

DAWNFORGE

CRUCIBLE OF LEGEND

FANTASY ADVENTURE IN AN AGE OF LEGEND



CREDITS

ORIGINAL CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT

GREG BENAGE

WRITING AND DESIGN

GREG BENAGE, MARK CHANCE, DAVID LYONS, DARRELL HARDY, ARI MARMELL, WIL UPCHURCH, ROSS WATSON, AND SAM WITT

COVER ILLUSTRATION

MITCH COTIE

COLOR ILLUSTRATIONS

CHRIS DIEN

BLACK AND WHITE ILLUSTRATIONS

MITCH COTIE, WILLIAM EAKEN, COS KONIOTIS, JIM NELSON, SCOTT SCHOMBURG, MATTIAS SNYGG, TYLER WALPOLE

COLOR CARTOGRAPHY

WILLIAM MCAUSLAND

ADVENTURE CARTOGRAPHY

ED BOURELLE

GRAPHIC DESIGN

BRIAN SCHOMBURG

EDITING, LAYOUT, AND ART DIRECTION

GREG BENAGE

PUBLISHER

CHRISTIAN T. PETERSEN

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FANTASY FLIGHT GAMES

1975 County Rd. B2 #1
Roseville, MN 55113

www.fantasyflightgames.com

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INTRODUCTION

Fantasy Flight Games is pleased to present DAWNFORGE, a unique and exciting fantasy campaign setting designed for use with the d20 System. This book provides all the rules you need to play in the DAWNFORGE setting, including new character races, classes, feats, magic rules, equipment, and much more. The DAWNFORGE campaign setting book also presents a wealth of setting information and background material to help DMs bring the world of DAWNFORGE to life for their players.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The DAWNFORGE campaign setting is a tool for both players and DMs. It is designed as a supplement to the d20 System core rules. This book builds and expands upon those rules, and the more familiar and comfortable you are with them, the more useful this book will be. This book should be used as a companion to the core rules and not a standalone game.

WHAT'S NEW?

DAWNFORGE is more than just a campaign setting—it is also a toolbox that provides a broad range of new rules and mechanics designed for epic, high-powered fantasy adventure. The world of DAWNFORGE is a young one that is just entering its golden age, a world where the great races and civilizations are reaching the pinnacle of their glory. It is a world where magic is strong and immortal godlings walk the earth.

The rules of DAWNFORGE are designed to allow you to create and play epic heroes in this world of magic and legend. Racial traits and transformations allow you to play a hulking minotaur warrior or an ageless elf lord.

New classes and rules for magic allow you to create and play mythic characters with a unique and personal connection to the primal magic of the world. With legendary classes and legendary paths, your hero can win fame and renown that bards will sing of in ages to come.

THE OPEN GAME LICENSE

DAWNFORGE is published under the terms of the Open Game License and the d20 System Trademark License. The OGL allows us to use the d20 System core rules and to publish game products derived from and compatible with those rules.

In fact, all rules-related material is designated as Open Game Content. You can use this material in your own works, as long as you follow the conditions of the Open Game License. The introduction to each chapter or section identifies the rules material that is designated as Open Game Content.

Not everything in this book is Open Game Content, however. In general, game rules, statistics, and mechanics are Open Game Content, but all background, story, and setting information is closed content and cannot be republished, copied, or distributed without the consent of Fantasy Flight Publishing, Inc.

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The text of the introductory chapter is designated as closed content.

LEGENDS OF THE FIRST AGE

I am a singer of forgotten songs. I am an explorer of worlds lost to time, a chronicler of people and places fallen to the march of years. I am a historian, and I will tell you now of a time when the world was young, a time when the great empires had not yet fallen and magic still coursed through the earth like a raging river.

The world we know is built upon the bones of a legendary past. As we wander in our mind's eye through the ruins of once-great kingdoms, we dream of what they must have been like at the height of their majesty. We are offered glimpses of forgotten lore and power, and we wonder what might have been possible before the magic receded from the land. We explore ancient sylvan groves, and we imagine their stunning beauty when the trees were young and the primeval forests spanned whole continents. We venture into subterranean cities lost to darkness, and we listen for the sounds that echoed in the galleries and vaults before the night closed in.

Journey with me now to a lost golden age and a world that is still young, a world overflowing with magic and wonder. This is a world where the first great empires are wrought from conquest, trade, and sorcery. It is a world where the elder races build glorious civilizations and forge the legacies that we, their children, would inherit in ages to come. It is a world where legends are born and the fate of a world rests on the shoulders of epic heroes. It is a world full of unbounded promise that we have always known but never visited, a world we have often glimpsed but could never reach.

Explore with me this lost, mythic age and discover in it the ancient roots of our own world. Wander with me down the darkening halls of time and find at their beginning the place where legends were born. Read with me the pages of our tattered history and mourn with me the fleeting glimpse of our faded glory and lost promise.

— Fiadan the Sage, in the Year
2664 of the Deluene Calendar

WELCOME TO DAWNFORGE

DAWNFORGE beckons you to a mythic age of epic heroes, great empires, high magic, legendary beasts, and titanic conflicts. In the world of DAWNFORGE, the vast, ancestral homeland of the elves has never known the bite of axe and flame. The great mountain kingdoms of dwarves and giantkind watch each other warily under the tattered banner of an uneasy truce. Newborn empires reach the height of their glory, and wars and intrigues are spawned where their destinies collide. Intrepid adventurers explore a primeval and untamed land, but both terrible danger and untold wealth await them in the wild places.

These are the first days of the world, and the land is still swollen with the arcane forces of creation. Legendary creatures of terrible might and foul purpose stalk the fringes of civilization and lurk in the dark corners of the earth. Archmages reach beyond the veil of the world to create spells and artifacts of awesome power. The princes, warlords, and kings of countless races and nations struggle and scheme to control the eldritch wells that tap the magic flowing through the land. In DAWNFORGE, glory is not lost and the magic and wonder of a mythic world are priceless treasures to be nurtured and protected.

The DAWNFORGE campaign setting invites roleplayers to explore a mythic world and an age of legend through the heroes they create and play. It is a world of rising civilizations surrounded by vast wildlands that have yet to be tamed. It is a world both familiar and exotic, a setting in which the players can identify with their characters and still explore new horizons and experience the thrill of discovery. On an urgent mission to Avennar, the heroes are plunged into the chivalry and intrigue of the noble courts of the Kingsmarch. In their search for a fabled elven oracle under the darkened eaves of enchanted Sildanyr, they encounter fey magic and are caught in a bitter war. They must brave plane-touched sorcerers and a fiendish legacy to save an imprisoned celestial from the summoning pits of Valhedar. In service to a merchant-prince of Ebernath, the heroes sail the Sunset Reach and hunt for dragon eggs in the rugged mountains of Tamerland. DAWNFORGE offers roleplayers a fantastic world of breathtaking beauty and epic challenge.

It is a time of endless possibilities, and heroes can chart their own courses and determine their own destinies. It is an age of wonder, and true heroes can become legends. A dwarven warrior forges a new clan and gives his name to a legacy that will endure for centuries. A trueborn lord wins a throne and changes the course of history. An elven wizard weaves the threads of magic into an intricate tapestry and transforms his ancient craft into an art. A halfling disciple builds a church and gifts a new religion to her people.

Heroes in the DAWNFORGE campaign setting do not just retrace the path of legends—they have a chance to create new ones. They do not just unearth the glory of the past—they can help to define their world and shape its future. In this mythic age, even fledgling heroes are guided by the heavy hand of fate. They may begin as novice sellswords, landless knights, apprentices or acolytes, but an epic destiny awaits those special few with the courage and fortune to seize it.

THE WORLD OF EADAR

The DAWNFORGE setting focuses on three major landmasses clustered in one hemisphere of a mythic world. The heart of civilization, Ambria, stretches from the frozen wastes of the north to the subtropics of the Summer Sea. At its widest point, from the western coast of the Kingsmarch to the eastern forests beyond the Morningstar Mountains, the continent spans some two thousand miles.

The northern reaches of the continent are dominated by the ice-sheathed Frostfells in the west and the frigid Winter Sea that bounds the central and eastern regions of the far north. The rugged Icehammer Front shields the central plains of Anderland and the western fringes of Sildanyr from the worst of the arctic winds that howl across the Winter Sea. They are also home to the goblinoids, wild giantkind, and other fell beasts that threaten the frontiers of these settled regions with never-ending raids and isolated attacks.

The great Stormfells run south from the shadow of the Pale Forest across the western heart of the continent, giving way to foothills and then flatlands as they approach the Emerlyn peninsula. The Durning Highlands, a land of rugged hills and pristine lakes, are bordered by the slopes of the Stormfells to the east and the great sea cliffs of the Sunset Reach to the west.

To the south, the highlands surrender to the broad

coastal plain known as the Kingsmarch. This fertile lowland is bisected and irrigated by two great rivers that run west from the Stormfells to the sea. These rivers—the Horn and the Hound—are the foundation of the often-chaotic politics and economics of the Kingsmarch. They are the lifeblood of the agriculture that supports the region's feudal land holdings, but they are also an imposing obstacle to any king who would unite the region under a single banner. The countless river forts

and stone bridges that dot the banks of the Horn and the Hound have been razed and rebuilt more times than anyone can remember.

These great waterways have broken so many armies and shattered so many dreams of empire that they have inspired a popular saying among the common folk: "The Horn and the Hound are the only true kings in the Kingsmarch."

A broad peninsula called Emerlyn thrusts into the Summer Sea to the south and east of the Kingsmarch. Emerlyn is dominated by coastal wetlands, moors, and marshes, and its sultry, subtropical climate is stifling during the height of the summer. The mild winters are warmed by pleasant breezes from the Summer Sea, but heavy rainfall and fierce but short-lived storms are an almost daily occurrence. Emerlyn's eastern boundary is marked by the Parthian Sea, an arm of the Summer Sea that is flanked by the headlands of Emerlyn and southern Sildanyr. A wide, marshy island in the northern coastal margins of this sea is home to Ebernath, an ancient city-state known for its twisting canals and lush, exotic gardens.

The fertile grasslands, rolling hills, and deciduous woods of Anderland stretch north from the shores of the Parthian Sea to the headwater of the mighty Imilbar River. This temperate region is fed by the great river and its many tributaries and is home to the Seven Cities, small farming communities, and bustling trading towns. The roads that crisscross this region are often little more than poorly patrolled wagon tracks, but Anderland benefits from vigorous trade with the great kingdoms and empires that border it on the east, west, and south.



The eastern region of Ambria is dominated by Sildanyr, the ancestral forest home of the elves. Sildanyr stretches for hundreds of miles from the frozen shores of the Winter Sea to the warm, sunlit woods along the coast of the Summer Sea. Ersevor, the ancient and magnificent capital of Sildanyr, stands at the base of the

Morningstar Mountains where the Netheryn River courses down from the peaks. The vast interior of the primeval forest is known only to the elves, and they guard its secrets jealously. A few small communities are scattered along the forest's western fringes and they serve as the commercial gateways that open Sildanyr to trade with Anderland and the rest of the civilized world. The Watching Wall, a line of fortified towers running along the coast of the Summer Sea, was built centuries ago when

the dark lords of Valhedar first began to look northward.

The warm, shallow Summer Sea divides the continents of Ambria and Zangala and somewhat gentles the climates of the equatorial regions. A large volcanic island in the middle of the Summer Sea is home to the ancient city of Valhedar and the great empire it has spawned. The Valhedar Dominion has spread from its island cradle to claim all of the Emerlyn peninsula and the great Azran Desert of northern Zangala. The tiefling lords of Valhedar long to conquer the fertile watersheds of the Kingsmarch, and the plains of Dor Erlon in northern Emerlyn have become one of the world's great battlegrounds. Long-standing treaties with the merchant-princes of Ebernath have thus far restrained Valhedar from expanding north and east into Anderland.

South of the Azran Desert and the Blackscale Mountains lie the windswept savannas and impenetrable jungles of shadowed Zangala. This mysterious land is home to the great empire of the yuan-ti, the most ancient civilization of the known world. It is said that the first monstrous stone temples of the serpent people were raised when the races of Ambria were still living in caves and hunting mammoths in the shadows of glaciers. Less is known of this ancient empire than of any place in the world, even newly discovered Tamerland. The few explorers and adventurers who have braved the dark jungles of Zangala have vanished as quietly as a whisper on the wind.

The Dreaming Isles are a subtropical archipelago off the western coast of Ambria. The islands are home to a handful of wealthy city-states, and the oldest and greatest of them is called Seagarden. Settled by merchant seamen and freebooters from Ebernath, the shining city-states of the Dreaming Isles are a maritime commercial hub that opens the Sunset Reach to the great civilizations of Ambria. The craft and magic of the shipwrights of Seagarden created the deep-draft vessels capable of surviving the deadly storms of the Sunset Reach and reaching the vast continent of Tamerland in the farthest west.

Landsgate, a bustling port town on the delta of the Caracasa River, is the only major settlement in Tamerland. Indifferently ruled by a colonial governor from Seagarden, Landsgate is little more than a staging point for the explorers and adventurers who mount expeditions into the interior. Most of the world's nations, both great and small, have representatives and agents in Landsgate. Few of these aspiring empires have the political will or economic resources to mount and sustain a major campaign in Tamerland, and they charter independent adventurers to plant their flags and stake their claims. There is no accepted rule or custom guiding the exploration and colonization of Tamerland, and its reputation as a lawless and unruly frontier is not undeserved. Most of the expeditions into the heart of Tamerland have been restricted to the Caracasa river basin. A few companies have struck north toward the



THE SUNKEN EMPIRE

Today, the Summer Sea is an unbroken expanse stretching unblemished from the southern shores of Ambria to the Azran Desert of northern Zangala. In ancient days, this pristine sea was the cradle of a great island civilization, the legendary empire called the Valhedrar Dominion.

Valhedrar was founded on dark pacts with fiendish powers. In this mythic age, a great demon is said to have dwelled in the heart of the great volcano that rose over the imperial city. The rulers of this empire were themselves touched by the hellish power of the volcano, and it gave them strength even as it twisted their bodies and souls. The Valhedrar built great monuments to their infernal masters and dug black pits in the earth where the fiends were said to dwell.

The lords of Valhedrar were driven to expand their empire, pursuing conquest above all else. The talons of their dominion reached south to Zangala, claiming the desert and the ancient cities within it. The ruined city of Saredrin was once the greatest of the Valhedrar citadels, and from it they made war

on the serpent people that once infested the dark jungles of that land. The ancient serpent people had their own dark gods, however, and their endless legions and black priests always drove the Valhedrar back into the desert.

In time, the Valhedrar lords turned their dark ambition to the north. The fiendish legions spilled into Ambria and, in time, brought iron and flame to the ancestral lands of the trueborn.

Time and again, the Valhedrar hurled themselves against the valiant defenders of the Kingsmarch. Bitter defeat eventually made the Valhedrar desperate. The greatest wizards of the empire gathered beneath the smoldering volcano and beseeched the demon for its aid.

Whether their demon master destroyed the Valhedrar as punishment for their hubris or the gods destroyed them for their crimes is a mystery lost to the depths of time. What is known is that the mountain roared and the ocean swallowed Valhedrar that day, and the dark empire was scoured from the face of the world.

Wildermarks, but even those few that survive the rain-forests have run afoul of the dragons that infest the mountains.

THE PEOPLE OF EADR

All of the major races have a place and a part to play in the world of DAWNFORGE. The core races as presented in the setting are mythic, idealized archetypes of the traditional fantasy races. In this age of legend, these races are young and magical, and they are in many ways greater than those who will follow them. In the DAWNFORGE campaign setting, the core races gain additional racial traits that reflect these mythic ideals. The elves gain a small selection of spell-like abilities that emphasize their fey heritage. The dwarves are as strong and sturdy as the bones of the earth, and these traits are mirrored in the game by improved defenses and resistances. The humans of DAWNFORGE are the fathers and mothers of kingdoms and cultures, and they can choose from a variety of background traits both magical and mundane. Some are the offspring of noble bloodlines with claims to wealth and station. Others are primal barbarians for whom war has become a religion.

These additional racial traits contribute to the set-

ting's unique appeal. The character races represent a powerful and immediate bridge between the players and the campaign setting. The opportunity to play these archetypal forms of their favorite races gives players a unique window onto the setting's mythic and legendary themes. By raising the baseline of racial abilities, DAWNFORGE also allows players to create heroes of other races with prominent roles in the world. These races, including night elves, minotaurs, doppelgangers, and the planetouched, are among the most compelling and exotic in the d20 System, but they are often a less viable option for players in traditional campaign settings.

Humans of countless cultures, nations, and ethnic creeds inhabit the world of DAWNFORGE. They are the trueborn lords of the Kingsmarch and the common folk of Anderland. They are the merchant-princes of Ebernath, the daring privateers of the Dreaming Isles, and the grim sellswords of the mercenary companies of Kor. They are the fierce herdsman and warriors of the Durning Highlands and the rogues and bravos who seek their fortunes on the ancient streets of Valhedrar. They are rangers of the Griffin Company and treasure-seeking adventurers who brave the wilds of Tamerland. They are prophets of a thousand small gods and arcanists who seek to uncover the secrets of creation. Humans hail from all walks of life and all the corners of the world.

The elves are a populous and influential people in

THE WORLD OF DAWNFORGE

THE SUNSET
REACH



THE KINGSMARCH





THE LEGACY OF THE ELVES

As magic recedes from the land, elvenkind is leaving this world, returning to their undying homeland. The ghosts of a glorious past drift amidst the silent trees, and only a few scattered ruins are left to mark an eldritch civilization that once awed the lands of men with its magic, beauty, and wonder.

The expanse of the wood itself is now a mere shadow of what it once was. In elder days, Sildanyr stretched unbroken from the frozen shores of the Winter Sea to the sun-touched coast of the Summer Sea. While the people we know as high elves ruled the forest kingdom, they shared their land with other races of elvenkind, including their dark cousins. The drow, as we know them today, were not always an evil race that dwelled deep below the earth. Long ago, they lived among the high elves and joined them in building and defending their nation.

Few sages can agree on the origins of the elven schism and the drow's slow descent into evil. The records of high elven scholars claim that the drow were corrupted by the Spider Queen, who in those days was called Lathail. Human sages claim that the pride of the high elves also played a role in the schism, that they oppressed the drow and denied them any voice in the affairs of the nation.

Regardless of who was ultimately responsible, it is known that a war raged for untold years in the forest of Sildanyr. The drow were inexorably driven from the forest kingdom, and they built new halls and temples under the mountains. They were twisted by their dark goddess and the evil priestesses who served her.

In time, the drow largely abandoned their fight for the great forest. They found new enemies in the underground realms, and because they were often killed on sight, they eventually returned to the surface world only for sporadic and violent raids against the elves they so hated. Today, of course, the high elves are a fading memory in Eadar, but the drow remain an abiding menace that threatens the lands of men from below.

the world of DAWNFORGE, and the greatest of their civilizations is the forest kingdom of Sildanyr. While there are several different elven subraces and cultures, the two most common in Sildanyr are the dawn elves and night elves. In the Elven language, their names for themselves translate as "people of the dawn" and "people of the night." In appearance, the dawn elves are bright, warm, and fair, while the night elves' ebony skin reflects the night sky and their white or silver hair is the color of moonlight. The dawn elves are the largest racial group, and they have held the throne of Sildanyr since their civilization was born. Years ago, however, the emergence of a new religion among the night elves led them into open rebellion against the crown. A civil war between the lords of dawn and night threatens to consume the ancient forest kingdom from within. The dawn elves of Sildanyr are rangers and shamans who protect and revere the wild places. They are wizards and sorcerers whose blood courses with fey magic. The night elves are rebels, wanderers, rogues, and would-be kings who are torn between two worlds and two destinies.

