divine favor, or even cabals of successive shapeshifters who impersonate the same ruling individual. Most questors see immediately that open questioning about such matters will lead to their exile, death, or at least all authorities being ordered to refuse them aid. So, intrigued questors instead try to win posts in ruling courts and rise to the innermost circles of advisors to rulers, in hopes of learning the truths about long reigns.

GEOGRAPHIC CLUES

Any ruling court may hold courtiers, keepers of regalia, heralds, and sages, in particular, who have some inkling of what leads to long lifespans among royalty (and in some cases, courtiers and nobility).

SECRETS

Divine favor, bloodlines, the best of care (healing magic, healthy diets, and physical protection against the elements and attacks from foes), and extraordinary spells have all lengthened the lifespans of rulers. It's also clear that some ruling families, such as the Glassfeathers of Jamandar, come from hardy and long-lived stock and through careful breeding have become even harder and longer-lived. It's also true that in at least one case, just which one is a Mystery in itself, a secret society of shapeshifters *has* taken turns pretending to be just one ruler.

However, the primary reason for longevity among rulers in Castlemourn is exposure to a very rare sort of enspelled gemstone usually known as a dreamstone but referred to in ancient lore as an *ordra*. Close and continual proximity to *ordra* makes eating, drinking, and even breathing less vital to continued life, so the bearer of an *ordra* can refrain

from all of these activities for days without suffering harm, though she will be thirsty, hungry, or feel that she's suffocating. The *ordra* causes slow regeneration (1 hp per half-day of cumulative exposure; will restore missing limbs, organs, and blood to a living creature but can't return life to a dead one) and revitalizes natural processes, so physical bodies don't age, faculties and fertility don't deteriorate, and natural lifespans extend indefinitely.

Often *ordra* exposure is unwitting; affected individuals have no idea what's causing them to remain vigorous. In other cases, they may have some inkling (or a confused or wrong notion, as opposed to an incomplete one) as to what's causing their lives to lengthen.

Ordra exposure prevents senility, but some whose lives stretch on too long become so depressed by the weight of accumulated grief, demands, disagreements, and just plain experience that they seek suicide or provoke a foe into slaying them—welcoming death's release.

PRIZES OF INTEREST

Before the Fall, a few wizards and sorcerers were aware of the properties of *ordra* and wore them next to the skin, usually as pendants, or even under the skin, slid into slits in the skin that were sewn up to entrap them. Popular belief then was that dreamstones calmed troubled sleepers and upset or overwhelmed individuals. Aside from knowledge held by a very few individuals, only the popular belief survived the Fall, but both before and after the Fall it led some makers of royal regalia, such as crowns, orbs, scepters, and jewelry such as pectorals and rings, to incorporate the cloudy blue-white, naturally smooth (and usually cabochon-cut) dreamstones into their pieces. Scores of dreamstone-adorned rings are possessed by rulers and nobility today. Scores more lie in crypts and tombs, and adventurers may well end up possessing these as treasure. Not all *ordra* retain their powers forever, and there are several other gemstones, such as moonstone, that in some specimens very closely resemble *ordra*. There's no reliable way of telling if a particular stone is *ordra* or not—except by wearing it for years.

TAMRUNE ISLE (GREATER)

Covered by beast-infested jungles, ancient ruins, and five haunted castles, mysterious Tamrune Isle sits like a brilliant emerald near the center of Glamryn Bay. The island holds many secrets, and few who explore it return to speak of their discoveries.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Common wisdom says Tamrune is the most magical location in Mournra. Tamrune is shrouded in a trackless, choking tropical rainforest, home to vicious beasts and deadly plants. Yet, when the topic of Tamrune comes up, most Mournans whisper of the horrible transformations that those daring—or foolish—enough to explore Tamrune almost always suffer.

Those who escape the island, whatever their physical changes, are seldom able to retain much of their sanity. The phrase “touched by Tamrune” has become synonymous with insanity. Almost everyone, from settlers in the backlands of Sparruk to thieves in the back alleys of Dragonhead and the wealthy of Windhollow Rise in Jamandar, claims to know someone—a relative, neighbor, or trade acquaintance—who tried to explore Tamrune and fell prey to the Isle’s curse.

Visiting Tamrune need not always mean doom; there are many tales of folk who came away fabulously wealthy, the Isle having yielded sacks and chests full of cut gems, jewels, and gold. Tamrune’s shores are littered with the bleached timbers of wrecked ships, and sailors insist there are many more lying on the shoals or just beneath the waves, their treasures not yet plundered.

Sages, mages, and priests all across Mournra scorn such treasure-tales, saving their fascination for what lies within the five castles rising above the jungle. Few of them voice their greatest fear: the transforming magics awake on Tamrune Isle will somehow reach the mainland, causing a new and horrible Fall into beastdom. The magics of Tamrune must be understood, so they can be quelled or prevented from spreading off the island.

QUESTOR PATH

Questors devoted to investigating Tamrune often focus on the following skills in addition to the standard questor skill set: Climb, Concentration, Disable Device, Jump, Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (nature), Profession (sailor), and Swim.

Apprentice questors studying Tamrune typically visit the ports along Glamryn Bay, interviewing sailors who have seen the island and any Tamrune survivors they can find. After gathering all the second-hand information possible, journeymen questors often spend time mapping the island, either by circumnavigation or magical flights over the isle, before ever setting foot on its shores. Such maps are highly valued by learned folk across Mournra and proudly displayed on many study and library walls. More than one questor has abandoned questing to make her fortune copying and selling such maps.

Master questors struggle to determine precisely how and why the Isle transforms intelligent creatures. Sometimes they hire treasure-seekers and adventurers who have been transformed by Tamrune to go back while being *scryed* from afar, pay them handsomely for all they can remember, or offer to try to change them back in return for samples of their blood and flesh. Dead and dying transformed are collected for dissection and magical examination (of their brains, in particular). Other master questors create zoos of transformed who have been brought off the island, studying them to try to find a means of restoring them to their former shapes. This remains the burning question for Tamrune questors.

Many master questors believe the names of the Isle’s five castles (Melrauth, Nunkael, Oldhorn, Stonesword, and Thaunkeep) still hold some hidden significance. A few clues about the fortresses have been found in mainland ruins, and all who ponder the matter suspect much more information remains to be found. Explorations of Arhdahkaun have hinted at magical links between each of the five. Several now-dead master questors, working separately, wrote in their private journals that more lore related to the Tamrune fortresses could be found in Ormscar and Ironfell.

GEOGRAPHIC CLUES

Arhdahkaun in the Haunt of Eagles is known to be of like age and construction to the five castles of Tamrune Isle. The Iron Isles are home to more than a few wizards who specialize in transmutation magics; those who’ve studied with them report that they have their own theories about Tamrune—and their own carefully guarded collections of secrets.

SECRETS

For a single island, Tamrune holds many secrets (thousands according to most master questors).

- Nighdal, along the Foreshore, is home to many transformed of Tamrune, though many had never seen the city before their change. Those changed by Tamrune either remain on it, or if brought to the mainland, naturally gravitate to Nighdal—for reasons neither they nor anyone else can explain.
- Using magic to change form into a common island creature seems to allow visitors of all races to explore Tamrune unscathed; either they suffer no transformation at all, or if they regain their own forms off-isle, they suffer at most a change in hair or eye hue or gain a few scales or tufts of hair. The few questors who have successfully explored the Isle have all used potions or spells to alter their forms. Other explorers have found success in using magic to cloak or obscure their

personal ethics and beliefs. Yet, just as many visitors employing such tactics have suffered disastrous changes, though a sage who studied explorers' tactics for years insists that those who avoid suicide or being slain by others for their strange forms slowly—sometimes over several Times—drift back to their original forms if they cast some sort of magic on themselves before arriving on Tamrune.

PRIZES OF INTEREST

An adventurer never knows what exactly to expect when treasure hunting on this mysterious isle. Many artifacts from Before the Fall have been found on Tamrune's shores, amongst the plentiful ruins, in the depths of the dense jungles, and hidden within the five castles. Other oddities have been created from strange materials brought to the mainland or the Iron Isles. Even so, most master questors agree that great care must be taken in dealing with the strange, and often quite deadly, treasures of Tamrune.

Tamrune Skull Cap: Proprietors of magic shops say the *skull cap* is able to hide its wearer from Tamrune's mutating magics. Though many claim to sell them, they are always curiously out of stock. A few individuals do possess these items (silver-hued metal caps covering the head from forehead to nape of neck with articulated, adjustable forehead bands and sliding ear hole sideplates) and have had them analyzed by Mournan sages and arcane academicians. Radiating faint abjuration magics, few folk know how the caps work—and many claim they don't work at all.

Thaundar Wood: First harvested along the eastern shores of Tamrune, these trees unique to the island, were named for nearby Thaunkeep. Lumber from the thaundar trees has many intriguing qualities. The trees reportedly radiate such strong magical energies that most who harvest the trees use crews of prisoners or slaves, leaving behind those who are transformed by the island. There is a thriving trade in this lumber; it commands huge sums from rich and powerful Mournans. Items made from thaundar wood are more durable, resisting rot and mildew and rarely cracking or splitting, even when frozen or baked. Thaundar wood readily accepts magical enchantments (and in some cases, makes them last longer), and ships with hulls constructed from the wood shed water and so travel faster through all seas.

Vrayan Maps: Priestesses of the Vraya, a splinter sect of Larlassé's worshipers, capture creatures native to the island and prepare their skins through a secret process resulting in fine, supple white leather. They then cast spells on these leathers in a secret Vrayan ceremony, causing a

detailed map of Tamrune to appear on each hide. Such maps can, by yet another Vrayan ritual, be keyed to specific individuals, so a particular map constantly displays a moving mark that denotes the keyed individual's exact location on the Isle.

Golden Chains of Tamrune: There are five different types of long gold chains—some up to thirty feet in length—collectively known as the *Golden Chains of Tamrune*. They reportedly have the ability to transport an individual, or a number of individuals, from anywhere on Mournra to one of the five island fortresses. The design of the chain indicates to which castle it is attuned. When Thelseene is full and a *chain* is spread out in a loop, up to ten people can stand within the *chain's* circle and be transported to Tamrune. After the transport has occurred, the owner and his or her companions must pass a taelole on the island until the next time Thelseene is full and high in the sky. While the *chain* travels along to Tamrune with its owner, it remains inactive until the next full moon. At that time, the owner must be back inside the correct castle, ready to be transported back to the exact spot from which they departed. Six Tamrune master questors are known to possess one of these *golden chains*; all of them charge huge sums of money to transport groups into one of the castles. They insist (truthfully, at least according to their own experiences thus far) that the island's transforming magics don't strike anyone inside a fortress who is carrying or close to a *golden chain*.

MAGIC FOUNTAINS (LESSER)

Naturally occurring magical waters are found throughout Mournra, from the rocky heights of the Haeldar to the Iron Isles and everywhere in between. Some are beneficial, others detrimental, yet the waters always appear clear and pure.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

An attentive sage or questor will notice a surprising number of magical fountains, pools, and wells scattered across Mournra; not including those known only through legend or now lost or hidden, they number in the hundreds. Most of these magical waters are spoken of only locally, and many of them have restorative properties; if drunk from or bathed in, a being is healed or re-energized. Although there are many theories, no one knows why these fountains exist or how to tell (except by direct experimentation) if a spring or pool in the wild is magical or not; some have intermittent powers, only affect individuals of a particular race, or those suffering from certain conditions. Many, sages and questors insist, well up from underground springs proven to be non-magical; the

magical properties are somehow acquired as the water gushes forth at the surface. When a magical spring or fountain is discovered in the upcountry or wild, a village typically grows around it, and vials of its waters are sold for high coin. It is quite common for local residents to construct a lip around the fountain upon which they carve images and writings describing the fountain's magical properties—and, in some cases, warning of side-effects.

QUESTOR PATH

Questors studying magical fountains often focus on the following skills in addition to the standard questor skill set: Bluff, Heal, Intimidate, and Knowledge (nature).

Almost as soon as a new fountain is discovered, talk of its location and properties spreads across Castlemourn. The result is a stream of tales about this or that new magical water or newly discovered properties of a known water—creating such a lively and ongoing body of rumor that even attentive sages grow confused. A recurring topic in all this talk is the search for the ultimate fountain—one able to bring back the ancient dead from immersed bones or even grave-dust, who could then speak of the past and the Fall.

It is well-known that Arhdahkaun, Orn Doalryn, and the five castles on Tamrune Isle each contain several magical fountains—fountains whose properties have seemingly changed over the years. Whenever sunken Orn Doalryn rises to the surface, explorers flock to its halls to gather barrels full of its mystical waters.

Apprentice questors spend most of their time mapping the many known fountains, both above and below ground. In mapping, they also catalog the known

powers and effects of each. Journeymen perform in-depth studies of known fountains and scour Mournra, seeking as yet undiscovered fountains. Many master questors have personally discovered a fountain of some power and established a base of operations around it. A few are developing theories of magic water distribution they hope will aid them in searching for as-yet-unidentified pools, wells, and fountains by predicting where such features should be. Other master questors believe the great majority of magic waters were caused by the magics that resulted in the Fall, and study of the locations and specific powers of these features can lead to a better understanding of the magics that caused it.

GEOGRAPHIC CLUES

The most famous magic water in Mournra is the Wyrmwell in the Iron Barony; even wounded

dragons fly to the Well and immerse themselves in its healing waters. Yet every land holds at least a few smaller, lesser known magical pools, wells, or fountains. Many work some sort of healing, but a few are notorious for altering the age, gender, or even race of those who drink or bathe in their waters. Others dredge up memories or evoke visions of interest to the imbiber; clergy claim such visions are sent by the Seven, especially when brought on by magic waters located within temples.

SECRETS

Though the appearance of new magical fountains, and locations of known ones, may seem entirely arbitrary, this isn't entirely the case. The efforts of master questors are beginning to pay off with some basic insights into how and why magical fountains occur.

- Questors suspect anything of a magical nature buried in the



ground near a fountain contributes to or alters that fountain's magical effects. For example, the waters of Duth's Spring, a small fountain in Firelorn, cause rapid, magical growth, and local legend holds that two titans are buried somewhere beneath the fountain.

- **Magical waters** sometimes appear to address a natural imbalance. For example, several fountains bubble up in the swamps in and around Tantanhar and have kept the undead presence in the region to a minimum for the last hundred years. Records accumulated by two master questors suggest at least one of those fountains definitely did not exist some eighty summers ago, because there are accounts of a bare rock ridge with steps carved into it leading up to a lookout in the exact spot. Today, the ridge is cracked asunder, the steps lead nowhere, and the fountain bubbles away in the rocky cleft.

PRIZES OF INTEREST

In addition to the restorative powers of many of these fountains, wizards and clerics alike have crafted magic items to help locate and identify magical fountains. While still not completely reliable means of identifying the properties of magical fountains, some of these items can at least protect the user from unnecessary harm.

Weskyn's Sword: This sword, named for the long-ago Wizard of the Fountains (Weskyn Jusklorn) who devised it, glows blue whenever it is brought within sixty feet of a magical fountain, pool, or well. As the sword's wielder comes within 30 feet of the pool, the glow brightens noticeably. If the sword tip is touched to the surface of the pool, the light pulses strongly if the water is harmful.

Darszel's Plate: This suit of full plate armor is magically sealed against all liquids and prevents any fluid from touching its wearer; so clothing and belongings worn or carried under the armor remain bone-dry. With the helm firmly attached, the wearer magically receives a breathable supply of fresh air while underwater. The armor works equally well in fresh or salt water and alters in size to fit the wearer perfectly. It does not prevent damage from cold or exposure, though it does slow the cooling of an immersed wearer's body. The armor glows bright crimson when submersed in the waters of a magical fountain.

Water Test Kit: Made almost exclusively by the skilled alchemists of Luuthaven, these alchemical kits are designed specifically to test the waters of magical fountains. While they are unable to identify a pool's exact properties, the reagents within the kit can help to distinguish between waters with healing or beneficial properties and those with harmful effects. The alchemical reagents turn bright

blue when added to healing or restorative waters, a brilliant acid green when added to harmful waters, and yellow when the water is magical but neither healing nor harmful (the waters of Duth's Spring would be an example of this). The reagents are unable to provide any indication of conditional modifiers (race, affliction, or other factors) that effect the waters' actions.

GOLEM VILLAGES (LESSER)

In hamlets and villages of the mountainous foothills bordering Mournra, remote settlements where even the most adventurous explorers seldom go, there are many legends of golems dwelling high in nearby peaks. Why the golems are there and what they are actually doing are mysteries that continue to plague and concern the folk of Castlemourn.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The tales speak of villages where golems tirelessly mine gold and gems, constantly smelting and gemcutting so as to stockpile vast treasures of ready wealth. The tales disagree widely on why the golems do this, with most cleaving either to the simple "they were commanded to, long ago, and are but following their orders" view or the more sinister "they do this in preparation for some nefarious scheme or event to come."

Another common theme runs through many of these tales—the legend of The Gold Golem. According to the tales, there was once a much beloved High King of Castlemourn. The most clever artisans of that ancient time created a gold golem to entertain the monarch by telling stories and performing. When the Fall came, the golem was unaffected by the chaos, though all around it dust swirled and towers collapsed. When the land calmed, it found itself standing on a high mountain where there had once been a city in the desert. Without instructions, it began to roam the land and soon found other wandering golems; ultimately it united them into a clan of sorts. Ten distinct ballads, first sung by bards of different generations in widely separated backland locations, tell various stories of the golem clan and their adventures, but all of them end with the constructs learning to hate and kill. As a result, Mournans dwelling in the shadow of the mountains live in near-constant fear, wondering how long it will be before the golems come to slaughter them.

QUESTOR PATH

Questors specializing in golem villages typically focus on the following additional skills: Climb, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Handle Animal,

Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Spellcraft, and Use Magic Device.

There are enough reports of encounters with the Gold Golem that modern questors have widely accepted its existence. They have also come to believe that the Gold Golem can somehow influence other golems, both ancient and newly created, to disregard programmed instructions and instead obey the Gold Golem.

Apprentices study golems, learning all the various manners of their creation (including failed experiments, seeking to learn precisely why they failed) and the details of how they function. Of course, this knowledge only includes extant methods. It is believed much golem lore was lost during the Fall and has yet to be rediscovered. Journeymen commonly travel Mournra seeking to precisely locate reported golem activities, unearth and recover golems buried or otherwise trapped in the Fall (so these can be studied and kept from the influence of the Gold Golem), and map as many golem villages as they can, noting the numbers and occupations of their inhabitants. Master questors seek out the fabled Gold Golem, which increasingly seems to avoid mortals, hoping to interview or deal with it, establishing some sort of friendship or at least agreement—and ultimately learning from it all they can of the Fall, the events before the Fall, its own aims, and what it knows of its nature and of crafting and controlling golems.

GEOGRAPHIC CLUES

Golem villages are always found high in the mountains, typically above quarries and mines. The golems work the mines and quarries, stockpiling the results of their efforts in storage caverns laboriously hollowed out of solid rock. Such treasury caves are walled off by golems standing pressed together. Only certain types of golems, such as clay and flesh golems, require shelter; most visiting mortals find the villages icy, windswept, and storm-lashed with little or no shelter, unfrozen water, or plant life of any kind—inhabitable places in inhospitable terrain.

SECRETS

Many mysteries surround the golems, and some would argue master questors spend too much time pursuing the legend of the Gold Golem and not nearly enough time trying to uncover the reasons for the existence of golem villages, their work, and their forays into the civilized lands. Until more is known of their secrets and motives, many Mournans living in the mountain shadows will continue to sleep uneasily.

- Some golems are able to sense magical artifacts at a great distance. Groups of these

golems travel far and wide to secure such items, fighting others who possess them if necessary, and bring them back to their villages. Those who study golems and the villages say these constructs drain magical energies from the artifacts to heal and rejuvenate themselves. For unknown reasons, such golem raiders never seem to approach large cities and leave wide swaths of Mournra (such as most of Lyonar and Jamandar) alone.

- Some dragons have taken to lairing near golem villages. These wyrms have grown lazy over the years and rely on the golems to kill anything that approaches. Golems typically rend foes, tearing off limbs, or simply batter intruders to death. The dragons greedily devour such remains, having expended no effort in hunting or fighting.

PRIZES OF INTEREST

While controllable golems are great prizes in and of themselves (if one can determine how to control a found golem), several other valuable items have been liberated from golem raiding parties or even found washed up along the shores of the Ildrakewater.

Golem Lenses: These golem- or man-made gemstones are clear, faceted crystals formed from melted and fused sand, along with a variety of secret ingredients. The size of a large man's fists pressed together and often fashioned with one spur-like handgrip for ease of use, they are very durable, unharmed by falls and even sharp blows. Any being who looks through such a *lens* sees through almost any illusion or deception; magics that change appearances become faint rose-red auras, through which the reality is clearly visible. Golems traveling through unfamiliar surroundings often travel slowly, using *lenses* to check every wall, corner, and crevice for tricks or traps. Any intelligent creature can use such crystals, but it is said continued use of a *golem lens* often results in a slow, irreversible transformation into a golem.

Golem Arms: These fully functional arms, generally crafted from stone or iron, can be commanded to do anything a normal pair of arms could do, but with the strength of a golem. The most common sort of *golem arms* graft themselves to their user via open sores or wounds, which the user can create with a dagger or even by pricking herself with a brooch-pin; only a small but steady flow of blood is necessary, and it circulates harmlessly back into the user. They function as extra arms, anchoring to any part of the user's body where they are grafted onto a wound. These additional arms are stronger than the user's own and wield weapons or accomplish tasks with a skill governed by the user's

experience with the arms. Veteran users control such arms with the same ease as they do their own native limbs; adventurers intent on gaining the most benefit from such arms would be well advised to take the Multiweapon Fighting feat. A rather less common sort of *golem arm* walks on its fingertips, creeping along over the ground or whatever they can clutch-climb. These are generally used as guardians and can fight and operate independent of a host. The rarest sort of *golem arms* (aside from rumors that such guard the treasure vaults of some rulers and the wealthiest folk of Asmrel, they are known only in tales and epic ballads) can float and fly about by themselves, wielding weapons or accomplishing tasks independent of their user's presence, so long as she has given them orders. No matter the type of *golem arm*, they are not always found as a matching set. More often than not, only a single arm is found. Several noted adventurers are known to have permanently grafted *golem arms* to their bodies in order to replace lost limbs.

ESTEMEL (LESSER)

Stone archways flickering with lights, disgorging fell beasts or other farfarers into the lands of Mournra, the *estemel* are gateways between Umbrara and elsewhere. Their openings are unpredictable, and no one knows where they lead. Many Mournans would like to see them destroyed or sealed forever, fearing one day they may again disgorge the legions of fiends believed responsible for the Fall.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Estemel are scattered in the remote reaches of the mountains, ruins from the time of the Fall, and unknown places in the Mist or elsewhere in Umbrara. Creatures from other far realms occasionally enter Mournra through them. The *estemel* have been around since the Fall of the Castles and are sometimes cited as the cause of the cataclysm. Most of the time, these stone structures are dormant, appearing as massive archways of smooth stone, framing tall, narrow openings. On rare occasions, they glow, pulsing with translucent swirls of scintillating color. When these radiances are present, the living can pass through them. However, sages and priests all insist that no Mournan who has entered an *estemel* has ever returned, and no outsiders who have come to Mournra through one have ever been able to leave.

QUESTOR PATH

In addition to the standard questor skill set, individuals specializing in *estemel* often focus on the following skills: Knowledge (the planes), Speak Language (any), Spellcraft, and Use Magic Device.

Estemel are a source of both fear and wonder. People are loath to live near them, though they are thought of with a certain romanticism that draws curious visitors—everyone from scholars to playful children and even young couples, who sometimes use them for trysts or weddings. Settlements near *estemel* often have a small guard or watch contingent assigned to keep an eye on the magical gateway, but these guardians often grow lax, especially at *estemel* that open only very briefly once every few years.

Apprentice questors spend most of their time mapping the locations of individual *estemel*. They attempt to link the functioning of these gateways to celestial observations (the positions of moons, nightlanterns, and other celestial objects in the sky) or other natural phenomena.

Journeyman travel in search of beings who came through *estemel* from otherwheres, recording and cataloging their beliefs and observations about the *estemel*, and their accounts of where they came from. Journeyman questors also compare the locations of the *estemel* where the outsiders arrived, looking for similarities and consistencies, or discrepancies, in an attempt to determine if the *estemel* have fixed, random, or regularly moving other end locations.

Master questors settle near the most active *estemel*, and after thorough study, the most accomplished and brave venture through them. Unfortunately, this practice has proven unrewarding, as no *estemel*-traveling questor has yet returned, so Castlemourn has received no definitive lore-answers. Other master questors have attempted to determine if outside forces and controls activate the *estemel*; such research has thus far proved fruitless.

GEOGRAPHIC CLUES

Estemel are most commonly found near ruins of ancient Castlemourn and high in the surrounding mountains. A few stand deep in the Mistcloak; they have never been known to function, and most sages and questors speculate that they need to be touched by starlight to awaken. However, this remains unproven. A questor once tried to reflect moonlight onto an *estemel* by means of mirrors, but the arrows and deadly aim of the Mistcloak elves swiftly put an end to his work.

SECRETS

In addition to the more common mysteries surrounding the *estemel*, deeper secrets exist:

- Questors are convinced *estemel* lead elsewhere, based on the words of beings brought through them to Umbrara. Most questors suspect the *estemel* were somehow involved in the Fall of the Castles. It is generally agreed that the *estemel* predate the cataclysm and were protected from its chaos by their own powerful magic.

- The *estemel* are living entities—amorphous, energy-draining clouds of glowing light—born of ancient arcane energies that transformed spellcasting beings into the *estemel* of today. These beings feed off the energies unleashed by the friction of momentarily connected dimensions and world-spaces. As more and more living creatures pass through them, they grow more powerful. The stone structures Mournans know as *estemel* were built around these energy-creatures so as to contain them. If the stones of a *estemel* are shattered or forced to collapse, that *estemel* will emerge and feed on any and all life-energies it encounters, roaming wild, free of all control.

PRIZES OF INTEREST

Only a few items have been discovered to have any connection whatsoever to the *estemel*. These items, *starmetal cogs* and an *Arshroon timepiece*, can be combined to control the opening and closing of any *estemel*.