The towering peaks of the Stormfells are home to a great dwarven civilization that has endured for centuries. The Three Kingdoms of Aradath were once independent nations, but they were unified by Hael of Clan Ironforge during the last great war with giantkind. The High King rules Aradath from the Mithral Throne in the majestic mountain city of Stoneguard. The keeps and holdfasts of the Three Kingdoms are scattered across the rugged slopes of the mist-shrouded peaks and tunnel for untold miles below their surface. The dwarves of Aradath are warriors, builders, and craftsmen of great renown. The mithral arms and armor wrought by dwarven artificers in the eldritch furnace of the Earth Forge are among the world's most legendary artifacts of war.

The Stormfells are also home to the giantkind, a loose nation ruled by the legendary Storm King. In DAWNFORGE, players can create characters of two of the giants' thrall races—the ogres and minotaurs. These races either live in service to the giants or are scattered throughout the world, but they are among the fiercest warriors in the known lands of Eadar.

The gnomes of DAWNFORGE are a primal race that dwells in wooded dells and secluded mountain valleys. They have maintained a closer bond with their fey heritage than even the elves of Sildanyr. They have built no grand civilizations, and their communities are often loosely organized tribes of extended families. Like their fey cousins, gnomes are sustained by the magic of the world. They do not require food or water to survive, though they often eat and drink for the simple pleasure of it. The gnomes' physical appearance follows the changing seasons as they age. The skin and hair of gnome children are tinted with the green of springtime and summer, and humans often mistake them for true fey folk. When a gnome enters adulthood, his coloration gradually changes to the brown and gold of autumn, and then slowly fades to white in his elder years. Gnomes

are legendary tricksters and illusionists, and they are often met with polite suspicion in human lands. They are accepted by the dwarves of Aradath and the elves of Sildanyr, and there are a few small gnome communities in the wild hills of northern Anderland.

Halflings are found in all corners of Ambria, but they are not builders of empires, kingdoms, or even permanent settlements. The largest halfling culture is a nomadic one, and its people travel the land in great caravans of brightly colored wagons. These halflings call themselves the Faring Folk, and they are encountered most often in Anderland. A few small caravans are seen occasionally in the Kingsmarch and Emerlyn, but the Faring Folk are sometimes persecuted by the human and tiefling lords of those lands. The Faring Folk's wagons are large even by the standards of other races, and they are drawn by sturdy hill ponies bred in northern Anderland. The Faring Folk are notorious for their love of animals, and their caravans are often accompanied by herds of goats and pigs, along with packs of barely domesticated dogs that serve the halflings as mounts and guard animals. The halfling Faring Folk are herders and rogues, traders and bards, craftsmen and tinkers. They have a reputation in some places as thieves and scoundrels, but Faring Folk caravans are tolerated in many isolated communities because of the exotic trade goods they bring from faraway lands.

The forces of creation still flare brightly in the world of DAWNFORGE, and the walls that separate this world from others is still thin and mutable. Planetouched races are found in all corners of the world, from Sildanyr to the wilds of Tamerland and from

the shores of the Winter Sea to the burning sands of the Azran Desert. Of these races, only the tieflings have built a great civilization of their own. While the common people of the Valhedar Dominion are racially diverse, the power and station of its aristocracy are measured by planetouched blood. The tieflings of Valhedar are lords and generals, diplomats and spies, merchants and thieves, wizards and disciples of fiendish powers. Most embrace their dark heritage and corrupt society, but a few are exiles and wanderers of good heart who follow a different path.

Little is known of the elusive and enigmatic yuan-ti, but they are the masters of the oldest civilization in the world of DAWNFORGE. This great empire sprawls across central and southern Zangala, and isolated ruins discovered in Sildanyr, Anderland, and the Stormfells indicate that their civilization once extended into Ambria. The three main castes of yuan-ti society are rarely encountered beyond the jungles of Zangala. In the world of DAWNFORGE, however, there is a fourth caste that forms the lowest ranks of yuan-ti civilization. Known as thinbloods, these yuan-ti appear as normal humans with only a few subtle traces of their serpentine heritage. The thinbloods are held in contempt by the other yuan-ti castes: They are denied access to the powerful and influential priesthood and are treated little better than the lizardfolk and other races who serve the



yuan-ti as slaves. A few bold and adventurous yuan-ti thinbloods choose to leave behind their jungle homeland and the social order that holds them in such low regard. They represent a unique and exotic choice of character race for players in the DAWNFORGE campaign setting.

When explorers from the east arrived on the shores of Tamerland, they encountered savage tribes of lizardfolk scattered throughout the great rain forests. While their technology is typically much more primitive than that of the great empires, the lizardfolk are strong in primal magic and many tribes enjoy the protection of the ancient dragons they worship as gods.

Tamerland is also believed to be the homeland of the doppelgangers, mysterious shapeshifters that infiltrate all the civilized corners of the world. Many doppelgangers are members of the Black Circle, a shadowed organization that seems intent on sowing chaos among the eastern nations and preventing their exploration of Tamerland.

LEGENDARY CIVILIZATIONS

It is an age of empire, and the clash of rising civilizations casts the factions and organizations of the world of DAWNFORGE in stark relief. The future is an unknown horizon, and the lands of Ambria, Tamerland, and Zangala are a battleground for competing visions and conflicting dreams. Some of these battles are waged by great armies on the fields of Dor Erlon and in the enchanted groves of Sildanyr. Others are won with the epic deeds of legendary heroes. Some are fought in the open with steel and spell, while others are fought in the shadows with whispered words and dark intrigues.

The tiefling lords of the Valhedar Dominion have built an empire on fiendish pacts and dark sorcery. The

ancient city of Valhedar rests in the shadow of a great volcano whose fires burn with the unholy light of the lower planes. Since time immemorial, the wizards and disciples of Valhedar have communed with the dark powers that dwell in the heart of the mountain. These ancient and evil beings share their knowledge and strength, and the

Valhedrin worship them as gods. The brooding idols that line the broad avenues and canals of Valhedar are not the fearsome visages of imagined fiends—they are the dark forms the tieflings see when they gaze into the pit. The tieflings' dreams of conquest are driven not only by their own lust for power but also by the need to placate their masters with suffering and sorrow.

The lords and ladies of the Kingsmarch are the children of a dozen noble bloodlines and the champions of a hundred rival banners. Their shared language, culture, and history bind them together, but true unity remains an elusive goal in a land where all of the great families were born

to rule. The greatest of the scattered realms of the Kingsmarch is Deluin, a southland kingdom ruled from the walled port city of Avennar. King Enir II traces his line back to the barbarian princes who first settled the banks of the great rivers. Deluin stretches across the southern reaches of the Kingsmarch between the Horn River in the west and the Shield River in the east—the boundary mark that separates the Kingsmarch and Emerlyn. This kingdom and its people have paid the steepest price in the wars with Valhedar, and losses suffered on the fields of Dor Erlon have prevented Enir from pressing his claim in the Kingsmarch.

The Three Kingdoms of Aradath are among the oldest civilizations of Ambria. The dwarves, in fact, claim that they are the eldest race, that they were hewn from the stone of the world by a god of the mountain in the first days. The giantkind contest this claim, and many scholars believe there are things far older than



BIRTH OF A KINGDOM

The Great Kingdom of Deluin traces its roots to the barbarian tribes that first settled the rich lands of southwestern Ambria. These tribes were a fractious lot, and the land that in those days was called the Kingsmarch was ruled by a hundred competing nations. The coming of the True King heralded the glory of future ages, as these divided realms were finally united around the shining city of Avennar. Its majesty has faded in the long years since, but Deluin prospered while the glory that was Avennar endured.

The line of the Old Kings is an ancient one. Its seeds were sown in the days when giants ruled the mountains and men built the fabled Seven Cities with gold that flowed like honey in the rivers and pooled in the lakes of Anderland. The Deluene claim that the Old Kings were given their crowns by Alharra, the goddess of valor, but this is true only insofar as divine right is made manifest through the mundane and often bloody human concerns of history, politics, and war.

By the time the legions of Valhedar landed

on the shores of Ambria, Deluin had become the largest and most powerful nation of the Kingsmarch. The newborn realm of the Old Kings was forged and tempered in the fires of war, and it endured and grew stronger while lesser realms collapsed into chaos and barbarism. The histories of that age offer conflicting accounts of how Deluin itself survived. Deluene scholars claim that the realm was saved by the coming of the True King. The Church fathers insist that Deluin was saved only when the gods smote its enemies and Valhedar was consumed by the sea.

As is so often the case, both of these events no doubt played a role in the unfolding of history. The reign of the True King and the fall of Valhedar ushered in a golden age and a unified kingdom was raised from the ashes of war. The legendary monarch restored the ravaged lands and rebuilt the shattered cities, and Avennar and its royal court flowered as the greatest city in Ambria. The True King ruled from the City of the Sun for a hundred years, and his reign ushered in this Age of Man.

either race that dwell in the dark and wild places of the world. High King Odvar Ironforge rules the dwarves of the Stormfells from the fortress city of Stoneguard. This great holdfast is built into the side of Mount Aradrund, and a determined dwarf could journey for weeks through the endless vaults, halls, and mines hewn from its ancient bones.

The giants that share the Stormfells with the dwarves of Aradath are ruled by Balon Thunderhorn, who is called the Storm King. Despite this title, the storm giant's realm is not a true kingdom and it does not even claim a name of its own. It is a loose alliance of giant clans whose allegiance to Thunderhorn's banner is forged of awe and fear. The clans that offer fealty to the Storm King include all of the races of giantkind, with the exception of frost giants and fire giants. The frost giants are far more common in the snow-shrouded peaks of the Frostfells and the Icehammer Front. The fire giants rule the deep places far below the Storm King's realm. The great citadel called Skyhold is built into the summit of Mount Imperion, the highest elevation in Ambria. The culture of the giants of the Stormfells is a simple one, and the clans spend most of their time warring against each other and hunting the last dragons remaining in their mountain home. The Storm King's throne in Skyhold is crafted from the bones of a great wyrm, and the giants' prowess at dragon hunting was an

important consideration in Hael Ironforge's decision to make peace with the Stormfell clans.

The elves of Sildanyr are the magical children of the fey creatures that have dwelt in the wild places since the world was born. Their war-torn forest kingdom is ruled by a dawn elven king and queen from the ivory-walled city of Ersevor at the foot of the Morningstar Mountains. It was King Aelorn who issued the edict banning the night elves' new religion and inadvertently sparked a civil war. Most of the elven settlements in Sildanyr are small communities built around the roots and in the boughs of the ancient trees. The kingdom's economy is a simple one, but the magic and plenty of the great forest provide the elves with all they need. There is some trade with Anderland and beyond, but the dawn elves require little that they cannot craft or gather for themselves.

The culture of the night elves has been radically transformed in the years since the disciple Baleth introduced her people to their new goddess. They have been driven from the villages and cities of their homeland and now live as desperate fugitives and rebels in the Morningstar Mountains. Their lives are devoted to the worship of Lathail and the bloody war they must win to reclaim their birthright. Most of the night elves have followed their priestesses into exile and open rebellion, but a few have refused to turn their backs on the old ways.

THE FALL OF GRIMHAL

The dwarves claim that they are the world's oldest children, and indeed, it was the dwarves who created the first calendar in Ambria and recorded its oldest histories. In the Stormfell Mountains, they emerged from endless wars with the giantkind to build the first great kingdoms, and the ruins and remnants of their mighty cities and monuments endure to this day. These broken stones are all that remain of the ancient dwarven civilization, however, and in these latter days the dwarves are a rare and scattered people.

In elder days, the dwarven nation of Aradath stretched from the southern banks of the Torvun River all the way to the headwaters of the Shield. Forged from three independent realms by a line of dwarven high kings, Aradath in its time was unmatched in its mastery of architecture, engineering, and craft. The great cities and holdfasts of the dwarves sprawled for miles across the slopes of the soaring mountains and tunneled deep below the surface of the earth. The stone-paved highways, wondrous bridges, and subterranean vaults of the King's Road spanned the breadth of the Stormfells and delved to its roots.

Most dwarves of this age favored the crisp, mountain air and sun-dappled slopes of the Stormfells. But the dwarves of Grimhal preferred the darkness and solitude of the underground, and their lust for the treasures of the deep places was legendary. The dwarves of Grimhal battled the fire giants for dominion over the darkened realms in the mountain depths. Deeper and deeper they dug, and a dwarf could wander forever among the endless subterranean vaults and tunnels of Grimhal.

The doom of Grimhal fell when a cataclysm shook the dwarven kingdom. The legends of that time agree only in that the sundering of Grimhal was not a natural event. Some dwarven songs imply that a terrible magic wrought by the fire giants shattered the kingdom, while others suggest that it was devoured by some far more ancient evil that dwelled in the bowels of the earth. All contact with Grimhal was lost as if overnight, but it is believed that its shadowed halls endure still, sealed off for all time from the surface world.

These night elves are tolerated in the communities of Sildanyr, though fear and distrust have often marred their lives and relationships. Some have left Sildanyr altogether, refusing to take sides in a war they know can only end in tragedy and loss.

The great empire of the yuan-ti stretches for hundreds of miles from the savannas of northern Zangala to the southernmost tip of this ancient land. The serpent people laid the foundations of this empire in the days when dragons and glaciers ruled the north, and their civilization has endured for untold centuries. The heart of the yuan-ti empire is an ancient stone city on the banks of a marshy lake in the heart of the jungle. Marazan is a city of great pyramid temples, alien spires and arches, and vine-wreathed shrines and idols. The trueblood lords of the city live in decadent luxury. They are priests who offer blood sacrifices and foul prayers to their dark gods. They are dreaming sorcerers who search for hidden dimensions and black places with half-lidded, reptilian eyes. The thinblood lower caste and the slaves of countless races who serve these alien masters live in fear and squalor. The temples and spires are built on their labor, and the only reward they can expect is the chance to offer their lives on bloodstained altars.

The great empires and civilizations of the major races are not the only powers in the world of DAWNFORGE. There are scores of orders, guilds, cults, secret societies, and organizations that play an influential role in the affairs of the world. Good, evil, or neutral, allied with races and nations or standing apart from them, these organizations have their own goals and agendas that drive the events of history.

The Panthic Order of Ebernath is a society of wizards and sorcerers based in the wealthy city-state in the Parthian Sea. The walls of the order's great chantry house are built around Cardas Fane, though the legendary arcane shrine is ostensibly owned and controlled by the city's great merchant houses. The Panthic Order's public face is of a society dedicated to the advance and refinement of the arcane arts. The order prides itself on its strict neutrality, and its membership ranks are filled by arcanists of all alignments, races, and nations. Led by its High Council, the Panthic Order is a powerful ally to the merchant-princes of Ebernath. It is believed that the tiefling members of the order interceded on the city's behalf and deflected the imperial expansion of Valhedar to Emerlyn and the Kingsmarch. While all of these things are true, the Panthic Order's public face masks its true purpose. Its members do indeed devote themselves to the arcane arts, but they do so because they believe this is the key to immortality and divinity. As an organization of mortals who would become gods, the Panthic Order is both a powerful force for good and a potentially destructive tool of evil.

The Griffin Company is an independent order of rangers committed to the protection of the Anderland frontier from the goblinoids, giants, and fell beasts that threaten it from the north. The ranger troop is headquar-

tered in Firebrand Keep on the banks of the mighty Imilbar, a gift from a petty baron who could no longer afford to maintain and defend the fort himself. The Griffin Company draws its members from across Anderland, and most of these rangers are of human ancestry. Some, however, are elven exiles from Sildanyr, landless knights from the Kingsmarch, tiefling sellswords, or wanderers from other distant lands. William Ornskar, the Lord Marshal of the Griffin Company, is the dishonored son of a clan chieftain from the Durning Highlands. The rangers of Griffin Company are trained in Firebrand Keep and garrisoned in a number of small wooden forts scattered across the frontier. They patrol the wildlands in small troops of four to twenty rangers, and these patrols are intended to gather information on the enemy's movements and activities as often as they are meant to punish raiding goblinoids.

In the Kingsmarch, organizations that owe allegiance to no king often forge the most enduring bonds among this disunited and querulous people. The Sacred Order of the Knights Adamant was founded decades ago by a paladin of Alharra, a goddess of courage and valor in battle. Alharra is the patron deity of the city of Avennar, and it is said that her celestial blood runs in the veins of the kings of Deluin. When it became clear that no king's banner would unite the feuding nations to stand against the encroachment of the Valhedar Dominion, the Knights Adamant took the field to defend the realms from the grasping talons of the tiefling empire. The spiritual heart of the Knights Adamant is a modest temple in Avennar devoted to their goddess. The temple grounds are a sanctuary and refuge from the political squabbles and terrible battles that are the inheritance of the order's paladins, disciples, and noble warriors. During the day, the temple echoes with the sounds of martial training and fervent prayer, and it offers the Knights Adamant welcome fellowship, no matter the devices they wear on their shields or the kings they serve.

The exploration and colonization of Tamerland herald a new age of imperialism in the world of DAWNFORGE. The merchant-princes of Seagarden were the first to stake their claim to this new world, but they lack the political and military power to bar other nations from exploiting its riches. Valhedar, Ebernath, and even some of the nations of the Kingsmarch have arrived on the shores of Tamerland, and sails flying the flags of the Dreaming Isles are no longer the only ones to be seen in the Sunset Reach. Despite these setbacks,

the merchant-princes of Seagarden and the other city-states have discovered a way to profit from the flourishing trade between Ambria and Tamerland. They have begun to issue official charters to the pirates and free-



booters that anchor in the many secluded harbors and hidden coves of the Dreaming Isles. These pirates are ostensibly charged with protecting the merchant shipping of Seagarden and the other city-states from foreign pirates and other threats. While they are legal representatives of the governments of the Dreaming Isles, the privateers' true charge is to prey on the ships of Valhedar, Ebernath, and the other rival powers that sail the Sunset Reach in ever-increasing numbers. The efforts of the privateers have been so successful that they have provoked retaliation from the victimized nations, and piracy has grown rampant across the Sunset Reach and the coastal waters of Tamerland.

The world of DAWNFORGE is an unfolding drama marked by the epic struggles of the great races and empires. But some beings prefer to pursue their goals in the shadows, walking among their unsuspecting enemies but always remaining hidden from them. The enigmatic Black Circle is a secret society of evil phasms and doppelgangers committed to throwing down the pillars of civilization and plunging the world into never-ending night. While they have no single religion of their own, they are committed to the mysteries of an ancient tradition that glorifies entropy, chaos, and decay. The members of the Black Circle do not pursue their dark agenda in the open—they seek to spread corruption and decay within the great civilizations flowering in Ambria.

CRUCIBLE OF LEGEND

The world of DAWNFORGE is a mythic land rich in magic and wonder where great empires clash, intrepid explorers journey beyond wild frontiers, and mighty heroes brave epic dangers. It is a land where familiar and beloved races and archetypes are reaching the pinnacle of their glory and wonder. It is a vast and rich realm where newborn nations are still islands of civilization in a dark and unexplored wilderness sea. The world of DAWNFORGE is a land where the greatest deeds have yet to be done and epic heroes are wrought in the crucible of legend.

Along with the core rules for the d20 System, this book includes everything you need to create and play a character or run a campaign in the DAWNFORGE campaign setting. Most of the information players will need is found in the first three chapters of the book. Chapter One presents information on all of the character races in DAWNFORGE, including their new racial talents and transformation. Chapter Two provides a selection of new core classes and introduces legendary classes and paths. Finally, Chapter Three presents a variety of new rules and game mechanics, including new feats and equipment and new rules for arcane and divine magic.



CHAPTER ONE

RACES

The races in DAWNFORGE represent archetypal versions of the standard races, as well as a few new exciting choices. Much more than in a traditional campaign setting, the race you choose to play in DAWNFORGE helps to define your character. Each race has a set of racial traits that he gains at 1st level, as well as two new characteristics: talents and transformations.

Racial talents are abilities enjoyed by members of each character race and may be selected in any order you wish as long as your character meets the prerequisites of each. Your character gains a racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter up to 9th level (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). Racial talents represent skills, maneuvers, and tricks that your character learns over time, but not physical changes.

Racial transformations are physical changes that occur to a character over time. These tend to have stricter prerequisites than racial talents, because the physical growth of a race is somewhat determined by the power within it. Your character gains a racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter up to 10th level (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th).

Finally, characters gain ability boosts at the same levels at which they gain a racial talent. These increases represent a character's innate racial traits as they grow to heroic levels. By 10th level, a character represents the archetype of his race, even though each individual's abilities and choices may differ.

All of the races presented in this chapter are treated as humanoids. However, some races gain racial transformations that change their creature type. For example, minotaurs are considered humanoids, but minotaur characters can choose a racial transformation that changes their creature type to monstrous humanoid. A ranger who chooses minotaurs as his favored enemy gains his normal bonuses against all minotaurs, regardless of their creature type.

The names of the races and the game rules and mechanics in this chapter are designated as Open Game Content. The descriptions and background text are designated as closed content.

DOPPELGANGER

Doppelgangers are one of the strangest races to walk the known lands, and certainly the most mysterious. The origins of these shapeshifters are unknown, although many conclude that they have been around since the beginning of recorded history, and perhaps longer. The doppelganger can take the form of any humanoid creature—although most prefer to remain in one or two forms—and they can learn to master the abilities of these forms almost as well as the true species. In their true forms, doppelgangers resemble tall, extremely thin humans with rounded heads and no hair anywhere on their bodies. Their large, reflective eyes sometimes show the viewer as a different race from his own, almost as if the doppelganger were shifting the viewer's shape in his own mind.

The doppelgangers have no true homeland, existing in all the cities and communities of the world, including the hidden jungle fortresses of the yuan-ti and the lizardfolk tribes of Tamerland. Wherever they live, they strive to conceal their true identities for fear of persecution. This secretive and deceptive behavior only serves to reinforce the prejudices of those who believe them to be evil or maleficent. Doppelgangers can also be found wandering the known lands, searching for a place they can call home. As wanderers they often pick up the affectations of many different cultures, which they use to aid their shapeshifting disguises. Doppelgangers can often be found among the Faring Folk, enhancing their performances by providing them with ready individuals of any race for their shows.



The humans of Ambria, elves of Sildanyr, and the dwarves of the Stormfells view the doppelgangers as an alien race to be feared and shunned. Doppelgangers found among these races must work hard to conceal their true identities, lest they be cast out of their homes or worse. The tieflings do not trust the doppelgangers any more than their rivals to the north, but they look upon them as tools to be used. Doppelgangers in Valhedar are routinely tortured physically and mentally, preparing them for magical brainwashing that turns the doppelgangers into unwilling, but loyal, servants. The lizardfolk of Tamerland believe the doppelgangers to be blessed leaders, and more than one tribe is led by a doppelganger shaman or chieftain.

Doppelgangers have no culture of their own, never having been part of a unified nation or society. Like many of the races of the world, the doppelgangers have no collective memory of their emergence into the world. Sages believe they may have originated in Tamerland, and explorers have reported that they are indeed common there. It has long been rumored that doppelgangers fill the ranks of the Black Circle, an elusive cult of shapeshifters with an unknown agenda.

The doppelgangers' only shared cultural trait is their grand oral tradition. Each individual greatly cherishes this bond with his fellows, and a doppelganger greeting always gives a snippet of the individual's life so that curious acquaintances will know which ques-

tions to ask first. Doppelgangers from different parts of the world meeting for the first time can sometimes talk for days on end, sharing stories from their homelands and weaving tales of their exploits and everyday lives.

It is thought that this oral tradition is not so much a function of some part of the doppelgangers' collective psyche as it is a necessity brought about by their complete inability to understand written language. Something about the doppelgangers' minds keeps them from mastering even the basics of any language, even their own. Spoken Doppelganger sounds strange and alien to most of the other races, consisting of various clicks, whines, and whistles that is incomprehensible to others. Because speaking Doppelganger requires the constant morphing of the palate, tongue, lips, and throat, non-doppelgangers can never learn to speak the language. A character of another race can spend two ranks in Speak Language to be able to understand the language, however.

Doppelgangers are primarily scavengers, living off the discards of their adopted culture and trying to be as inconspicuous as possible. One of the methods they have come to use to protect themselves is not utilizing or siphoning the resources of their native land. They have great minds for using objects in a variety of ways, and as such usually gain reputations as inventors—or at the very least clever riggers—no matter where they are settled.

DOPPELGANGER RACIAL TRAITS

- **+2 Con, -2 Str:** Doppelgangers are unusually tough and resilient thanks to their malleable body type, but their musculature is more supple than powerful.

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

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

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

- **+4 bonus on all Bluff checks.** The doppelgangers grow up having to convince others that they are something they are not.

- **+4 bonus on Fortitude saves** versus poison and disease. The doppelganger's alien physiology reacts differently to most poisons and diseases. Poisons crafted specifically to defeat a doppelganger negate this bonus, do not work on any other creatures, and have a market value of five times normal.

- **Cultural Influences:** A doppelganger can choose any base racial trait of his chosen alternate form that confers either a skill bonus (or multiple bonuses) or attack bonus. So, the doppelganger could choose the bonus to Listen, Search, and Spot checks granted to dawn elves, or the bonus on attack and damage rolls with axes and hammers granted to dwarves. The doppelganger may also choose the race's Weapon Familiarity as his cultural influence. If his chosen race does not have any qualifying traits, he gains a +2 bonus to Spot checks.

- **Alternate Form:** Although the doppelgangers are shapeshifters, they are not born with the ability to assume any form they wish. Most doppelgangers only gain the ability to shift into a single form. They can assume the form of any Small or Medium humanoid creature. Most doppelgangers learn to assume the shape of the dominant race in the area in which they are born, often learning the technique from a parent who wishes them to lead normal lives among their adopted people. Although the doppelganger can appear to be wearing any clothing or armor when he changes, the transformation has no effect on the character's ability scores, natural armor, or special abilities. If the doppelganger changes size, however, he does adjust his attack bonus and AC accordingly.

Changing forms in this way requires a full-round action, and the doppelganger can transform in this manner as often as he wishes. This is a supernatural ability, and the doppelganger gains a +10 bonus on Disguise checks when using it.

- **Restricted Skills:** Doppelgangers may never gain ranks in Decipher Script or become literate in any of the languages they speak.

- **Automatic Languages:** Common and Doppelganger. **Bonus Languages:** Any (except secret languages, such as Druidic).

- **Favored Class:** Rogue. A multiclass doppelganger's rogue class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing. Doppelgangers are, by nature and necessity, a secretive, elusive, and often deceptive race.

DOPPELGANGER RACIAL TALENTS

Doppelgangers may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

FORM MASTERY RACIAL TALENT TREE

Some doppelgangers choose to develop their natural shapeshifting abilities

Alternate Form: When a doppelganger chooses this racial talent, he gains the ability to transform into a different alternate form. The new form follows all the normal rules for transformation.

Special: This racial talent can be selected multiple times.

Form Mastery: A doppelganger that selects this racial talent gains the physical ability adjustments (Str, Dex, and Con) and natural armor bonuses of his new form. Thus, if the doppelganger transforms into a dwarf, he gains +2 Constitution and -2 Dexterity, whereas transforming into a lizardfolk would grant +2 Strength and +1 natural armor.

Prerequisites: Quick Form, Alternate Form, character level 7+.

TRUE DOPPELGANGER RACIAL TALENT TREE

The doppelgangers are an elusive people who believe that they must hide their true nature from those around them.

Deception: Doppelgangers are masters at reading others, either to determine whether or not they are lying or to give them false information of their own. As a result, a doppelganger that chooses this racial talent gains Bluff and Sense Motive as class skills. If either of these is already a class skill for the doppelganger, he gains a +2 talent bonus to that skill.

Improvised Equipment: Given 10 minutes and the presence of any reasonable materials, a doppelganger with this racial talent can improvise equipment to gain a +4 circumstance bonus to any one of the following skills: Balance, Climb, Disable Device, Hide,

Jump, Move Silently, Open Lock, or Swim. This is a one-time bonus, although actions relying on multiple skill checks (such as a long swim) gain the bonus on each check until the action is completed.

Quick Form: A doppelganger that chooses this racial talent can change form as a free action.

Talent Feats: When the doppelganger selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any item creation feat, Improved Initiative, or any racial talent feat from his base alternate form.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the doppelganger selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Bluff, Craft (any), Knowledge (geography, history, local), Intimidate, Listen, Profession (any), Sense Motive, and Spot.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

DOPPELGANGER RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Doppelgangers may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Monstrous Humanoid: When the doppelganger selects this racial transformation, his creature type changes from humanoid to monstrous humanoid.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Darkvision: When the doppelganger selects this racial transformation, he gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Detect Thoughts: A doppelganger can continuously use *detect thoughts* as the spell. The caster level is equal to the doppelganger's character level and the Will save DC is Charisma-based. The doppelganger can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Unusual Physiology: When the doppelganger selects this racial transformation, he gains a 10% chance to negate any successful critical hit. This ability works exactly as if the doppelganger were wearing armor of fortification, and the ability stacks with such armor.

Special: This racial transformation can be selected multiple times. Each time it is selected, increase the chance of avoiding a critical hit by 10%.

Change Shape: A doppelganger that selects this racial transformation gains the ability to assume the form of any Small or Medium humanoid. The doppelganger can remain in this form for as often as it likes. A *true seeing* spell or ability reveals the doppelganger's

true form. The doppelganger can use this ability once per day.

Special: This racial transformation can be selected multiple times. Each time it is selected, the doppelganger can use the ability one additional time per day.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Natural Armor: When the doppelganger chooses this ability, his natural armor increases by +1. The doppelganger may only choose this transformation once.

Transformation Feats: When the doppelganger selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Dodge, Endurance, or Great Fortitude.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the doppelganger selects this racial transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Balance, Climb, Disable Device, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Open Lock, or Swim.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, doppelganger traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Dex
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Cha
6	Racial transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Int
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Con
10	Racial transformation

DWARF

The Three Kingdoms of Aradath are among the oldest civilizations of Ambria. The dwarves, in fact, claim that they are the eldest race, that they were hewn from the stone of the world by the god Mordrin in the first days. The giantkind contest this claim, and many scholars believe there are things far older than either race that dwell in the dark and wild places of the world. High King Odvar Ironforge rules the dwarves of the Stormfells from the fortress city of Stoneguard. This great holdfast is built into the side of Mount Aradath, and a determined dwarf could journey for weeks through the endless vaults, halls, and mines hewn from its ancient bones.

The dwarven holdfasts and towns are built on high ledges and mountainsides of the Stormfells south of the Torvun River. Most settlements have tunnels and caverns underground that serve them as places for storage and defense, but the dwarves of the kingdom of Grimhal



are the only ones that typically live beneath the surface for extended periods.

The basic dwarven social unit is the clan. Loyalty to one's kingdom and ultimately to the dwarven nation have grown stronger since Hael Ironforge unified the clans, but most dwarves still identify most closely and immediately with their clans. There is no higher honor among the dwarves than founding one's own clan and most dwarves believe that achieving this feat will secure them the greatest rewards in the afterlife.

The dwarves have a reputation across the lands of Ambria as being isolationist, but this is not the case. Facing marauding goblinoids and the Storm King's giants to the north, the dwarves simply cannot afford to leave their holdfasts to meet and parley with other races and cultures. Many of the same dangers have kept others from seeking dwarven company, although warriors from the Durning Highlands sometimes venture into dwarven lands to learn their techniques for fighting giants and other shared threats. Several of the highland clans have become fast friends to the dwarves and know more about them than any others. Trade is common among the two peoples, and the dwarves often travel first to the highlands when they leave the mountains.

The dwarves of the Stormfells are short and broad of body, with thick, knotted muscles. Their hair and eyes tend to be brown or black, always matching. In war they wear heavy dwarven plate armor and great helms forged

into the shape of bears and other symbols of strength and prowess. Warriors normally wear leather tunics studded with adamantine and heavy boots that protect their legs. The common folk dress in lighter garb—thin tunics and heavy wool *patas*, skirts created in the image of the ones worn by the highland folk. There is a highland song that warns the children never to climb underneath a dwarf after a feast, although it is not a good idea to sing this around the prickly dwarves.

DWARF RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Constitution, -2 Dexterity. Dwarves are stout and tough but lack coordination due to their strange body type.

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

- Dwarves' base land speed is 20 feet. However, dwarves can move at this speed even when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

- +2 bonus on all Knowledge (engineering) checks and Craft checks related to machines. Dwarven culture uses and understands machines better than any other.

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

- **+1 racial bonus** on all attack and damage rolls with axes and hammers.

- **Stability:** Dwarves are exceptionally stable on their feet. 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 standing firmly on the ground).

- **Weapon Familiarity:** Dwarves may treat dwarven exotic weapons as martial weapons.

- **+4 dodge bonus** to Armor Class against creatures of the giant type (such as ogres, trolls, and hill giants): This bonus represents special training that dwarves undergo, during which they learn tricks that previous generations developed in their battles with giants.

- **Automatic Languages:** Common and Dwarven. Bonus Languages: Anderlar, Clan Speech, Giant, Goblin, Orc, Stone-speak, and Terran.

- **Favored Class:** Fighter. A multiclass dwarf's fighter class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing. The dwarves learned to honor martial prowess from their endless wars with the giants.

DWARF RACIAL TALENTS

Dwarves may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

Divine Mastery: Each time this racial trait is selected, the dwarf gains one additional known spell of any level he can cast (if he is a spontaneous caster) or one additional spell slot per day of any level he can cast (if he must prepare his divine spells).

Prerequisite: Divine spellcaster level 1+.

TRUE DWARF RACIAL TALENT TREE

Dwarves have an ancestral heritage that makes them good with engineering as well as the crafting of all types of magic arms and armor.

Craft Magic Arms and Armor I: The dwarf gains the ability to create magic arms and armor without taking the Craft Magic Arms and Armor feat. He must still expend the gold, XP, and time costs as per the feat in order to create the weapon, and he must craft the masterwork item himself as part of the process. He may create any weapon, armor, or shield with a total bonus of +2 or less (including enhancement bonuses and special abilities).

Prerequisite: Identify Magic Arms and Armor.

Craft Magic Arms and Armor II: The dwarf's skill at crafting magic arms and armor improves. He can now create any weapon, armor, or shield with a total bonus of up to +5 (including enhancement bonuses and special abilities).

Prerequisite: Craft Magic Arms and Armor I, character level 7+.

Giant Fighter: Dwarves grow up learning the proper techniques to combat giants and other large humanoids. Each time a dwarf selects this racial talent, he gains a +1 talent bonus on all attack rolls against giants and humanoids of at least Large size.

Identify Magic Arms and Armor: By concentrating for 10 minutes on a magic weapon, suit of armor, or shield, the dwarf can identify all of its magic properties (including enhancement bonuses, special abilities, and so on). A dwarf can identify whether or not a piece of armor or weapon has any magic properties at all as a free action.

Sabotage: Dwarves are masters of mechanical devices. As a result, a dwarf that chooses this racial talent gains Disable Device and Open Lock as class skills. If either of these is already a class skill for the dwarf, he gains a +2 talent bonus to that skill. The dwarf may disable magical traps as long as they have a mechanical component to them as well.

Talent Feats: When the dwarf selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any item creation feat, Leadership, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Power Attack.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the dwarf selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Appraise, Craft (any), Knowledge (arcana, architecture and engineering, dungeoneering, geography, local, nobility and royalty, religion), or Profession (any).

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

DWARF RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Dwarves may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Damage Reduction: Dwarves are incredibly tough and they can learn to ignore the pain of combat in order to become better fighters and champions. This damage reduction only protects a dwarf against physical attacks, not energy damage or spells.

The dwarf ignores one point of damage from all melee and ranged weapons, gaining DR 1/—. Each time he takes this ability, he gains one more point of damage reduction (DR 2/— after taking it twice and DR 3/—

after taking it three times).

Special: This racial trait may not be selected twice in a row.

Darkvision: When the dwarf selects this racial transformation, he gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Improved Climber: When the dwarf selects this racial transformation, he gains a climb speed of 10 feet. He gains a +8 racial bonus on all Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

Transformation Feats: When the dwarf selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Endurance, Great Fortitude, or Toughness.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the dwarf selects this transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Balance, Climb, Jump, and Concentration.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, dwarf traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Con
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Str
6	Racial transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Con
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Wis
10	Racial transformation

ELVES

The elven nation of Sildanyr is dominated by two main races, the dawn elves and night elves.

DAWN ELF

The dawn elves are the traditional rulers of the forest kingdom of Sildanyr. They advocate the old ways, cultural traditions that have allowed the elves to prosper, although the night elves see them merely as tools to keep the dawn elves in power. Most dawn elves still have hope that the night elves can be brought back into the kingdom, but the war is bloody on both sides. The dawn elves call themselves the *aliasir*, or “people of the dawn,” and they believe it is their destiny to rule the kingdom of the elves and to bring their people to the forefront of the world’s nations. For this reason, many dawn elves choose to travel the world, learning of the

different cultures and heralding their emergence as a power in the world.

Dawn elves are masters of the arcane arts, and their enchantments are among the most powerful in the world. They use their magic to protect and explore the vast wilderness of Sildanyr, believing the entire forest to be fey sacred ground. The green valleys and icy blue rivers of the forest are their shrines, and the grove of the First Tree is both the seat of their king and the well-spring of their faith. Elven rangers and shamans know the forest well and protect it against the depredations of the goblinoids in the north. They fear what might happen should the war between the humans and the tieflings ever spill over into their forest.

Dawn elves have pale skin, fair hair, and eyes that range from pale blue to sparkling green. It is said that all the colors of the natural world are reflected in the eyes of every dawn elf. The elves are shorter and thinner than humans, although they can be just as strong. Elves exhibit much of their fey heritage, from the way they think to the strange, lilted quality of their speech. They see the world through two sets of eyes, one set physical and the other linked to the arcane energies of the world. Goblinoid legends from the far north speak of elves who can smell magic and even feel it on their skin when it is near, although the elves laugh at these claims and reply that the energies are there for all to see.