Starmetal Cog: On rare occasions, palm-sized artifacts fashioned of starmetal in the shape of a cog are found in ancient ruins or in the treasure vaults of families or land-rulers of long lineage. It has been discovered that when the cogged wheel perfectly matches (in size and tooth pattern, both spacing and tooth size) marks graven into the stone of a particular *estemel*, the cog can be used to determine the next time that particular *estemel* will open. The cog must be inserted into an *Arshroon timepiece*, and the magic item can then be manipulated, even by an individual seeing and handling the *timepiece* for the first time, to show precisely when a given *estemel* will open. By themselves, *starmetal cogs* have a very useful property: they partially absorb and deflect electricity, both natural and magical, that strikes any being holding or carrying a cog, so as to reduce the damage dealt to the bearer by such attacks by 2 points of damage per die (to a minimum of 1 point per die).

Arshroon Timepiece: Only three of these *timepieces* are known to exist, each currently owned by a powerful wizard. The first was discovered on Arshroon Isle and was named for the island, because sages believed it was linked to strange phenomena on the island. This notion has long since vanished, but the name stuck. The strange device is believed to be a timepiece from before the Fall of the Castles, with an impressively decorated face divided into four quarters. The device is thought to have four different powers, one corresponding to each quarter of its face. If the owners of these *timepieces* have learned anything more about their powers, they have kept the secrets

to themselves. Most sages and scholars believe their magics deal with the direct manipulation of time.

In addition to these other unknown powers, *Arshroon timepieces* are inextricably linked to the *estemel*. As mentioned previously, a *starmetal cog* can be inserted into a *timepiece* to reveal the next opening of a particular *estemel*. The cogs are linked to specific *estemel*, so finding one is not a universal answer for all *estemel*. Additionally, with the cog inserted into the matching pattern on the *estemel*, the *timepiece* can be manipulated to trigger the *estemel* to open immediately. This is a fairly complex procedure and is only known to have been accomplished once in recent history.

THE IRON ISLES (LESSER)

Forming the southern boundary of Glamryn Bay, the Iron Isles shield the Bay from the harsh winds and crashing waves of the Vaerath—the fierce, storm-tossed seas keeping Mournan’s isolated from much of Umbrara. It is widely believed that some magic of the isles protects Mournra from the worst of the Vaerath’s fury; most likely, it is the same magic that draws spellcasters from across Castlemourn to the small, rugged islands.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The Iron Isles, the string of islands surrounding Glamryn Bay to the sekhovynd (south), are considered highly magical, and they are home to a large number of arcane spellcasters. It is widely believed the best magic items are made on these islands. Mainland gossip constantly features odd events happening on the Iron Isles. Islanders and mainlanders mistrust each other heartily, and one mainland belief persists despite it being very far from the truth indeed: all folk of the Iron Isles are spellcasters and can instantly take the shapes of all manner of creatures. Questors don’t usually hold such foolish notions but do probe at a root question: what is it about the Isles that make them home to so many spellcasters?

QUESTOR PATH

Questors researching the islands often augment the standard questor skill set with the following: Climb, Knowledge (local), and Spellcraft.

Apprentice questors spend a great deal of time mapping the islands and speaking with social leaders among the islanders. Journeymen delve into accounts of interviews with earlier islanders, conducted by previous questors, and begin to amass small collections of magic items made on the Isles for study. They also study such items owned by others whenever possible, seeking similarities among island-made items and which properties

of island-made items are different from mainland-made items; it should be noted there are no visually obvious commonalities or differences. Masters often hire spellcasters born on the Isles to assist them in studying island family lineages, tracing who exhibited precisely which capabilities with arcane magic and how intermarriages or relocations to specific island locales seem to affect arcane aptitude. Most masters seek the assistance of spellcasters in attempts to determine how much magic is radiated by specific spots on the Isles and if this excessive magic can be seen, over the generations, to have any effect on the intelligent beings dwelling near or frequenting such locales.

Geographic Clues

There was once another Iron Isle, Whitekoon, just sekhovind of the Deepwrath Strait. The island was known for its many small family harrada (sheep farms) and famous for its skilled wand makers. Whitekoon sank under mysterious circumstances one hundred years ago, leaving many islanders fearing they might be next. The very tips of Whitekoon's tallest mountains now jut out of shallow seas, waters dangerous for sailors but teeming with fish. What caused Whitekoon to sink so suddenly and peacefully (there were no eruptions or storms, no reported shattering of the island's rocks nor spectacular spells)? Will other isles suffer the same fate? If so, when? There are ancient tales of islands rising out of Glamryn Bay to confound and shipwreck sailors, only to sink again; are such tales true? If so, what causes this?

Large cavern networks—ancient lava tubes—honeycomb the mountains of the Iron Isles. These vast darkways are home to several subterranean races, some intelligent and some not. None of them take kindly to iron and diamond miners from the surface, whose delvings often break through into the lava tubes. The miners tell their own stories of buried palaces and cities roamed by terrible monsters but crammed with strange magic, carvings, and riches. Who dwelt in these underground cities, what can be salvaged from them, and are the foes of the Fall—or other fell entities—lurking below, where they would best be left undisturbed?

Secrets

The Iron Isles are rife with magic and strange happenings, and the folk who dwell there are tight-lipped with outsiders. Even so, it is blatantly evident the islands practically buzz with magical energies.

- Some sages say *ioun stones* form naturally within the island mountains and occasionally rise to the surface. Whether this is true or not,

many of the *ioun stones*, naturally formed or created by island wizards, found throughout Mournra came from the Iron Isles.

- Lightning strikes on the sandy beaches of the isles occasionally leave behind glass objects resembling burned branches. Islanders learned long ago how to shape these into javelins, which often manifest the powers of *javelins of lightning*. As storms approach the isles, daring islanders rush to the beaches and thrust metal rods into the sand to encourage lightning strikes.

- A secret arcane society on the Isles, the Wise Wave is dedicated to studying magics from the Realm of the Castles. Members, most of whom are financially successful islanders, pay handsomely for books of magic, the workbooks and diaries of long-ago wizards, and even scraps of spell-scrolls or eyewitness accounts of castings, spell components, and overheard incantations. Wave members meet secretly but maintain a few houses in mainland port cities where islander merchants can rent temporary lodgings when trading ashore. Some master questors have been allowed to rent lodgings in these houses in exchange for sharing lore or offering to sell or give the Wave island-related magic items they have recovered.

Prizes of Interest

Many different magic items emerge from the workshops of wizards and sorcerers on the Isles. Most are small, simple devices, such as stones that glow or heat up on command, serving as lamps, bed warmers, or cauldron boilers; of the more complex items, many are experimental, and their creators constantly seek adventurers willing to test them in the field to see how well they work. Many islanders possess ancient magic items and often have only scant ideas as to their true purpose or function. They, too, want adventurous folk to test the items to see what they do and determine whether or not they are dangerous.

Beast Totems: These wood or stone, hand-sized carvings take the shapes of beasts, their forms indicating the type of creatures summoned. In other words, a bear-shaped carving summons bears. Target creatures within three miles of a *beast totem* come when the bearer holds the device and wills them to appear. The creatures travel to the caller at their normal movement rates and are friendly to the device-bearer when they arrive. The *totem* doesn't aid communication between bearer and creature aside from giving the bearer vague empathic impressions of the creature's condition. Many fake (or no longer functioning) *totems* are sold or traded on the isles and mainland Mournra.

Ioun Stones: Rumor has it that many never before seen varieties of *ioun stones* are being found or created on the Iron Isles. Tales from seacaptains and questors report seeing *stones* of new colors and shapes, and some even claim certain islanders possess items that can hold *ioun stones*, transferring their powers into an item or simply making the *stones'* presence a little less noticeable.

Isle Watcher Birds: Certain island birds are very intelligent; when captured and properly trained, they become excellent guards, spies, or fetch-and-deliver messenger wings. Such birds are highly prized and fetch high prices—typically 35 to 50 gold shields, depending on age, training, and appearance. If well treated, they are loyal to their owners for life.

THE THAELE (LESSER)

The mysterious nature of the thaele is discussed throughout Castlemourn, though relatively few thaele have devoted their lives to uncovering their own racial secrets. The greatest healers are thaele, yet members of this race seldom socialize with others. Only rarely do thaele join in business pacts or partnerships with non-thaele.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Mournans enjoy speculating about the thaele. Everyone knows they live long years, though no one knows exactly what constitutes a normal thaele lifespan. Some wonder if the thaele are descendants of the invaders summoned to fight during the Fall. If it weren't for their healing powers, the thaele would be completely shunned and outcast.

Folk find it odd that notable thaele often choose to live in tall, slender towers in which a spiral stair winds from floor to floor, each level being a single small, round room. A lone thaele may build a five-story tower and dwell there alone, and such towers dot the lands just beyond the walls of many cities.

Common questions about the mysterious thaele include: The thaele seem somehow not of Castlemourn, so where did they come from? Why are they able to heal others so well? They're not quite human, so what are they?

QUESTOR PATH

Questors researching the thaele often focus on the following additional skills: Bluff, Disguise, Intimidate, and Speak Language (Thaelen).

Of course, questors probing this mystery are never of the thaele race. Thaele lie or mislead others if directly questioned about their dark secrets or the Dusk, but otherwise may cooperate fully with questors; they want to know more about themselves, and questors may uncover useful lore.

Unfortunately, most thaele don't know much more than non-thaele in regards to the three common questions mentioned above.

Thaele don't like to travel over water and become very sick if they sail on Glamryn Bay. When they must travel across a large body of water, or even a small lake, they take drugs to help them sleep through the journey and are forced to rely on others for safe transport.

Apprentice questors usually journey through several lands, studying local thaele intensely. Journeymen often spend years in Asmrel, Dragonhead, Lyonar, or Haunthills, as these areas seem to attract large numbers of thaele, seeking to befriend individual thaele. Questors hope to gain their trust and receive honest answers when seeking bits of thaele folklore, particularly old tales and beliefs relating to the time of the Fall. Curiously, there are few master questors researching this mystery; many who seem close to achieving master status either die or disappear.

GEOGRAPHIC CLUES

Thaele have enclaves in every major city; an in-depth study of the race requires a questor to travel extensively, though there are fairly major populations of thaele near Asmrel, Dragonhead, Lyonar, and Haunthills. Thaele are almost never found dwelling in rural areas, and strangely, the thaele refuse to travel to Tantanthar.

SECRETS

Thaele are very secretive, making progress in unraveling their mysteries slow and difficult.

- Thaele guard all knowledge related to their ability to drain life force from others very closely.
- The churches of the Sleeping Seven all have high-ranking thaele in their priesthoods.
- Intelligent undead typically favor thaele; given the choice, they attack thaele last, and willingly parley or speak with unfamiliar thaele.
- Demons and devils hesitate before attacking thaele, and show unusual respect towards thaele of any alignment.
- Thaele avoid mirrors. They flinch at the touch of silver, which causes welts on their skin. They generally dislike flowers of any type and commonly salt the earth in a twenty-yard radius around their homes.
- All who probe deeply into thaele culture eventually discover that the thaele all have a personal connection to a supernatural entity known as the Dusk. Each thaele views his relationship with the Dusk differently, so its true nature is almost impossible to determine. The Dusk seems to be some sort of ancestral collective.

- Several questors and sages have theorized that the thaele once worshiped an evil entity to which they made blood sacrifices. During the Fall, this divinity was nearly destroyed, scattered into a thick psychic haze that could only maintain itself by bonding with the souls of its worshipers. This cursed their descendants, who must prepare themselves throughout their lives by consuming the life forces of others to better strengthen the Dusk when they merge with it in death.

- Some current sages and questors, who believe thaele prepare themselves for the Dusk during life, have advanced the view that a thaele's personal ethics also contribute to the Dusk. If enough of them can merge their innate goodness with the Dusk, its own nature and interests will change. It will emerge as an Eighth to join the Seven, and the curse on the thaele will be lifted.

Prizes of Interest

There are no known thaele artifacts or devices from Before the Fall. However, some magic items, most likely created by thaele spellcasters, related to the thaele are known to exist. These items include special protective amulets thaele spellcasters give to non-thaele with whom they work on a regular basis. These small, plain, silver amulets protect the wearer from the energy draining attacks of certain undead creatures while they are in direct contact with the wearer's skin. Oddly, none of the thaele wear similar protective amulets. Instead, some thaele, especially those in the clergy, are known to wear specially-crafted holy vestments. The now-dead questor, Turlath Bellwood, suggested some thaele vestments have properties unknown even to those who habitually wear them that awaken only in particular conditions of need or when a wearer becomes ready in some manner, as her life unfolds.

Stone Circles (Lesser)

Many stone circles stand throughout Mournra, most consisting of ten or more roughly rectangular stones, none less than four feet tall. The greatest circle, Araunaeven—found in a wilderness hollow luthsurl (west) of Stauntstone and aerho (east) of Wind Pass—consists of two concentric circles formed by more than a hundred stones, each some forty-five feet tall, twenty feet wide, and five feet thick. Believed to have been erected long Before the Fall, while they are known to transport people and materials from one place to another, the true reason for their construction remains a mystery.

Common Knowledge

According to folk wisdom, the most recent circles are more than five hundred years old, constructed some two hundred years Before the Fall. The nature and purpose of the circles is much debated among sages and historians, sparked by their behavior under certain conditions. The stones of some, though not all, circles glow brightly when Thelseene is full, and its light and that of Amaunt falls upon the stones. Although this radiance is magical, the stones radiate no magic that can be detected at other times. When certain types of gems are brought within one hundred yards of some circles while the stones glow, and near enough to other circles when they are not glowing, the gems glow with a similar light. Several questors and gemcutters study gems that have been made to glow in this manner, seeking to discover if any changes have been wrought within the gems. These glows are obviously magical, and the most popular current theory holds that the circles were once part of an ancient magical transportation system. According to sages who support this theory, when the proper key item is brought within a glowing circle (some believe such a key would not only be a small, portable magic item but probably one made from a gem), the circle magically transports people or items to other locations.

Questor Path

In addition to the standard questor skill set, individuals pursuing the mystery of the stone circles often focus on the following skills: Climb, Knowledge (geology), Spellcraft, and Use Magic Device.

The stones that make up the ring suggest which kind of gem activates the circle. Only one type of gemstone works with a particular stone circle. Red granite stone circles are typically activated by rubies, while emeralds activate circles of green marble. Though they discourage public discussion of this topic, questors know that certain types of cut gems brought within the ring of particular stone circles will bring fiends from other planes to Umbrara.

Apprentices spend much of their time mapping the locations of stone circles and gathering general knowledge about them. After plotting several known circle locations on a map, apprentices are often able to correctly predict the locations of other circles. While creating their maps, apprentices are taught to make careful note of the number and type of stones in each circle.

Journeyman often attempt to repair stone circles by replacing fallen or missing stones, and even to make new stone circles. The assistance of stonecutters and sages, as well as draft animals,

ropes, log rollers, and plenty of muscle, is required, and no new or reconstructed stone circle has, as of yet, ever awakened.

Master questors seek to craft working stone circles, though most leave this lifelong labor to search for the *universal plate*, an artifact rumored to activate many different stone circles.

GEOGRAPHIC CLUES

Invisible lines of force are a vital part of the magic of the stone circles. These ley lines are magnetic and can be detected with special devices (either enchanted or crafted by those skilled in fine mechanical works); a careful study of the routes birds take in flight and the trails wild animals create can also aid in tracing ley lines. Some land features, such as natural tors and springs, mark the long, invisible, straight lines formed by the energies of the land—lines linking the circles. Ancient Mournan folk tales claim that any wizard foolish enough to attempt to disrupt or turn aside the energies coursing along a ley line will be swiftly torn apart by savage magical forces.

SECRETS

The stone circles are indeed a means of transporting people and materials rapidly throughout Mournra. Unfortunately, their layout is still poorly understood, and their proper operation known to very few. Even though master questors have established their primary function and means of operation, more secrets remain for the intrepid or foolhardy to discover.

- Stones to be used in new circles are still being cut by golems working in high mountain quarries. The golems are piling these stones high, creating massive walls that make it difficult for anyone to get into or out of the quarries. Presumably, this occurs because no one, aside from the occasional questor, is taking the stones away to use in circle-making.

- Casting certain spells within some circles causes them to function, translocating everything inside the circle to another circle elsewhere in Mournra or on one of the two moons. Other circles function very rarely when the right (or wrong, depending on one's viewpoint) magic is cast within them; as sometimes these castings happen by accident or during combat, just which magics caused the circle to operate may not even be known to a survivor. When operating, the circles transport everything within them—creatures both alive and dead, items, and even the local weather.

- Many old sages' lorebooks claim there's at least one set of stone circles on each of the moons, but properly controlled activation of them (and other circles, to reach them) requires

a specially-enchanted moonstone. Most of these accounts state that the moons are airless, and death comes swiftly to anyone who remains there for more than a few breaths or travels outside of the circle.

- To properly activate a circle, the user must bring a specially-crafted and -enchanted plaque or plate of polished gemstone into the circle. The plate's holder then visualizes a mental image of all other circles he can travel to from his present location. Once the plaque-holder chooses a destination, he—along with everything else in the circle, including living and non-living items only partially in the circle—instantly *teleports* to the new location. Some gem plates, rather than being sheets of solid gemstone, are crafted from the same stone as that which makes up the circle, with the right sort of gem embedded at the center. A typical gem plate is about an inch thick and is either a rectangle about ten inches across by a foot in length, with rounded corners, or is a ten-inch-diameter circle. The right sort of gem plate for a circle glows and grows warm to the touch when brought near the circle.

- Scores of different gem plates have been found in Arhdahkaun over the years. The castle is the only Mournan building or ruin known to hold a stone circle; light from the moons can fall upon the stones through a set of windows high in the huge vaulted chamber that holds the circle. This has led to speculation that there might be stone circles inside the five castles on Tamrune Isle or in buried or underwater castles elsewhere.

PRIZES OF INTEREST

As any questor interested in stone circles will tell you, there's no point in exploring stone circles until you've found at least one gem plate.

Gem Plate: Nine types of gem plates are known to exist in many multiples (as opposed to unique plaques or plates fashioned in pairs or quartets). Some are made of a solid piece of gemstone, while others are made of stone with a gem at the center; more than twenty of each kind are known to exist (some master questors have more than one of a particular sort). They are customarily differentiated and referred to by means of the central gemstone: diamond, ruby, emerald, sapphire, moonstone, bloodstone, amethyst, and obsidian. Rarer gem plates are known to have pearls at their centers rather than hardstone gems, and there are rumors of plates of unknown black stone inset with a cluster of several gems. However, if master questors or anyone else actually possesses such gem plates, they are keeping firmly silent about it.

THE SUNKEN CASTLE, ORN DOALRYN (LESSER)

By the light of the full moons, sunken Orn Doalryn thrusts up from the depths of the Idrakewater. Most folk believe it rises every time both of the moons are full and their light touches the waters covering the fortress, but this is incorrect. However, it has never been known to appear when the light of both full moons is not shining. Whenever Orn Doalryn rises, many shore-encamped questors and treasure-hungry adventurers rush to explore its halls, seeking riches, magic, and information. At the same time, monsters dwelling within Orn Doalryn surge forth, assaulting would-be treasure hunters and ravaging the surrounding countryside. The castle remains until sunrise, even if clouds obscure the moonlight, but always sinks, slowly but inexorably, when the sun's light first touches its turrets.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

The leaders of Ormscar and Lothran have each offered 1,000,000 gold shields to anyone who can stop the sunken castle from coming up from the depths. At every Rising, castle-dwelling creatures pour forth in waves to plague the folk dwelling near the lake; most of the creatures avoid intruding adventurers in favor of raiding across the lands. None of these raiding beasts has ever shown any tendency to want to return to Orn Doalryn, and no one knows where they come from; the castle itself seems to lack food or any evidence of creature lairs, matings, or young-rearing. Some sages have speculated that the strange scaled and webbed creatures of the Idrakewater's shores, and even the sharae in the lake itself, are the result of monsters breeding with each other and with shore creatures.

Those who explore the castle quite often find modest treasures of gems and even magic items in the castle's soggy halls with little effort. Traps are few, treasure-guarding monsters almost unknown, and the castle holds an astonishing number of secret passages and hidden chambers—veteran adventurers working from good maps they've developed find new secret ways at almost every Rising and report they seem to be traversing furnished living-areas abandoned so swiftly that no one carried any valuables away. Substances readily damaged by water have long since perished, but magic pulses within the very walls of the castle and seems to preserve many of its furnishings.

According to legend, two lovers ruled the castle Before the Fall. When the great devastation came, some of the castle towers collapsed. The woman was killed, and her lover soon took his own life out of grief. It is said their souls meet again, during full moons, when the castle rises to the surface.

QUESTOR PATH

Questors investigating Orn Doalryn usually focus on the following additional skills: Disable Device, Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Knowledge (dungeoneering), Open Lock, Profession (sailor), and Swim.

Apprentices can gather a great deal of information about the sunken castle from old records. They typically begin by mapping out Arhdahkaun, as the two castles have similar floor plans. Foolhardy, and often short-lived, apprentices explore the castles of Tamrune Isle seeking clues to Orn Doalryn's secrets.

Journeyman study the flora and fauna of the Idrakewater, making detailed records of the positions of celestial objects at every Rising in hopes of determining what, other than the light of the full moons, affects the rising of the castle. They typically concentrate on explorers' accounts dealing with specific areas of the castle, seeking ways to unmapped areas or traces of the strong root magics of the castle that hold it together, cause it to rise and sink, and endlessly repopulate it with monsters.

Master questors usually discover that Orn Doalryn rises and sinks at the will of an ancient female dragon turtle lairing in caverns beneath it. It seems this creature lost its coherent memories during the Fall and is struggling to use the castle's awesomely powerful root magics, which awaken upon contact with the light of the full moons, to try to restore its knowledge. Master questors often seek to acquire the ability to breathe underwater so as to try to communicate with the dragon turtle. For her part, she seems to enjoy devouring master questors; records some of them have left behind hint at some sort of heart chamber, from which the castle's magics can be controlled, that she thrusts her head into in order to manipulate intricate combinations of magics blindly in the manner of a groping child playing with many objects.

GEOGRAPHIC CLUES

The castle is located near the luthsurl (western) end of the Idrakewater, not far offshore. Armored explorers need boats to reach it, and if they don't return to such conveyances (and get them unmoored from the castle) soon after it begins to sink, they usually drown. Sharae avoid shore creatures traveling to and from Orn Doalryn and never enter its halls themselves.

SECRETS

Sunken Orn Doalryn and the Idrakewater conceal many secrets. Since the castle rises infrequently, and only remains above the water's surface from the time the moon is high in the sky until dawn's first light touches the castles towers, questors who

cannot explore underwater are extremely limited in their ability to investigate the ruins. While some questors seek means of exploring the castle while submerged, others have found potentially related mysteries lurking along the lake's shores.

- Orn Doalryn, along with Arhdahkaun, Melrauth, Nunkael, Oldhorn, Stonesword, and Thaunkeep, are the only castles known to have survived the Fall. Interestingly, the castles seem to share a similar floor plan.

- An underground tunnel links a secret onshore location with a water-filled dungeon in the depths of the castle. Even when Orn Doalryn has risen, the dungeon remains flooded, but the tunnel is always dry—some sort of invisible magic field or membrane holds the castle-filling waters back.

- Sections of the dungeons and caverns beneath Orn Doalryn do not rise with the rest of the castle, instead remaining behind as part of the lake's bottom. It is impossible to completely investigate the entirety of the castle when it surfaces, but the sections remaining underwater have no connection to the castle's ability to rise.

- The castle could rise above Irdakewater and into the sky if the dragon turtle allowed it. She learned how to do this, but hastily halted the Rising Into Air when she realized Orn Doalryn would rise up and leave her behind, unable to remain in contact and keep control.

- Strange part-human creatures known as sharae live in the Irdakewater near the castle. Tales say these creatures are spawned by other creatures released by the castle's Risings, and

some sages believe they are the khelpae of older legends. The sharae are actually human shapeshifters, descendants of castle residents, forever changed by the Fall. See [Appendix 1, Creatures of Castlemourn](#) for full details on the sharae.

PRIZES OF INTEREST

Numerous items marked with the crowned ring



(literally, a three-spined crown resting atop a ring of much larger size) crest of Orn Doalryn, all of great interest to questors, have found their way into the hands of merchants across Mournra. Some Mournans believe the sharae—or perhaps hidden elder sharae—craft magical devices; others scoff at this idea but believe other powerful, intelligent beings live in and around the submerged castle. Whatever their source, many magical devices are found in out of the way sections of the castle, often behind wall panels, removable floor and ceiling stones, and inside hollow pillars. The two types of items listed

hereafter are the only ones to have been found in many multiples. All of them shrink and dwindle slowly, a little at each use, until they become hand-sized and collapse into drifting dust and shadows, their magic gone.

Pearl Scepter of Healing: This white-pearl-tipped scepter fashioned from black stone functions only at night. It is able to heal almost any kind of wound or other damage.

Orn Doalryn Vision Pearl: This oblong, golden pearl is the size of a small human palm. It allows anyone holding it against their bare flesh to see up to ten minutes into the future, but only when the holder is at least knee-deep in water.

APPENDIX I: CREATURES OF CASTLEMOURN

Castlemourn is a human-dominated region where most races live in relative harmony. There are very few dragons, at least until one wanders well into the mountains, and only small nomadic bands of giants, goblind, ogres, trolls, bugbears, and gnolls wander the mountains and foothills, lurking around the edges of Castlemourn and occasionally raiding the settled lands for food and loot. The golaunt have ties to these creatures and occasionally recruit them into their raiding parties and armies, so they are also encountered in golaunt raiding parties in Lyonar, Lothran, and Ormscar.

Lizardfolk dwell in some of the coastal swamps, lying low rather than dwelling openly so their villages can be attacked. In most regions, they maintain a tenuous peace with the muerar, though there are occasional territorial disputes. Doppelgangers and other monsters that can pass for human lurk among Mournans, especially along the damp canals of Luuthaven and the crumbling streets of Nighdal, but most challenges faced by typical Mournans are unfriendly or swindling individuals of their own race.

That said, Mournra is home to a wide variety of beautiful and terrifying creatures. Even so, unless one makes a point of venturing into ancient ruins or exploring the fallen lands and rugged mountains, most Mournans only see monsters in cages or zoos. This chapter presents a handful of the most common or iconic creatures of the Castlemourn setting.

ANIMAL

Most animals of Castlemourn are similar to those found on Earth, and most real world animals can be found somewhere in Mournra. In addition to these normal animals, Castlemourn is home to some variations of these common animals. The swamp larthar,

presented herein, is very similar to the real world moose—a tall, gangly herbivore, but one that is also used as a mount in Tantanthar.

SWAMP LARTHAR

Large Animal

Hit Dice: 6d8+24 (51 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 50 feet (10 squares)

Armor Class: 15 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+12

Attack: Gore +8 melee (2d6+7) or slam +8 melee (1d10+5)



Full Attack: Gore +8 melee (2d6+7) or 2 slams +8 melee (1d10+5)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/5 feet

Senses: Low-light vision, scent; Listen +6, Spot +6

Special Attacks: Powerful charge, trample 1d10+7

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +3

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6

Languages: —

Crucial Skills: Hide -3, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +6

Other Skills: Swim +4

Crucial Feats: Endurance

Other Feats: Alertness, Improved Natural Attack (gore)

Environment: Temperate marshes and swamps

Organization: Solitary or pair

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 7–12 HD (Large)

This immense, shaggy beast spends most of its time foraging in swamps and bogs. Standing between 5 and 7 feet tall at the shoulder, male larthar have immense palmate antlers. These antlers are the larthar's primary weapons, and particularly large males may have antlers spanning six feet across. Its impressive size and formidable antlers are enhanced by its aggressive, territorial nature. Despite this, Tantanthans long ago succeeded in taming larthar for use as war and riding mounts. While females are occasionally used as riding mounts, only males are used as battle mounts.

COMBAT

Larthar are very direct in combat, charging opponents to gore with their antlers and then trample with their massive hooves. In a more prolonged combat, the larthar uses its great antlers to delivering staggering blows to its opponents. Though generally slow to anger, larthar are extremely territorial and, once incited to combat, are difficult to dissuade; they often pursue aggressors to the edge of their territory. Domesticated larthar are protective of their masters but do not show nearly the same aggression as their wild cousins.

Trample (Ex): Reflex half DC 17. The save DC is Strength-based.

Powerful Charge (Ex): A larthar inflicts 4d6+14 points of damage when it makes a charge.

LARTHAR AS MOUNTS

Larthar are reliable mounts, though their long-striding gait can be difficult for inexperienced riders, and staying on one's back while it's fighting is difficult. A trained larthar only charges

or tramples at its rider's direction, either attack requiring a successful Ride check (DC 22 or DC 12 if the larthar is battle trained).

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a larthar is up to 399 pounds; a medium load, 400–800 pounds; a heavy load is 801–1,200 pounds. A larthar can drag up to 6,000 pounds.

GONE SNAKE

Medium Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 3d10+3 (19 hp)

Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 feet (6 squares), climb 30 feet, swim 30 feet

Armor Class: 16 (+3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+6

Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d8+4)

Full Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d8+4)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

Senses: Darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision; Listen +5, Spot +5

Special Attacks: —

Special Qualities: Flicker, minor regeneration

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +2

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 8

Languages: —

Crucial Skills: Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +7, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Spot +5

Other Skills: Swim +11

Crucial Feats: —

Other Feats: Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack^B, Lightning Reflexes, Spring Attack^B

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, or flicker (2–4)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 4–5 HD (Medium); 6–10 HD (Large)

The typical gone snake is six feet long and nearly as thick as an adult human thigh. They have flat heads that flare out in a triangle from their neck to their exceedingly wide jaws and are usually dusty-hued dark brown or gray. Their enormous fangs crisscross over the end of the snout when its jaw is shut. Because of these long, jutting fangs, gone snakes customarily glide along the ground with their neck bent and head held up, rearing much like a cobra about to strike. Gone snake gender is easily determined by eye color; females have green eyes, while males have golden eyes.

These cunning predators are especially dangerous due to their strange ability to translocate short distances—disappearing only to reappear a short distance away.

COMBAT

Gone snakes use hit-and-run tactics, appearing suddenly behind a foe, striking, and then disappearing just as quickly. They prefer to attack from, and retreat back to, concealment, ambushing prey and foes alike. If a tough opponent manages to severely injure the gone snake, it will flee combat, seeking some place to hide and heal—up a tree, on a rocky ledge, or in a narrow crevice.

Flicker (Su): Gone snakes are able to repeatedly translocate themselves over short distances, almost as if using the *dimension door* spell (though they suffer no ill effects and can act immediately following this translocation). Once per round as a free action, the gone snake can use its flicker ability to vanish and reappear anywhere within 30 feet of its initial location. This can be combined with a move action to essentially double the snake's movement for the round.

The gone snake can combine this flicker ability with a Spring Attack, allowing it to use part of its flicker movement to enter a threatened square, attack, and then withdraw—finishing its movement and use of the flicker ability for the round. This also allows the gone snake to move in and out of threatened squares while attacking without provoking attacks of opportunity from the creature being attacked. However, if the snake moves

through squares threatened by other creatures, it still draws attacks of opportunity normally.

The gone snake cannot use its flicker ability for one round following this combined use of the flicker ability and Spring Attack.

Minor Regeneration (Ex): Gone snakes regenerate any damage to their eyes in 2d4 days and recover 5 hit points with a full night's rest (10 hit points with 24 hours of rest).

Skills: Gone snakes have a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. A gone snake can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened. Gone snakes use either their Strength modifier or Dexterity modifier for Climb checks, whichever is higher.

A gone snake has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, if it swims in a straight line.

Feat: Because of their extraordinary jaws, gone snakes have Improved Natural Attack as a bonus feat, even though they don't meet the base attack bonus prerequisite. Gone snakes also gain the Spring Attack feat as a bonus feat and can use it with their natural attacks, rather than a melee weapon.



MOONSKULL

Tiny Undead (Incorporeal)

Hit Dice: 6d12 (39 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: Fly 60 feet (perfect) (12 squares)

Armor Class: 18 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +3 deflection), touch 18, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/–

Attack: Incorporeal touch +5 melee (1d6 plus Strength damage)

Full Attack: Incorporeal touch +5 melee (1d6 plus Strength damage)

Space/Reach: 2 1/2 feet/0 feet

Senses: Darkvision 60 feet; Listen +10, Spot +10

Special Attacks: Chilling touch

Special Qualities: Fade out, incorporeal, undead traits, vision

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +9

Abilities: Str —, Dex 17, Con —, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 16

Languages: Abyssal, Crown Tongue, Dandarr, Far Tongue, Gadroar

Crucial Skills: Bluff +12, Hide +11, Intimidate +11, Listen +10, Search +10, Sense Motive +13, Spot +10

Other Skills: Appraise +9, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (religion) +9, Knowledge (the planes) +9, Spellcraft +11

Crucial Feats: —

Other Feats:

Iron Will,
Lightning
Reflexes

Environment:

Any ruin

Organization:

Solitary or
murmur
(2–6)

Challenge

Rating: 7

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always
chaotic evil

Advancement: 7–12
HD (Tiny)

Ghostly, flying human skulls glowing with a cold, blue-white aura, moonskulls are mischievous and malign incorporeal

undead. Faint motes of light dance gleefully in their inky-black eye sockets, and they are capable of the faintest shifting of features to convey reaction and emotion. Despite the absurdity, this never makes them any less sinister.

Moonskulls are as intelligent and cunning as they were in life and can see, hear, remember, reason, and speak (though only in whispers, inaudible more than an arm's length away). They occasionally take interest in a particular living creature and follow them, continually cajoling and haranguing the person or debating the proper strategy that should be taken. When they do so, they occasionally aid individuals on a whim, but more often than not, they seek to amuse themselves through cruel and often deadly mischief. Despite this, they rarely kill the living, preferring to leave them weak and helpless in some uncomfortable and most likely dangerous place.

Moonskulls attack by flying through their opponents, searing the individual with an intense, life-draining cold. Some adventurers report having unusual, and occasionally helpful, visions brought on by this painful contact, but most would say it is not worth the risk. However, some moonskulls are old and clever, and they may hold keys to great secrets of Mournra.

They seldom work with other, more powerful undead but may observe them and follow their schemes and plots. When adventurers arrive to stop them, the moonskull may occasionally dart in to join the fun or just enjoy the entertainment.

All moonskulls speak Far Tongue, and most also speak Abyssal, Crown Tongue, Dandarr, and Gadroar.



COMBAT

Moonskulls move around a lot, whittling down their opponents until they are helpless, at which point the moonskulls usually mock them and go on their merry way. They take full advantage of their flight capability and their power to fade out. Moonskulls that win initiative



frequently inflict damage and then immediately vanish from view, looping back around to start the process anew, coming up through the ground or from above.

Chilling Touch

(Su): Any touch from a moonskull inflicts 1d6 points of negative energy damage. Each time the moonskull inflicts damage, it gains temporary hit points equal to the damage inflicted. Additionally, the moonskull's touch inflicts 1 point of Strength damage, unless the victim makes a successful Fortitude save (DC 16). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Vision (Su): Anyone attacked by a moonskull may be struck by a momentary vision or image from the moonskull's memory or past life. There is a 50 percent chance this will occur, though the moonskull can always choose to make it happen. If a victim receives a vision, she must make a successful Will save (DC 16). Failure means the victim obsesses about understanding the memory afterward for 1d4 days. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Fade Out (Su): A moonskull may *dimension door* at will (as the spell; caster level 5th) as a move action and can act normally immediately after passing through. When using this power, the moonskull seems to fade from sight, as if turning invisible, only to reappear somewhere else later. A moonskull can never use this ability from the exact spot again, so moonskulls that fade away fly back from elsewhere to menace adventurers anew, rather than winking out and back again in combat.

Skills: Moonskulls have a +6 racial bonus on Listen, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks.

Due to the ever-present glow surrounding a moonskull, it has a -6 racial penalty on Hide checks.

POUNCELAR

Tiny Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 2d10+4 (15 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 feet (6 squares)

Armor Class: 18 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/-8

Attack: Tail barb +4 melee (1d3+1)

Full Attack: Tail barb +4 melee (1d3+1), 2 claws +2 melee (1d2), and beak +2 melee (1d2)

MOURNAN FAMILIARS

In addition to the standard list of familiars and improved familiars, Mournan spellcasters can also acquire gone snakes, pouncelars, and treecats as familiars. Attracting any of these creatures as a familiar requires the Improved Familiar feat.

Mournan Improved Familiars by Alignment

Familiar	Alignment	Arcane Spellcaster Level
Gone snake	Neutral	7th
Pouncelar	Neutral	5th
Treecat	Any (alters to match master's alignment)	3rd

Space/Reach: 2 1/2 feet/0 feet

Senses: Darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +4

Special Attacks: Pounce, rake

Special Qualities: —

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

Languages: —

Crucial Skills: Hide +14, Jump +9, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4

Other Skills: —

Crucial Feats: —

Other Feats: Multiattack^B, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Forest, swamp, or jungle

Organization: Solitary (scout) or bound (2–10)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 3–8 HD (Small)

Pouncelars are curious, scuttling little animals; omnivores preferring areas of thick undergrowth, they forage and occasionally ambush prey. Roughly two-feet long, pouncelars are something of a cross between an armadillo and a scorpion, covered in segmented armor with heavy barbed tails. They are very cunning creatures, often working in groups to confuse and distract larger opponents. The pouncelar is named for its unique ability to roll itself into a ball and then fling itself at an opponent using its muscular tail.

Despite their formidable appearance and apparent ferocity, pouncelars are not naturally venomous. However, they are sometimes captured by wizards and alchemists and allowed to roam in high-walled, vegetation-filled dry moats after having their tails dipped in long-lasting poison of some sort to further imperil intruders.

COMBAT

Pouncelars assess creatures before attacking, trying to discern weakly armored locations or which of the group is weakest. If their opponents seem predatory, the pouncelars may attempt to lure the creatures into an ambush where pouncelars fling themselves from concealment.

Pouncelars typically leap, inflict damage, and scuttle off to ready themselves to pounce again while others continue to attack and distract the creature. They prefer to attack in groups; solitary pouncelars act as scouts or bait.

Pounce (Ex): As a full-round action provoking attacks of opportunity, a pouncelar may curl itself into a ball and launch itself in a flying charge against a single target (usually aiming for the face). This is treated as a charge, except it ignores reach weapons, and the pouncelar must be within 15 feet of its target. The pouncelar may make a full attack at the end of this charge, bringing all four claws to bear but not its tail.

Skills: Pouncelars have a +4 racial bonus to Hide checks due to their coloration. They also have a +4 racial bonus to Jump checks, making excellent use of their tails to catapult themselves forward. Pouncelars use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Jump checks.

SHARAE

Sharae are former humans twisted by magic in the Fall and referred to in some stories and legends as khelpae. They have innate magical powers, but are



	Sharae, Human Form, 1st-Level Sorcerer Medium Humanoid (Shapechanger)	Sharae, Aquatic Form, 1st-Level Sorcerer Medium Humanoid (Aquatic) (Shapechanger)
Hit Dice:	1d4 (5 hp)	1d4 (5 hp)
Initiative:	–1	–1
Speed:	30 feet (6 squares)	30 feet (6 squares), swim 50 feet
Armor Class:	9, touch 9, flat-footed 10	13 (–1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple:	+0/+1	+0/+1
Attack:	Short spear +1 melee (1d6+1)	Short spear +1 melee (1d6+1)
Full Attack:	Short spear +1 melee (1d6+1)	Short spear +1 melee (1d6+1)
Space/Reach:	5 feet/5 feet	5 feet/5 feet
Senses:	Listen +0, Spot +0; Darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision	Listen +0, Spot +0; Darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision
Special Attacks:	Spell-like abilities, spells	Spell-like abilities, spells
Special Qualities:	Amphibious, alternate form	Amphibious, alternate form
Saves:	Fort +0, Ref –1, Will +1	Fort +0, Ref –1, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 12, Dex 9, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 17	Str 12, Dex 9, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 17
Languages:	Far Tongue	Far Tongue
Crucial Skills:	Bluff +3, Concentration +1, Listen +0, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Spellcraft +4, Spot +0	Bluff +3, Concentration +1, Listen +0*, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Spellcraft +4, Spot +0*
Other Skills:	Swim +3	Swim +9
Crucial Feats:	—	—
Other Feats:	Toughness	Toughness
Environment:	Near water/aquatic	Near water/aquatic
Organization:	Solitary, pair, family (3-8), clan 9-30)	Solitary, pair, family (3-8), clan 9-30)
Challenge Rating:	2	2
Treasure:	Standard	Standard
Alignment:	Usually neutral	Usually neutral
Advancement:	By character class	By character class
Level Adjustment:	+2	+2

best known for their ability to change into a sleek humanoid form with large dorsal, leg, and arm fins, capable of swimming at great speed. As a rule, sharae have little interest in being recognized for what they are and generally hide and dwell away from other Mournan races. Some chose to live as humans, though remain largely isolated and often pose as healers or hermits. Even when amongst humans, sharae are irresistibly drawn to large bodies of water and are only content when dwelling near them.

Sharae can interbreed with humans, their progeny being either pure human or sharae. Adolescent sharae initially seem entirely human, but later begin to exhibit their abilities, particularly if swimming. They are always attractive and personable, even compelling in their alternate form, and rumors about reclusive beauties frequently emerge near waterside towns.

assistance.

Alternate Form (Su): A sharae may shift from its human form to its aquatic form at will, the change taking a standard action. The sharae benefits from its Swim movement and natural armor bonus in its aquatic form.

Amphibious (Ex): Sharae can breathe both air and water in either form, though they tend to remain close to freshwater lakes.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At will—*mage hand*, *water walk*; 2/day—*levitate*; 1/day—*cure light wounds*. Effective caster level 5th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Sharae of 10 HD or more have the following spell-like abilities: At will—*mage hand*, *water walk*; 3/day—*cure light wounds*, *levitate*; 2/day—*cure serious wounds*, *neutralize poison*. Effective caster level 10th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

A few sharae have taken up magic, finding a natural aptitude for sorcery, but even those who do not grow in power as they age. The oldest, it is said, make homes for themselves hidden underwater, where they can live as they wish, undisturbed with others of their kind.

Sharae speak Far Tongue.

COMBAT

Sharae prefer to avoid combat if at all possible. If forced into battle, they use what magic they can and try to fight on their own terms—underwater. Many sharae cultivate allies and, despite their reputation for being reclusive, are frequently able to call on these allies for

Skills: A sharae has a +2 racial bonus on Swim checks in human form. In its aquatic form, the sharae has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. In its aquatic form, it can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered, and it can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

*While in its aquatic form, a sharae has a +2 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks made underwater.

The sharae presented here is a 1st-level sorcerer using the following base ability scores: Str 10, Dex 8, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 13.

SHARAE AS CHARACTERS

Most sharae with class levels are sorcerers.

Sharae characters possess the following racial traits.

- +2 Strength, +4 Charisma.
- **Medium:** As Medium creatures, sharae have no size-related bonuses or penalties.
- A sharae's base land speed is 30 feet (in either form), and it has a Swim speed of 50 feet in its aquatic form.
- Darkvision 60 feet and low-light vision.
- **Racial Skills:** Swim is always a class skill for sharae. In addition, sharae have a +2 bonus on Swim checks in their human form, and a +8 bonus on Swim checks while in their aquatic form. While underwater in their aquatic form, sharae have a +2 bonus to Listen and Spot checks.
- **Racial Feats:** A sharae gains feats according to its class levels.
- +4 natural armor bonus (alternate form only).
- **Special Attacks** (see above): Spell-like abilities.
- **Special Qualities** (see above): Amphibious, alternate form.
- **Automatic Languages:** Far Tongue. Bonus Languages: Aquan, Crown Tongue, Dandarr, Gadroar, Halfling, Sylvan, Vvarr.
- **Favored Class:** Sorcerer.
- Level adjustment +2.

TANGLECLAW

Small Aberration

Hit Dice: 5d8+15 (37 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 30 feet (6 squares), climb 30 feet

Armor Class: 21 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +7 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+5

Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d3+2)

Full Attack: 5 bites +6 melee (1d3+2)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (20 feet, tentacles)

Senses: Darkvision 60 feet; Listen +6, Spot +8

Special Attacks: Constrict, gnawing grapple, improved grab, stretch

Special Qualities: Aberration traits, all-around vision, regrow limbs

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +5

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 10

Languages: Draconic, Far Tongue, Gadroar

Crucial Skills: Balance +7, Climb +16, Hide +12, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Search +9, Spot +8, Tumble +13

Other Skills: —

Crucial Feats: Combat Reflexes, Improved Grapple

Other Feats: Alertness

Environment: Any, usually ruins

Organization: Solitary, pair, or strangle (3–6)

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually neutral

Advancement: 6–8 HD (Small), 9–16 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

Deadly spider-like predators, tangleclaws have five to nine long, black or mottled gray tentacles ending in clawed hands radiating out from a small, relatively featureless central body. The number of tentacles depends on the tangleclaw's size and



age, and while the tentacles only appear to be about three feet long, the tangleclaw can extend its tentacles by thinning and stretching to nearly twenty-feet long. Each tentacle ends in a six-taloned human-like hand with a thumb to either side of the palm and a fanged mouth in the center of the palm. The claws and tentacles are dotted on all sides with small compound eyes. Tangleclaws are capable of using their claws to grip, climb, manipulate tools, grasp, and bite.

These monstrous creatures are quite intelligent and patient. They are avid hunters, stalking bands of travelers or adventurers and waiting for a chance at someone alone, wounded, or otherwise weakened or hampered. Tangleclaws are capable of anticipating tactics and the most likely actions of their targets, remembering the effects and uses of weapons and spells they've seen before. The creatures are not above baiting their victims into ambushes or existing traps. They often leave previous victims lying where others will spot them, with treasure openly visible, attempting to lure in more victims—taking advantage of pit traps or other perils when they can. Left undisturbed with a victim, the tangleclaw will entangle its prey with its tentacles, slowly feeding at its leisure on fresh kills or victims too weak to escape.

Tangleclaws speak Far Tongue, Draconic, and Gadoar.

COMBAT

Tangleclaws prefer to ambush their victims, luring them into traps or drawing them away from allies. In open combat, they focus on one target at a time, hoping to force a retreat or take down their opponents as quickly as possible. They do not like prolonged conflicts and will attempt to flee a combat that is too pitched, regrouping to stalk and observe, looking for some advantage to turn the tides later.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a tangleclaw deals 1d3+2 points of damage.

Gnawing Grapple (Ex): If the tangleclaw has pinned a foe, it may begin to feed, inflicting 1d3+2 points of damage per round per tentacle used in the grapple. Once a foe is pinned, the tangleclaw can wrap as many of its tentacles as it likes around its victim. This feeding damage is in addition to any other grappling damage that may occur.

If the target breaks the pin, the tangleclaw must start over to regain its hold.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a tangleclaw must hit with a bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Stretch (Ex): As a move action, the tangleclaw can extend any or all of its tentacles out to roughly 20 feet in length, giving it a reach of 20 feet. The tangleclaw can retract any or all of its tentacles as a free action.

All-Around Vision (Ex): The many eyes along the tangleclaws tentacles allow the creature to see in every direction. The creature gains a +4 racial bonus on Search and Spot checks and can't be flanked.

Regrow Limbs (Ex): Though the tangleclaw heals at normal human rates, it may regrow lost limbs. For each 8 hit points the tangleclaw recovers, it can instead restore a lost tentacle.

Skills: Tangleclaws have a +4 racial bonus on Tumble checks due to the flexibility and strength of their tentacles.

A tangleclaw has a +8 racial bonus to Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

Advancement: For every 2 HD the tangleclaw gains beyond 5, it gains an additional tentacle to a maximum of nine tentacles at 13 HD.

WHIRLSHARD

Medium Construct

Hit Dice: 12d10+20 (86 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: Fly 40 feet (perfect) (8 squares)

Armor Class: 22 (+2 Dex, +10 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 20

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+14

Attack: Slam +14 melee (2d6+5)

Full Attack: Slam +14 melee (2d6+5)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

Senses: Darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision

Special Attacks: Ruinous charge, vicious cloud

Special Qualities: Construct traits, DR 4/—, runebound, scavenge

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +4

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 8

Languages: —

Crucial Skills: —

Other Skills: —

Crucial Feats: Improved Sunder^B

Other Feats: —

Environment: Ruins

Organization: Solitary or mangle (2–4)

Challenge Rating: 10

Treasure: Double standard

Alignment: Neutral

Advancement: 13–20 (Large)

Level Adjustment: —

These mindless guardians, created by spells from Before the Fall, appear to be collections of battered metal weapons, helmets, shields, and pieces of armor

floating together in a vague imitation of an upright humanoid. A whirlshard usually guards a particular area or item, though some are set to rove a larger area, and hurls itself at any living creature that trespasses, smashing and slashing on impact even as it flies apart, gliding away to reform.

Whirlshards are single-minded and very simple in their approach, varying only when confronted by concerted magical forces. Whether they are a deteriorated form of some higher construct or some sort of incomplete golem is unknown, and it seems impossible to communicate with, control, or break through the enchantments holding one together. They are vigilant, relentless, and unintelligent. Unfortunately, whirlshards have never been known to fight each other, and they always join forces against interlopers, which can make for a grim time indeed for explorers.

On occasion, rare or even magical items are included in the tangle of metal that makes up a whirlshard. Only the foolhardy would seek them out to gamble on that, however.

COMBAT

Whirlshards have very simple tactics—continue colliding with trespassers until they die. They use nothing more sophisticated, unless using Improved Sunder with slam attacks to smash weapons and shields for later healing.

Ruinous Charge (Ex):

Whirlshards slam into their target and immediately fall apart on impact. This inflicts 5d6+8 points of damage (bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing). As a charge attack, a ruinous charge grants a +2

bonus on the attack roll and a –2 penalty to the whirlshard's AC. Since the whirlshard is flying, it ignores penalties for difficult terrain. The charge movement need not be in a straight line, so long as the whirlshard does not move back toward its original position during the charge. After striking its target, the whirlshard loses its cohesion, its pieces whirling away from its foe, and any attack against it has a 50 percent miss chance. It must spend the following round reforming and can take no action on that round except movement.

Vicious Cloud (Ex): Whirlshards use this ability to attack a spellcaster who has attempted to permanently destroy the whirlshard. The targeted caster is attacked by the whirlshard's slam attack. If the attack is successful, the whirlshard explodes into a whirlwind of flying metal with the caster at its center. This whirlwind is identical to a *blade barrier* spell (caster level 12th), but fills a 20-foot-radius spherical area centered on the target and inflicts 12d6 points of damage (Reflex save, DC 18, half). The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Runebound

(Ex): As

constructs, whirlshards are immune to many spells. Additionally, most spells that target metal objects (such as *chill metal* and *heat metal*) only boost the whirlshard's damage, transferring the cold or heat

damage to its attacks. The following spells are known to temporarily deactivate a whirlshard, causing it to collapse for the duration of the spell or for 1d3 rounds for spells with an instantaneous duration: *antimagic field*, *break enchantment*, *dispel magic*, *greater dispel magic*.

Any spell inflicting more than 20 points of damage on a whirlshard causes it to target the caster exclusively and triggers a vicious cloud attack.

Whirlshards are immune to all rusting effects.



Scavenge (Su): A whirlshard heals itself by finding piles of loot, discarded weapons and armor, or the like and incorporating these new parts into its form. It takes a whirlshard ten minutes to link 5 pounds of material to itself, repairing 10 points of damage.

WHISPERLIPS

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 20 feet (6 squares), swim 40 feet

Armor Class: 14 (+2 Dexterity, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+1

Attack: Bite +1 melee (1d6)

Full Attack: Bite +1 melee (1d6)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

Senses: Darkvision 60 feet; Listen +6, Spot +6

Special Attacks: Constrict 1d6, improved grab

Special Qualities: Amphibious

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 8

Languages: Far Tongue, Muerar

Crucial Skills: Escape Artist +8, Hide +5*, Listen +6*, Move Silently +6, Spot +6*

Other Skills: Swim +8

Crucial Feats: —

Other Feats: Alertness

Environment: Temperate marshes

Organization: Solitary, hunting party (2–4), or nest (5–20)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually neutral

Advancement: By character class (no spellcasters)

Level Adjustment: +1

Whisperlips appear much like human-sized freshwater lamprey, with small, humanoid arms protruding from either side of their toothed, sucking mouths. These fearsome mouths are quite articulate with extremely flexible lips, and the whisperlips softly hissing speech gives the race its common name. They refer to themselves as the muerar (“Moo-er-ARR”).

Whisperlips do not have much of a society outside of mutual cooperation. The creatures are hermaphrodites; individuals mate every summer, fertilizing each other, and both partners birth 1d4+4



live offspring (one-foot-long versions of adults that grow rapidly if enough food is available) two months later. They don't form stable family groups, mating and moving on immediately, but hunt cooperatively and will band together against mutual foes. Muerar never feed on each other.