As rulers of the elven kingdom, dawn elves are used to being well respected, if not in control. When they visit other lands and interact with other races, however, they are cordial and polite. They are trained to be humble guests and to represent the elven nation with grace and style. They dress in fine elven fashion, even when traveling, and if allowed will talk endlessly of elven virtues and the beauty of their kingdom. The elves believe that all the other races are part of the natural world, whereas they themselves are of the fey. This belief leads to both a reverence for others as well as a paternalistic attitude toward them. An elf that does not watch his tongue might be considered condescending, especially when comparing elderly humans or halflings to the rocks, the sun, and the sky.

The elves have been met with mixed feelings by the other races of the world. The orcs and goblinoids of the north threaten Sildanyr where it meets Frostwater Bay, and fighting is frequent. The Anderlar remain decidedly neutral toward elves of all kinds, and do not encourage their presence in the markets and towns of Anderland. The merchant princes of Ebernath are attempting to rectify this so that they might forge trade agreements with both the dawn elves and the night elves, but so far the attitude has lingered. The elves avoid traveling south and have had little contact with the Valhedrin tieflings. Some of the nations of the Kingsmarch have been wooing the elves, who they see as potential allies in their wars against the tieflings. So far the elves have done nothing but politely listen to the humans’ entreaties, but if the wars in Sildanyr and



Emerlyn continue, the dawn elves and trueborn might be forced into an alliance.

DAWN ELF RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution: Elves are graceful but frail. An elf's grace makes her naturally better at stealth and archery.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, elves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Elf base land speed is 30 feet.
- Immunity to magic *sleep* spells and effects, and a +2 racial saving throw bonus against Enchantment spells and effects.
- Low-Light Vision: An elf can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Weapon Familiarity: Elves may treat elven exotic weapons as martial weapons.
- +1 racial bonus on all attack rolls with longbows (including composite longbows) and shortbows (including composite shortbows).
- +1 racial bonus on all Listen, Search, and Spot checks.
- Spell Immunity: Elf characters choose one arcane spell at 1st level. They are immune to the effects of the chosen spell.

- Automatic Languages: Common and Elven. Bonus Languages: Anderlar, Gnome, and Sylvan.

- Favored Class: Wizard. A dawn elf's wizard class does not count when determining whether he suffers an experience point penalty for multiclassing. Mastery of the arcane comes naturally to the elves.

DAWN ELF RACIAL TALENTS

Dawn elves may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

TRUE ELF RACIAL TALENT TREE

Even dawn elves that do not choose the path of wizard or sorcerer have a natural affinity for arcane magic.

Lesser Spellcasting I: The dawn elf is able to cast a small selection of arcane spells. He may choose one 0-level and one 1st-level spell from the wizard's spell list. From this point forward, he may cast each of these spells once per day as a spell-like ability. The caster level for these abilities is equal to the elf's character level.

Lesser Spellcasting II: The dawn elf's arcane abilities grow more powerful. He may use all of the spells granted by Lesser Spellcasting I twice per day. In addition, he may choose an additional 1st-level spell and one 2nd-level spell that he may now cast once per day as spell-like abilities. The caster level for these abilities is equal to the elf's character level.

Prerequisite: Lesser Spellcasting I, character level 7+.

Voice of the Woodlands: When this racial talent is selected, the elf gains the ability to listen to the wind blow through the trees and gain knowledge about the surrounding terrain. This works exactly like the *commune with nature* spell as cast by a druid of the elf's level, except as follows. It only requires 5 rounds of concentration to gain the information desired, and the ability only works in forests. An elf may use this ability at will.

Woodland Fighting: Elves are used to fighting enemies among the trees of Sildanyr. When an elf selects this racial talent, he gains a +1 bonus on all attack rolls in woodland areas.

Prerequisite: Character level 3+.

Special: This racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

ARCANE MASTERY RACIAL TALENT TREE

Dawn elves feel the flow of magic through their veins more keenly than other races.

Arcane Mastery: Each time this racial trait is selected, the elf gains one additional known spell of any level he can cast (if he is a spontaneous caster) or one additional spell slot per day of any level he can cast (if he must prepare his arcane spells).

Prerequisite: Arcane spellcaster level 1+.

Talent Feats: When the elf selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any metamagic feat, any item creation feat, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, or Spell Focus.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the elf selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Craft (any), Handle Animal, Heal, Knowledge (arcana geography, local, nature, religion, the planes), Listen, Profession (any), Search, Spellcraft, Spot, and Survival.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

DAWN ELF RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Dawn elves may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Elfsight: Some dawn elves have the ability to see the living auras of all creatures, manifesting itself as a hazy white glow. An elf that selects this racial transformation gains a +4 bonus on Spot checks to detect hidden creatures, and the miss chance due to concealment for creatures affected by invisibility, displacement (but not *blink* or *ethereality*), and similar effects is halved.

Improved Spell Immunity: Each time the elf selects this racial transformation, he may choose an additional spell to which he becomes immune.

Wild Empathy: An elf that selects this racial transformation can use body language, vocalizations, and demeanor to improve the attitude of an animal (such as a bear or a giant lizard). This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check made to improve the attitude of a person (see PHB, Chapter 4: Skills). The dawn elf rolls 1d20 and adds his character level and Charisma modifier to determine the wild empathy check result. The typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals are usually unfriendly. A dawn elf shaman adds twice his class level to this check (as well as levels from other classes) to reflect his training as well as his innate connection with animals.

To use wild empathy, the elf and the animal must be able to study each other, which means that they must be within 30 feet of one another under normal conditions. Generally, influencing an animal in this way takes 1 minute but, as with influencing people, it might take more or less time.

An elf can also use this ability to influence a magical beast with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2 (such as a basilisk or a girallon), but he takes a -4 penalty on the check.

Ageless: When this racial transformation is chosen, the elf lord no longer takes ability score penalties for aging (see Aging Effects, PHB) and cannot be magically aged. Any penalties she may have already incurred, however, remain in place. Bonuses still accrue, and the elf still dies of old age when his time is up. The elves abandoned true immortality when they left Itheria.

Transformation Feats: When the elf selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, or Iron Will.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the elf selects this transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Balance, Climb, Concentration, Jump, or Swim.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, elf traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Int
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Dex
6	Racial transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Cha
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Dex
10	Racial transformation

NIGHT ELF

The night elves are the second most common race of elves found in the Sildanyr forest, and the civil war between them and their dawn elf cousins threatens to tear their civilization apart. Elves are the newest of the races to appear in Ambria, having come into the world from the fey realm of Itheria only three centuries ago. Discontent soon grew among the night elves, who realized that they would never be allowed by the dawn elves to share rule of their new forest home. The night elves began to rebel against the cultural traditions of the dawn elves, even abandoning its animistic religion in favor of a new goddess, Lathail, that whispered from the darkness and depths of the Morningstar Mountains.

The disciples of Lathail advocated cultural independence from the greater elven civilization, if not complete political separation. They argued that if the night elves continued down the path they were on—being ruled by the haughty dawn elves from their wooden thrones—their people would soon vanish from the face of the world.

Unable to match the sheer arcane power of the dawn elves, the night elves learned the arts of stealth and subterfuge until such skills became a part of their nature. Led by the disciples of Lathail, the night elves have begun to understand the divine essence in the world. Under her guidance, night elf females have taken up the mantle of spiritual advisors to the rebellion, and her disciples wield ever greater control over the forces that flow through the world. The night elves have been able to survive by striking from the shadows and melting away before the dawn elves can strike back. Their ebony skin and moonlight hair are perfect for nighttime raids, and the night elves have taken to the darkness just as their cousins exult in the sunshine and brightness of the day.

Some night elves still walk among the other elven people of Sildanyr, but the others regard them with a wary eye. Persecution is not widespread, as the dawn elves still hold out hope that the night elves can be brought back within the elven nation, but some elves

cannot help but see a spy or murderer behind every night elf's hood. Most of those who have joined in the civil war have left the cities and gone into hiding with the rebels. They have created strongholds in the Morningstar Mountains where they dwell in caverns just below the surface. The night elf leaders know that their people would be safer deeper within the mountains, but far more dangerous and evil things than elves live in the depths.

The night elves know and care little about the world outside Sildanyr, having set their sights on the grove of the First Tree and the dawn elf king who rules from its seat. They believe that whoever controls this wellspring of fey magic will control the forest itself. What sorties they have sent out to Anderland have been met with hostility and distrust. The people of that land fear that the elven civil war will one day spill out of the forest, and so have turned back elven emissaries no matter their skin color. The gnomes remain neutral in the elven conflict, and so interact with the night elves as they would any other fey.

Night elf adventurers are common both within and outside the forest of Sildanyr. Mercenaries fight and spy for both sides of the conflict and even take their unique skills to other lands. These night elves find their abilities in high demand by the Valhedrin generals as well as the trueborn lords of the Kingsmarch. The wilds of Tamerland hold a fascination for the night elves, some of whom believe that the great primordial forests of that land may be their true birthright, not Sildanyr. There are even night elves who have traveled to the jungles of Zangala with the same thought, but none have ever returned.

NIGHT ELF RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Dex, -2 Con: Night elves are graceful but frail. A night elf's grace makes him naturally better at stealth and archery.

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

- Night elf base land speed is 30 feet.

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

- +2 racial bonus on all saves versus spells and spell-like abilities.

- Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights*, *faerie fire*. Caster level is equal to character level.

- Spell Resistance: Night elves have an innate resistance to magic that grants them spell resistance equal to their character level.

- Automatic Languages: Common and Elven. Bonus Languages: Anderlar, Gnome, Sylvan, and Abyssal (disciples of Lathail only).

- Favored Class: Rogue. A night elf's rogue class

does not count when determining whether he suffers an experience point penalty for multiclassing. Night elves are naturally creatures of the darkness, and they have mastered the arts of stealth and surprise.

NIGHT ELF RACIAL TALENTS

Night elves may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

ARCANE MASTERY RACIAL TALENT TREE

Elves feel the flow of magic through their veins more keenly than other races.

Arcane Mastery: Each time this racial trait is selected, the night elf gains one additional known spell of any level he can cast (if he is a spontaneous caster) or one additional spell slot per day of any level he can cast (if he must prepare his arcane spells).

Prerequisite: Arcane spellcaster level 1+.

DAGGERS IN THE DARK RACIAL TALENT TREE

The night elves have learned that stealth is their greatest ally against the arcane might of their dawn elf enemies.

Unusual Stealth (Ex): A night elf that selects this racial talent may move up to his full speed while Hiding and Moving Silently at no penalty.

Spider's Bite (Su): The night elf gains the ability to magically poison up to five arrows, bolts, or thrown weapons per day. Doing so is a move action, but the effect lasts for the entire day. Only piercing and slashing ammunition may be so affected. Night elf poison; injury; Fortitude save (DC 14); initial damage nauseated for 1d4 rounds, secondary damage unconscious for 2d4 hours.

Prerequisite: Character level 5+.

Shadow Jump (Su): The night elf can "jump" through shadows, granting him the ability to *dimension door* up to 40 feet per day. He can make multiple jumps as long as the total distance traveled per day does not exceed 40 feet. Each time the night elf uses this ability it counts as at least 10 feet, no matter if he jumps less than that.

Prerequisite: Character level 7+.

Special: This racial trait can be selected multiple times, each time adding 40 feet to the maximum daily limit.

Talent Feats: When the night elf selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any metamagic feat, Rapid Reload, or Track.



Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the night elf selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Bluff, Craft (any), Knowledge (dungeoneering, geography, local, nature, religion, the planes), Listen, Profession (any), Search, and Spot.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

NIGHT ELF RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Night elves may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Darkvision: When the night elf selects this racial transformation, he gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet.

Full Spell Resistance: The night elf begins to manifest the powerful resistance that allows his people to successfully battle their lighter cousins. The elf gains spell resistance equal to 15 plus his character level.

Prerequisite: Moderate spell resistance, character level 10.

Minor Spell Resistance: The night elf's natural resistance to magic grows stronger. His spell resistance is now equal to 5 plus his character level.

Moderate Spell Resistance: The night elf's spell resistance is now equal to 10 plus his character level.

Prerequisite: Minor Spell Resistance, character level 6+.

Transformation Feats: When the night elf selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, or Iron Will.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the night elf selects this racial transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Balance, Escape Artist, Hide, and Move Silently.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, drow traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Int
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Dex
6	Racial transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Cha
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Dex
10	Racial transformation

GNOME

Gnomes are a primal race that dwells in wooded dells and secluded mountain valleys. They have maintained a closer bond with their fey heritage than even the elves of Sildanyr, even though the gnomes have existed in the world for much longer than the elves. They have built no grand civilizations, and their communities are often loosely organized tribes of extended families. The gnomes have few natural enemies in the world and have managed to remain neutral in all of the conflicts that rage across Ambria. Like children, they are often ignored wherever they go—gnomes are not seen as a threat to anyone, rather just a part of the surroundings.

Because of this, while they are most common in Sildanyr, gnomes can be found in all the lands of Ambria, the islands of Ebernath and Valhedar, as well as in Tamerland and even in the cities of Erenak and Saredrin in the Azran Desert on the continent of Zangala. Since gnomes have an undeserved reputation as tricksters and illusionists, they are often met with polite suspicion in human lands. They are accepted by

the dwarves of Aradath, and there are a few small gnome communities in the wild hills of northern Anderland. The tieflings of Valhedar are interested in the gnomes because of their strong connection to the fey realm, an attribute the tieflings would like to understand to help them with their own summoning rituals.

Gnomes move within these societies, observing all they can while staying out of the natives' way. Gnomes are little understood creatures who are sometimes mistaken for lesser beings because of their intense connection to nature and the strange phenomenon known as the Fading. Sometimes as a gnome grows older he begins to fade out, existing simultaneously on more than one plane. Most sages assume that gnomes are in contact with the fey realm of Itheria when this happens, but no one except the gnomes is really sure. This eerie phenomenon is as likely to get a gnome driven out of town as it is to provoke awe and wonder.

To a greater degree than their fey cousins, gnomes are sustained by the magic of the world. They do not require food or water to survive, though they often eat and drink for the simple pleasure of it. The gnomes' physical appearance follows the changing seasons as they age. The skin and hair of gnome children are tinted with the green of springtime and summer, and humans often mistake them for true fey folk. When a gnome enters adulthood, his coloration gradually changes to the brown and gold of autumn, and then slowly fades to white in his elder years. Gnomes tend to only wear clothing when going into areas with other creatures, and adventuring gnomes are often seen wearing no clothing at all. They do not mark their bodies, instead respecting them as they respect all other parts of the natural world. Gnomes never eat meat, and always bless any plant before they eat it or its fruits. They tend to carry seeds with them wherever they go, planting new trees and bushes on the course of their travels.

Gnomes have little in the way of ambition for worldly things—power, money, lands, and titles. Instead they seem content to wander the land and ensure that the natural world is not affected by the conceits of the other races. They are most welcome in the lands of the dwarves and the elves, who view them as kin. The elves identify with the fey nature of the gnomes, while the dwarves regard them as an elder race that transcends the others who have come after. Gnomes are very curious about the untamed arcane and divine energies of the world, and seek magic items and places of power to satiate this curiosity. All gnomes have some knowledge of magic, and there are elder gnomes whose knowledge may hold the key to unlocking the path to the divine.



GNOME RACIAL TRAITS

• +2 Wisdom, +2 Cha, -2 Strength. Gnomes are wise in the ways of both natural and other peoples, but their small size makes them weaker than larger races.

• Small: As Small creatures, gnomes gain a +1 size bonus to Armor Class, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks. They must use smaller weapons than humans use and their lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of 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 similar conditions of poor illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.

• +2 racial bonus on Handle Animal checks. Animals can sense a gnome's deep connection with the natural world.

• +2 racial bonus on Listen checks. Gnomes have keen ears.

• Weapon Familiarity: Gnomes may treat gnome exotic weapons as martial weapons.

• Gnomes do not need to eat or drink, though they sometimes do so for the pleasure of it. Gnomes are more closely related to their fey cousins than even the elves.

• +1 racial bonus to attack and damage rolls with bludgeoning weapons (including slings). Gnomes prefer such weapons, since they cause less grievous wounds than slashing or piercing weapons.

• Wild Empathy (Ex): A gnome can use body language, vocalizations, and demeanor to improve the attitude of an animal (such as a bear or a giant lizard). This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check made to improve the attitude of a person (see *PHB*, Chapter 4: Skills). The gnome rolls 1d20 and adds his character level and Charisma modifier to determine the wild empathy check result. The typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals are usually unfriendly. A gnome shaman adds twice his class level to this check (in addition to levels from other classes) to reflect his training as well as his innate connection with animals.

To use wild empathy, the gnome and the animal must be able to study each other, which means that they must be within 30 feet of one another under normal conditions. Generally, influencing an animal in this way takes 1 minute but, as with influencing people, it might take more or less time.

A gnome can also use this ability to influence a magical beast with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2 (such as a basilisk or a girallon), but he takes a -4 penalty on the check.

• Automatic Languages: Common and Gnome.

Bonus Languages: Anderlar, Elven, and Sylvan.

- **Favored Class:** Shaman. A gnome's shaman class does not count for determining whether he suffers an experience point penalty for multiclassing. Gnomes are innately bonded with the living things and primal forces of the natural world.

GNOME RACIAL TALENTS

Gnomes may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

MAGIC MASTERY RACIAL TALENT TREE

Gnomes feel the flow of magic in the world and through their veins more keenly than other races, though not as powerfully as the elves.

Arcane Mastery: Each time this racial trait is selected, the gnome gains one additional known spell of any level he can cast (if he is a spontaneous caster) or one additional spell slot per day of any level he can cast (if he must prepare his arcane spells).

Prerequisite: Arcane spellcaster level 1+.

Divine Mastery: Each time this racial trait is selected, the gnome gains one additional known spell of any level he can cast (if he is a spontaneous caster) or one additional spell slot per day of any level he can cast (if he must prepare his divine spells).

Prerequisite: Divine spellcaster level 1+.

TRUE GNOME RACIAL TALENT TREE

Gnomes have a strong tie to the fey blood that flows within their veins.

Fey Gift I: The gnome is able to cast a small selection of arcane spells. He may choose one 0-level and one 1st-level spell from the druid's spell list. From this point forward, he may cast each of these spells once per day as a spell-like ability. The caster level for these abilities is equal to the gnome's character level.

Fey Gift II: The gnome's arcane abilities grow more powerful. He may use all of the spells granted by fey gift I twice per day. In addition, he may choose an additional 1st-level and one 2nd-level spell that he may now cast once per day as spell-like abilities. The caster level for these abilities is equal to the gnome's character level.

Prerequisite: Fey gift I, character level 7+.

Potion Mastery I: When the gnome selects this ability, he gains the ability to unfailingly identify magical potions and oils. In addition, all potions are consid-

ered to have a caster level one higher when drunk by the gnome. (So a standard *potion of cure light wounds* would heal 1d8+2 points of damage.)

Potion Mastery II: This ability grants a gnome the ability to brew potions even if he does not have the Brew Potion feat or the ability to cast spells. He must still expend the gold, XP, and time costs as per the feat. Each time this trait is selected, the gnome chooses three spells of up to 3rd level from the shaman or ranger spell lists. He may now create potions that mimic the effects of these spells, and the gnome's caster level is always considered the minimum necessary to cast the spell.

Prerequisite: Potion mastery I.

Talent Feats: When the gnome selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any metamagic feat, any item creation feat, Alertness, Improved Initiative, or Spell Focus.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the gnome selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Craft (any), Handle Animal, Heal, Knowledge (arcana, geography, local, nature, religion, the planes), Listen, Profession (any), Sense Motive, Spellcraft, and Spot.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

GNOME RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Gnomes may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Damage Reduction: A gnome's supernatural nature and strange anatomy makes him less susceptible to bludgeoning attacks (including slam attacks, falling damage, and so on). This damage reduction stacks with that gained from other sources (such as the barbarian's damage reduction).

The gnome ignores two points of bludgeoning damage from all melee and ranged weapons, gaining DR 2/piercing or slashing. Each time he takes this ability, he gains two more points of damage reduction (for example, 4/piercing or slashing after taking it twice and 6/piercing or slashing after taking it three times).

Special: This racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Ghosting: Many gnomes exhibit this strange trait, which allows them to live on both the Material Plane and the fey realm of Itheria simultaneously. Normally this has no effect except to give the gnome a slightly fuzzy look, as if his form is slightly blurred. On command, however, the gnome can *ghost*, phasing back and forth between the planes more rapidly than the mortal

eye can follow. The effect is identical to the *blink* spell except that the gnome travels back and forth to Itheria rather than the Ethereal Plane. It requires a full-round action to activate this ability, and the gnome can only activate it once per day for a duration of up to one minute.

Fading: This ability is related to ghosting. On command, the gnome can *fade*. The effect is identical to the *ethereal jaunt* spell except that the gnome travels to Itheria rather than the Ethereal Plane. It requires a full-round action to activate this ability, and the gnome can only activate it once per day for a duration of up to one minute.

Improved Fading: The gnome has grown more comfortable shifting back and forth from Itheria to the Material Plane. He may now activate his fading ability as a free action and can do so up to three times per day for a duration of up to one minute each. A gnome that selects this ability becomes pale and ghostlike even when not using this ability.

Transformation Feats: When the gnome selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, or Toughness.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the gnome selects this racial transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Climb, Escape Artist, Jump, Move Silently, Ride, and Swim.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, gnome traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Con
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Wis
6	Racial Transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Cha
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Wis
10	Racial transformation

HALFLING

Halflings are found in all corners of Ambria, but they are not builders of empires, kingdoms, or even permanent settlements. The largest halfling culture is a nomadic one, and its people travel the land in great caravans of brightly colored wagons. These halflings call themselves the Faring Folk, and they are encountered most often in Anderland. A few small caravans are seen

occasionally in the Kingsmarch and Emerlyn, but the Faring Folk are sometimes persecuted by the human and tiefling lords of those lands. They have a reputation in some places as thieves and scoundrels, but Faring Folk caravans are tolerated in many isolated communities because of the exotic trade goods they bring from far-away lands.

Halflings do not have traditional families. Instead, the whole village or wandering troupe acts as family to all new halflings born. The group shares responsibility for the protection of the weak and elderly, and most possessions are shared between the individuals of the group. They understand the laws of personal property, but simply care little for ownership of material things. This leads them into trouble sometimes—especially where young halflings are concerned—with cultures that do not share their carefree notions of property.

The Faring Folk's wagons are large even by the standards of other races, and they are drawn by sturdy hill ponies bred in northern Anderland. These halflings are notorious for their love of animals, and their caravans are often accompanied by herds of goats and pigs, along with packs of barely domesticated dogs that serve the halflings as mounts and guard animals. These wagons hold trade goods from all over Ambria as well as from the far-flung reaches of Tamerland. Portable stages are built into the sides of many of these wagons, allowing the Faring Folk to put on shows no matter where they go. Sometimes a wandering bard will take up with a group of halflings, adding his own talents to those possessed by his dexterous and joyful hosts.

The Faring Folk accept silver and other remuneration for their performances, but they prefer to trade for local foods and handiworks. It is good luck for a halfling to make a stranger smile, so they work toward these ends constantly.

Halflings look like small elves, standing between 3 and 3 1/2 feet tall. Their eyes and hair are a variety of colors, reflecting the chaotic nature of their lifestyle. Halfling men favor wearing their hair straight and tied back in a ponytail, while the women curl their hair and either cut it close to their heads or allow it to curl into flowing designs. The Faring Folk dress in brightly colored, loose-fitting clothing that they can use to conceal spell components, small weapons, and other items that may be of use. Of course, the potential for larceny has not escaped the notice of the cultures into which the halflings bring their entertainment and trade.

The Faring Folk are most prevalent throughout Anderland. The region's inhabitants have taken a liking to the "small folk" and they are always welcome sights at harvest festivals and neighborly meets. Since the Anderlar travel very little, the halflings bring them knowledge of the world outside their borders. The halfling traveling shows also move among the elves of Sildanyr, and the troupes stare with awe and wonder at the elven citadels and homes that seem to grow from the trees themselves.



Rounding the Stormfells to journey into the Emerlyn peninsula or the Kingsmarch is risky business for a troupe of halflings, as neither the tieflings nor the trueborn hold them in high regard. Still, the Faring Folk favor the exotic spices and appearance of the tieflings and seem to enjoy taunting the trueborn, who by all appearances have lost their sense of humor. It is also necessary to cross the Kingsmarch to get to Avennar, where a troupe can buy passage to Seagarden and the mysterious realm of Tamerland beyond. Halflings that have crossed the Sunset Reach and returned are assured of being feted by their fellows.

HALFLING RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Dex, +2 Cha, -2 Str, -2 Wis. Halfling's are naturally deft and agile, and they are born performers and entertainers. But their small size makes them weaker than larger creatures and they are prone to impulsiveness and hasty judgments.

- Small: As Small creatures, halflings gain a +1 size bonus to Armor Class, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks. They must use smaller weapons than humans use and their lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of a Medium character.

- Halfling base land speed is 20 feet.
- +2 racial bonus on all Bluff, Perform, and Sleight of Hand checks. Halflings know how to work a crowd in more ways than one.
- 1 extra feat at 1st level. Halflings are quick to master specialized tasks and varied in their talents.
- +1 racial attack bonus with all light weapons (including thrown weapons). Halflings prefer to use small, concealed weapons in combat rather than large, unwieldy ones.
- Weapon Familiarity: Halflings may treat halfling exotic weapons as martial weapons.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Halfling. Bonus Languages: Anderlar, Clan Speech, King's Tongue, Goblin, and Orc.
- Favored Class: Bard. A halfling's bard class does not count for determining whether he suffers an experience point penalty for multiclassing. The Faring Folk travel the known lands, making their way with stories, songs, and profitable trade.

HALFLING RACIAL TALENTS

Halflings may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

Arcane Mastery: Each time this racial trait is selected, the halfling gains one additional known spell of any level he can cast (if he is a spontaneous caster) or one additional spell slot per day of any level he can cast (if he must prepare his arcane spells).

Prerequisite: Arcane spellcaster level 1+.

TRUE HALFLING RACIAL TALENT TREE

Halflings are lucky and charismatic creatures that seem to always find a way out of trouble. They pick up a variety of skills during their travels, making them extremely versatile.

Fast Learner: When the halfling selects this racial talent, he may select any two skills that become class skills for him no matter what his class selection may be. If the halfling selects a skill that is already a class skill for him, he gains a +2 racial bonus to that skill.

Incredible Luck: Each time the halfling selects this racial talent he gains the ability to re-roll any single die roll once per day. The halfling must announce that he is using this ability before he learns the result of the roll, but he may choose to use the better of the two rolls.

Talent Feats: When the halfling selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any metamagic feat, any item creation feat, Combat Expertise, or Rapid Reload.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the halfling selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Appraise, Bluff, Craft (any), Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Disable Device, Disguise, Forgery, Gather Information, Knowledge (any), Open Lock, Perform, Profession (any), Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, and Spellcraft.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

HALFLING RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Halflings may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Animal Companion: A halfling who chooses this racial transformation magically bonds with an animal companion chosen from the following list: dire rat, dog, riding dog, eagle, hawk, pony, or wolf. This loyal companion follows all of the rules for a druid's animal companion (see PHB).

Good First Impression: A halfling that chooses this racial transformation learns to project his inner congeniality toward others, calming them and making them much more likely to greet the character as a friend. The first time a halfling makes a Diplomacy check to affect or determine the mood of an NPC, he automatically takes 20 on the die roll, regardless of the circumstances.

Quick Feet: Halflings are small, of course, but many are deceptively quick over short distances. A halfling who chooses this racial transformation gains a 5 ft. bonus to land speed. This movement bonus only counts for moves and double moves.

Special: This racial transformation cannot be chosen twice in a row.

Transformation Feats: When the halfling selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, or Run.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the halfling selects this racial transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Ride, Tumble, and Use Rope.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Special

Racial talent, halfling traits
Racial transformation
Racial talent, +2 Con
Racial transformation
Racial talent, +2 Cha
Racial transformation
Racial talent, +2 Dex
Racial transformation
Racial talent, +2 Cha
Racial transformation

HUMANS

The humans of Ambria are divided into four main groups: highlanders, lowlanders, saltbloods, and trueborn.

HIGHLANDER

The Durning Highlands are home to more than a hundred disparate clans of humans. The warlords of these clans have managed to carve out domains in the lands north of the Kingsmarch lying between the Stormfells and the sea. Although the clans are often at war against each other, many have united to defend the highlands from humanoid and giant raids or to launch their own raids into the Kingsmarch.

Each highlander warlord has claimed lands as his own, and typically only those of his clan may reside within his borders. Clan hierarchy is rigid, with each warrior swearing allegiance to the commander above him, until the lowliest peasant blade is linked to his warlord through a chain of bloodsworn oaths. The extent of each warlord's lands is in constant dispute, and this combined with the differing codes by which each clan lives leads to the constant bickering and warfare that disunites the region. A clansman's first responsibility is to live by his clan's code and defend its honor. Personal achievement is secondary, but still important within the clan societies.

The highlanders are smaller than trueborn humans, but they are quicker on their feet and fearless in battle. They have light brown skin and fine, dark hair that they tie back into ponytails with special bone clasps called *anunti*. These clasps are painted and sculpted in such a way as to reveal the wearer's clan affiliation. A warrior that loses his *anunti* to a rival is considered shamed and must work his way back up the clan hierarchy from the bottom rung. This form of humiliation is the clans' way of sparing each other's greatest warriors from death whenever possible. Most clans abide by this code, although some—such as the infamous Blacktooth Dogs—would rather open their enemies' throats and spit upon their remains.

Clans are inclusive and even allow outsiders to

join if they have proven themselves both worthy and honorable. One extreme example of this can be found in the recent history of the Durning Highlands and is a tale told by halflings across Ambria. Late one night after drinking heavily with several visiting Faring Folk, the chieftain of clan Steel Wolf inducted the entire troupe into the clan without consulting his advisors. Longstanding bitterness over past insults threw the clan into a civil war from which it never recovered. The halflings, long gone before the bloodshed began, are now the sole remaining survivors of the clan, a fact that they trumpet proudly as they roll into every new town.

Some chieftains are friendly to travelers, seeking information and trade goods from them as they pass through their lands. Others, however, demand tribute or service from those crossing their lands. The ever-shifting nature of the clan boundaries makes crossing these lands a risky proposition for those not in good standing with the many warlords of the highlands.

In battle, highlanders prefer heavy swords and short, wide daggers. Many of the clansmen excel at unarmed combat, and while they are not a religious people many of their fighters have learned to channel the magic of the world to allow them to perform amazing feats of acrobatics and combat. As it is written, these “fighters in the sky” were the first to ever harness magical energies in this way.

HIGHLANDER RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Dex, –2 Int, –2 Cha: Highlanders are quick and agile, but they often prefer fighting to thinking or parleying.

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

- Highlander base land speed is 30 feet.

- 1 extra feat at 1st level. Highlanders can choose any armor or weapon proficiency, or any feat from the fighter’s list of bonus feats.

- 4 extra skill points at 1st level.

- +2 racial bonus on Will saves.

- Clan Honor Code: Characters from the highlands come from one of the region’s many clans, and each warlord establishes an honor code that binds all who follow him. If a character acts against her clan’s honor code (as determined by the DM), she loses her bonus to Will saves, as the verity of purpose that she once knew is shaken.

- Automatic Languages: Common and Clan Speech. Bonus Languages: Anderlar, Giant, Goblin, Highland Runic, King’s Tongue, and Orc.

- Favored Class: Barbarian. A highlander’s barbarian class does not count for determining whether he suffers an experience point penalty for multiclassing. The highlanders place great emphasis on might and fierceness in battle.

HIGHLANDER RACIAL TALENTS

Highlanders may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

Clan Favored Weapon: Each of the highlander clans has a favored weapon that its warriors are taught to use from an early age. When this ability is chosen, the highlander gains a +1 circumstance bonus on attack and damage rolls and a +1 circumstance bonus on initiative checks when he is using one of these favored weapons. If the highlander does not have his weapon drawn when initiative is rolled, he can still gain his initiative bonus by drawing and using his weapon on the first round of combat. The most common favored weapons in the highlands include: bastard sword, battleaxe, greatsword, longsword, shortbow, and spear.

Fast Learner: When the highlander selects this racial talent, he may select any two skills that become class skills for him no matter what his class selection may be. If the highlander selects a skill that is already a class skill for him, he gains a +2 talent bonus to that skill.

Talent Feats: When the highlander selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Alertness, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency, Track, or Weapon Finesse.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Voice of the Highlands: When this racial talent is selected, the highlander gains the ability to put his ear to the ground and gain knowledge about the surrounding terrain. This works exactly like the *commune with nature* spell as cast by a druid of the highlander’s level, except as follows. It only requires 5 rounds of concentration to gain the information desired, and the ability only works in the hills and highlands. The highlander can use this ability at will.

HIGHLANDER RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Highlanders may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Disciplined Mind: Each time this ability is chosen, the highlander gains the ability to focus his mind once per day, making him extremely deadly in combat. When he invokes this ability, the highlander temporarily gains a +4 bonus to Dexterity, a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, and the Combat Reflexes feat. In addition, the character cannot be flanked.

The character is able to focus his mind for a number of rounds equal to 5 + his Wisdom modifier. He may



only enact a disciplined mind once per combat, and at the end of the duration he is considered fatigued until the end of the encounter from the mental strain of focusing so intensely.

Fast Movement: Clansmen roam the hills and highlands and learn to move with great speed across open ground. Whenever this racial transformation is chosen, the highlander adds 5 feet to his base land speed.

Transformation Feats: When the highlander selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Run, or Toughness.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the highlander selects this transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +6 that may be distributed among the following skills: Balance, Jump, Ride, Swim, or Tumble.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level

1
2

Special

Racial talent, highlander traits
Racial transformation

3	Racial talent, +2 Con
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Dex
6	Racial transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Wis
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Dex
10	Racial transformation

LOWLANDER

Lowlanders are found throughout the known lands of Eadar, but they are most populous in Anderland. Anderlars are an agrarian people who are sheltered from most of the war and conflict that rages across Ambria. They live in the farming communities and market towns that spread out across the fertile plain between the Imilbar and Dural rivers. The common folk of the Kingsmarch, Ebernath, Emerlyn, and even Valhedar are often lowlanders as well.

Family is very important in Anderland, and most Anderlar households have at least three generations living under the same roof (or roofs). The average farm couple will have seven or eight children over the course of their lives, most of who grow to help on the family farm either as a caretaker or a laborer. Anderlar homes are built to allow easy additions, and as a family grows more buildings are added to give them room in which to

live. The most prosperous farms may have up to six buildings to house the extended family that lives within. Men are expected to work the farms until their sons' sons are old enough to take over, at which time they retire to live out their days surrounded by family. Women keep the household and family together, providing clothing, meals, and comfort to their husbands and children.

Neighboring Anderlar families strive to be on good terms, and there is a strong communal bond between neighbors that runs deep in the culture and psyche of Anderland. Neighbors share a portion of each crop with each other, and gifts of seeds and tools are given at the beginning of each new growing season. It is common for neighboring farms to gather on holidays rather than traveling to a town or celebrating in private. These gatherings are full of music, food, and games and serve to strengthen the bond between Anderlar families. This tradition extends to the cities and towns of Anderland as well, where the city's quarters put on distinct celebrations, each trying to outdo the other.

Lowlanders are among the largest of the human races, their muscles well developed from a lifetime of farm work. Anderlars typically have fair skin and hair that ranges from dark brown to black. Anderlars wear their hair long in the winter and cut it short in the summer. Blue and green eyes are most common, and black or gray eyes are considered a sign of nobility. Anderlars wear heavy tunics and pants when working in the fields, and lighter garments when they go to market or are otherwise out of the fields. They do not favor ostentatious garments, instead using gold, silver, and copper trim to decorate fine tunics and breeches when proper attire is warranted.

Of all the races, lowlanders typically have the least desire to go off on adventures or to improve their lot in life beyond perhaps expanding the family farm. Those that do choose such a life are often seen as black sheep, although they are always welcome back into their family home and treated as if they had never left. Some lowlanders are not content to work the farms for their entire lives; instead, they may want to see the luxuries of Ebernath or to cross the Sunset Reach in search of the unknown in far-off Tamerland. Anderlars consider it a rite of passage for young men, and sometimes young women, to travel up the rivers that feed the farms and towns of Anderland. Some choose to travel up the Dural from the Parthian Sea to the Goldspring Sea, while others take the much longer and more dangerous route to the headwaters of the Imilbar. This takes a traveler between the Pale Forest and Sildanyr, through halfling country and then into the cold steppes in the shadow of the Icehammer Front.

Anderlars tend to stay out of the conflict between the clansmen of the Kingsmarch and the tieflings of Emerlyn. They respect the treaty between the tieflings and the merchant princes of Ebernath that has kept their lands peaceful for hundreds of years. Some lowlanders,

however, feel that they must defend their human neighbors from the predations of the tieflings, even going so far as to join one of the armies that defend the Kingsmarch from the tiefling legions of the Emerlyn peninsula.

The dwarves and giants of the Stormfells are legendary to the Anderlars, who see them as primal races whose conflict represents a tension between the opposed forces of the natural world. The Anderlars are wary of the elves of Sildanyr, whose conflict threatens to spill over into Anderland. Most treat the dawn elves and night elves equally, although rumors about the night elves have turned some lowlanders against them. Halflings are common sights at lowlander festivals, and the two races regard each other with mutual admiration. The Anderlars have little contact with any of the other races, although they regard the orcs and goblinoids to the north with nervous caution.

LOWLANDER RACIAL TRAITS

- Lowlanders gain a +2 bonus to one ability score of the player's choice and suffer a -2 penalty on one other ability score of the player's choice. Humans are a diverse race no matter which region of Ambria they come from and demonstrate a wide range of physical and mental strengths and weaknesses.

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

- Lowlander base land speed is 30 feet.