The race doesn't seem to have any aptitude for magic, but they are capable of understanding and using magic items their tiny arms can wield, with the exception of spell completion and spell trigger items. They rarely use weapons, though they make good use of rope, usually as a trap of some sort. Examples would be a length of rope stretched between two swimming whisperlips, who rear up from waters on either side of a foe on a skiff, or the same scenario against someone trying to cross a bog afoot from one tuft of solid ground to the next). They are particularly fond of ambushing and entangling spellcasters or archers.

Whisperlips speak Muerar.

COMBAT

Whisperlips avoid open combat, preferring guile and subterfuge. If they encounter much resistance after a surprise attack, the creatures usually flee, but will watch and wait for another opportunity to ambush their foes. They take considerable advantage of their aquatic nature and are not above dumping bound foes into the water to distract enemies from the battle, forcing them to rush to the aid of their drowning companions.

Constrict (Ex): A whisperlips deals automatic bite damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): A whisperlips that makes a successful bite attack can attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Amphibious (Ex): Whisperlips can breathe both air and water.

Skills: Whisperlips are extremely flexible and naturally slimy and, as such, have a +6 racial bonus to all Escape Artist checks. They also have a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. Whisperlips can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. The creature can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

*While underwater, a whisperlips has a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks.

WHISPERLIPS AS CHARACTERS

Most whisperlips with class levels are fighters or rogues.

Whisperlips characters possess the following racial traits.

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, –2 Cha.
- **Medium:** As Medium creatures, whisperlips have no size-related bonuses or penalties.
- A whisperlips' base land speed is 20 feet, and it has a Swim speed of 40 feet.
- Darkvision 60 feet.
- **Racial Hit Dice:** A whisperlips begins with two levels of aberration, which provide 2d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +1, and base saving throw bonuses of Fort +0, Ref +0, and Will +3.
- **Racial Skills:** A whisperlips' aberration levels give it skill points equal to $5 \times (2 + \text{Intelligence modifier, minimum } 1)$. Its class skills are Escape Artist, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, and Swim. Whisperlips have a +6 racial bonus on Escape Artist checks and a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks while underwater.
- **Racial Feats:** A whisperlips' aberration levels give it one feat.
- **Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** A whisperlips is automatically proficient with all simple weapons.
- +2 natural armor bonus.
- **Natural Weapons:** Bite (1d6).
- **Special Attacks (see above):** Improved Grab, Constrict.
- **Special Qualities (see above):** Amphibious.
- **Automatic Languages:** Muerar. **Bonus Languages:** Aquan, Draconic, Far Tongue, Gadroar.
- **Favored Class:** Rogue (whisperlips cannot be spellcasters).
- Level adjustment +1.

APPENDIX 2: A BRIEF HISTORY OF CASTLEMOURN

More than three hundred years ago, the Realm of Castles thrived—the Golden Age of Umbrara. Much of what happened then, and in the Great War that brought the Fall of the Castles, is lost to the folk of Mournra, though bits are preserved in fanciful tales and snippets of old verse. Nowadays, the period of time before this cataclysmic event is often referred to as Before the Castles Fell or Before the Fall. Modern history is frequently referred to as After the Fall if there is some question as to the timing of an event.

At best guess, roughly three hundred and sixty years have passed since the Fall. The folk of Mournra have had significant time to rebuild, and realms have come and gone over the passing years. Mournan recorded history begins with the First of the Brightbird, nearly 210 years ago. Castlemourn is now four years in to the seventeenth Time since the Time of the Brightbird, the Time of the Gryphon. The following is the Telling of the Years for the past daunt (a period of twelve Times), the ritual recollection of important events that have happened since the Fourth of the Blacktusk.

A more in-depth, detailed timeline can be found at www.castlemourn.com.

THE TELLING OF THE YEARS

5th Blacktusk: In Ghandalar, two years of lawlessness come to an end with the arrival of the sorcerer Sulandro Mulvaer from the Iron Isles. Mulvaer declares himself Lord and starts hurling spells, burning down guild warehouses until the guilds reluctantly accept him. He then invites the guildmasters to a private meeting, at which he either cast spells on them to give him some sort of mental hold or scared them so deeply that he gained influence amounting to the same thing. Mulvaer restores order to the streets, establishes a just and fair working court system, and encourages the guilds to take up trading again. Astonished, everyone in Ghandalar cooperates, and the city flourishes.

6th Blacktusk: On the Foreshore, a long-sunken ship rises to the surface of the harbor in Thamral one spring evening, black, bubbling, and reeking. The cause of its rising is never discovered, but it drifts across the harbor, crawling with undead, until it runs aground on a shipwright's yard-slip. The undead

swarm ashore and are fought by hastily summoned priests, a battle raging until darkness falls. Some of the undead escape, presumably into Thamral or the countryside beyond. The wreck, judged to be from before the Fall and much too wet to be burned, is broken open the next morning in the presence of priests and wizards ready to destroy undead—but no more are found. Inside is much that is drowned and ruined, but enough gold coins to fill more than four wagons are found; Thamran citizens fall upon these in a frenzy, and there's scattered fighting. One way or another, all of the gold is gone by sunset, and many spells are readied to probe at Thamral's harbor bottom. It proves to be choked with a score or more of wrecks, tangled together three deep in places, but no more gold is found.

7th Blacktusk: In Luuthaven, the Conclave gives Master Yaurlees a third term. The Dusks and her justice have become accepted, although there are rumors that some drugged prisoners are going mad thanks to horrific nightmares (the Master deliberately causing these with the drugs). Madness is certainly occurring, but Yaurlees is not to blame.

8th Blacktusk: In Lyonar, King Sandror II is killed fighting off a golaunt raid that sacks and burns Mossgreen and penetrates almost to Stormgate. Queen Melandra crowns their eldest son King Alsandyr III, dons her dead Sandror's hacked and battered armor, and leads the hastily-mustered Lyon forces in harrying the golaunt back to the Yarhoon and deep into its caverns. She returns to Shalaunce Castle and becomes the new king's advisor and court steward, serving with imperious grace.

9th Blacktusk: In Luuthaven, what comes to be called the Cult of Dark Dreams is formed: individuals who meet in secret to take particular drugs together, in hopes of sharing the same dream and so collectively becoming greater by seeing the secrets of the Seven. The cult leaders are sorcerers who believe humans can learn to fly, breathe underwater, and stand immune against magics through deep dreaming. The wizards Albaerlus and Rhandalar try to catch and slay these sorcerers, but they flee the Haven; the cult goes into hiding. It is rumored to still flourish in Luuthaven to this day, members meeting in great secrecy and having acquired some of the special powers they've sought.

10th Blacktusk: In Tantanthar, High Prince Mardulth Delzryth takes a second wife, Princess Selkeene, daughter of a wealthy guildmaster of Sardulkin.

11th Blacktusk: In Lothran, the sorceress Jassees Naebra, close advisor to the Grand Duke and widely believed to be his lover, is found murdered, her hands and head missing, with a message written on her torso in her own blood: "I, Orlamdar Randathjet, did this! Lothran forever!" A grieving, raving Grand Duke Zorthsel Haramandras sets his forces to scouring the realm for any trace of the murderer. Nothing is ever found.

12th Blacktusk: North of Ormscar, the Scarlet Swords adventuring band out of Lyonar, delving into monster-roamed tunnels, reaches the dwarf city of Imundar under Mount Glath. Wounded in their battles with many monsters, the human adventurers are healed when they happen to rest in the presence of the great stone sword known to dwarves as the Great Secret. Wanting to take the Secret away with them, although its size and weight make this well-nigh impossible, the Swords try to enlist dwarven aid. They are chased out of the underways by enraged dwarves, who then muster in numbers to rebuff scores of adventuring bands who come venturing later in the year, seeking this Great Secret the Swords have spread word about.

1st Shadowhooves: On the Foreshore, a talking horse is born in Marag's Pool. It speaks cryptic phrases in Crown Tongue, and folk flock from all over the Coves to hear what it says. Its owner—an elderly baker, hight Eskul Maerym—is offered fantastic sums for it, and both he and the horse are wounded in several attempts to steal the beast until he's too afraid for his life to retain it; he sells it for twelve thousand good gold coins and a fleet of six fine merchant caravels, with the cargoes aboard them to a rich merchant of Maerlur, Halto Neveront, who takes the horse and promptly vanishes; both he and the beast depart Marag's Pool and are never seen again. Neveront's extensive holdings and wealth in Maerlur are eventually seized or stolen by creditors and neighbors, and Maerym dies wealthy and happy in the arms of a young and pretty new wife and four hired bedmaids.

In Luuthaven, Aunelle Yaurlees resigns as Master and refuses to serve again, citing exhaustion and wanting a life before I find my grave, reminding citizens that she's served since she was eight winters of age and is now twenty-six. The wizards Albaerlus and Rhandalar appear at the Conclave and tell all attending that, law or no law, evidence or no evidence, they will spell-slay anyone who harms Yaurlees, dealing out a death that will be neither swift nor free of torment. When the head of House Nilpiir sneers at them to be a bit more specific, Albaerlus mentions having a regenerative spell cast on a miscreant and holding

just his face in a pool of hungry sharks for a day or so. The sneers stop. The Conclave elects Darneld Streel, a much-scarred retired adventurer, as Master of Luuthaven.

2nd Shadowhooves: In Lyonar, a hitherto-unknown plague, the Boiling Eyes Affliction, so named because it causes eyeballs to bubble and then pop, blinding its victims, arises in upland Raumarl and sweeps across the realm, killing thousands—including King Alsandyr III and his two sisters, leaving only Alsandyr's younger brother, Faerel, to take the throne. By summer's end, the plague reaches Raddanth and fades away as suddenly and mysteriously as it came.

3rd Shadowhooves: In Estorna, disputes flare over differing local measures and standards for wares. The Council of Caeth sends the Horse to quell open fighting between rival guilds in Glael and between traders of Glael and traders of Harbridge. Guildmasters all over Estorna demand the Council establish common goods standards (not prices, but definitions, and weights and measures).

4th Shadowhooves: In Estorna, the Council of Caeth reaches agreement on common standards for goods trading and decrees them into force throughout Estorna. There's widespread grumbling for a taelole or two and then widespread—if grudging—acceptance.

5th Shadowhooves: In Marrovar, as spring passes into summer, the waves that roil where the River Sundrin flows into Marrovar Bay suddenly spew winged fiends into the air. These foul monsters have many shapes but share the same gloating aggression; they attack, slay, carry off, and devour many Marrovians. Priests and wizards of the city muster all the magic they have to blast down the fiends, who ravage the city for days until exterminated. Many fell mages and even entire realms have been accused of causing this Fiendwave, but nothing definite is learned.

6th Shadowhooves: In Jamandar, Lord Martial Ammurt Misthand is killed while single-handedly trying to quell a tavern brawl, and the militia conclave chooses Misthand's trusted aide, the warrior Lorn Mrelhorn, as his successor.

In Lyonar, Dowager Queen Melandra dies of a chill in the depths of winter—and thereafter, haunts Shalaunce Castle as a seldom-seen, impossibly-tall drifting wraith whose touch chills and whose whispers give harsh guidance.

In Marrovar, the Lords of the Stonehall agree that the cause of the Fiendwave must be learned, and the city must prepare for another such disaster. They offer guild status and legal protections to all sorcerers who form a sorcerers' guild and all wizards who form a wizards' guild. The Circle of Sorcery and the High Hall

of Magecraft are brought into existence before year-end, though both have a bare handful of members.

7th Shadowhooves: In Lyonar, King Faerel I scours the Summerstar Hills, slaughtering many brigands and monsters, and turns to the Winterwood to do the same. However, he is forced to abandon his hunting there until the following year to deal with new golaunt raids out of the Yarhoon.

In Luuthaven, the Conclave elects Master Streel to another term. He has added floggings and exiles to the sleeps and rare executions in the sentences he hands out. He is considered more sour and harsh than lenient, but most citizens respect him for treating members of the big Houses (the wealthiest and most powerful families) exactly the same as he treats nameless, homeless prisoners. The first golaunt appear in Luuthaven and are treated with much suspicion.

8th Shadowhooves: The Boiling Eyes Affliction which struck Lyonar in 2nd Shadowhooves washes over Luuthaven, blinding many who either take their own lives or are sold into slavery. As it follows on the heels of the first golaunt settling in Luuthaven, they are widely blamed for bringing it with them and massacred by many citizens. As with its earlier rise, the plague fades away by summers-end.

9th Shadowhooves: In Firelorn, Crown Duke Lharkyn is beset by a magical curse, acquired in his investigations of ancient items, that brings on bouts of raving madness and shapeshifting. He names his most capable battle captain, Auldin Nethurr, his successor, crowns him, and defends him against all rivals.

In Lyonar, King Faerel I, already famous among his subjects as a dashing, gallant warrior who hunts golaunt and winter wolves with enthusiasm, and beds every beautiful lass who doesn't refuse him, faces rebellion in late spring. The Dukes of Raumarl and Marlstag rise in arms against him, declaring the founding of their own kingdom, Summerstar. King Faerel crushes their armies, beheads them, and takes their sons into his personal bodyguard to ride with him as he scours the Summerstar Hills, Winterwood, and the surface of the Yarhoon of monsters (hunting so well that he ends monster raids—except for golaunt—on Lyonar for almost twenty summers). By year-end, he releases the new Dukes of Raumarl and Marlstag to their lands and duties, certain of their loyalty to him.

10th Shadowhooves: In Khalandorn, nigh-constant internal warfare reduces the Knights able to still put on armor and get on a horse to two-and-twenty. One of the eldest Knights, Elmreth the Grim, kills High Knight Nornar Hreld (who had held the title for less than a taelole and was the ninth High Knight of this year) and, in his proclamation of ascension, sends forth a call to parley, summoning all of the Knights to

Shields Hard to make a brighter future for our blood-drenched realm. The call is endorsed by high-ranking priests of all the Seven and is heeded. A historic Blood Council is held at Shields Hard, whereat Elmreth and the priests sway the Knights to sign the Pact of Khalandorn, more commonly known as the Blood Pact as all present sign it with their own blood. The Pact changes the custom of Khalandorn being ruled by a High Knight who wins title by force of arms, usually slaying his predecessor, once Elmreth leaves office, the High Knight shall always be a female Knight, elected—and unelected—by two-thirds or better majority vote of the Knights, any valid vote to be held in the presence of the High Knight, unless the ruler is dead. High Knights have no set term of office, but serve until they resign, die, or are voted out of power. The priests witnessing the Pact preach that should the Pact ever be broken, by a ruler seizing power in another way, Khalandorn will be ravaged by the wrath of the Seven, and blasted in a devastation like unto the Fall. This has passed down in local lore, and is the firm belief of almost every Khalandornar to this day.

11th Shadowhooves: On the Foreshore, robed men are seen standing on thin air far above the tallest turrets of Nighdal, apparitions that seem to see and confer with each other before vanishing. This happens three times in summer, with many folk gathering below to share the sight, and then ceases as abruptly as it began, unexplained.

In Lyonar, King Faerel begins building, greatly expanding the settlement of Lancerake. He also continues to wench his way through the kingdom, fathering many bastard offspring.

12th Shadowhooves: In Marrovar, the beginning of summer brings a second Fiendwave in which the Sundrin-mouth waves are clearly seen to transform into winged monsters of all shapes, who fly to attack Marrovians. The Circle of Sorcery and the High Hall of Magecraft, the sorcerers' and wizards' guilds, move swiftly to battle the fiends, blasting many down before their spells are exhausted and citizens are reduced to arrows and swords. The fiends are numerous, and their victims many, but in a handcount of days, they are all slain. The Lords of the Stonehall decree handsome annual salaries to all spellcasters who join the Circle and the High Hall, agree to defend the city, and take training to do so (free access to battle magic spells is offered).

1st Helmvipier: In Luuthaven, Darneld Streel stands for another term as Master, but the Conclave instead chooses Ithelt Pondarr, an effeminate, darkly handsome young halfling forger and artist, as the new Master of Luuthaven. "Old Grim Steel" has become widely disliked for his increasingly harsh justice; brawls and hurled pots were being rewarded with punishments. Pondarr promises tolerance but seems

to deliver inattention to his governing duties, in his immediate pursuit of beautiful ladies willing to model for a series of nude portraits. Grumblings begin.

2nd Helmvipser: In Tantanhar, Princess Selkeene, the second wife of High Prince Mardulth Delzryth, dies in childbirth, her unborn daughter dying with her.

3rd Helmvipser: In Lyonar, King Faerel turns to building in the port of Tyrfaalon and in his throne city of Stormgate, expanding and improving both.

4th Helmvipser: In Luuthaven, an angry husband, arriving home early and discovering Ithelt Pondarr doing more to his wife than painting her portrait, breaks Pondarr's neck and hurls him into the waters. The port needs a new Master, and the Conclave votes to install Darneld Streel, not for a new term but to serve out the remainder of the dead Pondarr's term. Streel proves as grim as before.

5th Helmvipser: In Tantanhar, High Prince Mardulth Delzryth takes a third wife, Princess Alaesee, a fisherman's daughter from Amrest.

6th Helmvipser: In Luuthaven, former Master Mhaerla of the Potions dies. Her aging body is found lifeless but unmarked in her workshop; the apparent cause of her demise is years of exposure to poisonous ingredients and the quaffs of her own making. The wizards Albaerlus and Rhandalar take away her body and everything in her workshop, and tasteless local jokes about their wanting an undead lover briefly make the rounds.

7th Helmvipser: In Tantanhar, High Prince Mardulth Delzryth dies when his young bride Alaesee, his third wife, goes mad and stabs him repeatedly in their bridal bed before slaying herself. Mardulth's three grown sons (Narlonsur, Flaeroed, and Tarrael; the first two borne by Mardulth's first wife, Darmdrella, and the last by his second wife, Selkeene), who dislike each other intently, all claim the throne, scorn each other, and arm for war, with Tantanthans split in loyalties between them.

In Firelorn, former Crown Duke Lharkyn descends into his last madness, becoming a horrid yellow worm of many jaws and claws that hisses oaths at all living things and seeks to slay them. Crown Duke Nethurr orders him slain and burned, and this is done.

In Lyonar, an unknown disease strikes King Faerel, ravaging him from within. Despite the best prayers and healing, he weakens and dies as summer begins. Lyonar erupts in civil war, with every senior courtier and duke advancing their own candidate from among Faerel's two legitimate heirs, daughters Namraetha and Rymarra, and more than a dozen bastard sons. Namraetha is crowned queen but then spirited out

of the realm into Lothran; she is hidden (as a virtual prisoner, for her own safety) in a hunting lodge in Cormithal by the Duke of Landaen. Rymarra and half a dozen of the bastard sons are also proclaimed as monarchs of Lyonar after Namraethra, but usually without clergy or even the so-called royal personage present at the ceremony or announcement. In other words, the proclamations are clearly spurious, even if Namraetha hadn't been legitimately crowned.

In Luuthaven, Streel does not stand for re-election as Master. The Conclave chooses Harnel Klarnshar, a maker and importer of cloaks and caps, as the new Master of Luuthaven. As winter approaches, arriving ships strike something in a central ornpool; dredging brings up a long-sunken barge infested with undead that wreak much havoc for days.

8th Helmvipser: In Tantanhar, the Battle of Three Princes is fought in Lartharford and ends with all three brothers dying of their wounds. Their nephew Rorelth Ensemmer, a supporter of the youngest prince, Tarrael, is badly wounded but survives. He is urged by the Larthar guildmasters to wed Azaundra Delzryth, the widow of the middle prince, Flaeroed (and so strengthen his claim to the throne), and begin ruling Tantanhar. Rorelth agrees, but takes the title High Lord of Tantanhar rather than High Prince, and is accepted by Tantanthans until a high prince shall come again.

9th Helmvipser: In Firelorn, Crown Duke Nethurr puts down the Blackthar Rebellion after Orgusk Blackthar, Battle Captain of Firelorn, proclaims himself champion of Aummurdaun and orders Nethurr deposed and put to death in favor of a refounded ruling council.

10th Helmvipser: In Amsrel, Ruler Eltara Braeror dies suddenly of heartstop while holding court. Shocked courtiers summon priests and wizards to cast spells seeking murdering magic or poison, but no foul play is revealed. The wizard Irstrake Ohnborn publicly reminds the city that lawlessness and any attempt to defy or hamper the Lord Vraezers in their proper and lawful search for our next Ruler will be answered by his spells. In less than a taelole, the Lords present Marlax Braeror, a peddler from Lothran, as the new Ruler. There's no dispute of Marlax's legitimacy or rule; Amsrel seems collectively relieved.

11th Helmvipser: In Lothran, Grand Duke Zorthsel Haramandras uncovers treason among the Thronelar, the wealthiest mercantile families. Under hired magical compulsion, the traitors confess and are executed. Even among the Thronelar, this outcome is welcomed, for the Grand Duke's firm justice and the strong protection from his armies have encouraged years of prosperity, and he has become popular in Lothran. Publicly, the ducal Houses are all friendly with—and

not merely loyal to—him, and Lothran flourishes. Bards call this treason the Blackhelm Plot after the surname of one of its leaders.

12th Helmviper: In Asmrel, the wizard Irstrake Ohnborn dies, aging suddenly to dust and crumbling bones while walking in the street. No hostile magic is suspected; rather, it seems Ohnborn's own longevity spells, that had kept him alive from Before the Fall, suddenly failed. A few Lord Masters sarcastically comment that Ruler Marlux Braeror, who has proved to be shrewd and worldly-wise, adept at manipulating one guild into opposing or frustrating another, had now best beware; there's no longer a powerful wizard to act as his army, shield, and daily cudgel, all in one. Marlux sharply reminds them that if all Asmrans were loyal to Asmrel, no Ruler would need a shield or cudgel and require an army only against hostile outlanders.

1st Dustdrake: In spring, the Duke Landaen of Lothran rides through Wind Pass and triumphantly restores Queen Namraetha of Lyonar to her throne in Shalaunce Castle. He meets with no resistance, as the years of strife have exhausted the realm; most of the Lyon pretenders were captured and killed by opposing factions, and most of the dukes and their heirs also died in the fighting. The Duke of Landaen also forcibly marries Queen Namraetha to his own son, Lorandur, and installs his own knights as her defenders—and captors. There's no gender bar to rule in Lyonar; succession firmly follows blood, so consorts are just that. Queen Namraetha has the authority, and King Loraundur is her messenger and war-leader; if he'd happened to have any children by a previous union, they'd not have had any throne-claim. The union is a happy one; by the onset of winter, Namraetha and Lorandur fall deeply in love with each other.

In Luuthaven, Klarnshar, despite having a local reputation as the Invisible One, stands for re-election as Master but is passed over in favor of a shipwright, Tloskan Talvern—whose first act as Master of Luuthaven, citing hostile statements made in Asmrel about the Haven being a festering den of pirates, evil wizards, and thieves, that should be brought to dust as swiftly as possible, is to decree the Haven must and shall have a large navy. The oldest and wealthiest local families raise an uproar, claiming Talvern is enriching himself by spending public coin on ships that he, as a shipwright, will have a hand in building. Talvern suggests these oh so concerned families pay for the navy themselves and have it built in any yards they choose, so they can readily cut him out. The houses of Lharsk, Marhaen, Nilpiir, and Qaraunt all sponsor warships, but Calantorn, Doarove, and Irjet say that whoever can build the best vessels for the least amount of coin should be hired, even if it is Talvern's

Voyaging. In the end, Talvern declines to take part in naval shipbuilding.

In Dragonhead at the height of summer, monsters are seen atop the Head itself (the bare rock tor standing just sarrind of the town, sheltering it from the worst winter storms). Adventurers scaling the tor to deal with these beasts are slain or forced into maiming falls by the spells of a wizard atop the tor; survivors report the monsters are obeying the mage and building a stone tower at the highest spot on the Dragonhead. By winter, the tower stands complete, and the monsters are seen no more—and the lawless frontier trading-town of Dragonhead has a ruler: the wizard of the tor, Largrymm. He strides through town curtly telling folk how to behave, and what to desist from doing, blasting those who defy him. He seems to always know what's going on in Dragonhead, but powerful Iron Isles wizards hired to find and slay him report that his tower atop the tor stands empty with no trace of the mage. When the wizards have taken ship home, Largrymm kills those who hired them. By year-end, rumors that the wizard takes the shape of many other people and trudges around town watching what's happening have become accepted local truth, and Largrymm is spoken of as the Wizard of a Thousand Faces.

2nd Dustdrake: In Jamandar, Lord Martial Lorn Mrelhorn is crushed by a ceiling-beam when a half-built barracks collapses in a storm, and the militia conclave chooses the veteran duelist and road-patrol archer Arlock Talonrise as his successor without incident.

3rd Dustdrake: In Lyonar, Queen Namraetha and King Lorandur prove both determined and diplomatic. By summer, as their second son is born, they deftly ease Lorandur's father, the Duke of Landaen, out of daily control of their lives without harming or rebuking him and begin to rule in their own stead.

4th Dustdrake: In Baerent, Lord Horaer Baerenthur is slain by poison, introduced into his platter alone at a feast. Despite the hiring of priests, sages, and wizards to investigate, the murderer is never found. Horaer and his youngest and only living son, Doraunt, is called back from adventures in the Starhaven Reach to take the throne. He arrives with not one but two consorts, whom he dubs his High Ladies, and treats equally.

In Khalandorn, High Knight Elmreth the Grim, his health failing, leaves office after building four bridges at key locales on the realm's roads and winning the respect of all Khalandornar. He dies within the year. High Knight Jhalesse Hornbroar is the first elected High Knight and immediately faces a revolt led by Knight Borun Morlar, who believes the strongest Knight should rule, not a succession of wenches!

Morlar's force is attacked by those of several Knights from various sides, and although Morlar himself escapes, sorely wounded, Hornbroar faces no more armed challenges during her rule.

5th Dustdrake: In Lyonar, heavy golaunt raids in Wind Pass draw King Lorandur into a trap, where he's slain. When word of this reaches his father in Lothran, the Duke of Landaen throws his own life away in a savage assault into the caverns and passages of the Yarhoon, butchering countless golaunt as he penetrates almost to Mahrokh itself. Prince Roldor, Queen Namraetha and King Lorandur's eldest son, vows his own vengeance on the golaunt of the Yarhoon, though he's but three years of age. Prince Alsandyr, aged two, vows nothing.