- 1 extra feat at 1st level.

- 4 extra skill points at 1st level.

- +2 racial bonus on all Bluff and Diplomacy checks made to influence a transaction or trade.

- Automatic Languages: Common and Anderlar. Bonus Languages: Any, including Druidic (but not other secret languages).

- Favored Class: Any. A lowlander's highest level class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing. Lowlanders are a diverse and versatile race.

LOWLANDER RACIAL TALENTS

Lowlanders may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

MAGIC MASTERY RACIAL TALENT TREE

Lowlanders from the farming communities of Anderland are generally uninterested in arcane magic, but occasionally they make faithful disciples. The merchant princes of Ebernath and their sycophants, however, applaud anyone with the talent and dedication to

study arcane magic, which they see as better for entertainment purposes than war.

Arcane Mastery: Each time this racial trait is selected, the lowlander gains one additional known spell of any level he can cast (if he is a spontaneous caster) or one additional spell slot per day of any level he can cast (if he must prepare his arcane spells).

Prerequisite: Arcane spellcaster level 1+.

Divine Mastery: Each time this racial trait is selected, the lowlander gains one additional known spell of any level he can cast (if he is a spontaneous caster) or one additional spell slot per day of any level he can cast (if he must prepare his divine spells).

Prerequisite: Divine spellcaster level 1+.

TRUE LOWLANDER RACIAL TALENT TREE

Most lowlanders are agrarian people who stick together in times of trouble.

Connected: Lowlanders thrive thanks in some part to their loyalty to their own. As a result, any time a lowlander that has chosen this racial talent is in need he can look to his fellows to provide him with whatever aid they can reasonably give.

Once per day the lowlander can make a level check (1d20 + character level) to which he adds his Charisma modifier. The DM sets the DC based on the aid being requested and the circumstances involved. The DC ranges from 10 for a simple request to as high as 25 for highly dangerous, expensive, or illegal requests. The lowlander cannot take 10 or take 20 on this check, nor can he retry the check for the same request. Note that these requests should help advance the plot of an adventure. A request that would allow the lowlander and his companions to circumvent an important plotline should always be unavailable to the character, regardless of the result of the check. The DM should always monitor the lowlander's use of this ability and disallow any request that could be disruptive to the game.

A lowlander can only request a favor from any particular NPC once per week, and any particular community a number of times per month equal to his level.

Note that only other lowlanders will grant this type of favor as it represents loyalty to one's own, and PCs are never under any compulsion to grant favor requests to other lowlanders.

Fast Learner: When the lowlander selects this racial talent, he may select any two skills that become class skills for him no matter what his class selection may be. If the lowlander selects a skill that is already a class skill for him, he gains a +2 talent bonus to that skill.

Group Fighter: Lowlanders practice group fighting techniques for the rare occasion on which they must defend their homes. Each time the lowlander chooses this racial talent, he gains a +1 talent bonus on attack rolls made when attacking a creature that is threatened

by one of his allies.

Special: This racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Feats: When the lowlander selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any metamagic feat, Leadership, or Track.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the lowlander selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +6 that may be distributed among the following skills: Appraise, Craft (any), Diplomacy, Heal, Intimidate, Knowledge (any), Perform, Profession (any), and Sense Motive.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

LOWLANDER RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Lowlanders may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Fast Movement: Lowlanders are known as long-legged folk, and footraces are an important part of most Anderlan festivals. Whenever this racial transformation is chosen, the lowlander adds 5 feet to his base land speed.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: This racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Great Swimmer: A lowlander that selects this racial transformation can always take 10 on Swim checks and can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to three times his Constitution score.

Strength of Body, Mind, and Spirit: Each time the lowlander chooses this racial transformation, he gains a +1 bonus to all saving throws.

Transformation Feats: When the lowlander selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Diehard, Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Run, or Toughness.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the lowlander selects this racial transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +6 that may be distributed among the following skills: Climb, Concentration, Jump, Ride, and Swim.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.



Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, lowlander traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Con
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Str
6	Racial transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Wis
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Con
10	Racial transformation

SALTBLOOD

Saltbloods are more comfortable on the sea than they are on land. The Dreaming Isles boast the greatest port city in the world, Seagarden, and all of the children on the archipelago are educated in the ways of ship and sea. They are a rugged folk, picking up the rough manners and speech of the sailors that visit and live on the island. Danger is never far from a saltblood's mind, and it is said that by the time a saltblood reaches manhood he has faced more danger than a lowlander will face in his entire life.

Many saltbloods consider themselves superior to the other human races. They are tougher and heartier thanks to the rough life of the sea. They are quicker and more agile thanks to a life of activity and danger. Of course, this posturing and bravado does them little good when faced with the end of a sword. Saltbloods are outstanding swimmers and can even learn to take to the water like a second home. They prefer to wear light armor and wield small weapons so that they can easily shed them should they be knocked from their boats. Their fighting style generally relies on agility and defense, and they are fond of performing flamboyant maneuvers when they fight.

Saltbloods have dark brown to black hair and olive skin, made tough by a life living near the sea. They are slightly smaller than the highlanders and much smaller than the lowlanders who live across the mountains. Saltbloods are fond of tattooing their skin, and the practice has become an art at which many retired sailors and artisans make their living on the Dreaming Isles. Seagarden boasts the best, and most expensive, tattoo parlors in the world. It is said that the master tattoo artists of Seagarden can paint you a new face if you bring them enough coin.

The Dreaming Isles, and Seagarden in particular, offer some of the greatest diversity in the world. All the races of the world come to the islands to set sail to Tamerland, do business that they would hide from the prying eyes of enemies, or to simply enjoy the island atmosphere. Saltbloods are therefore experienced at dealing with most of the civilized races of the world, and even some of the less civilized—notably the lizard-folk who make the journey from Landsgate to see

Ambria. This makes the saltbloods favor a neutral stance in the conflicts that rage across Ambria. In a place where anything can happen and anyone can be right around the corner, there is more than enough reason not to choose sides. Some see this as a virtue—the tieflings and yuan-ti especially favor this attitude, as it allows them to do business on the islands without attracting undue attention from the local authorities. Many humans of Ambria view this neutral attitude as cowardly and the trueborn of the Kingsmarch often treat saltbloods as undeclared enemies. The elves of Sildanyr admire the saltbloods' affinity for ships and the ocean, but they too find it hard to swallow the neutrality and seeming amorality of the Dreaming Isles and its people.

Saltbloods are always on the move, and they dislike staying in one place for long periods of time. It is partly this trait that makes them such excellent seamen, and it also means that saltbloods can be found getting into all manner of adventures in Ambria and Tamerland. They especially enjoy adventuring on the new continent, as it tests their survival skills to the limit and feeds the individualistic streak that is characteristic of the saltblood personality. The saltbloods have inherited a strong spiritual tradition from the native Madocs that share their islands, and the Dreaming Isles have also produced a number of renowned wizards. Nevertheless, magic and religious vocations are not as common among the saltbloods as they are in other human cultures. The saltbloods do enjoy hunting strange new creatures, which is one of the reasons they like Tamerland so much—it gives them the ability not only to hunt new creatures, but to discover them as well.

Piracy is an increasingly common vocation among the saltbloods as trade and travel between Ambria and Tamerland increases. Saltblood pirates prey on the merchant ships of Ebernath and Valhedar, and sometimes even attack the ships of rival saltblood captains. Some saltblood privateers sell their services to Ebernath, Valhedar, and the merchant houses of Seagarden, raiding the fleets of those nations' enemies in return for official sanction and safe harbor.

SALTBLOOD RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Dexterity, -2 Str: Saltbloods are dexterous and agile, but they are smaller and less physically powerful than other humans.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, saltbloods have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Saltblood base land speed is 30 feet.
- 1 extra feat at 1st level. Saltbloods are quick to master specialized tasks and varied in their talents.
- 4 extra skill points at 1st level.
- +4 racial bonus on all Swim checks and a +2 racial bonus on all Use Rope checks.
- +1 circumstance bonus to AC when using a buckler. This bonus stacks with the buckler's shield bonus. In addition, a saltblood's shield does not impair

his ability to swim. He does not count its weight when attempting a Swim check. Saltbloods train extensively with bucklers, which are small enough to be useful aboard ships and not too restrictive to their movement while swimming.

- Automatic Languages: Common and Dorlian. Bonus Languages: Any (except secret languages, such as Druidic).

- Favored Class: Any. A saltblood's highest level class does not count when determining whether he suffers an experience point penalty for multiclassing. Most saltbloods favor a life at sea, but they are a versatile people that does not favor one path over all others.

SALTBLOOD RACIAL TALENTS

Saltbloods may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

Fast Learner: When the saltblood selects this racial talent, he may select any two skills that become class skills for him no matter what his class selection may be. If the saltblood selects a skill that is already a class skill for him, he gains a +2 talent bonus to that skill.

TRUE SALTBLOOD RACIAL TALENT TREE

Saltbloods have quickened souls that are ready for combat and danger at any time.

Danger Sense: Saltbloods are a hard and ready people, not easily taken by surprise. When this talent is selected, the saltblood gains a +4 racial bonus on all initiative checks.

Special: This racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Ignore Pain: Because of the saltblood's inherent toughness, all non-lethal damage suffered by the character is reduced by half.

Talent Feats: When the saltblood selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any metamagic feat, Leadership, Quick Draw, or Rapid Reload.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the saltblood selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +6 that may be distributed among the following skills: Bluff, Craft (any), Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (any), Profession (any), Sense Motive, Survival, and Spot.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

SALTBLOOD RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Saltbloods may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Hold Breath: The saltblood gains the ability to hold his breath for up to one hour once per day.

Prerequisite: Perfect Swimmer.

Damage Reduction: Saltbloods learn to brawl at an early age, and the ability to take a punch is essential to their growth into respectable adults. This damage reduction only protects a saltblood against physical attacks, not energy damage or spells.

When selected, the saltblood ignores one point of damage from all melee and ranged weapons, gaining DR 1/—.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Special: This racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Natural Swimmer: Saltbloods grow up in and around water and some develop incredible swimming skills. When this racial transformation is chosen, the saltblood gains a swim speed of 10 feet. This grants the saltblood a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. In addition, he can always take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. He can use the run action while swimming, provided he swims in a straight line.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Perfect Swimmer: When this ability is chosen, the saltblood's Swim speed increases by 10 feet.

Prerequisite: Natural Swimmer.

Transformation Feats: When the saltblood selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, or Toughness.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the saltblood selects this racial transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +6 that may be distributed among the following skills: Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Jump, Swim, Tumble, and Use Rope.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level

Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, human traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Con
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Str
6	Racial transformation

7	Racial talent, +2 Dex
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Con
10	Racial transformation

TRUEBORN

The noble lines of the Kingsmarch call themselves the trueborn and trace their lineage from the first barbarian princes that settled the banks of the Hound and the Horn. While the trueborn of the Kingsmarch have built a remarkable civilization from this barbarian legacy, their noble houses are no more unified today than were the clans that first began building mud huts and wooden forts between the great rivers. Despite their many accomplishments—their castles and cathedrals, their culture of chivalry and their devotion to honor and duty—the only thing that seems capable of finally uniting the trueborn are the periodic invasions of the Kingsmarch by the legions of the Valhedar Dominion.

Trueborn humans can be found throughout Ambria, though they are by far most common in the Kingsmarch. The trueborn found elsewhere are typically exiles or adventurers, or the children of such wanderers. Those who make lives for themselves beyond the Kingsmarch often rise to positions of leadership and prominence in their communities. Trueborn who remain in their ancestral homeland are often lords, knights, courtiers, soldiers, or their devoted servants.

The trueborn are admired by the people of Anderland, whether lowlander humans or the Faring Folk. They are distrustful but not overtly hostile to the saltbloods, as they resent what they view as the Dreaming Isles' collaboration with the Valhedar Dominion. Many houses of the northern Kingsmarch have suffered periodic border wars and raids from the Durning clans, but there is nevertheless a mutual respect between most trueborn and highlanders. The trueborn, as a whole, have little contact with elves, dwarves, giants, or other races. They reserve their true enmity for the tieflings of the Valhedar Dominion. Most trueborn view tieflings as inherently evil and unredeemable and believe the sword is the only remedy for their blight upon the world.

The appearance and unique racial traits of the trueborn have led many sages to speculate that the blood of celestials flows in their veins. This would certainly seem to explain the enmity between the trueborn and tieflings, which no discourse or diplomacy seems capable of appeasing. If this is true, no one has yet identified the source of the celestial influence on the trueborn. Many believe that an eldritch well of celestial energy—the counterpart of the great volcano in Valhedar—must be located somewhere in the Kingsmarch. Regardless of its source, the celestial heritage of the trueborn is far more subtle and unpredictable than the fiendish legacy of the tieflings. Many trueborn possess no obvious celestial traits, while others are blessed with angelic fea-

tures and the innate ability to wield divine magic.

The different human tribes that settled the Kingsmarch gave rise to a people with diverse physical traits. Nevertheless, some traits are more common among the trueborn of the Kingsmarch than others. The trueborn are often slightly taller than other humans, averaging more than six feet in height. Their hair is most often blond, although sandy brown and reddish gold are not unknown, and they typically have fair skin and blue, gray, or green eyes. Trueborn humans are comfortable in heavy armor and prefer to fight with a weapon in one hand and a shield in the other.

The trueborn often find themselves engaged in adventures whether they seek them or not. They have a natural tendency to want to protect the weak and to see justice done at any cost, although some have intentionally turned away from this heritage for reasons that vary depending on the individual. The trueborn are by nature creators and builders—they feel a deep-seated need to leave a mark on the world. Whether a trueborn is building a family, a castle, or a kingdom, this need drives and directs his ambitions in life.

The trueborn are excellent riders, and most houses favor heavily armored cavalry using traditional lances and swords. Other military roles, including archery, are relegated to the soldiers and footmen that the knights support on the field. Both the Durning highlanders and the Valhedrin legions have sometimes taken advantage of the trueborns' lack of fast, lightly armored cavalry and mounted archers. When on the ground, trueborn knights fight with sword and shield.

TRUEBORN RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Wis, +2 Cha, -2 Dex: As a people, the trueborn are wise and noble but their large frames are less agile than other races.

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

- Trueborn base land speed is 30 feet.

- 1 extra feat at 1st level. Trueborn humans can choose any armor or weapon proficiency, or any feat from the fighter's list of bonus feats.

- 4 extra skill points at 1st level.

- +2 racial bonus on Handle Animal and Ride checks with horses.

- Automatic Languages: Common and King's Tongue. Bonus Languages: Anderlar, Celestial, Clan Speech, and Valhedrin.

- Favored Class: Any. A trueborn's highest level class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing. Like other humans, the trueborn are diverse and versatile.

TRUEBORN RACIAL TALENTS

Trueborn humans may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th,

and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

CELESTIAL RACIAL TALENT TREE

Due to their celestial heritage, trueborn humans are able to better harness the divine energies of the world of DAWNFORGE.

Divine Mastery: Each time this racial trait is selected, the trueborn gains one additional known spell of any level he can cast (if he is a spontaneous caster) or one additional spell slot per day of any level he can cast (if he must prepare his divine spells).

Prerequisite: Divine spellcaster level 1+.

Lesser Spellcasting I: The trueborn is able to cast a small selection of divine spells. He may choose one 0-level and one 1st-level spell from the paladin's spell list. From this point forward, he may cast each of these spells once per day as a spell-like ability. The caster level for these abilities is equal to the trueborn's character level.

Lesser Spellcasting II: The trueborn's spellcasting abilities grow more powerful. He may use all of the spells granted by Lesser Spellcasting I twice per day. In addition, he may choose an additional 1st-level and one 2nd-level spell that he may now cast once per day as spell-like abilities. The caster level for these abilities is equal to the trueborn's character level.

Prerequisite: Lesser Spellcasting I, level 7+.

Talent Feats: When the trueborn selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any metamagic feat, any item creation feat, any Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Leadership, or Spell Focus.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the trueborn selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +6 that may be distributed among the following skills: Craft (any), Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Knowledge (arcana, dungeoneering, geography, history, local, nobility and royalty, religion, the planes), and Profession (any).

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

TRUEBORN RACIAL TALENT TREE

The trueborn are the masters of mounted combat and have a close affinity to the plains on which they are raised.

Horse Shield: Each time he selects this racial talent, the trueborn gains a +2 cover bonus to AC when riding his horse thanks to his ability to duck while riding and put his horse between him and danger. If his horse is hit while providing cover in this way, the trueborn can still use a Ride check to negate the damage.

Special: This racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.



Natural Rider: A trueborn that selects this racial talent can use his full Ride skill no matter what type of creature he is riding.

Mounted Warrior: A trueborn that selects this racial talent gains a +1 circumstance bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls when mounted in combat.

Talent Feats: When the trueborn selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any metamagic feat, any item creation feat, Mounted Combat, Quick Draw, Trample.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the Kingsmarch trueborn selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +6 that may be distributed among the following skills: Intimidate, Listen, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

TRUEBORN RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Trueborn humans may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Outsider: When the trueborn selects this racial transformation, his creature type changes from humanoid to outsider.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Aura of Good: When the trueborn chooses this ability, he gains a +2 transformation bonus on all saves versus evil spells and the spell-like and supernatural abilities of evil creatures.

Special: The trueborn may only choose this transformation once.

Natural Armor: When the trueborn chooses this ability, his natural armor increases by +1.

Special: The trueborn may only choose this transformation once.

Spell Resistance: When the trueborn chooses this racial transformation, he gains spell resistance equal to 5 + his character level against evil spells and the spell-like abilities of evil outsiders.

Prerequisite: Aura of good, character level 6+.

Angel Wings: When this racial transformation is selected, the trueborn is able to fly as the spell three times per day. Caster level is equal to the trueborn's character level. When this ability is used, softly glowing, translucent wings sprout from the trueborn's back.

Prerequisite: Character level 8+.

Darkvision: When the trueborn selects this racial transformation, he gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Transformation Feats: When the trueborn selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Great Fortitude, Iron Will, or Toughness.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the trueborn selects this racial transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +6 that may be distributed among the following skills: Concentration, Jump, and Ride.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, trueborn traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Con
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Wis
6	Racial Transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Cha
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Str
10	Racial transformation

LIZARDFOLK

Lizardfolk were unknown to the civilizations of Ambria until the first brave adventurers crossed the Sunset Reach and landed on the shores of Tamerland. They were at first mistaken for an elder race of yuan-ti, but the humans soon learned that the lizardfolk had no knowledge of the serpent people of the Zangalan jungles. Tribal and primitive, the lizardfolk both fear and respect the other races who can build ships to cross the edge of the world.

Lizardfolk are tall humanoids whose powerful bodies are covered with armored scales that range in color from gray to green. They have extended jaws filled with razor-sharp teeth, and each has a unique set of fins that runs from his skull to his upper back. All lizardfolk have ridged tails that range from four to six feet long that help them swim and with which they can deliver powerful blows. Most lizardfolk wear no clothing, although some have started to mimic the ways and fashions of the newcomers in Landsgate.

The lizardfolk regard the adventurers and residents of Landsgate as strange visitors to their land. Many regard them with suspicion, fearing that they will attempt to subjugate the tribes to their will. Such is the way of the lizardfolk tribes, who often sell captured enemies into slavery. So far there has been no concerted effort to drive off the explorers in Landsgate, although sometimes adventuring parties will be attacked if they venture too far into lizardfolk lands. Some tribes wel-

come these visitors for their interesting items, methods of dress, and steel weapons. They look upon these things with wonder, and such lizardfolk are quick to adopt the dress and manners of those from the foreign land.

So far the humans of the Dreaming Isles and Anderland have treated the lizardfolk the kindest. Emissaries from the Valhedar Dominion have looked upon them as flesh to be traded and have captured several live specimens to take back to the dominars. The elves admire the lizardfolk's closeness to nature and dedication to their dragon gods, but they are too gentle and their dress too outlandish for the lizardfolk to tolerate. The lizardfolk do not understand the jesting and songs of the Faring Folk, and they dress too much like the elves to warrant much respect.

Lizardfolk are often used as guides for adventurers new to Tamerland. Since they do not value gold or jewels, their rates are generally fairly cheap, consisting mainly of trade goods and food. They are knowledgeable not only about the land but also the creatures that inhabit it. Sometimes a lizardfolk will be curious as to where these explorers come from and will accompany a ship back to Ambria to explore its rich lands. Those that do spend years exploring the plains of the Kingsmarch and the peaks of the Stormfells, but invariably they either make their way back to Tamerland or settle in Sildanyr or on the Emerlyn peninsula. There are growing communities of lizardfolk in each area, but they do their best to steer clear of the native inhabitants and their wars.

LIZARDFOLK RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Str, -2 Int, -2 Cha: Lizardfolk develop powerful muscles, but their lack of civilization affects their mental and social development.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, lizardfolk have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Lizardfolk base land speed is 30 feet. Lizardfolk base swim speed is 40 feet. This grants the lizardfolk a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. In addition, they can always take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. Lizardfolk can use the run action while swimming, provided they swim in a straight line.
- +2 racial bonus on all Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks. Lizardfolk have never known the comforts of civilized society.
- +1 natural bonus to Armor Class. Lizardfolk have tough hides that can turn away arrows and blades.
- Lizardfolk can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to three times their Constitution score.
- Lizardfolk can never gain proficiency with heavy armor, even if it is granted as a class ability. Their strange physiology makes the weight of heavy armor unbalancing no matter how well the armor is crafted.



- **Automatic Languages:** Common and Draconic. **Bonus Languages:** Any (except secret languages, such as Druidic).

- **Favored Class:** Barbarian. A lizardfolk's barbarian class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing. The lizardfolk's society is somewhat primitive, and many lizardfolk are fierce warriors.

LIZARDFOLK RACIAL TALENTS

Lizardfolk may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

Natural Weapon Mastery I: When the lizardfolk selects this racial talent, he gains the ability to effectively use his natural weapons in combat. He gains two claw

attacks at his highest base attack bonus that deal 1d4 points of damage plus Strength modifier. When using the full-attack action with a one-handed weapon, he may choose to also use a claw attack instead of any iterative attacks he may gain with his weapon. In this case the claw attack suffers a –5 penalty on the attack roll.

Natural Weapon Mastery II:

When the lizardfolk selects this racial talent, he gains the ability to make a single bite attack at his highest base attack bonus that deals 1d6 points of damage plus Strength modifier. When using the full-attack option, the lizardfolk can use two claws and a bite, in which case the bite suffers a –5 penalty on the attack roll and deals 1d6 points of damage plus one-half Strength modifier.

Prerequisite: Natural Weapon Mastery I.

Natural Weapon Mastery III:

When the lizardfolk selects this racial talent, he gains the ability to make a single tail sweep attack at his highest base attack bonus that deals 2d4 points of damage plus one and a half times his Strength modifier. When using the full-attack option, the lizardfolk can use two claws, a bite, and a tail sweep, in which case the bite and tail sweep suffer a –5 penalty on the attack roll and deal 1d6 points of damage plus one-half Strength modifier and 2d4 points of damage plus Strength modifier, respectively.

Prerequisite: Natural Weapon Mastery II.

Primitive Weapon Mastery:

Lizardfolk are trained to fight with stone weapons, and so can use them more effectively than others. Each time this racial talent is selected, the lizardfolk adds a +1 talent bonus to all attack and damage rolls with stone weapons.

Special: This racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Feats: When the lizardfolk selects this talent, he gains one of these bonus feats: any metamagic feat, Eschew Materials, Greater Weapon Focus (claw, bite, or tail), Weapon Focus (claw, bite, or tail).

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the lizardfolk selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Craft (any), Heal, Knowledge (dungeoneering, geography, history, local, nature), Listen, Profession (any), Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

LIZARDFOLK RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Lizardfolk may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Breathe Water: The lizardfolk gains the ability to breathe water for up to one hour per day.

Natural Armor: Each time the lizardfolk chooses this ability, his natural armor increases by +1.

Scent: When a lizardfolk chooses this ability, he can detect opponents within 10 feet (double that if the scent is upwind, one-half if downwind) and may take a move action to determine the direction of a scent. If an odor source is within 5 feet, the lizardfolk can pinpoint that source. A lizardfolk can use scent to track an enemy.

Darkvision: When the lizardfolk selects this racial transformation, he gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Transformation Feats: When the lizardfolk selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, or Toughness.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the lizardfolk selects this racial transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Balance, Climb, Jump, and Swim.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, lizardfolk traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Con
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Wis
6	Racial transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Dex
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Str
10	Racial Transformation

MINOTAUR

Like the ogres, the minotaurs of Ambria once served the giants as thralls. After centuries of living in servitude, they attempted to rebel against their masters but they were quickly crushed. In the aftermath of the failed revolt, the minotaur tribes were scattered across Ambria and they ceased to exist as a unified culture. Minotaurs have no lands of their own and now live alone or in small groups throughout the lands of the other races.

Minotaurs are large humanoids, standing between 7 feet and 8 1/2 feet tall. Their bodies are covered with long, matted fur that hangs from their bodies. They have hooved feet and strong, clawed hands. Their heads have both bovine and humanoid qualities, and wide horns extend horizontally from their temples. The fur of Ambrian minotaurs ranges from rust-colored to dark brown, and black-furred minotaurs are very rare. Their eyes are red and seem to glow in moonlight, and they sniff and snort as they walk along the streets and roads of their settlements.

During their failed rebellion, infighting often prevented the minotaurs from achieving significant gains. Now that they are a scattered people, the minotaurs have adopted several traditions intended to minimize unnecessary bloodshed and prevent the future dissolution of the minotaur race. One of these is the tradition of personal combat and ritualistic dueling. If two minotaurs wish to fight, tradition holds that they must declare a duel. Outnumbering an opponent is considered dishonorable, so each side must have an equal number of combatants. Larger brawls are less common than one-on-one duels, only because it is rare to find a large number of minotaurs together in one place. This tradition allows the minotaurs to remain true to their nature without pushing their race further toward extinction.

Some of the minotaurs that were scattered by the giants did not follow their tribes to the human lands. Some stayed in hiding in the mountains, becoming giant hunters or merely trying to live out their days in peace in their ancestral home. Some traveled far to the east through Anderland seeking the Morningstar Mountains, while others went to live among the dwarves or find a new home in the Frostfells or the Icehammer Front. Some minotaurs escaped farther west and sailed for Tamerland where they hoped to find a pleasant, and giant-free, area in which to rebuild their lives. Rumors that the wilds of Tamerland are a paradise for the minotaurs that have gone there have trickled into the lands of Ambria.

MINOTAUR RACIAL TRAITS

• +2 Str, +2 Con, -2 Dex, -2 Int, -2 Wis: Minotaurs are strong and tough, making them excellent fighters. They are less intelligent than most other races, however, and their large, heavy frames lack agility.

• Medium: As Medium creatures, minotaurs have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

• Minotaur base land speed is 30 feet. When a minotaur charges, it may move 2.5 times its base land speed.

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

• +2 bonus on all Spot checks. Minotaurs have keen eyesight.

• Natural Cunning: A minotaur can never be lost, is never flat-footed, and is immune to *maze* spells.

• Automatic Languages: Common and Giant. Bonus Languages: Anderlar, Clan Speech, Dwarven, Goblin, and Orc.

• Favored Class: Fighter. A minotaur's fighter class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing. There is a strong warrior's tradition among the surviving minotaurs of Ambria, and most have learned to defend themselves in order to survive.

MINOTAUR RACIAL TALENTS

Minotaurs may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

TRUE MINOTAUR RACIAL TALENT TREE

Minotaurs are cunning and brutal, but their honor keeps them from marauding across Ambria in a swath of bloody destruction.

Gore: The minotaur gains a gore attack at his highest base attack bonus that deals 1d8 points of damage plus half his Strength modifier. When using the full-attack action with a one- or two-handed weapon, he may choose to also use the gore attack, though the gore attack suffers a -5 penalty on the attack roll.

Powerful Charge: The minotaur gains the powerful charge natural attack. When the minotaur charges, he may use his horns to deliver an attack at his highest base attack bonus (+2 for the charge) that deals 4d6 points of damage plus one and a half times his Strength modifier.

Prerequisite: Gore.

Talent Feats: When the minotaur selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any item creation feat, Blind-Fight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Greater Weapon Focus (gore), Leadership, or Weapon Focus (gore).

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the minotaur selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Craft (any), Intimidate, Knowledge (architecture and engineering, dungeoneering, geography, local), Profession (any), and Spot.

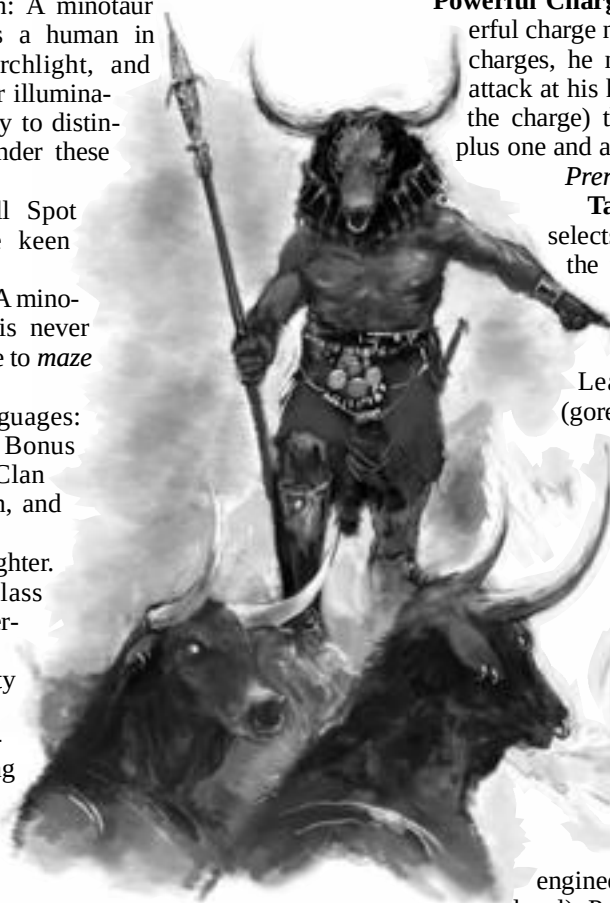
Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 bonus from this ability.

UNBREAKABLE RACIAL TALENT TREE

Minotaurs are among the toughest of the races.

Robust: The minotaur gains a number of hit points equal to his character level when he selects this racial trait. Thereafter, the minotaur gains +1 hit point per level.

Special: This racial talent may only be selected once.



Second Wind: Once per day as a free action, the minotaur draws upon his body's reserves to gain a second wind. When he uses this ability, the minotaur recovers a number of hit points equal to his character level. This racial trait does not increase his hit points beyond his full normal total.

Stamina: The minotaur recovers twice as fast as normal and gains more than the normal amount of healing from healing spells. The minotaur gains two additional points of healing per spell level when targeted by a *cure* spell. He recovers two hit points per character level per evening of rest, two points of temporary ability damage per evening of rest, and awakens in half the normal time after being knocked unconscious.

MINOTAUR RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Minotaurs may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Monstrous Humanoid: When the minotaur selects this racial transformation, his creature type changes from humanoid to monstrous humanoid.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Darkvision: When the minotaur selects this racial transformation, he gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Natural Armor: Each time the minotaur chooses this ability, his natural armor increases by +1.

Prerequisite: Character level 2+.

Special: This racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Large Size: The minotaur has learned to use his size to better advantage in combat, although the new techniques have disadvantages as well. When he selects this racial transformation, the minotaur's natural reach extends to 10 feet. He suffers a -1 size penalty on all attack rolls and to AC. He may now wield large weapons one-handed or use Huge weapons two-handed.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Scent: When a minotaur chooses this ability, he has learned to utilize his natural sense of smell to its fullest potential. He can detect opponents within 10 feet (double that if the scent is upwind, one-half if downwind) and may take a move action to determine the direction of a scent. If an odor source, such as an opponent, is within 5 feet, the minotaur can pinpoint that source. A minotaur can use scent to track an enemy.

Transformation Feats: When the minotaur selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Diehard, Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, or Toughness.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this

racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the minotaur selects this racial transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Balance, Climb, Jump, and Swim.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 bonus from this ability.

Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, minotaur traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Str
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Con
6	Racial transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Str
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Wis
10	Racial Transformation

OGRE

Most of the ogres in Ambria work as thralls to the giants that live in the Stormfells. Skyhold itself is said to boast at least 1,000 ogre thralls, and several thousand more can be found throughout the mountains. Ogres wander alone or in pairs through the foothills of the Stormfells and the plains that lie in the shadow of the Icehammer Front. These wandering ogres are much wilder and bestial than the thralls of the giants, who have been known to become educated to a degree and work their way to freedom.

Ogres are rarely accepted in other cultures. Dwarves hate them for their giant blood, and humans fear them because of the frequent raids they endure in northern Anderland and out of the Stormfells into the Kingsmarch. Elves and tieflings see them as too stupid to deal with, while the halflings pity them for their lot in life. Individual ogres can overcome these prejudices, but it takes some work to do so. Adventurers are often more quick to forgive an ogre because its size and strength are of great benefit to their parties.

An ogre's hair is usually unkempt and long. Some use mud to smooth their hair down, and ogre women often use the tall plains grass of the northern steppes to tie it back. They are not fond of decoration except for war scars, which they often exaggerate on purpose in order to look more fearsome. They have no need for jewelry and other adornments, although sometimes they will hammer precious stones into their greatclubs in imitation of the civilized races of the south.

The wild ogres of the northern steppes wear little to no clothing, other than perhaps armor made from the hide of a great beast. They travel either alone or in pairs, never having more than two in a party except in unusual circumstances. These ogres are very in tune with their surroundings, and make excellent rangers and shamans

when they can focus their minds long enough to train. Wild ogres travel with animal companions, with whom they have an uncanny rapport. Large brown bears, elk, and snow tigers can all be found accompanying ogres as they travel in search of food and shelter.

The ogres that serve the giants in the Storm King's domain are cleaner and more civilized than their wild cousins. They prefer to wear simple, round or square garments that slide over the head. These garments are common and unadorned until an ogre curries the favor of his lord, at which time a strip of colored cloth may be sewn to the garment in recognition of his work. This grants the ogre some measure of freedom and usually guarantees him better treatment. These ogres keep their hair short and do not scar themselves as do their wild cousins. The most promising thralls are sometimes educated with the giant young, taught how to wear armor and wield weapons as well as how to write their language and perhaps speak another.

Wild ogres often tire of the constant search for food and shelter on the frozen northern plains. These usually prove dangerous to the inhabitants of northern Anderland, outlying lowland farms and the few permanent halfling communities that dot the upper Imilbar. Sometimes, however, an ogre moves south seeking peaceful coexistence with the native populations. They trade their strength for food, helping to move rocks and wood and doing other large projects for which horses and machines might normally be necessary. The wildness of these ogres often frightens people in these communities, however, leading to persecution or banishment. It is rare that an ogre can ever make a permanent home with humans or halflings, and those who wander into the forest of Sildanyr rarely make it back out alive.

Escaped thralls often band together in caves low in the Stormfells, far from the castles of their former masters in the high peaks. Educated ogres might become free when their master dies in battle, or be sent to represent the giants in Emerlyn or even Tamerland. Sometimes a master will band several of his thralls together as adventuring and raiding parties, tasking them to bring back treasure from the new continent.

OGRE RACIAL TRAITS

- +4 Str, -2 Dex, -2 Int, -2 Cha: Ogres have incredible strength, but their minds are underdeveloped and they have trouble moving quickly and adeptly.

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

- Ogre base land speed is 40 feet.

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

- Automatic Languages: Common and Giant. Bonus Languages: Anderlar, Clan Speech, Dwarven, Goblin, and Orc.

- Favored Class: Fighter (Stormfells) or Barbarian (wild). An ogre's fighter or barbarian class does not count when determining whether he suffers an experience point penalty for multiclassing. The giants of the Stormfells frequently train their ogre thralls in the arts of war, while wild ogres tend to be frenzied and undisciplined warriors.

OGRE RACIAL TALENTS

Ogres may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

TRUE OGRE RACIAL TALENT TREE

Ogres are bestial and strong, but occasionally one is born that can deal with the civilized races of the world.

Favored Weapons: An ogre's traditional weapons include many types of spear and javelin. Each time this ability is selected, the ogre gains a +1 talent bonus on attack rolls with piercing melee and thrown weapons.

Special: This racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Feat of Strength: When the ogre character selects this racial talent, he gains the ability to perform a feat of strength. Once per day the character can make a Strength check as if he had rolled a 20 and with a +10 bonus to the result. Thus, an ogre with an 18 Strength would have an automatic result of 34 on his check.

Special: Each time the character chooses this racial talent, he gains one more use of the ability each day.

Intellectual Curiosity: Many of the ogre thralls that live in the Storm King's domain learn to read and develop other skills during their servitude. An ogre that chooses this racial talent treats his Intelligence as if it were two points higher in regards to skills. Thus, an ogre fighter with an 8 Intelligence would gain 2 skill points per level (2 for class, +0 for Intelligence) rather than 1, and Intelligence-based skills would have a +0 modifier rather than -1.

Special: This racial talent may only be selected once.

Keep the Distance: Ogres use their extreme strength and size to great effect in combat with smaller creatures. Any time an ogre with this ability makes a successful attack of opportunity against an opponent, he may force the opponent back 5 feet in any direction.

Prerequisite: Large size.

Talent Feats: When the ogre selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Blind

Fight, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the ogre selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Craft (any), Intimidate, Knowledge (architecture and engineering, dungeoneering, geography, local), Listen, Profession (any), Speak Language.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

OGRE RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Ogres may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Darkvision: When the ogre selects this racial transformation, he gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet.

Large Size: The ogre has learned to use his size to better advantage in combat, although the new techniques have disadvantages as well. When he selects this racial transformation, the ogre's natural reach extends to 10 feet. He suffers a -1 size penalty to all attack rolls and to AC. He may now wield Large weapons one-handed or use Huge weapons two-handed.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Giant: When the ogre selects this racial transformation, his creature type changes from humanoid to giant.

Prerequisite: Large size, character level 8+.