In the Iron Barony, Iron Baron Ghaudren Carmeirnar achieves his lifelong ambition of going on a dragon hunt, fighting and slaying a dragon. Unfortunately, it kills him, too. His son Morgrym Carmeirnar is enthroned as Iron Baron without dispute.

6th Dustdrake: In Ormscar, the ancient and frail dwarf-of-no-clan Lord Imperial Durgan "Ironmask" dies, collapsing in his ruling hall before all his court. By agreement among all there, the grim but popular wary veteran warrior known as the Shield of Stauntstone, Brorim Handral, becomes Lord Imperial of Ormscar.

7th Dustdrake: In the Yarhoon, Orlhaurlen Sarrak Dundarr Thraul is killed during a drunken brawl, and so many of the Haurlen of the land were involved that the maeraedra argue heatedly over who should be the next Orlhaurlen. Fortuitously, a scarred, rebellious giant of a golaunt named Mrokh Oubrah Daseyel returns with much treasure from beyond the Beastlands, claiming to have seized it bloodily in his farfaring adventures. None expected him to return to the Yarhoon at all, let alone so enriched, and he's hailed as a great warrior and made Orlhaurlen of the Yarhoon.

In Luuthaven, Talvern declines to stand for re-election, the now-twenty-ship navy still a matter of angry controversy, and the Conclave names Valmur Pharlden, a jovial, blustering alchemist, as Master of Luuthaven. Pharlden believes daily use of drugs for serenity amid troubles, a clear head when trading, and happy evenings is what all folk should do, and his high-spirited revels capture the enthusiasm of younger citizens, establishing a new lifestyle. Older and worldlier folk of the Haven tend to be disgusted. A typical comment: "We can barely walk about in twilight, what with stumbling over all the bodies of

sleeping or happily-humming-and-giggling-at-nothing youngnecks!"

8th Dustdrake: In Ghandalar, years of stability and prosperity come to a sudden end with the death of Lord Sulandro Mulvaer. The Lord of Ghandalar dies of some sort of shaking, trembling illness that resists magical healings; foul play is not suspected. The three guildmasters publicly announce they had previously agreed (presumably with Mulvaer, under coercion) to hold an election open to all, votes to be counted separately by all of the local temples to choose Mulvaer's successor. Much of the year is consumed in naming candidates from among the citizenry and voting. As winter begins, the exhausted guildmasters announce the shipwright Eldrith Rhustul as the new Lord of Ghandalar.

9th Dustdrake: In Haunthills, Tarnbaron Dondro Halsaltohn of Orlgate dies of bluetongue fever, having named Harlax Daurmortaun as his successor. Daurmortaun becomes Tarnbaron and is promptly attacked by three shapeshifting would-be slayers in his own court, whose remains are snatched away by magic when Daurmortaun and adventurers attending his celebratory feast prevail. Their sender, who presumably also removed them, is never identified.

10th Dustdrake: In Firelorn, Crown Duke Nethurr is killed in a suspicious turret collapse, but no one opposes the ascension of his son Kelmur to the throne.

In the Haunt of Eagles, a great fist of rock—the size of a small mountain, most observers say—rises into the air in early spring and hangs in midair for many days before suddenly exploding with a roar that causes ears to ring as far away as Chemmore, Marrovar, and Thornar. Fragments of rock rain down on most of Estorna and the Broken Lands. Some say the floating rock had a stone tower atop it, but others disagree. All put its location as not far sekhovynd of Arhdahkaun.

11th Dustdrake: In Ormscar, a hard winter is marked by many blizzards, snowdrifts higher than many roofs, and packs upon packs of hungry wolves. Lord Imperial Brorim Handral spends the winter struggling through the snows, wolf slaying, and his people revere him for it.

12th Dustdrake (100 years ago): In Ormscar, Lord Imperial Brorim Handral leads all who want to join him on extended wolf hunts up into the mountains, scouring the Haeldar of all wolves, bears, and hunting cats. His reward is a winter free from wolf raids.

In Ghandalar, Lord Eldrith Rhustul shocks the city in early spring by announcing he no longer wants to rule and is returning to his shipyard. "Madness has almost closed its jaws on me," he tells citizens—and

within a taelole is dead, impaled on several rods after a suspicious fall into the open-work of an unfinished ship. His silencer is never identified, but many citizens suspect the guilds are behind the death; under Rhustul's well-meant but often uninformed rule, their influence has grown great, and the Lord of Ghandalar must have known many things they'd want kept secret. The guildmasters announce new elections but done in a new way: they will name candidates, and citizens desiring to vote must come to a voting hall, staffed by clergy of the Seven, and have their vote registered there. There's some grumbling about the guilds choosing among their trained tyrants, but the election goes ahead without incident. By midsummer, Lord Waerender Storlin, a retired trader said to be a very minor sorcerer, who is physically a taller and grimmer version of Rhustul, is holding court.

In Khalandorn, growing dissatisfaction with High Knight Jhalesse Hornbroar's habit of playing favorites, and neglecting the concerns of those not her friends, leads to her being voted out of office at Shields Hard in early spring and the election of High Knight Harla Morntyl, a ruthless and energetic warrior who is also strikingly beautiful—something she uses to advantage in persuading many male Knights to support her. A sarcastic Khalandornar saying arises and survives to this day: "Half the realm has lain with Harla the Highest—and the other half is soon going to!"

1st Barbwyvern: In Luuthaven, Valmur Pharlden is re-elected Master of Luuthaven, but there's widespread fury in the city over the drugged, biddable condition of many attendees and its cause: Pharlden handing out drugged drinks at the entry door. When unaffected citizens protest at how the vote is conducted, Pharlden calls in armed sailors of the navy, who he's obviously had waiting in hiding, and has the protestors hustled out. Within a day, Pharlden has resigned, gabbling a terrified confession and apology with the grim wizards Albaerlus and Rhandalar standing behind him, their hands like vultures' claws on his shoulders. Another Conclave is held and elects a reluctant Aunelle Yaurlees as Master of Luuthaven. She's sixty-two as she begins this, her fourth term.

2nd Barbwyvern: In Baerent, High Lady Aunatha is killed in a turret collapse, leaving High Lady Nathys enthroned with Lord Doraunt.

3rd Barbwyvern: In Marrovar, another Fiendwave comes. This time the Circle of Sorcery and the High Hall of Magecraft are ready, and the fiends, though more numerous, kill far fewer Marrovians before being eliminated. The Lords of the Stonehall call on the guilds to uncover the cause of these magical fiend invasions and to craft spells to prevent the fiends from appearing. However more than one wizard tells them,

"You can decree that sunrise and nightfall never come again, yet not make it so, or that winter be outlawed—and yet find winter coming again at its usual time; these demands of yours are in no wise different." Nonetheless, the Circle and the High Hall set to work.

4th Barbwyvern: In Khalandorn, Khalandornar raids on the Iron Barony provoke an unusually fierce response: an invasion in great strength that shatters many Knights' holds and drives aerho into the very heart of the realm. High Knight Harla Morntyl defeats the invaders at the battle of Wyrmosteads but dies fighting on the field of battle. She is mourned by many, and the invaders are butchered to the last man by grieving Knights, who elect Brahanna Whiteshield to the high seat.

5th Barbwyvern: In Khalandorn, High Knight Brahanna Whiteshield has proved blustering and imperious in everyday petty matters but indecisive on larger matters, and Knights try to hold a vote to unseat her. For much of the summer, she frustrates them by fleeing hither and thither in the realm, so as to invalidate their vote, but in the end, they capture her in an inn, The Many-Beheaded Drake, and vote her out of the high seat. Much heated and sometimes drunken debate ensues, ere the elderly Maukra Ararnhelm is elected High Knight in absentia.

When Maukra is informed of her new title, she resigns on the spot, telling the Knights to "get to Shields Hard and put a younger lass on the high seat—and choose one with brains, this time!" Former High Knight Jhalesse Hornbroar travels the realm cajoling many Knights, seeking to win the high seat once more, but is rebuffed at a year-end council in Shields Hard in favor of a new High Knight: Starla Rowanar (still celebrated in Khalandornar lore, as the Lady Fearless With the Long-flowing Hair, galloping her charger across the land leaping hedge, fence, and ditch. Starla proves to be not only fearless but shrewd and diplomatic, and soon wins the respect of practically all of the Knights, who let her rule until her death.

6th Barbwyvern: In Marrovar, a fourth Fiendwave strikes the city. Again, the Circle of Sorcery and the High Hall of Magecraft stand ready and swiftly destroy the fiends, who manage only a few deadly raids into the city before being eliminated. The Lords of the Stonehall again call on the guilds to uncover the cause of Fiendwaves and to craft spells to prevent the fiends from appearing. The guilds rather testily respond that they're still working on those two tasks, without seeming to have moved a single stride closer to making them possible since the last Lords' demand.

7th Barbwyvern: In Jamandar, the aged Lady of the Land, Marratha Dreir Glassfeather, dies of

three warring fevers, and the hitherto little-known adventurer Desmaera Hollyhaun Glassfeather of one of the poor border branches of the family is ritually chosen as her successor. At Dreir's death, prayer-visions led senior Jamandran priests of all of the Seven to assemble and together introduce a drop of the dead Lady's blood into a bowl of water; the face of her successor was seen in the bowl. The priests insist, and the Lord Martial Arlock Talonrise decrees, that this is the rightful manner in which the Lady shall be chosen henceforth, rather than the Glassfeather family deciding who among them shall be Lady of the Land. Small vials of each Lady's blood shall be taken and held in secret, in case a Lady's body cannot be recovered. The newly-confirmed Lady agrees, formally reinforces the Lord Martial's decree, and publicly yields blood to him and to seven senior priests for this purpose.

In Lyonar, Prince Roldor, who has devoted his life to arms, becoming a scourge of brigands and golaunt in the borderlands of Lyonar and a superb mounted warrior, is killed by a great many-clawed monster that swoops from the sky and then fades away after rending the Prince limb from limb. A grieving Queen Namraetha takes to her chambers, turning her back on the affairs and concerns of the realm and wider Castlemourn. The young Prince Alsandyr sharply rebukes courtiers who try to make decrees in her name, insisting that he be involved—and they train him in prudence and statecraft. This is done.

In Luuthaven, Aunelle Yaurlees collapses while telling the Conclave she's far too ill of unspecified afflictions to stand for another term as Master. The seemingly-ageless wizards Albaerlus and Rhandalar appear out of thin air to take over conduct of the meeting and to magically succor the stricken Yaurlees—causing a stir because former Master Mhaerla of the Potions stands with them in undeath. The Conclave elects Coryn Wahlvur, a maker and seller of furniture, as Master of Luuthaven, but talk in the Haven is all about the wizards and their two undead lovers. Who are they really, and what are they up to? Why are they preserving these women? No answers are readily available, and mutterings grow about evil that may dwell in their midst.

8th Barbwyvern: In Dragonhead, the mercenary warlord Oldhrel "Old Helm" Marrkstaerl is murdered in a tavern brawl. Within days, Old Helm's Blades are hired, warrior by warrior, by rival warlord Harandar "Deathwind" Dorn. There are mutterings that some of the brawlers who slaughtered Old Helm and his bodyguard were known members of the Deathwinds. Such talk is guarded, particularly after the prominent potion-seller Blind Arrask publicly complains to Dorn that the killing has cost him trade (dead men buy no healing quaffs), and Dorn responds by dragging

Arrask out of his shop and butchering him in the street. In less than a taelole, Dorn starts making public suggestions as to how he wants this or that local matter settled, how things should be in Dragonhead, or what particular residents should or shouldn't do. Prominent Deathwind officers suddenly start to die, their heads exploding on their shoulders. A bewildered Dorn calls upon any wizards who desire much coin to stop these deaths, and reveal their cause. The wizard Largrymm, who's not been seen in the Head for some twenty summers, appears and reveals he killed Dorn's warriors—and if Dorn doesn't stop trying to rule Dragonhead, Dorn will suffer the same fate. The warlord attacks Largrymm, who calmly murmurs a spell that blasts Dorn's head from his shoulders, and then vanishes into thin air. The Deathwind disbands, many of its members hastily departing Dragonhead for good.

9th Barbwyvern: In Jamandar, a feud between the wealthy merchant families of Narander and Belound culminates in a dozen deadly duels, leaving both families reduced to a few infirm elders and a handful of infants. By joint order of the Lady of the Land and the Lord Martial, the babes of one family are married to those of the other in a new family named Jamand. The Lord Martial Arlock Talonrise adopts one leftover infant who could not be paired into his own family and executes three elders of the two warring families after separate instances of mistreating infants of the other blood in their care. Much strong dispute arises among the oldest families in the land as to how much the Lady and the Lord should intrude into family affairs and the Jamandran tradition of dueling, and the year ends with all families signing The Shield Pact, a law that holds the last male and last female of any Jamandran house, high or low, are immune from duel challenges unless they publicly and in writing, before either the Lady or the Lord, waive that right—or the Lady or Lord publicly decree they have renounced that right through their own murderous behavior.

In Lyonar, Queen Namraetha, silent and withdrawn, withers and dies of an unknown cause at summers-end. Most Lyons believe she simply no longer wanted to live. Her surviving son Alsandyr ascends to the throne as Alsandyr IV without dispute or incident.

10th Barbwyvern: In the Yarhoon, the usual golaunt raids into Lothran and Lyonar are interrupted by a huge army of monsters, pouring sekhovynd through the caverns. Gloun and Klael are both overwhelmed (all golaunt exterminated if they can't flee in time) before the mismatched army of beasts is turned back. It's never discovered who assembled or led them, beyond the observation that huge stag-headed

creatures seemed to command the monsters in several skirmishes.

11th Barbwynvern: In Estorna, the Iron Isles sorcerer Baerondur Eluutyn is caught controlling the votes and utterances of several Council members through casting mind-twisting magics. He is executed after being held tight-bound (trussed, blindfolded, and gagged, in chains in a cell) and interrogated by several hired wizards and local priests. Their probings reveal Eluutyn was hired by several of Estorna's wealthiest merchant families, who are seeking to continuously control the Council so as to rule Estorna from behind the scenes: the Onstriths and Holonds of Caeth, and the Andraers, Belondhuls, and Randevvurs of Harbridge.

12th Barbwynvern: In Estorna, the wealthy families implicated in the Eluutyn Plot to covertly rule are shattered; prominent family members are killed fighting to resist arrest, jailed, or flee the country, abandoning all but the most portable of their wealth and property. Some are known to reach Asmrel; there's talk of some of the Disgraced resettling on the Foreshore, the Iron Isles, and Jamandar, using new names.

1st Marjaws: In Luuthaven, the Conclave re-elects Coryn Wahlvur as Master of Luuthaven. Wahlvur is seen as a benign, lightly-meddling diplomat who moves to settle feuds and sets the navy to sail in a show of force whenever folk in Asmrel or elsewhere talk of the evils of Luuthaven. Citizens trust him to deal with matters of governance, while they get on with the tasks of surviving amid decadence and perils, so as to get rich. Spies for hire are everywhere; folk of the Haven settle into a habit of spying on trade rivals and on neighbors, just to know what they're up to. The Dusks are considered the best spy network, with citizens believing they see all, which in turn lessens the need for their open presence on the streets.

In the Iron Barony, Iron Baron Morgrym Carneirnar dies in late summer when a spell fades from his favorite horse, causing a stop in its ability to fly, and horse and man fall to their deaths out of the sky. Morgrym's three sons dispute who should succeed to the Iron Throne: Lylran, the eldest, is handsome but cruel, a murderer several times over; Burdrar, next in age, is strong but slow-witted, under the sway of a clever and ruthless merchant of Nor Umber; and Haurek, the youngest, spends his days riding with the Iron Host, nigh-unknown in Chemmore. Lylran invites his brothers to a feast; and there has them murdered by two dozen hired outland swordsmen, whom he then exposes and orders executed. However, the slain Haurek turns out to be an impostor, and the real Haurek, aided by several priests of the Barony, proclaims the truth. Lylran orders his

arrest and execution for treason, but Haurek, with the aid of adventurers, eludes arrest and manages to reach and slay Lylran in his bedchamber. Iron Baron Haurek Carneirnar is enthroned the next day without dispute.

2nd Marjaws: In Jamandar, the oldest wealthy landholding families meet at various of their homes during the time of the first end-of-summer storms. They are collectively concerned that their voices and influence are being lost in the realm as the powers of the Lady and the Lord broaden. They resolve to amend this grave failing and establish a merchants' guild that grows rapidly in wealth, numbers, and influence (and arguably holds the real power in Jamandar today). This process is aided when Lord Martial Arlock Talronrise dies suddenly, of hearburst, late in the year. The militia conclave names a young, dashing warrior, Elvur Gorondar, as his successor.

3rd Marjaws: In Dragonhead, as the winter snows slacken, undead are suddenly everywhere, skeletons and zombies lurching through the streets by the score, silently and clumsily attacking the living until dismembered and crushed or burned. No one knows where they come from, or why, but residents inevitably blame the wizard Largrymm. For almost a taelole, the undead appear, apparently out of thin air. At first, they wander everywhere and attack indiscriminately, but after some days, they are seen to be converging on a neighborhood known as Downstreets, a natural hollow overlooked by other parts of the city. Many deaths occur there, and most inhabitants flee; the undead are observed to be attacking the buildings, literally dismantling the structures down onto their own heads. Residents of the Head shun the area—particularly after some adventurers who seek to destroy the undead are themselves slain by more powerful undead. After much of Downstreets has been reduced to rubble, the undead vanish as suddenly as they came. There's much speculation as to why (or if) the wizard Largrymm sent them, but the wizard isn't seen in Dragonhead at any time during the year. A mob, scaling his tor demanding answers, is routed by flying, animated empty suits of armor wielding blades.

4th Marjaws: In Asmrel, Ruler Marlax Braeror dies of wormguts, a parasitic infestation, and the Lords Vraezer seek and find his successor, Haeleth Braeror, a soft-spoken sage from Yarnd, without dispute or controversy. Haeleth hits upon the idea of concocting a local belief that the gods will smile on Asmrel if it's ruled by someone of the blood of Palandrin, a mythical long-dead hero of the Braerors.

5th Marjaws: In Jamandar, spring is heralded by a plague of monsters erupting from an apparently

empty room in a roadside inn. This onslaught of marauding beasts ceases only when inhabitants and adventurers attracted to the peril succeed in fighting their way to the inn and burning it to the ground. For some months, there's a brisk alchemical trade in the blood, hide, organs, and fangs of many beasts, until local priests begin denouncing increasing instances of fakery.

6th Marjaws: In Firelorn, Crown Duke Kelmur Nethurr dies of heartburst, and his son Orstil peacefully succeeds him.

In Lyonar, Alsandyr IV is killed at a feast in Stormgate by unknown assassins, later widely suspected of being in the employ of the Duke of Raumarl. The dead king's infant son is crowned, but Alsandyr V is too young to rule anyone or anything; Lyonar is governed by the Dukes of Raumarl and Greatbellow, who move into Shalaunce Castle to train and rear the boy king.

7th Marjaws: In Ghandalar, shopkeepers, infuriated by the overpricing and bullying trade tactics of the three city guilds, announce the formation of their own guild, the Browncloaks. Several shops are promptly burned or looted by gangs, and Browncloak members openly beaten in the streets by members of the three established guilds. An aging but furious Lord Waerender Storlin hires adventurers to arrest the masters of the three established guilds. He executes them personally in public and decrees that any further attempts on the part of the three senior guilds to hamper the Browncloaks or his rule will result in wizards in hiding, whom he's prepared for this day killing certain guild members, followed by the dissolution of the three guilds. The decree is openly derided by the three guilds, who sneer that these wizards in hiding are mere fiction—whereupon wizards burst into guild meetings, slaying some and causing much tumult and damage with their spells. The three guilds simmer in silence, holding meetings in secret to choose new masters and decide what to do about Storlin. They are shocked when he summons the new masters to meet with him and has wizards cast spells to let everyone in court hear their own private conversations from those secret meetings. He demands their obedience, forcing them to sign agreements that will forfeit all guild funds and possessions if they act against the Browncloaks or against the Lord's person or decrees. They sign. Unguilded citizens flock to join the Browncloaks, and an uneasy peace returns to Ghandalar.

In Luuthaven, the Conclave elects Coryn Wahlvur as Master of Luuthaven for a third term, but he's soon accused of using the Dusks not just for civic guardian spying but of selling information on the utterances and deeds of individual citizens to trade and social rivals

for coin that drops into Wahlvur's purse and not into Luuthaven's coffers! Wahlvur dismisses the charges—which come from several angry merchants, including two former bitter trade rivals who stand united in saying each of them bought information from Wahlvur about the other—as pure dream-fantasies, spun by ambitious crooks who want to be Master of this city, but mutterings about them persist. When a Dusk is found murdered, a tale that Wahlvur did it to silence the woman races about Luuthaven and won't go away. "Watch out, or you'll join Rookroost!" becomes an everyday Haven warning.

8th Marjaws: In Baerent, High Lady Nathys dies in childbirth, leaving Lord Doraunt without a consort. The child, his daughter Ardythe, lives, but the grieving Doraunt entrusts her upbringing to a trio of local priests, and hurls himself into wenching, taking no consorts but assembling a gowned court of constant companions. Those who can't ride, drink, hunt, and joust to match him last only a short time, but Baerent and Firelorn seem to furnish endless eager replacements.

9th Marjaws: In Jamandar, Lady of the Land Desmaera Hollyhaun Glassfeather uncovers a plot by a cabal of ruthless merchants in Asmrel to win control of many farms in the land by lending coin at low rates, getting the most greedy Jamandran farmers deep into debt, and then raising rates sharply to gain control of their farms. Informing only the Lord Martial Elvur Gorondar and his senior aides the Horselord and the Shieldlord, she turns to her longtime companion, the mage Shallara Horndragon, who prepares a mighty spell. Hollyhaun goes to Asmrel, confronts the merchants, and lets them slay her, unleashing the magic. It immolates an entire tower in Asmrel with all members of the cabal inside. Back in Jamandar, Horndragon then leads priests through the ritual to identify Hollyhaun's successor—Jhalaera Malree, of an obscure and poor farming family in the an-anarrlith verge of the realm, who prove to be a branch of the Glassfeathers descended from the rebellious wanderer Iljar Glassfeather. She then kills herself with a hitherto-unknown magic that leaves the outline of her body burned deep into the stone floor of her tower, where it remains to this day.

10th Marjaws: In Ghandalar, a frail and stooped Lord Waerender Storlin dies of heartstop; foul play is not suspected. The three senior guilds promptly name candidates for the election to choose a new lord of the city (just two men, both members of the Equine Guild), but the Browncloaks object, as do all the local temples of the Seven, who publicly insist that *they* will name the candidates and accept votes at the Lord's hall. Guild gangs briefly run amok in the streets,

overturning wagons and setting a few shops afire, but the Bold Blades, a local adventuring band, behead the leader of the Equine Guild and announce that they and their wizards in hiding will do the same to the heads of the other two senior guilds if they don't give in to the will of the priests. The temples get their way, and five candidates are named. From among them, Haerrak Holone, a local fisherman, is elected Lord of Ghandalar without further incident.

11th Marjaws: In Lyonar, the Dukes of Raumarl and Greatbellow disagree sharply over policy (Raumarl hungers to expand luthsurl and conquer Dragonhead, but Greatbellow thinks this is insanity), to the delight of the other dukes of the realm, who have been much less than pleased at Raumarl and Greatbellow ruling in Shalaunce Castle. Several bands of adventurers, probably all hired by various dukes, attack Shalaunce Castle by night, wounding Raumarl and forcing Greatbellow to flee for his life. Duke Palandmar wastes no time in occupying Shalaunce Castle and taking custody of the boy king, but is murdered by more adventurers, who are in turn slaughtered by the swiftly-arriving forces of Duke Norntree. Duke Marlstag then attacks Stormgate with an army of monsters and fell mages, and the hastily-arming Duke of Larancel finds himself under attack by opportunistic golaunt, raiding in force out of the Yarhoon. Elevur Marlstag's forces cause much destruction in Stormgate, but are scattered in vicious street fighting that blunts them into a "raid by night, hide in ruined buildings by day" occupying force rather than an army assaulting Shalaunce Castle. The Duke of Marlstag disappears; the Duke of Larancel defeats the golaunt and marches hastily on Stormgate; and the Duke of Greatbellow slips into Shalaunce Castle with a few adventurers and makes off with the young King Alsandyr V, taking him to the encamped Larancel and begging that duke to keep Lyonar's future safe. The astonished Larancel takes Greatbellow and Alsandyr back to his own castle of Stormhaven and sends word to the dukes of Raumarl and Norntree to meet him there without their armies. Surprisingly, the dukes agree and journey to Stormhaven alone. When all but the missing Elevur Marlstag are gathered, many days of discussion ensue. The young king agrees to marry Duke Larancel's daughter Rhee, though she's older than he is, and remain with her at Stormhaven until she's visibly with child. The child will be given into the keeping of Duke Norntree to raise, the plan being the second royal child will be reared by Greatbellow. When the elder child reaches ten years of age, Norntree will hand him to Raumarl, and at the same time, Greatbellow will give the second child to Norntree. The dukes all solemnly agree to this, summoning priests of the Seven to make a blood-pact, which comes to be called the Stormhaven Vows, on it.

12th Marjaws: In Tantanthar, High Lord Rorelth Ensemmer dies suddenly in a fall from a high turret window (there are some whispers of foul play, but no public outcry), and his eldest son Garlut ascends to the lordship.

In Lyonar, Queen Rhee gives birth to Prince Sorlond and gives him into the keeping of Duke Norntree in accordance with the Stormhaven Vows. She's with child again by year-end.

1st Huthbear: In Lyonar, Princess Lorauna is born to Queen Rhee, who surrenders her to Duke Greatbellow. The queen is visibly with child again by year-end, causing much speculation as to what upbringing the dukes will demand for the third royal heir. Envoys shuttle back and forth, but no immediate agreement is reached.

In Luuthaven, Coryn Wahlvur is pelted with stones and rotten things as he opens the Conclave and dares not stand for re-election as Master (though he's carrying a prepared speech, intended for deliverance in a bid to do just that). The Conclave elects Esselk Storntal, a fat, gruff local cooper possessed of a huge fierce mustache, as Master of Luuthaven. To the surprise of many, the wizards Albaerlus and Rhandalar do not appear at the tumultuous meeting.

2nd Huthbear: On the Foreshore, identical male quintuplets are born to a halfling couple in the port of Stormstay. A priest of Munedra hails this as the touch of the goddess and that the five must be dedicated to the Allmother. The parents disagree and resist clerical attempts to remove the babes to a temple of the Whitestar. The five grow to twice normal halfling height when still young, and their father, Urnstan Haelfallow, grows so weary of priests coming thrice daily to try to see, touch, talk to, enspell, or even seize his sons that he bundles his family aboard a merchant ship bound for the Iron Isles. The family is taken to Bel's Sharth and there vanishes utterly; none of the Haelfallows are ever seen again.

In Lyonar, Queen Ree gives birth to her third child, Prince Ormryn. A difficult birthing leaves the queen near death; she receives much healing magic, prayers, and careful tending but remains weak and bedridden. Her nurses refuse to surrender the infant prince to anyone, but as summer-end nears, Duke Marlstag appears in Shalaunce Castle one stormy night, with bestial horns grown out of his head, long claws, and long fangs sprouted from his jaws. Slaying several nurses, he seizes the baby and disappears into thin air. In the morning, Alsandyr V is found murdered, and by year-end, Duke Norntree has crowned the infant Sorlund I and restored him to Shalaunce Castle, where all of the dukes (except the missing Marlstag, whose

duchy the other dukes have flooded with armed patrols, seeking him) install envoys and guards.

3rd Huthbear: In Ghandalar, Lord Haerrak Holone is murdered by unknown assailants. The three senior guilds announce they will begin investigating this crime, but the Browncloaks announce the three senior guilds are obviously responsible, and call upon the citizens to kill the heads of the three senior guilds. There are riots in the streets; guild gangs kill several citizens, and someone manages to dismember the head of the Gemcutters' Guild, delivering pieces of his remains to various temples of the Seven. The other guildmasters all go into hiding. The temples send speakers to confer with each other, announce elections, and take all candidates into cloistered seclusion for their own safety. Guild gangs and adventuring bands clash in several night skirmishes in the streets, but the election proceeds. The baker Bellard Stel is named Lord of Ghandalar. His first decree is the hiring of a Lord's Swords bodyguard; his second is the naming of four personal envoys; his third is sending those envoys out to hire wizards to protect him and his court; and his fourth is the formation of a council, to meet publicly every taelole, at which the masters of all four guilds and temple representatives will meet with him to discuss matters of governance. Guilds who fail to participate will be dissolved, and their property seized by him. An uneasy calm settles over the city as council meetings begin.

4th Huthbear: In Dragonhead, in the early days of summer, a hitherto-unsuccessful adventurer named Barlan "Skullshield" Llaskor announces his discovery of a Crown of Spells in a ruin in Faerel by triumphantly explaining to fearful passersby what he's doing as he strides the streets blasting his creditors and rivals with lethal rays from gems adorning a dark-spined crown he wears. He slays dozens before the wizard Largrymm appears and causes them to disappear together—whereafter Llaskor is seen no more in Dragonhead.

In the Iron Barony, Iron Baron Haurek Carneirnar's astute investments (everywhere in Castlemourn; Asmrel, Marrovar, Jamandar, and Lyonar in particular) and deft deployments of his secret teams of adventurers (which include some of the most highly-paid wizards Castlemourn has ever known), sent to ruthlessly eliminate anyone not of the Barony who seeks to get some share of the iron exported from the Iron Isles to mainland Castlemourn, makes the Barony so wealthy that all taxes are ended. The Iron Baron's agents go around the kingdom, providing free horses, oxen, buildings, tools, and wagons to anyone who needs such things. A raid from Khalandorn is turned back with casual ease, and the Iron Baron hires assassins to have everyone involved in that raid

murdered quite openly, as a warning to fools of the matchless power of the Iron Barony.

5th Huthbear: In Estorna, several members of the Council of Caeth are poisoned in the space of a few days. In every instance, rumors arise that these guildmasters were murdered by rival members of their guilds. Local priests of all of the Seven work together to try to uncover truth, confirming the same sort of poison, sarviper venom, was used in every instance, and the killings must be related. More comes from a surprising source: the wizard Largrymm of Dragonhead appears unheralded at a Council meeting, informs them their colleagues were poisoned by agents of the Holond family (of the Disgraced, hunted out of Estorna in 12th Barbwyvern), and vanishes again, offering neither proof nor elaboration.

6th Huthbear: In Ormscar, Lord Imperial Brorim Handral is slain on his own throne by the Swordwolves, a band of adventurers led by the boar-like, brutish warrior Feskrar "the Furious." Feskrar proclaims himself Lord Imperial of Ormscar, and warns that he'll be more than ready to deal with any who dispute his authority. By year-end, several of his Swordwolves have been murdered after disagreements with Feskrar. Most of the rest have quietly slipped out of Ormscar. Undaunted, Feskrar starts recruiting and training his own army, the Imperial Swords. The Grand Duchy of Lothran moves forces of glittering-armored land knights north from Landaen into Septrur and Waern but makes no move to invade Ormscar; for his part, Feskrar shows no any signs of attacking Lothran.

In Lyonar, spring is heralded by a series of fierce storms. One night at the height of a lightning-fest, Duke Marlstag magically appears in Shalaunce Castle, restored to normalcy and accompanied by a band of grim warriors and the young Prince Ormryn, and kills King Sorlund. He rouses the court to witness, plucks up the crown, still dripping with Sorlund's blood, and enacts a solemn coronation. The first decree of Ormryn I is to install Duke Marlstag as his Lord Seneschal and to declare the other dukes outlaws; Marlstag's first decree, mere moments later, is to order the dukes arrested and put to death without delay, and all their kin with them. Someone escapes the Castle and manages to get word to one of the dukes, and the dukes muster their knights and converge on Stormgate from all directions. Marlstag gets word of this, locks up Ormryn in one tower of the Castle, and commences a series of exhausting summoning spells, flooding Shalaunce with fiends. The ducal armies are ravaged by the creatures, but have weight enough to prevail. Marlstag is still summoning new allies when the foremost knights reach and slaughter him. They battle the surviving fiends through Shalaunce Castle and Stormgate beyond—discovering that one of them broke

into the tower and devoured most of King Ormryn, leaving only a foot and a few fingers behind. So it is that Princess Lorauna becomes Queen Lorauna, and the grim and weary surviving dukes swear to defend the Lyon royal line at all costs.

7th Huthbear: In Baerent, elder farmers and warriors of the realm finally persuade Lord Doraunt Baerenthur to take a wife again, in order to produce an heir for the realm and fend off the subtle suggestions from envoys of Firelorn that Baerent needs more than a friendly alliance with their land; it needs full-fledged protection. Lord Doraunt insists on undertaking one last adventure across Castlemourn to find a suitable bride; and in Lyonar, he seduces a courtier's daughter, Ormra Illyth, and brings her back to Baerent as his new High Lady.

In Luuthaven, the Conclave re-elects Esselk Storntal as Master of Luuthaven. Storntal's blunt talk and wry humor has made him one of the most popular Masters ever, as he steers the Haven through the disputes and stresses of another wave of expansion—and some feuds over oyster beds.

8th Huthbear: In Tantanthar, the swamps spread greatly in this year, drowning and swallowing many farms and much pastureland. High Lord Garlut Ensemmer hires wizards from all over Castlemourn, paying handsomely, but their spells are unable to force back the fen waters. All Tantanthans are urged to pray and make handsome offerings at temples all across the land, and they do so, but all the priests receive from entreating the Seven is the obvious news that the land is sinking and will continue to do so. Roads and hamlets are swallowed, and strange, slithering creatures are seen in the deepening, expanding wetlands. Some of the dispossessed seek to clear new land on the verges of Stormstars Wood, but are attacked by creatures from the forest on one side and the swamps on the other. They soon perish, go to Sardulkin to try to start new lives, or depart the realm altogether.

9th Huthbear: In Baerent, High Lady Ormra Baerenthur gives birth to a son, Nestarl, who is confirmed heir to the realm by his delighted father, Lord Doraunt Baerenthur.

10th Huthbear: In Jamandar, a ghost slays several of the living in duels in the summer moonlight, using a spectral sword that stops hearts when it thrusts through them. The ghost then vanishes as suddenly and mysteriously as it first appeared.

11th Huthbear: The wolves, descending out of Faerel and the mountains luthsurl of it every winter to roam Sparruk and raid northern Estorna and even

Dragonhead, are unusually numerous this year and strike at Thornar, Nenth, and even the downland farms between the Rivers Esplander and Luuth. They're driven off with great loss of life, but not before the beasts devour entire herds of livestock. As the deepest cold begins, giants stride out of the swirling snows to attack Nenth and Harbridge, smashing walls and defenders alike and taking captives—as food?—before retreating. Those they capture aren't seen again, but the giants don't return the following winter.

12th Huthbear: In Lothran, undead suddenly erupt from the ground all over Darkleaves, a small wood in the duchy of Septrur, and attack the living. The lurching, decaying cowed shufflers can cast spells and are destroyed only with difficulty. Grand Duke Zorthsel Haramandras sends envoys around the realm to reassure his subjects that this curse from Before the Fall has been dealt with and decrees that henceforth all magically-gifted folk of Septrur must take part in defending the realm, as their arcane gifts were so vital in defeating the undead of Darkleaves. The wood is burned down; however, spellglows are seen by night, and occasional images of burning trees appear. Such sights persist to this day, though Darkleaves is locally shunned and has become a wilderland forest again.

1st Swiftwing: In Ghandalar, Lord Bellard Stel dies of heartstop while abed with his wife; no foul play is suspected. The advisory council Stel established announces an election and names candidates for a taelole; the voting takes another taelole, and—smoothly, without dispute or violence—the drover Marrux Horbilar, a muscled, impressive, deep-voiced giant of a man, is named Lord of Ghandalar. His first council meeting makes it clear he'll suffer no coercion or determined resistance from anyone.

In Luuthaven, Esselk Storntal is elected to a third term as Master of Luuthaven, though his health is visibly failing; he now wheezes with every breath, and walks with a cane. Golaunt reappear in the Haven for the first time since the aftermath of the Boiling Eye plague. This time no such illness arises in the city, though golaunt are still watched warily.

2nd Swiftwing: In Ormscar, Lord Imperial Feskrar “the Furious” brutally puts down an uprising against his newly-heavy taxation in Stauntstone by swording every wealthy Stauntan merchant and telling their grieving kin to sell what they must to render their taxes by year-end—or he'll return to sword them, too.

3rd Swiftwing: In Lothran, agents of Grand Duke Zorthsel Haramandras, investigating dwindling taxes remitted by the hronsul (mayor) of the border-port of Lhoadur, discover that Hronsul Brammath Eirdruin and many of the master merchants of

Lhoadur are in the pay of Jamandar. In return, they are diverting tax funds, yielding control of much of their trade dealings, and turning over title after title to buildings in Lhoadur to Jamandran merchants. The Grand Duke travels to the port with the mustered armies of Lothran, summons a Great Court of priests and Septrur wizards, and spends much of the year interrogating citizen after citizen. Despite Jamandran protests and several attempts to rescue particular imprisoned merchants of Jamandar (some successful, some not), all whom the Grand Duke deems guilty—both of the blood of Lothran and of Jamandar—are executed, and Lhoadur is fortified. Haramandras publicly denounces the invasion of his land by Jamandar and the rape of Lothran wealth and sovereignty. The Lord Martial of Jamandar, Elvur Gorondar, responds by arresting and publicly executing the Grand Duke's envoy, calling him just one of many, many spies and wizards of Lothran who have covertly pillaged and sought to govern fair Jamandar for years upon years. Diplomatic contact between Lothran and Jamandar ceases. Due to the manner of all of the executions, bards take to calling this the time of Rolling Heads.

4th Swiftwing: In Ormscar, Stauntstone rises in arms against new and heavier taxes levied by the Lord Imperial Feskrar. His response is to send golaunt recently arrived from the Yarhoon, fleeing a dispute there, to dwell in Stauntstone, telling them they can slay and take the homes of anyone who doesn't pay them his taxes in full. By year-end, over forty Stauntan homes are held by golaunt, who deal harshly with local anger against them. Some citizens flee to Roserook or Waern in Lothran, and others band together to work harder, produce more, and so be able to pay their taxes.

In Lyonar, Queen Lorauna takes a Jamandran merchant as consort, marrying King Alarmak in midsummer. By year-end, she is visibly with child.

In Khalandorn, High Knight Starla Rowanar dies of cold while struggling through a winter blizzard. She'd become frail with age, afflicted by many niggling ailments, but remained iron-stubborn. At a council in Shields Hard, a young and unknown Knight, Larauna Velmantle, is elected to the high seat, because the assembled Knights dislike both of the foremost and most forceful candidates.

In the Iron Barony, aging Iron Baron Haurek Carmeirnar dies in early summer, gored by a boar he's hunting (a death he deliberately sought, having become nigh-blind and increasingly weak of limbs), and his popular, battle-skilled, twenty-six-summers-old son Aeden Carmeirnar is enthroned as Iron Baron.

5th Swiftwing: In Lyonar, Prince Rygard is born to Queen Lorauna and King Alarmak. Onstur Marlstag,

the heir to the dukedom, swears fealty to the crown and willingly undergoes a blood-binding spell that will enable Queen Lorauna and any reigning monarch of the Blood Lyon to make his blood catch fire from afar if ever he turns traitor. Onstur is restored to the dukedom of Marlstag.

In Marrovar, a fifth Fiendwave strikes. The Circle of Sorcery and the High Hall of Magecraft rebuff it and slaughter the fiends, but suffer some losses in doing so. Some of the fiends get into the city and hide, lurking and striking for days before being eliminated. The Lords of the Stonehall politely remind the two guilds of their desire to have the cause of Fiendwaves revealed and spells created to prevent the fiends from appearing—and the guilds politely reply that work continues on those two tasks.

6th Swiftwing: In Asmrel, an elderly and ailing Ruler Haeleth Braeror slips on wet cobbles in a storm, falls under the hooves of fast-pulling wagon horses, and is killed. The Lord Vraezers move swiftly to find a successor and succeed all too well: two Lords each proclaim a different person as the next Ruler. Lord Vraezer Taelon Rhyune presents the city with Ruler Angrath Braeror, a weaver from Jamandar; Lord Vraezer Imdur Sarthil announces Ruler Jard Braeror, a forester from Nor Umber. The various guilds move swiftly to back one Ruler or the other, and widespread strife seems imminent, until Vorstarr's Vigilants, a band of adventurers from Firelorn, attacks and kills Jard. His corpse reverts to its true form: a grotesque tentacle-headed creature. Lord Sarthil flees the city but is pursued by the Vigilants and slain; he, too, proves to be of the same race. Fear sweeps the city, and the surviving Lord Vraezers all announce their willingness to be magically examined by local temples to confirm their humanity. This is done, and Ruler Angrath Braeror announces the results to the city. Angrath decides to take the title of Palandrin, to reinforce his legitimacy in the eyes of Asmrans. Thereafter, it is used as an honorific by a few Braeror rulers and then as a title.

In Maurkaun, the long reign of Nurnlarra the Gem Queen ends very suddenly one night in early summer. Spell-battles in her realm rock all Castlemourn, the sky over Maurkaun glowing a roiling ruby and amber shot through with white stabbing lightnings. By morning, Nurnlarra, her realm, and those who fought her for it are all gone, every castle in the realm blasted apart and hurled down. The Land of Spell-Gems is transformed into a wasteland, the few survivors of the devastation mind-blasted and wandering witless, easy prey for prowling monsters even before sicknesses and involuntary shapechanges brought on by raging wild magic strike them down. Questors and sages later guess that Nurnlarra faced a revolt by some of the lesser wizards and sorcerers of Maurkaun, who from

their castles administered small areas of the realm for her. Their concerted attack proved to be a folly that destroyed all of them and Maurkaun into the bargain, as well as the Gem Queen.

7th Swiftwing: In Firelorn, Crown Duke Ortsil Nethurr is slain in a Harrag raid, and strife ensues as three senior advisors and his daughter Melaura all seek to rule.

In Lyonar, Queen Lorauna conceives again, and Princess Ilyteara is born just before year-end.

In Luuthaven, an increasingly-frail Esselk Storntal is elected to a fourth consecutive term as Master of Luuthaven. The wizards Albaerlus and Rhandalar have not been seen in the Haven for thirty-six years, but many younger, less powerful mages now dwell in the city. One of them, a handsome man by the name of Gharlaun, takes to selling *fleshmasks*. These single-use items are rather fragile paper masks, waxed and painted with cosmetics into the likeness of a human face. When placed on the face of someone who utters the word of activation written on the inside of the mask, they bond to the flesh of the wearer and melt into an illusion spell (of the face painted on the mask) lasting half a day, leaving no physical trace behind. Folk of the Haven take to wearing them not just to revels and taverns when trysting, but to attend trade negotiations, when shopping, and of course when committing crimes. This practice continues to be popular in Luuthaven to this day, despite several attempts to ban or limit it.

In the Iron Barony, Hawkhunt is beset by sudden waves of monsters out of the former realm of Maurkaun: strange beasts the like of which no Mournan has ever seen before. Sages believe most of the monsters are transformed humans and livestock from the fallen Land of Spell-Gems, as some of them revert back to human form when slain and others seem to be struggling to speak, with tongues and maws ill-suited for such tasks, as they're hacked down. Hawkhunn kill monsters until they're arm-weary; those that elude them scatter to the sekhovynd into the Duskadar, wild places all over the Barony, and even into Khalandorn.

8th Swiftwing: In Ormscar, Lord Imperial Feskrar "the Furious" defeats a small invading army mustered by the warrior-farmer Taulneth Delndarr of Waern and butchers Delndarr. It's widely believed in both Ormscar and Lothran that Grand Duke Zorthsel Haramandras of Lothran aided Delndarr with coin, food, and weapons, but the Lord Imperial is wise enough to say and do nothing to Lothran (after a few unofficial night raids into Seprtur were all magically turned around and sent back home, with the raiders forcibly shapechanged into beasts in their saddles).

9th Swiftwing: In Firelorn, the warrior Torl Damreth, formerly one of the principal advisors to the dead Crown Duke Nethurr, slays his rivals, forcibly marries Melaura Nethurr, and declares himself Lord Duke of Firelorn.

In Lyonar, spring begins with a mysterious message appearing in the melting snow: "Beware My Doomspell." Tragedy befalls the realm as spring turns into summer. A scroll appears in midair in the throne room, bearing the words "Behold the Doomspell." As it is unrolled and read, every human male in the room goes raving, shrieking mad—a slaying madness. They claw, strangle, gouge, and dash each other to death, rending loved ones, friends, and foes alike, ignoring personal danger, such as the waiting point of a drawn sword, in their eagerness to get at the next person. King Alarmak perishes, but not before having torn out the throat of his beloved queen and dashing her brains against the nearest wall. The infant prince and princess, elsewhere in Shalaunce Castle, survive unscathed, and the shaken Lyon dukes convene in Stormgate and hire wizards to discover who cast the Doomspell, before crowning Rygard I. The dukes declare themselves the Six Regents and begin training Rygard to be a great king.

10th Swiftwing: In Jamandar, Lord Martial Elvur Gorondar perishes by the jaws of a pack of wolves in the depths of a winter blizzard, and a small conclave of hastily-assembled militia name the young, handsome adventurer Malvaeros Harrowhand to succeed him. There's some grumbling as to who was involved in the choosing, how few of them were present, thanks to the weather, and even some wild talk that Gorondar was murdered and his body thrown to the wolves to conceal the deed. Priests use magic to learn the truth and trumpet it widely, and Harrowhand works hard—and successfully, if slowly, over the passing years—at earning the trust of his detractors. His obvious taste for the ladies is not seen as a serious flaw.

11th Swiftwing: In Ghandalar, Lord Marrux Horbilar orders the public execution of the courtier Hauthan Dorn for treason against Ghandalar. Dorn is the tenth courtier put to death by Horbilar for the same crime, and mutterings in the city grow. To Horbilar, treason increasingly seems to mean refusing to lie and steal on behalf of the Lord. Horbilar is amassing a huge fortune and living luxuriously, amid growing complaints from outlanders and the unguilded that they are being swindled and the Lord's Swords scorn their pleas for investigations. Less than a taelole after Dorn's head and body are separately raised on lances for all to watch the vultures feed, a priest of Haelarr speaks publicly of a secret agreement between Horbilar and the head of the Iron Guild. Horbilar orders the priest arrested, but his temple refuses to yield him;

the Lord's Swords storm the temple, and the citizens erupt in fury, killing the Lord's Swords and then the Lord himself, as his luxurious new palace is looted and vandalized. The guilds hire mercenaries to restore order. The temples call upon other Mournan temples to send armed believers to establish order and defeat the guild mercenaries (who kill, loot, and burn at will), and Ghandalar descends into war.

12th Swiftwing: In Ghandalar, an adventuring band from Luuthaven, the Thaelestorm, butchers its way through the upper ranks of the Gemcutters' Guild and then the Iron Guild, until it forces the two guilds to support its leader, the warrior Drost Lharnarr, as the next Lord of Ghandalar. Lharnarr leads the surviving guild members in raids on the leaders of the other two guilds and manages to kill the leading Browncloaks and capture the head of the Equine Guild, who agrees to support him as Lord. Lharnarr calls on the temples for a public meeting to bring peace to Ghandalar, and, at that meeting, gets the temples to support his rule in return for firm policing of a code of laws in which the temples have a say; the temples judge all accused miscreants, and the Lord takes no part in it. Sly Lord Drost, as the citizens soon take to calling him, settles in to preside over the rebuilding of Ghandalar's ravaged buildings and society, making trade deals that always seem to personally enrich him even as he establishes a police force, courts, and civic workers. Ghandalar lurches into peace and a slow return to prosperity.

1st Ornserpent: In Luuthaven, Esselk Storntal dies the night before the Conclave is to assemble to elect his successor. The Conclave, lacking his leadership, wrangles over procedure and order, but four candidates offer themselves for the mastership. Skarnor Buirookh, a tall, sarcastic maker of fish- and eel-pastes, is ultimately elected Master of Luuthaven.

2nd Ornserpent: In Jamandar, the prominent merchant Ildus Yorond is discovered to be a spy in the pay of Lothran, and is executed after he uses magic to slay militia members and the Shieldlord's agents attempting to capture him. It's thought his slayings were accomplished by using items, not spells. At his execution, his transformation into a gigantic serpent, which resulted in his death by battle, rather than formal execution, is thought to have been magic worked on him from afar rather than his own doing and to have been as much a surprise to him as it was to others present.

In Khalandorn, High Knight Larauna Velmantle is killed in combat in late spring, struck down by Orstul Hawkheather, a Knight who attacked the Velmantle lands. Hawkheather has no intention of trying to become High Knight, and says as much after he

rides to Shields Hard and tells the priests to convene a Council to elect a new High Knight. As word spreads of the planned moot, most of the Knights in Khalandorn seem spurred to make war on those around them, righting imagined wrongs and personal slights—and killing most of the female Knights left in the Realm! A few of the older Knights see the increasing peril to the realm, and successfully hire outland adventuring bands and wizards to make sure some female Knights survive. At the year-end Council, Osshana Darance is narrowly elected High Knight of Khalandorn.

3rd Ornserpent: On the Foreshore, several merchants of Nighdal are murdered by the Daertalon, a hitherto-unknown group that seems to seek to control trade in the ancient port. They leave spells on the bodies causing the corpses to say, "I was slain by the Daertalon" when touched by the living. Local gossip believes the Daertalon must be local men or at least concerned with specific goods and wares traded in Nighdal.

4th Ornserpent: In Tantanthar, High Lord Garlut Ensemmer dies suddenly of wildeye fever, shouting deliriously to the last, and his son Sargarl becomes High Lord of Tantanthar. The seacaptains of Rulverjak, long restless under Garlut's rule, declare their independence; and the young Sargarl orders they be ignored (not traded with, aided, or even spoken to by the rest of Tantanthar). He is obeyed. Seeking some sort of living, some of the Rulvan captains turn to piracy by year-end.

5th Ornserpent: In Tantanthar, Rulvan piracy comes to a swift end in the spring when Rulvan pirates try to board an old, wallowing ship of Nighdal whose crew summon undead out of the hold to fight. The undead spread swiftly from ship to ship, as if magically transported across open sea, until not a single Rulvan ship still has a living captain aboard. Rulverjak sends envoys to plead with Sargarl to accept their loyalty; he does so, but their ships are forever lost. The High Lord appoints a friendly Rulvan youth, Maskurman Huljack, to be the port's Speaker to him, and folk begin to refer to Rulverjak as Rulverjack.

6th Ornserpent: In Firelorn, Lord Duke Torl Damreth is slain by magic, dying horribly, torn apart by conjured monsters, before all his court. The warrior Tarth Ghelkor kills the wizard Klaed, whose spells slew Damreth and proclaims himself Lord Duke.

In Tantanthar, as spring deepens into summer, High Lord Sargarl is murdered in Sardulkin by the husband of a woman he seduced. Several Sardran guildmasters seek to seize power, proclaiming themselves the new High Prince of Tantanthar or

the rightful High Prince, restored again. The dead High Lord's uncle Belgarophaun, Garlut's younger brother, who departed Tantanthar's fogs and swamps years earlier to become a successful cloth merchant in Marrovar, is hastily found and convinced to return to the realm to become High Lord before all the guilds of all the ports erupt into war over who shall rule. He agrees largely because Marrovar's intrigues have become steadily worse, and the realm embraces him.

In Khalandorn, High Knight Osshana Darance faces a Council called to vote her out of office, but she survives the vote. Anlys Brightgauntlet tries to challenge Darance to a duel at the Council, but is unceremoniously clubbed senseless under the gauntlets of several elder Knights.

7th Ornserpent: In Ormscar, Lord Imperial Feskrar "the Furious" courts Lady Amsrille Wyndbow, the wealthy and beautiful widowed matriarch of the longtime ruling family of Roserook. Disbelieving and revolted, she scorns him, and in rage, he forces himself on her, kills her, and burns Wyndbow Tower. He orders all of Wyndbow blood executed and sets his warriors to scouring Roserook for them, encouraging the Imperial Swords to rape, pillage, and slay at will, as they do so. They then return to Dauntcastle, the Lord Imperial taking a dozen of the prettiest local women with him for purposes of soothing the angers of ruling, leaving a ravaged, plundered Roserook behind.

In Luuthaven, Skarnor Buirookh easily wins reelection as Master of Luuthaven. Although those who've felt the sharp edge of his tongue bear no love for him, most citizens love his mocking observations and habit of ridiculing liars and the overly-haughty. One of the candidates who stood against him is revealed as a shapechanger, which causes much anger, and the resulting gossip spreads general realization that upright, intelligent, speaking monsters of all sorts have settled in Luuthaven, largely unnoticed among the *fleshmask* false faces worn daily by many citizens. Some city inhabitants have tentacled faces, some large fangs and hair, and more than a few resemble human-sized lizards, snakes, or insects. Hysteria builds for almost a taelole, with the inevitable smattering of knifings and bodies floating in the ornpools . . . and then fades, as most citizens decide they can do nothing about the monsters among them, as they've obviously been there, in some cases for years, without causing a catastrophe.

8th Ornserpent: In Baerent, there is a severe winter, wherein High Lady Ormra Baerenthur takes a chill in a sudden blizzard, lingers in a fever, and then dies before her Lord can reach her. Lord Doraunt Baerenthur entreats priests to restore her to life, but attempts fail. He is broken with grief and renounces the uncaring Seven, banning all priests and temple worship from his realm.

In Lyonar, King Rygard, who has grown at an uncanny rate, achieving the size and maturity in both body and character of a much older man, sets aside the Six Regents with a polite but very firm proclamation in early spring, taking to wife Delathchaunsa, a tavern dancer of Stormgate, on the same day. By year-end, Queen Delathchaunsa gives birth to a son, Prince Alran.

9th Ornserpent: Though diplomatic silence has stretched unbroken between Jamandar and Lothran since the time of Rolling Heads, trade and travel between the two countries has grown, and everyday relations between commoners are cordial. Thronelar and the merchants' guild of Jamandar have dealt directly with each other, and each entreat their rulers to heal the breach in relations; this bears fruit this spring in Lhoadur, the border-port in Lothran, where Grand Duke Zorthsel Haramandras of Lothran and the Lady of the Land Jhalaera Malree Glassfeather of Jamandar meet and formally embrace in friendship, reportedly being personally warm and even flirtatious towards each other. Construction begins on a bridge over the River Semphril to replace the fords and ferries carrying the Thaalride between Jamandar and Lothran. It is completed late the following year.

In Lyonar, the onset of winter is heralded by the birth of King Rygard's second son, Prince Bleyrar. His older brother Alran is growing and maturing so rapidly—as their father is aging so rapidly—that there is open talk in the realm of magic afflicting the royal line. Rygard executes the lone courtier who dares to suggest a wizard should investigate what's happening to the royal family.

10th Ornserpent: In Baerent, Lord Doraunt Baerenthur relents and dissolves his ban on the Seven and their worship. Thereafter, he often speaks of talking with his beloved Ormra in his dreams.

In Lyonar, Queen Delathchaunsa dies in childbirth. Her daughter, Princess Mambra, emerges into the world vigorous, healthy—and so large her size is obviously the cause of her mother's death. However, priestesses of Munedra know better. They deliver three more living, healthy children (all sons: Andamar, Harlarm, and Sandror) from the dying queen after the grieving Rygard has stormed out. The queen's last gasped words are the names of the three young princes. Among themselves, the priestesses agree to say nothing of the existence of the three younger princes, rearing them in seclusion in temples of the Allmother. Talk of the Lyon curse spreads across Castlemourn.

11th Ornserpent: In Ormscar, the unpopular, boorish Lord Imperial Feskrar "the Furious" is attacked in an inn bedchamber while asleep in the arms of four

hired wenches. All five are butchered by a dwarf from Ironfell, Imdurr "Longaxe" Toroth, who declares himself Lord Imperial of Ormscar, and fights off no less than six would-be successors before year-end, confirming his title. Offering great amounts of gold to Ironar dwarves to join, Toroth begins to assemble his own bodyguard, the Guard Imperial.

In Lyonar, King Rygard has come to resemble a stooped, wrinkled, weak old man, and his two sons now seem not the young boys their ages should have them be, but rather pranksome, high-spirited, and lusty young men. Their antics in many beds, as well as taverns, saddles, and dueling-yards, have earned them the nickname the Wild Princes, and they seem to glory in their reputations. At only one year of age, Princess Mambra is walking and talking like a prim and serious young girl of perhaps nine or ten years of age, not a crawling babe. In the temples, growing up unaware of their lineage, her three hidden brothers are also old beyond their years. Real alarm about the royal family's aging is spreading beyond the Lyon dukes and courtiers; a fear of fell magic possibly spreading to afflict all Lyons is abroad in the kingdom.

12th Ornserpent: In Ironfell, a long-simmering clan feud erupts into open war. The two small clans of Ironmaster and Farebelow almost exterminate each other before a hastily-called Conclave exiles the survivors—in different directions—commanding them to dwell aboveground henceforth and to slay no dwarf. Some members of both clans murder each other on sight, but others take other family names and establish themselves as crafters and traders in human-dominated cities, forming shadowy secret societies to keep family ties from collapsing altogether. The Ironmasters adopt the Bold, a triangle enclosing a faceted gem, as their device, while the Farebelows use the sign of the Taloned Eye, a staring eye whose lashes are arranged in clusters of four inward-curving talons as if the eye was surrounded by four outward-reaching claws. Their feud turns to battles of trade, punctuated by occasional stabbings, and rages on—as it does to this day.

1st Thantoad: In the Yarhoon, the aging Orlhaurlen Mrokh Oubrah Daseyel is sorely wounded leading a raid deep into Lyonar. Many golaunt suspect he intended to die in battle, but when he dies suddenly on the journey home, almost all golaunt believe one of his bodyguard killed him, bribed by an ambitious Haurlen. Accusations fly, blood is spilled, and a wily Haurlen leads a force out of Mahrokh to restore order and rescue the wounded and divided golaunt from pursuing dwarf adventuring bands hired by Lyonar. That Haurlen, Gorog Kairagh Lokhlar, is ever humbly obedient to every word and whim of the maeraedra

and is rewarded by being named the new Orlhaurlen of the Yarhoon.

In Lyonar, King Rygard I dies of heartstop, falling on his face before all his court. The two Wild Princes refuse to return to Stormgate for any coronation, preferring to brawl and wench their ways across the land. Priests of the Seven take and hide Princess Mambra, for her own safety, after the solemn young lass is almost raped by a drunken Prince Alran, who slays three of her maids and a priestess trying to get to her. Duke Raumarl sends envoys to Dragonhead, Luuthaven, Asmrel, and Arshroon, publicly seeking wizards willing, for fair coin, to attend Lyonar and end the unnatural aging that afflicts the royal family of Lyonar. The two Princes separately but publicly demand Raumarl be slain and his head brought to them, but also each declare themselves the one true and rightful King of all Lyonar, and demand supporters gather to their banners and bring the severed head of their rival prince. Some Lyons find the identical wording of the two proclamations darkly humorous, but others find it ominous. What hidden hand is guiding both of the young royals?

In Luuthaven, Skarnor Buirookh is elected to a third term as Master, but faces a demand at the Conclave for an elected governing council of which he will be only one. Six speakers would all have one vote each, and the Master would have two, proposes Forlar Calantorn, who stands forth with the heads of Houses Doarove, Irjet, and Marhaen. To the astonishment of all attending—who are in an uproar, with hands going to hilts all over the chamber—Buirookh agrees to the formation of this council on the spot with every evidence of eager relief. The Conclave votes the council into existence but shouts down all attempts by the wealthy Houses to put family members or known servants into the six council seats. In the end, six rather bewildered poor folk of the streets end up as speakers.

2nd Thantoad: On the Foreshore, a merchant is murdered in Nighdal by the Daertalon, and other merchants hire adventurers to aid them in uncovering who or what is the Daertalon. They succeed in revealing to all that the Daertalon is a cabal of merchants of Nighdal, and the city erupts in a brief, vicious war of hirelings, apprentices, and traders. The Daertalon is destroyed, all slain but two merchants who flee by ship, vowing doom to all who lord it in Nighdal.

In Lyonar, no one manages to kill Duke Raumarl. The warring princes Alran and Bleymar assemble small armies and ride up and down the realm, each burning the crofts and homes of Lyons they judge support the other prince, but avoiding direct confrontations with each other. Angered by this wanton destruction of the land these royal fools are supposed to cherish,

all of the dukes of Lyonar join in Raumarl's attempt to attract powerful wizards to the realm to cure the royal family. The Wild Princes finally come face to face at Ironhelm Hill on the road just north of Estel, and their knights butcher each other. Alran is killed in the fighting, and Bleyrar mortally wounded. He dies by nightfall, but not before telling the Dukes of Norntree and Larancel that "Marlstag did this to me—to us all!" The six Lyon dukes crown Queen Mambra and vow to end Marlstag's magic somehow.

3rd Thantoat: In Lyonar, Queen Mambra, who is now in all respects a woman who's seen forty winters, rather than the child of five the Calaunthra says she is, agrees to submit to spellcastings by a dozen hired wizards intended to identify any magics at work on her and end them. The castings reveal Elevur Marlstag's body died in 6th Huthbear, but his pre-arranged spells hurled his sentience into the mind of a hapless and magically-enthralled minor wizard of Stormgate, whom he mentally overwhelmed. Marlstag has been at work, magically influencing the minds of his own son Onstur, Queen Mambra, and her three younger brothers. The castings also cost eight of the hired wizards their lives, as Marlstag lashes out at them through the magical links, before they manage to destroy him, causing days of dazed ravings to the surviving wizards and all the minds Marlstag has been influencing. The kingdom is now aware of the three hidden princes but believes the evil of Marlstag has at last been ended.

4th Thantoat: In Baerent, Lord Doraunt Baerenthur falls ill of a mysterious affliction that starts to sap his strength and flesh. Priestly cures manage only to slow its progress.

In Khalandorn, High Knight Osshana Darance is voted out of office at a Council in early spring, and her longtime rival Anlys Brightgauntlet is voted into the high seat. High Knight Brightgauntlet doesn't last the summer; she's slain in combat by Clarla Bracebow, who is confirmed as High Knight in a Council just before the snows fly. A rumor arises in Khalandorn and persists to this day: Anlys Brightgauntlet was dismembered in the fray, but someone snatched up her rolling head and cast spells on it that kept Anlys alive or made of her an intelligent undead (able to talk, think, see, reason, and remember). Somewhere in Khalandorn, her head—still as beautiful as it was the day it was severed from her body—gives advice to a succession of owners who keep it hidden and confer with it often. Some believe Anlys schemes to rule Khalandorn once more by advising someone who attains the high seat.

5th Thantoat: In Lyonar, Queen Mambra dies suddenly in spring after her horse breaks its leg in

a burrow-hole, throws her, and rolls on her in its agony. King Andamar I is crowned without dispute or incident. It is apparent that the castings of 3rd Thantoat ended the swift aging of Mambra and her three brothers.

In Firelorn, Lord Duke Tarth Ghelkor dies of mottleskin fever, and his son Aummunast Ghelkor becomes Lord Duke.

6th Thantoat: In Baerent, the Lady Ardythe Baerenthur, the unmarried eldest daughter of Lord Doraunt, and a reclusive and widely-feared sorceress, struggles to reach her father's court but dies on the road, stricken by some magical curse or hostile spell that transforms her body constantly from beast-shape to beast-shape, transformations wracking her with agony. Her foe, if such existed, is never identified—but within an hour of her passing, her tower is utterly destroyed, down to a smoking pit, in an explosion that rocks the realm.

7th Thantoat: In Ghandalar, years of growing wealth and confidence under the rule of Lord Drost Lharnarr come to an abrupt end in early spring when two of Lharnarr's fellow adventurers in the Thaelestorm kill Lharnarr in his bedchamber, announce that Ghandalar cannot stomach Lharnarr's villainies any longer, and propose that Orndror Holone, nephew of Haerrak Holone, onetime Lord of Ghandalar, become the new lord of the city. The temples object, proposing elections instead, and this is agreed to, but every candidate is swiftly murdered except Holone, who (though receiving not even a hundred votes) is elected Lord of Ghandalar as summer begins.

In Luuthaven, Skarnor Buirookh is elected to a fourth term as Master of Luuthaven, and calls upon the Conclave for on-the-spot elections for the six speakers. Only five speakers have attended the meeting, and Buirookh grimly reveals that a sixth has been murdered, the night before, for refusing to stand against Buirookh for the mastership. Buirookh further reveals that the murderer was the head of House Qaraunt, an accusation causing a murderous armed brawl in the Conclave, during which the accused Vreskor Qaraunt hurls killing magics around the chamber before being slain by six or so citizens at once. When the Dusks and scores of navy sailors arrive and order is restored, Buirookh gives an impassioned speech about governing as Master being high-impossible if the high and mighty Houses persist in trying to run things by making the speakers their puppets. He says the council is a good thing, but the wealthiest families must agree to let Luuthaven govern itself or face being massacred by angry Haven folk, once they find out all the Houses have been up to. On behalf of the Houses, three heads who are present at the Conclave (Forlar Calantorn, Irbrorn Doarove, and

Mreldro Irjet) stand forth and solemnly agree to take no hand henceforth in the running of Luuthaven. Six new speakers are elected.

8th Thantoad: In Luuthaven, with feelings still running high over House meddlings in governing matters, the coming of spring is marked by the murders of two speakers, and rumors sweep through the city that a third is a spy of Asmrel. Master of Luuthaven Skarnor Buirookh refuses to appoint speakers, calling an extraordinary Conclave to elect replacements. At that meeting, he announces that the Dusks, aided by several unnamed local wizards, have thoroughly investigated the rumors about the spy and concluded that they are entirely false, started by House Qaraunt in an attempt to discredit that speaker and get him removed from council. Larroke Qaraunt, present at the meeting, explodes in a tirade and snaps orders to bring a dozen of his hired agents, sitting in the Conclave, out of their seats to attack the Master with hitherto-hidden swords. The wizard Albaerlus "Manywands" appears out of thin air, blasts down Qaraunt and his hirelings, and thunders at the other heads of the Houses to behave, here and in the years ahead. Amid a shocked hush, two replacement speakers are elected, and the seemingly-ageless Albaerlus vanishes again. There's no sign of Rhandalar the Black.

9th Thantoad: In Baerent, "Old Tusks," the lusty and much-loved Lord Doraunt Baerenthur, dies of the wasting disease he's fought for years and names his only son Nestarl as his successor.

In Lyonar, Prince Harlarm suddenly accuses King Andamar of being the monster Marlstag, hiding inside a Lyon body, and attacks his brother. Many of the guards present at court find themselves under attack by courtiers revealing themselves as Harlarm's supporters, and a pitched battle rages through Shalaunce Castle, ending with both Harlarm and the king dead. The six Lyon dukes hastily gather at the Castle and force the last surviving Lyon to submit to probing spells by all the wizards and priests they can assemble (to make absolutely sure he's not Marlstag or under Marlstag's influence) before they put Sandror on the throne. No evidence of any such coercion is found in the living or dead royals. Word of this is proclaimed all over the kingdom, and Sandror III agrees to be tutored and guided by all six dukes. With peace restored, the realm flourishes during Sandror's reign.

10th Thantoad: In Ormscar, Lord Imperial of Ormscar, Imdurr "Longaxe" Toroth, orders the arrest and execution of the traders Morold Taunthorn and Usturgus Mharhallow as enemies of Ormscar. Mharhallow is taken and killed, his properties and

wealth seized, but Taunthorn escapes through Lyonar to Luuthaven, where he denounces Toroth as an evil, grasping dwarf who kills hardworking merchants and seizes their goods because he's too impatient to tax the wealth away and too lazy to try to steal it. The Lord Imperial announces a blood-payment of a thousand gems the size of a fist and free wagons with oxen to carry them off for anyone who brings him Taunthorn's head. However, he jails and kills the first two men to try to collect it (they brought the heads of other men, claiming them to be Taunthorn), and no third attempt is publicly made to claim the reward. Taunthorn departs Luuthaven for Dragonhead and disappears (deliberately, most Mournans believe).

11th Thantoad: In Tantanthar, an outland caravan seeking a route overland from Ullscove to Tel Harbor vanishes in the swamps, drowned to the last flask and hoof.

In Lyonar, King Sandror, whom the dukes have sat down with an endless parade of possible queens, urging him to marry and father heirs, marries a beautiful commoner from Estorna. Queen Darlaera is not one of the dukes' choices, but proves to be a kind, loving, and principled woman, wiser than her husband and fair to all. She is pregnant by year-end.

12th Thantoad: In Imundar under Mount Glath, several dwarves forge a flesh-hammer, a weapon that does more harm to foes if the wielder lets it drink of his vitality. It drinks life-essence from those it slays and those who lend it their energies willingly, reducing them to bones and dust. Both its makers and the clan elders fear it. Many want it destroyed, others ask how, still others say Amaunt and Haelarr must have empowered and inspired its creation (and so, destroying it will be unholy defiance). In the end, the city elders agree to wall it away in a cavern at the heart of Imundar, to be retrieved only when Imundar is in grave peril. This is done.

In Lyonar, Prince Alsandyr is born before the coming of spring. By year-end, Queen Darlaera is with child again.

1st Khornalysk: In Lyonar, Queen Darlaera dies in childbirth. The babe, a daughter, is stillborn. King Sandror is inconsolable. Fearful clergy cast many spells on the dead queen and princess, but no trace of foul play or dark magic is found. Princess Namauthra, named for Darlaera's mother, is buried with all honor. A despairing King Sandror turns to drink and debauchery, giving the infant Prince Alsandyr into the keeping of the local clergy of Amaunt to be reared fit for the throne. At Sandror's invitation, the six dukes, in council with senior clergy of the Seven, take over the daily duties of ruling the realm.

In Luuthaven, Skarnor Buirookh resigns as Master of Luuthaven, refusing to stand again. He conducts a Conclave that elects—without incident—a new Master and six new speakers and then vanishes completely from the Haven; he walks out of the Conclave hall and is simply never seen again. The new Master is Targen Sorbel, a former envoy of Asmrel—who in his pre-vote speech to the assembled citizens, offers to reduce the Master's votes in council from two to one, giving more real power to the six speakers, and to reduce the term of office of the Master to just a year, so as to make the Master far more beholden to the people. Once named Master, he sits down before everyone with the new speakers and conducts a council meeting in which they vote to make these changes. Over the years that follow, from then until now, Targen Sorbel has won re-election annually in Conclave on ten occasions without anyone standing for office against him.

2nd Khornalysk: In Ghandalar, as summer ends, the wily, glib-tongued Lord Orndror Holone, whose Masked Fangs have slain scores of citizens who disagreed with Holone or happened to own something Holone wanted, makes a fatal mistake; he kills a member of the former Thaelestorm adventuring band. The surviving members capture and kill Holone—slowly, parading him around the streets of the city on a platform atop a wagon as they sever one limb after another from the screaming lord, whom they keep conscious with spells. They then announce that one of their number, Ulskar Brandlorn, is now Lord of Ghandalar and will serve any who dispute this as they served Holone. For his part, Brandlorn promises to restore order, try to find and execute all of the Masked Fangs, and then hold elections to select a new Lord of Ghandalar. As winter descends, folk in Ghandalar learn fear; large armed mercenary bands hired by Brandlorn keep order in the streets, and anyone who criticizes or opposes the lord, from children to aged crones, promptly gets arrested and beheaded as another Masked Fang.

3rd Khornalysk: In Ghandalar, Ulskar Brandlorn announces elections as spring deepens into summer and says he'll run in them. He asks the temples to conduct the elections and name the candidates—they do so—and as in the elections held in 7th Thantoad, every candidate except himself gets murdered. Although the temples announce that three of the dead candidates got more votes than Brandlorn (and hundreds of ballots were adorned with some variation of "Anyone but Brandlorn for Lord"), Brandlorn announces he's won, thanks the citizens for their loving, overwhelming, and truly inspiring support, and continues as Lord of Ghandalar, issuing new decrees that tax the guilds and limit their

memberships and powers. Scattered protests are put down brutally by the Lord's growing army.

4th Khornalysk: In Haunthills, "the Old Baron" Tarnbaron of Orlsgate Harlax Daurmortaun dies of heartburst on his throne, and his longtime seneschal and court chamberlain Marl Olburtaun proclaims himself Tarnbaron without any public opposition.

5th Khornalysk: In Tantanthar, the Lartharford Allcrafts Guild, a newly-formed, ambitious, and wealthy amalgamation of many smaller Larthar guilds, joins with the Sakymouth Artificer's Guild (long a haughty and wealthy force subtly opposing enforcement of the High Lord's decrees in Sakymouth) in demanding the High Lord of Tantanthar give them a vote in all matters of taxation and street justice pertaining to their two cities. High Lord Belgarophau Ensemmer offers to meet with them in Amrest, poorest of the land's ports, and the senior guildmembers agree. The moot is cordial, the High Lord reportedly agreeing to the formation of a realm-wide voting council of guilds that would be able to break the High Lord's decrees, but everyone who attends is suddenly stricken with a mysterious brain-rotting affliction, causing the stricken to go mindless as their brains literally become liquescent and run out their ears until they cease even involuntary functions and perish. The guildmembers all perish, but the High Lord miraculously recovers; there are many fearful mutterings in guild meetings all over Tantanthar about that suspicious recovery. One guildmember boldly goes to the High Lord to confront him and is felled by the same fatal condition. A sullen Tantanthar sees, heeds, and understands.

In Ghandalar, Ulskar Brandlorn announces that recent deaths of city merchants, widely believed to have been ordered by the lord himself, were in fact the work of foul murderers from Eltalon, a place whose aggression Ghandalar can no longer tolerate. Brandlorn declares war on Eltalon and sends several thousand well-armed Hawks of Ghandalar marching straeklith on Eltalon. Well outside the walls of Ghandalar, this army is blasted to a handful of dazed survivors by spells unleashed by unidentified wizards. The Gemcutters' Guild and Iron Guild both claim to have hired those wizards and call on Lord Brandlorn to renounce his lordship. Brandlorn sends the relatively few warriors he has left to slay all members of any of the four city guilds they can find and identify, but before nightfall, horrific spells shatter his palace, with him inside it, and send it raining down on the streets around. Pitched battles erupt as everyone in Ghandalar attacks the Lord's warriors; folk start to loot and pillage shops and warehouses, and someone magically summons monsters into the city and lets them loose to roam the streets. When word of the

fighting reaches Asmrel, a wealthy merchant shipper, hight Ostel Yarmarkh, musters all the mercenaries he can hire, loads them aboard two of his ships, and sets sail for Ghandalar. His mercenaries kill everyone who offers them any resistance, and when the surviving folk of Ghandalar are all cowering in their shops or barricaded inside temples, Yarmarkh declares himself the new Lord of Ghandalar. He asks the guildmasters and the wizards who ended Brandlorn's foul villainy to meet with him in the temple of Amaunt, to forge a new future for fair Ghandalar. No wizards appear, but the guildmasters do attend; Yarmarkh reaches a private agreement with them and settles down to ruling the city as the guilds rebuild it.

6th Khornalysk: A great host of elves from the Harrag raid right across Baerent and Haunthills, reaching easternmost Jamandar. This Bloodarrow Raid is beaten back with many dead on all sides.

High Knight Clarla Bracebow, a fiery-tempered but inspiring leader and capable warrior whose popularity has risen steadily over her years in the high seat, gets tired of increasingly-heavy monster raids out of the Haunt of Eagles and musters an army to put down the beasts for a time. She leads it far sarrind along the Haunt, battling all the way, and only retreats when the first winter storms arise. However, she falls in battle before reaching Khalandorn, ambushed by a great raiding band of monsters. Enraged Knights raid the Haunt from Khalandorn all winter, losing as many Khalandornar to the weather as to the foe (and giving the realm the war-cry: "For the blood of Bracebow!"), but clinching what the fallen High Knight achieved: weakening the inhabitants of the Haunt enough that they dare not raid in force into Khalandorn for years. A Council in Shields Hard elects Asmaera Ethalaum High Knight of Khalandorn, and her first act is to make one of the Knights of Khalandorn the Knight-Governor of the Haunt of Eagles and rebuild an old castle for him in Great Sword.

7th Khornalysk: In Jamandar, Lord Martial Malvaeros Harrowhand, popular and debonair, dies of heartburst while lovemaking in The Bower, an infamous local brothel. His blustering Horselord, Nallo Harvethen, is widely expected to succeed him, but the militia bladelords of Jamandar, in solemn conclave, instead choose the quiet Shieldlord, Dlezendor Harroen. Harvethen remains loyal, though some say he also continues as he always has, scheming to rule without ruling.

In Ghandalar, a city that has been swiftly rebuilt under Lord Ostel Yarmarkh as trade flourishes and the guilds grow more powerful again, Lord Yarmarkh heralds spring with a flurry of new decrees that increase his personal powers, increase taxes on the guilds and the temples (but not the citizenry directly),

and announces the founding of a new army, with the intent of rightfully conquering Eltalon at last and building a new empire from the Tharksun to the banks of the Luuth. These words cause the wizards who destroyed Lord Brandlorn and his dreams of conquest to reappear; they blast Yarmarkh's new palace to rubble, with him inside, and vanish again, their identities as mysterious as ever. The temples announce elections for a new lord; the guilds all put forward a candidate; the temples name another four (and offer all candidates defended housing inside the various temples); and a new Lord of Ghandalar is peacefully chosen without any signs of violence or ballot fraud—the tailor Unstrable Marthoon.

8th Khornalysk: In Ormscar, Lord Imperial Imdurr "Longaxe" Toroth executes Uldin Stonesword and his son Glorn and declares the Stonesword dwarf family traitors to the realm, seizing their dwellings, quarrying and merchant-shipping businesses, and wealth. Folk in Stauntstone, where the Stoneswords virtually ruled, openly mock the Lord Imperial's deeds and decree as self-serving, greedy butchery, saying the just and honest Stoneswords weren't traitors at all but merely wealthy rivals whose gold Toroth coveted.

9th Khornalysk: In Asmrel, Ruler Angrath Braeror dies of several successive attacks of heartstop, despite healing spells, potentially ending years of wild prosperity and burgeoning sophistication—and, some say, decadence. The Asmran temple of Haelarr presents the paladin Palandrin of Haelarr, named after the rulers of Asmrel, as rightfully of the blood of Braeror that same night (arguing that as Palandrin is a title taken by anyone ascending to the Zamosar Throne, this Palandrin must rightfully ascend), and the Lord Vraezers spend an entire taelole examining their proofs before concurring. Ruler Palandrin "the Just Warrior" is proclaimed as a devout, battle-hardened servant of Haelarr and champion of the city who will be the greatest ruler Castlemourn has ever known. The whirlwind of prosperity resumes.

10th Khornalysk: In Ghandalar, Lord Unstrable Marthoon rules quietly and fairly, and the guilds grow bolder. They demand some of their wealth and powers taken by previous Lords be restored to them. Lord Marthoon ignores these demands, but in the days that follow, many guild members and their kin die of poison. The Lord blames this on the usual murderous and lawless guild infighting, but increasing suspicion falls on him as the deaths continue; it seems any guild member who eats or drinks in Ghandalar soon dies. Panicked guild members take ship out of the city, and productivity falls. Lord Marthoon beseeches wizards for hire to come to Ghandalar and purge these foul poisons, and destroy those who are using them to

deal death. He then begins seizing guild property, ostensibly to pay for any wizards who do respond to his call. The guilds try to establish themselves in Luuthaven, asking shippers to shun Ghandalar and follow them to their new port, but they are rebuffed in Luuthaven, where organized groups of troublemaking outlanders are unwelcome. As winter comes, some wizards respond to Marthoon; they arrive, blast him with spells (sparing his tower this time), and depart again, their names and motives as mysterious as ever. The temples wearily hold lordship elections again, and the winner is a fast-talking seacaptain, Baerlyn Morthar, who promises to abandon this madness of empire forever.

11th Khornalysk: In Asmrel, the clothier Alurlan establishes himself as the first successful splendorpalm (independent custom designer of goods for wealthy patrons, a term derived from Alurlan's boast that he can, at will, capture the splendor of the very best of luxury in his palm). The Lord Masters at first dismiss him as a weak-headed charlatan and poseur, but when his success becomes obvious, they turn to Palandrin to force Alurlan to join a guild. The Ruler refuses to so trample the freedom of any Asmran, just to please other Asmrans. Rival splendorpalms soon arise, as the Golden becomes ever wealthier and plunges deeper into elaborate diversions.

12th Khornalysk: In Jamandar, the aging Lady of the Land Jhalaera Malree Glassfeather summons Horselord Nallo Harvethen for a private meeting. Neither reveal what is said, but it's widely believed Harvethen received a stern warning about his plots and shadowcloak activities; they either lessen or become far more covert.

In Ghandalar, Lord Baerlyn Morthar outlaws the four guilds of the city, claiming they are behind all of the strife, bloodshed, and oppression that has afflicted Ghandalar for so long. He moves to jail all known guildmembers and seize their property, hiring outland guards to watch over the most skilled guild crafters, so they can continue to work in shackles (their only pay being food and water). Even unguilded citizens are arrested and jailed, with all their goods seized and their dwellings rented out to outlanders. Such practices continue until it's clear to all that Morthar knows very well that he's incorrectly deeming unguilded persons as guild members, just to get his hands on their wealth. Only the temples survive unscathed, and Morthar makes wild accusations against them, saying they've turned from the holy ways of the Seven to hide guild trading within their walls. The priests hire mercenaries as guards against the Lord's ever-bolder forces. Frustrated, Morthar scours the citizenry again for hidden guild agents and traitors, jailing more folk and seizing yet more property. Some citizens retain

their freedom by agreeing to work for Morthar as investors abroad, putting his ever-greater wealth to work. The lord's mania grows; he seizes the homes and wealth of many of these trade agents in their absences while working abroad for him.

In Luuthaven, a seacaptain named Omsur Darthan murders two tavern dancers in public and escapes capture by plunging out a tavern window into an adjacent ornpool, from which he does not rise. He's generally believed to have gone mad, wielded his knife, and then drowned in the dark swamp waters. When Darthan's ship arrives late the next day, sailing in from Firelorn with a hold full of live oxen, and Omsur Darthan swings down from the deck to the dock, there's some move to arrest him for double murder, until someone points out that he can't possibly have killed anyone in a Luuthaven tavern if he was at sea. This starts citizens thinking about other instances where individuals were seen in two places at once or where they couldn't have been. The Haven, it seems, is infested with shapechangers adept at acting the parts of the real people they mimic.

1st Drusthorn: In Ironfell, charismatic dwarves arise in Hammerhall, the Halls of Light, and the Diamond Caves, all exhorting their fellows to independence, throwing off the iron yoke of Forgedeep to found their own realms. Many younger dwarves are swayed, and many elders are baffled as to why the speakers all use the same words. A party of dwarves travels to Septrur to beg the aid of human wizards, offering much gold, and return with mages who cast many spells to break mind-whispering enchantments. The speakers cease their speeches and schemes and seem unaware of the beliefs they so strongly propounded—but who enspelled them, and why, is never discovered.

2nd Drusthorn: In Lyonar, Sandror dies in a drunken fall down a Shalaunce Castle stair (no foul play is suspected), and his son takes the throne as King Alsandyr VI. Though he's but fourteen years of age, Alsandyr is confident and strong of character; he politely but firmly dismisses the ruling council, retaining the clergy—but not the dukes—as advisors at court. Nettled, and with the troubled times of the dark evil of Marlstag now but fast-fading memories in Lyonar, the Lyon dukes return to their own lands and pursuits, growing more restive and independent-minded as Alsandyr's reign continues. Some harbor hostility to the young king, though none offer open treason.

3rd Drusthorn: In Haunthills, Tarnbaron Marl Olburtaun dies of brainworm infestation, going into a dying frenzy and collapse before his court. The court erupts in stabbings and intrigues for three days of many tarnbarons misrule, until the wealthy miller

Lorlen Darr assembles an armed band, ruthlessly hunts down the last two pretenders (in hiding in different citadels in Orlsgate), and proclaims himself Tarnbaron of Orlsgate, ruler of the Haunthills.

4th Drusthorn: In Lothran, a chain of magical doors is discovered in many of the recently-built faelorn (mansions of the wealthy). When a particular unobtrusive door in one grand house is opened at the right time of day, it leads not into the next room but to a room in another faelorn. Some six-and-ten mansions are linked in a long chain or sequence. Rumors of treason and fell magic fly, but Grand Duke Zorthsel Haramandras conducts a thorough investigation with the aid of many loyal wizards of Septrur; his interrogations of all sixteen of the Thronelar families involved reveals that while several individuals had discovered the properties of a few doors, none of them knew who had constructed these magics and for what purpose. Investigations begin into which builders and artificers might have worked on all of the mansions, but many gnome families were hired and allowed to bring in workers as they saw fit, without yielding accountings to their patrons. The task of uncovering who may have created the chain of doors seems increasingly impossible and continues to this day.

In Marrovar, a small Khalandornar army attacks the city, aided by some sorcerers from Nighdal and other Foreshore ports who call themselves the New Lords of Marrovar. The invaders are routed and hurled back into Khalandorn at the battles of Sundrinside and Burningtrees—not by the relatively puny forces of Marrovar but by an army from Ghandalar, who'd just sailed to Marrovar to engage in The Sheathed Swords War, friendly battle training with the forces of Marrovar. The Ghandalans peacefully depart for home, and the Marrovians hasten to strengthen their army, the Lords of the Stonehall imposing heavy taxes to cover the costs of doing so.

5th Drusthorn: In Tantanhar, High Lord Belgarophau Ensemmer is attacked in the fading days of summer on the streets of Sardulkin by a robed and hooded man who slumps down into a thing of hissing tentacles that strangles, shreds, and dismembers most of the High Lord's bodyguard in a few moments of frantic sword-waving on their part. Ensemmer blasts his monstrous assailant with a small, unidentified, and hitherto-secret magic item; the tentacled monster vanishes, magically whisked away, and is not seen again.

In Khalandorn, High Knight Asmaera Ethalaum is killed while trying to quell a battle between two rival Knights, Rorthar Thannau and Baraskyn Dlayvur. She rides between their armies, and both male Knights order their armsmen to butcher her much smaller band—a task they swiftly accomplish. Thannau and

Dlayvur have amassed many supporters, increasingly dividing Khalandorn into two camps, and they spend the year in their saddles, battling each other from one end of the Realm of the Flame to the other. Both deliberately slay priests and envoys trying to spread word of a Council; both want to have crushed the other before the next puppet lass is elected to the high seat. Both intend to cozen, coerce, or even magically control the next High Knight to do their bidding, so they become the true ruler of Khalandorn. Thannau wants to achieve this so he can conquer the Iron Barony, while Dlayvur wants to conquer Estorna and Marrovar. They fight on into the winter, sapping the strength of all Khalandornar and giving the wolves and bears much to feed upon.

6th Drusthorn: In Haunthills, the Shining Stag is seen for the first time in more than two centuries. This bright, vivid ghostly apparition of a baleful, watchful stag is seen by many in Glusgar and Orlsgate. Priests of the Seven disagree sharply as to its significance, but common Castlemourn agrees that it presages the birth of someone important, who will rise to prominence in the future.

In Ghandalar, Lord Baerlyn Morthar's tyrannies become too great to bear. The guilds incite the citizens to rise against him, and a worried trade delegation of a dozen city merchants meets with Morthar, overpowers him, breaks his wrists and ankles to render him helpless, and then publicly butchers him. As a public joke, they announce that the four most notorious prostitutes in the city, who parody the sophistications and pretensions of Asmrel's high society, will henceforth be its ruling Princes. The guilds intend to make all decisions themselves, and these four courtesans will be empty-headed, wanton figures of mockery—mere figureheads. However, the four (Alessra, Delsharra, Jemesrelle, and Orbra) are revealed to be both sharp-witted and perceptive, and rule with a style and consideration for their people that rapidly makes them very popular. The citizenry accord them the title Bhel, which means "honored", and the guildmasters relinquish the making of the small daily decisions to them.

In Khalandorn, the war between Thannau and Dlayvur drags on, with Dlayvur's side suffering. By late spring, Dlayvur has been driven out of the realm, and Thannau triumphantly arranges a Council for Shields Hard—only to be slain by an adventuring band hired by Dlayvur, who accompanies it. Dlayvur then spends the summer fighting Thannau's remaining supporters, slaying as many as he can, as all Knights (in large armed bands) converge on Shields Hard. At the Council, all of the surviving Knights tell Dlayvur to stop and step away from the high seat for good, or they'll band together to kill him and despoil his family lands. They then elect Sapphiera Telmantle, a young

and untried-in-battle Knight who's just inherited her father's lands, High Knight of Khalandorn. Sapphiera is stunningly beautiful, an accomplished actress and manipulator-of-men, who is scared but honored to be chosen to guide Khalandorn. She sets out to do it the only way she knows how, breaking hearts and winning friends swiftly as she tries to quell disputes. Not knowing what she should be aiming the realm for, in the years ahead, she's wise enough to ask every Knight she gets along with just that and so wins popularity both for consulting them and by speaking and acting in accordance with what most Knights believe they want.

In the Iron Barony, pirates, hired by Marrovian merchants, some say, raid Chemmore in early spring. An enraged Iron Baron Aeden Carmeinar chases them into Glamryn Bay and is lost at sea in a fierce winter storm that sinks his entire navy. His son Rorldarr Carmeinar, a veteran commander in the Iron Host (the Barony's army), who prefers riding in the outdoors with sword in hand to doing battle with words, is enthroned as the new Iron Baron—ruler of a land about to be poorer, now that it can no longer ruthlessly control the trade in iron shipped to the mainland from the Iron Isles.

7th Drusthorn: In Jamandar, the frail and aged Lady of the Land Jhalaera Malree Glassfeather dies after a long illness abed, and Balastaera Glassfeather, a large and energetic daughter of the most prominent Glassfeather household (of Windhollow Rise), is ritually chosen her successor. Balastaera, who travels much and is a successful trader in herbs and herbal medicines in her own right, is initially unwilling to accept the Ladyship, but priests pray that she be sent signs; her mind is changed by meetings with ghosts that she refuses to discuss with anyone. As Lady, she begins to work well with Lord Martial Dlezendor Harroen.

In the an-sarrind Haunt of Eagles, at midsummer, a black stone tower appears overnight atop a peak overlooking Sparruk. The next night, a brilliant white radiance flares up from it to outshine Thelseene, so bright it is blinding to look upon, and dragons are seen silhouetted against this light, flocking to the tower. In the morning, it is gone. Adventurers who struggle to reach the area before year-end find no trace of tower or dragons.

8th Drusthorn: On the Foreshore, Thusker Orlin proclaims himself Sealord of Thamral as spring warms into summer and is promptly denounced by Alagh Marhook, the Thorm of Endeluth, and Burlgar Dawnhorn, Thorm of Stormstay. Marhook is murdered in the street outside his own tower in Endeluth a mere handful of days later by several unknown masked assailants. After another handful of days, Dawnhorn

is butchered on his own high seat by the Sealord's envoys. The Thorns of Warhorn Rock and Marag's Pool order their seacaptains to prepare for war, but the Sealord's navy, larger than anyone in the Coves had suspected (due to mercenaries hired in the Iron Isles and Khalandorn), sails into the harbor at Warhorn Rock. Its Thorm, Runstul Broon, publicly pleads for peace and accepts the Sealord's rule and authority unreservedly. As Warhorn Rock has traditionally been the most fiercely independent Cove, much of the Foreshore abandons plans to resist Orlin, especially as summer deepens to full heat. The Sealord's navy blockades Marag's Pool and sinks a cutter from Maerlur that tries to run through the blockade. By wintertide, the Sealord rules the Foreshore loosely, with the notable exception of Nighdal.

9th Drusthorn: In Baerent, Lord Nestarl Baerenthur dies in a spring boar-hunt, torn apart by lurking monsters. His widow, the popular Lady Nuthlore Baerenthur, rules in his stead.

10th Drusthorn: In the Haunthills, Daeren Tarmor chases the last Tarnbaron of Orlsgate out of the city at the height of summer and proclaims himself Lord of the Haunthills. Tarnbaron Lorlen Darr is found murdered outside a tavern in rural Firelorn days later, but Lord Tarmor denies all involvement. His protests are mocked by the murder of his newly-appointed envoy to Firelorn, whose body is found in precisely the same spot as the Tarnbaron's, lying in the same pose and slain in the same manner.

11th Drusthorn: Terrible raids of nightmare beasts out of the Mistcloak Forest scour Baerent and Firelorn, ravaging many eastern farms of Baerent. There are reports of the Mistcloak beasts fighting in an organized manner, led by stag-headed men riding great hunting cats, but no such bodies are among the slain.

In Marrovar, four warships mysteriously disappear from their moorings—forever—not quite a rathren after ten new keels are set in the shipyards. Gossip is heavy in the city about possible corruption (shipwrights in league with pirates or outland merchant fleet owners), but the Lords of the Stonehall officially ignore the incident and its financial implications.

12th Drusthorn: In Baerent, Lady Nuthlore Baerenthur finally accepts a repeatedly-made offer of troops from Lord Duke Aummunast Ghelkor of Firelorn to garrison Warhorn Well against raids out of the Mistcloak Forest, but continues to resist Ghelkor's ardent suit for her hand.

In the Haunt of Eagles, a mountaintop explodes not far sarrind of Great Sword, raining stones down on a wide area and leaving a plume of dust that doesn't

fade for more than a taelole. The riven peak is now crowned by a crater, but shows no signs of volcanic activity; whatever exploded seems to have been located in now-destroyed chambers. The crater walls are honeycombed with the exposed mouths of scores of passages and chambers, leading deeper into the mountains and, as several Khalandornar adventuring bands discover, swarming with monsters.

In the Iron Barony, the ghostly head of a dragon is seen rising out of the Wyrmwwell. It glows faintly, and observers can see through it. It whispers words in the Crown Tongue that men strain to hear before sinking down again. Some visitors to Wyrmwwell report hearing fragmentary phrases, whispered loud and harsh out of empty air, upon entering empty rooms. A sage who listens to their tales is of the firm opinion that they are hearing echoes, somehow preserved for many days, of what the ghostly dragon said. However, just what those words were are secrets both the hearers and the sages who've assembled different fragments into longer passages of speech seem reluctant to tell, even when offered much coin.

1st Gryphon: In Ormscar, as summer comes to the streets of Dauntcastle, several adventuring bands working together, or unwittingly directed to attack at the same time by a common client, almost manage to assassinate Lord Imperial of Ormscar Imdurr "Longaxe" Toroth, but the Guard Imperial saves the unpopular ruler's life, spending many of their own lives in the process. The belief that the adventurers were hired and directed by an unseen, magically-powerful master is bolstered by the sudden conflagrations that immolate them all as soon as Toroth escapes. No less than fourteen hitherto-unknown cabals, brotherhoods, and fellowships publicly claim credit for the attempt on the Lord Imperial's life, but many of these announcements are believed to be pranks or the work of petty thieves seeking to win reputations. The Lord Imperial devotes some effort to recruiting spies and night-knives (hired killers-by-stealth) of his own and rebuilding the Guard Imperial, rather than trying to identify and hunt down those who tried to slay him.

In Luuthaven, as spring gives way to summer, a miscast spell, magical trap, or the attack of an unseen foe employing spells kills Ildreth Mourarr, a minor wizard. Mourarr's house (and the wizard inside it) are blown apart in an explosion that hurls debris far and wide. These fragments include a coffer that bounces hard on a wharf and bursts open. A dozen glowing gems—ioun stones?—fly out and scatter in the air, swiftly going dull and darting about like insects. Many citizens pursue them, but no one is reported to have managed to catch one; many witnesses say the stones flitted and flew as if aware of attempts to grasp them.

In the Broken Lands, adventurers exploring the ruins of fallen Maurkaun report that magical discharges flow and burst spontaneously across the land and uncovering even fragments of magic items in the ruins cause gatherings of magic that affect living creatures, both searing flesh and augmenting personal abilities and magical aptitudes. The Sarn Shield adventuring band of Ruthstay returns home able to cast spells by mere act of will—magics they could not wield before. Their leader, the warrior Malasgar Braeren, can now drain magic from items he grasps and heal himself, though, as before, he cannot read or cast even the simplest spell.

2nd Gryphon: In the Yarhoon, golaunt raids on caravans traversing Wind Pass grow very heavy. By the end of summer, trade has been so disrupted an army from Lyonar and several Ironar adventuring bands hired by Lothran invade the northern Yarhoon, butchering golaunt as far south as Klael before being beaten back.

In Lyonar, the elderly Duke of Norntree dies in a hunting accident in the first snowfall of winter, thrown from his horse and impaled on several tree branches. His dukedom falls to his only heir, his daughter the Lady Cimmera Norntree. Several of the dukes—and wealthy merchants of Jamandar and Lyonar—reveal a sudden interest in marrying her.

In Luuthaven, a lone, disembodied human eyeball flies around the city one bright summer morning. It turns as if to peer at living beings it passes and watch their activities. For the most part it drifts, seemingly aimlessly, but darts about acrobatically to elude all attempts to capture or strike it. It drips blood from time to time, leaving spots behind, and wizards very familiar with *arcane eye* spells who encountered this eye all believe it was an actual eyeball and no sort of magical construct or illusion.

In Dragonhead, two outland adventuring bands make separate and quite determined efforts to explore the empty tower of the wizard Largrymm. Despite using powerful magic and consisting of large numbers of veteran adventurers, the Swords of Valor and the Iron Maces both apparently fail. None of them return from scaling the tower except as a series of severed hands that appear on tables in Dragonhead taverns clutching notes that read simply: "Dissuade others."

In Marrovar, two large city blocks of aging, ramshackle dockside warehouses burn to the ground on the same day a trader's wagon-train of squared timbers arrives in the city. There's open talk of guild arson in the streets, but the guilds involved and the Lords of the Stonehall remain silent. After a taelole, the talk dies away. In private guild meetings, several of the Lords are sarcastically advised by their guilds that a new expectation has been laid upon the Lords

of the Stonehall: the prevention of any more of these coincidences.

3rd Gryphon: In Lyonar, King Alsandyr VI joins the ranks of suitors seeking the hand of the Lady Cimmerale Norntree. Unlike the others, he seems to interest her, though she does not race to profess love for him or agree to become his queen.

In Luuthaven, merchants go missing—*lots* of merchants, vanishing one by one during their usual business travels around the city. The usual causes (slavers, assassins' knives and quiet disposal tied to something heavy and slid into an ornpool, or even tentacled things reaching up from the ornpools) are suspected in each disappearance, but by late summer, citizens have realized the extent of the vanishings and are becoming really alarmed. Although many folk start to take precautions, the disappearances continue.

In Sparruk, a dozen or more huge explosions shake the land, tremors strong enough to topple buildings in Nenth on the River Esplander and be felt in Glael, Harbridge, and Thornar. The blasts occur at seemingly random times throughout the summer, and even folk dwelling near the huge craters they leave behind are bewildered as to their cause. The tortured earth and rock in the craters glow fitfully from time to time and twist spells cast nearby awry into strange, unintended results. Adventurers daring to explore the craters report finding nothing of value and no trace of evil mages, monsters, or anything else alive in the rubble. Some adventurers returning from lengthy explorations seem to have magical powers they didn't possess before—powers they deny or are very secretive about.

4th Gryphon (Current Year): In Luuthaven, citizens—almost all of them successful local merchants—continue to disappear. There are many wild rumors about the cause, but as before, nothing definite is known.

In Sparruk, an undead giant, whose skull contains a cluster of glowing thaelstones, appears out of the hills in early spring and trudges from steading to steading, blasting the living with spells from its

thaelstones. When this striding doom is finally toppled and chopped apart by adventurers, the thaelstones are magically translocated away from under their very fingertips. Where they went, who enspelled them, created the undead, sent it forth, and why, all remain mysteries.

In the Torsornar Hills, a band of adventurers, following directions to a particular an-straeklith site very close to the coast to meet with outlaws who'd sent an agent to Luuthaven to hire them, discover the caverns inhabited by the outlaws have been hastily abandoned. There are signs of strife and half-eaten corpses. In the deepest caves, there is rubble where creatures have broken through into the caves from subterranean ways below and a trail that suggests the creatures then returned. The adventurers hastily depart, unsettled by a large tentacled head mark freshly burned onto a cavern wall and a disembodied flying head that started following them around the caverns, vanishing whenever they tried to capture or destroy it.

In Marrovar, priests warn that temple oracles and visions suggest another Fiendwave is imminent. The Lords of the Stonehall send forth proclamations to all Mournan ports, fee-carried on merchant ships departing Marrovar, promising to handsomely pay all who wet blade or hurl spell, and manage to smite fiends of the wave before the watching Holy Ones of Marrovar when the Fiendwave comes.

In the Iron Barony, new gem-lodes and veins of metal ores are found somewhere sekhovynd along the coast. Even as the news spreads and men grow excited at their forges, the men who discovered the veins vanish, and new rumors arise: the Iron Baron is seeking to personally control this new wealth and has had its finders killed; certain old and wealthy families in the land (specifically the Thoader, Saerask, and Bleyrnor clans of Chemmore) are conspiring to control the new finds, killing all not of their blood who know where the lodes and veins lie; and the mines aren't new, but are from the Fall, and haunted by flying wraiths who can control living men, and have been compelling such men to do murder to others.

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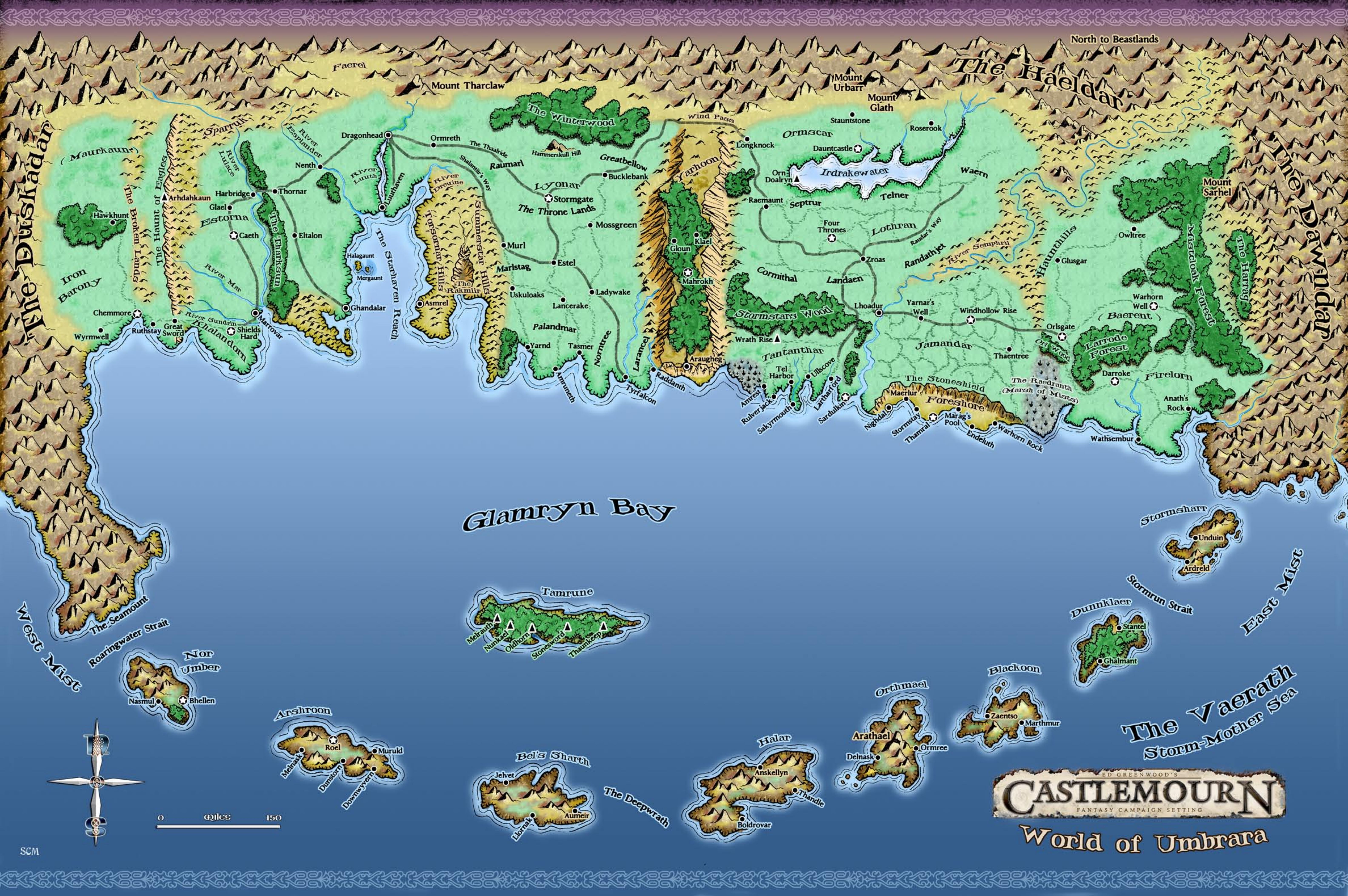
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North to Beastlands

The Haeldar

The Duskadar

The Duskadar

Glamryn Bay

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