Natural Armor: Each time the ogre chooses this ability, his natural armor increases by +1.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: This racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Feats: When the ogre selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, or Toughness.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the ogre selects this racial transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Climb, Jump, Ride, and Swim.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Special

Racial talent, ogre traits
Racial transformation
Racial talent, +2 Con
Racial transformation
Racial talent, +2 Con
Racial transformation
Racial talent, +2 Str
Racial transformation
Racial talent, +2 Wis
Racial Transformation

ORC

Orcs live throughout the north, in the Pale Forest, in the peaks of the Icehammer Front, and on the plains between the forest and the mountains, and their tribes extend all the way from the Frostfells in the west to the northern Sildanyr where the trees become evergreen spruce rather than the tall oaks that dominate the southern reaches of the elven kingdom. There is known to be a large horde of orcs in the northern Wildermark Mountains on the continent of Tamerland, but the lizard-folk tribes and dragons give these hordes enough trouble not to descend on Landsgate. The orcs have developed a brutal culture that matches the harsh environment in which they live, making them unpopular with the civilized nations of the world.

Orcs rarely venture south of the Pale Forest, where they know they are not wanted. The orc tribes are too fractious to form a large enough horde to truly threaten Sildanyr, the Three Kingdoms, or Anderland, so they stay where they are and live among the goblinoids and ogres that dominate the wild northern steppes. A different breed of albino orcs lives in the Pale Forest, and it is whispered in the south that these orcs are more than just mortal beings—they are called forest wights by the superstitious, and the rangers of the Griffin Company number them among their most dangerous enemies. Luckily for both the orcs and goblins to the north and the humans to the south, these orcs never seem to leave the confines of their forest.

The orcs are a somewhat misunderstood race, however. Their wild appearance, bloodlust in combat, and dull features hide a race that desires to live among the broader civilizations of the world. They attempt to emulate human cities, dwarven architecture, and elven harmony with nature, but they are unable to fully master these pursuits. Individual orcs and groups can be found in almost every city of Ambria, hoping to study the arts and sciences of the greater civilizations in order to take the knowledge back home to their tribes. Of course, frustration often sets in and leads to violence, condemning the orcs to the stereotype of big, dumb brutes.

The orcs' appearance does not help in these matters. They are about the same size as the lowland

humans, but they have disproportionately long arms, thick foreheads, and tusks that sprout from their oversized mouths. They eat a lot of food, and loudly, and their fondness for drink comes into its own in the cities where ale flows seemingly without limit. Most orcs have a thick coat of short hair that covers their bodies. They wear bulky hats made of bearskin and favor lighter armors such as leather and chain over heavy armor. Most favor decorated stone warclubs that they swing with two hands, causing massive damage to both creatures and objects alike.

The orcs are much less populous and less organized than the goblinoid tribes that rule the north, and especially in the Icehammer Front they have had to live in the goblinoids' shadow. The rise of Anlar Icefang has torn the orcs in two directions—some believe they can become a great civilization without conquest, but others believe that it will be easier to take what they want from others rather than working to understand things themselves. Those who have flocked to the banner of the draconic giant have already seen action against the forts and of the Griffin Company and other northern outposts. Having tasted blood and victory, these orcs now dance and drink by firelight every night, which serves to keep them primed for the next raid. An orc civil war has not happened yet, and likely never will because of the forces involved, but the success or failure of Anlar Icefang's war could leave a permanent mark on the development of orc culture across the continent.

One tribe of orcs has migrated southwest past the Stormfells into the Durning Highlands. They seek to completely emulate the clan structure of the humans there, although so far the highlanders have merely kept their distance, discouraging trade and contact between the two. Given the wild nature of the clansmen of the highlands, however, it may not be long before these orcs and humans come together. If this happens, they could be a major force in the Kingsmarch, perhaps uniting the land under a common orc and human banner.

ORC RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Str, -2 Int, -2 Cha: Orcs have great strength, but they are slow-witted and do not mix well with other races.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, orcs have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Orc base land speed is 40 feet. Orcs have learned to move more quickly across the frigid plains of their homeland.
- Low-Light Vision: An orc can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these conditions.
- Cold tolerance: Orcs are used to the cold steppes in the north and never suffer non-lethal damage from cold temperatures and conditions.

• +2 bonus on all Fortitude saves. Orcs are tough and hearty.

• Automatic Languages: Common and Orc. Bonus Languages: Anderlar, Clan Speech, Dwarven, Giant, and Goblin.

• Favored Class: Barbarian. An orc's barbarian class does not count when determining whether he takes an experience point penalty for multiclassing. Orcs are by nature fierce and wild warriors.

ORC RACIAL TALENTS

Orcs may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

Feat of Strength: When the orc character selects this racial talent, he gains the ability to perform a feat of strength. Once per day the character can make a Strength check as if he had rolled a 20 and with a +10 talent bonus to the result. Thus, an orc with an 18 Strength would have an automatic result of 34 on his check.

Special: Each time the character chooses this racial talent, he gains one more use of the ability.

TRUE ORC RACIAL TALENT TREE

Orcs are vicious in combat and enjoy nothing more than the smell of blood and the fury of battle.

The Bigger the Wound the Better: Orcs enjoy using large weapons that inflict grievous wounds on their opponents when they hit. As a result, every time an orc selects this racial talent he gains a +1 talent bonus on all attack rolls with two-handed melee weapons.

Special: This racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Orcish Rage: When an orc selects this racial talent, he gains the ability to rage once per day as the barbarian's rage ability.

If he already gets the rage ability (such as by having a level of barbarian), then he gains one extra use of his rage ability per day and gains rage abilities as if he were two levels higher in the class that grants him the rage. In addition, his Constitution score is considered to be four points higher when determining the duration of his rage (this does not stack if the ability is selected multiple times). Thus, if a 2nd-level orc barbarian with a 16 Constitution selected this talent, he would be able to rage three times per day and each rage would last for 10 rounds. If he selected this ability again at 8th level, he would be able to rage 4 times per day and would gain the greater rage ability. The orc's greater rages would last 11 rounds.

Special: An orc that gains the rage ability through this talent may not select it again. If he already had the

rage ability prior to selecting this talent (or if he gains it at the same level), then he may select it again, increasing his rage ability by an additional two levels. This racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Feats: When the orc selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms & Armor, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Iron Will, or Power Attack.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the orc selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Craft (any), Intimidate, Knowledge (dungeoneering, geography, local, nature), Profession (any), Survival.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

ORC RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Orcs may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Damage Reduction: Orcs learn to ignore the pain of blows and lingering injuries so that they might survive in the dangerous northern environment. This damage reduction only protects an orc against physical attacks, not energy damage or spells.

The orc ignores one point of damage from all melee and ranged weapons, gaining DR 1/—. Each time he takes this ability, he gains one more point of damage reduction (DR 2/— after taking it twice and DR 3/— after taking it three times).

Special: This racial trait may not be selected twice in a row.

Darkvision: When the orc selects this racial transformation, he gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Transformation Feats: When the orc selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Diehard, Dodge, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Run, or Toughness.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the orc selects this racial talent, he gains a total transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Climb, Jump, Ride, and Swim.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.



Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, orc traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Con
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Wis
6	Racial transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Str
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Con
10	Racial transformation

TIEFLING

The tiefling lords of the Valhedar Dominion have built an empire on fiendish pacts and dark sorcery. Common tieflings who walk the streets of Valhedar and Gedon can see the fiendish influences everywhere—from the brooding idols that line the broad avenues and plazas to the brutal violence and dark sorcery in the back alleys and poor quarters of the great cities. Tieflings can escape this atmosphere of evil by traveling to the Emerlyn peninsula, where Valhedrin generals wage a bloody war with the Kingsmarch clans for control of the fertile plains between the Hound and the Horn.

Tieflings are dark-skinned humanoid creatures that originated on the volcanic island of Valhedar. Every

tiefling has distinct red markings on his torso and face. Tiefling legend tells of a great scroll that is formed of the skin of every tiefling that has ever lived. The markings are said to be fragments of a hellish language that, once completed, will allow a chosen tiefling known as the *alhazar abhat* to rip the planar fabric and thrust the world into the void.

Tieflings are slight of build and shorter on average than the humans they fight on the plains of the Kingsmarch. Their eyes have dark, horizontal pupils and their teeth are more sharply pointed than those of humans. Their hair is always black (or silver as they age), and they wear it long and straight down their backs. All tieflings have horns growing from their heads, but the size and shape of these varies as much as the markings on their skin. Sometimes the horns are barely noticeable ridges beneath their hair, while some tieflings have large, curved horns that all but cover their ears. Large horns are favored on tiefling women, who often wrap their hair about them in a variety of styles.

The blood of fiends runs thick in tiefling veins, and its most powerful leaders have regular contact with fiends of all kinds. Fiends can be found in the halls of the tiefling lords of Valhedar and the tents of the generals on the Emerlyn peninsula. Their council is considered sacred, even though the fiends enjoy giving false and murky advice to the tieflings in order to sow chaos within the Dominion. Less powerful fiends roam the streets of Valhedar with the common people. These fiends have free reign over the common folk and are left alone as long as they do not interrupt the Dominion's plans too often or too violently.

The race excels at summoning magics, and its wizards believe that they must harness all of the world's untapped arcane power so that the *alhazar abhat* can throw the realms into a hell where they will rule over all creatures. Visitors to Valhedar and other tiefling-controlled areas must be very careful, lest they be taken and used as sacrifices to placate the called demons of tiefling wizards and shapers. Tieflings are exceptional diplomats as well, having honed their skills dealing with fiends and their cruel masters. Their unearthly presence can unnerve those who are not used to it, giving them an advantage in any negotiations. Only the merchant princes of Ebernath seem to have the upper hand on the Dominion when it comes to the arts of treaties and diplomacy.

Not all tieflings find the company of fiends a pleasant thought, however, and many of these join the battles on the Emerlyn peninsula. Some use this as an excuse to explore new lands, abandoning the legions as soon as they are able. These tieflings usually find themselves unwelcome in human lands, but some of the other races find them tolerable companions. Tieflings roam the halls of the Storm King and his vassals, providing advice and sometimes arcane power to the giant armies. Gnomes have a strange fondness for the tieflings, perhaps because of their shared affinity with other realms.

Tieflings find the northern reaches too cold for their liking, but the southern reaches of Sildanyr resemble the climate of the Emerlyn peninsula, and some night elves have begun soliciting the aid of the tieflings in their war with the dawn elves.

TIEFLING RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Dex, +2 Int, +2 Cha, -2 Str, -2 Con: The tieflings' fiery blood makes them quick of both mind and body, but they tend to be more slight of build than other races of similar size.

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

- Tiefling base land speed is 30 feet.

- +2 racial bonus on Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

Tieflings must hone these skills to deal with the outsiders they summon and the distrustful foreigners they encounter on their travels.

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

- Automatic Languages: Common and Valhedrin. Bonus Languages: Anderlar, Infernal, King's Tongue, and Sothren.

- Favored Class: Wizard. A tiefling's wizard class does not count when determining whether he suffers an experience point penalty for multiclassing. The arcane arts come naturally to the tieflings.

TIEFLING RACIAL TALENTS

Tieflings may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

ARCANE MASTERY RACIAL TALENT TREE

Tieflings feel the flow of magic through their veins more keenly than other races, though not as powerfully as the elves.

Arcane Mastery: Each time this racial trait is selected, the tiefling gains one additional known spell of any level he can cast (if he is a spontaneous caster) or one additional spell slot per day of any level he can cast (if he must prepare his arcane spells).

Prerequisite: Arcane spellcaster level 1+.

Infernal Gift I: The tiefling is able to cast a small selection of arcane spells. He may choose one 0-level and one 1st-level spell from the wizard's spell list. From this point forward, he may cast each of these spells once

per day as a spell-like ability. The caster level for these abilities is equal to the tiefling's character level.

Infernal Gift II: The tiefling's arcane abilities grow more powerful. He may use all of the spells granted by infernal gift I twice per day. In addition, he may choose an additional 1st-level and one 2nd-level spell from the wizard's list that he may now cast once per day as spell-like abilities. The caster level for these abilities is equal to the tiefling's character level.

Prerequisite: Infernal gift I, character level 7+.

TRUE TIEFLING RACIAL TALENT TREE

Tieflings have a special bond with outsiders from both the Abyss and the Nine Hells thanks to their culture of fiendish worship and the frequency with which they interact with these evil outsiders.

Demonic Familiar: When he selects this racial trait, the tiefling gains either an imp or a quasit as a familiar. If he already has a familiar, the ritual he performs causes the new familiar to burst forth from the old one's living flesh.

Infernal Resistance: When this racial talent is selected, the tiefling immediately gains a +4 bonus on all saving throws against the spells, special abilities, and special attacks of evil outsiders.

Talent Feats: When the tiefling selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any metamagic feat, Augment Summoning, or Spell Focus (conjunction).

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the tiefling selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Craft (any), Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (any), Profession (any), and Speak Language.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

TIEFLING RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Tieflings may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Outsider: When the tiefling selects this racial transformation, his creature type changes from humanoid to outsider.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Fire Resistance: When the tiefling selects this racial transformation, he gains fire resistance 5.

Special: The second time this racial transformation is taken, the tiefling's fire resistance increases to 10.

The third time it is taken, the tiefling gains immunity to fire.

Darkvision: When the tiefling selects this racial transformation, he gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Infernal Presence: Each time a tiefling chooses this racial transformation, he gains the ability to manifest the power of his fiendish blood. His eyes glow, his skin ripples, and his force of personality intensifies. This effect acts as the *fear* spell against all creatures that can see the tiefling, although companions and comrades are unaffected by the display. The Will save DC against this ability is 14 + the tiefling's Charisma modifier.

Natural Armor: When the tiefling chooses this ability, his natural armor increases by +1.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The tiefling may only choose this transformation once.

Transformation Feats: When the tiefling selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, or Lightning Reflexes.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the tiefling selects this transformation, he gains a transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Balance, Escape Artist, Move Silently, and Swim.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, tiefling traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Con
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Int
6	Racial transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Str
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Cha
10	Racial transformation

YUAN-TI THINBLOOD

Thinbloods are held in the lowest regard in their society in the jungles of Zangala. They are barred from joining the priesthood and are treated little better than the lizardfolk and other races that the yuan-ti keep as slaves. Some thinbloods spend their entire lives trying to prove their worth to the elders and halfbloods, but these yuan-ti never hold them in anything but contempt. Others abandon their homes and head north or across

the Sunset Reach to Tamerland, seeking a life far from the persecution and hopelessness of their society.

Thinbloods are sometimes elevated to the position of special emissary and sent with a halfblood disciple to visit the lands to the north. This type of activity has increased in recent years as the number of yuan-ti attacks across the Blackscale Mountains has decreased. This leads to whispers across Ambria that the tieflings and yuan-ti have reached an accord—an eventuality that could spell doom for all the nations of Ambria and the newly discovered continent of Tamerland. The thinbloods are used as the public face of the true yuan-ti, whose frightening appearance can often throw negotiations into doubt. These thinblood emissaries have no voice of their own, and speak solely at the behest of their masters.

Often it is these emissaries who choose to leave the service of their masters rather than return to the jungles of Zangala. Such deserters are branded traitors and hunted by yuan-ti assassins to the end of their days. Many find this a small price to pay for the opportunity to start a new life in a foreign land. Because of their subtle serpentine features, thinbloods are able to walk in other societies without drawing much attention to themselves. Most believe them to be tieflings or elves, although anyone with experience dealing with the other races of Ambria can often see through such a ruse. Thinbloods are treated like any other yuan-ti in most cultures—they are reviled and feared. The caste system of the yuan-ti is mostly unknown outside of Zangala, and now Valhedar, so the thinbloods' reasons for leaving are mostly misunderstood.

Yuan-ti thinbloods appear as tall, slight humans with a subtle slant to the eyes, which are always black on white. They have slightly pointed ears like the elves, and two short, sharp fangs in place of two of their upper canines. Their skin has a slight green tint on the forearms, thighs, and neck, and is patched with brown in these places. It is rougher than human skin and can grow into a tough layer of defense against physical blows.

Thinbloods tend to dress simply, most often in long, heavy robes that allow them to conceal as much of their body as possible. Thinbloods seldom speak unless absolutely necessary to avoid giving away their heritage through their thick, accented speech.

Yuan-ti thinbloods are masters of their ancient art—psionics. Few other than the yuan-ti even know of these powers and even fewer have gained any notable skill at wielding them. This is perhaps the thinblood's greatest weapon and tool for survival. His strange powers are unknown to the wizards and shapers of Ambria, allowing him the advantage of surprise when confronted by such powerful foes. Because of this rarity, however, a thinblood must do all he can to conceal his powers from those who might be able to identify their true origins.

Many yuan-ti choose to leave their jungle homes in search of nothing more than liberty. They may wish to explore the rest of the world, take in the diversity of cultures, and seek out the great works of the world. Others, however, leave in search of greater power than they could achieve under the thumb of their elders. Many would like to eventually gain enough power to return to their civilization and overthrow those they see as elitist and condescending. These thinbloods never try to establish themselves in other cultures, instead attempting to use them and build enough power to achieve their goals. They become slavers and adventurers, seeking magic and followers to turn against their former masters.

THINBLOOD RACIAL TRAITS

- +2 Int, +2 Wis, -2 Str: Thinbloods have keen minds and superior senses but less physical might than some other races.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, yuan-ti thinbloods have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Yuan-ti thinblood base land speed is 30 feet.



- +2 bonus on all Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks.

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

- **Automatic Languages:** Common and Yuan-ti. Bonus Languages: Abyssal, Draconic, and Valhedin.

- **Favored Class:** Psion. A thinblood's psion class does not count when determining whether he suffers an experience point penalty for multiclassing. The powers of the mind come naturally to all yuan-ti, even the lowly thinbloods.

THINBLOOD RACIAL TALENTS

Thinbloods may choose one racial talent at 1st level and every odd level thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial talent, if any.

TRUE YUAN-TI RACIAL TALENT TREE

While not as powerful as their highborn cousins, the thinbloods still have many of the abilities and powers of purebloods and halfbloods that rule their empire in the jungles of Zangala.

Bite Attack: The thinblood gains the ability to deliver a powerful bite attack in addition to his normal melee attacks. The attack is made with a –5 penalty and deals 1d6 points of damage plus half the character's Strength modifier. If the bite is the character's only attack for the round, it does not suffer this penalty and it deals 1d6 points of damage plus his full Strength modifier.

Poison Bite: The thinblood's bite becomes even more deadly, injecting poison into its victim. In addition, the penalty for making a bite attack in conjunction with other attacks is reduced to –2. Yuan-ti poison; bite; Fortitude save (DC 13); initial and secondary damage 1d6 Constitution.

Prerequisite: Bite attack.

Lesser Psionics I: The thinblood is able to manifest some of the abilities of its more powerful cousins, albeit in a much more limited fashion.

1/day—*chameleon power, detect poison, produce acid.*

Lesser Psionics II: The thinblood's psionics grow more powerful. He may use all of the abilities granted by Psionics I twice per day. In addition, he gains the following power.

1/day—*alternate form, aversion.*

Prerequisite: Lesser Psionics 1, character level 5+.

Psionic Mastery: Each time this racial trait is selected, the thinblood gains one additional discovered power of the highest level he can cast.

Invisible Psionics: The thinblood learns to conceal his strange powers, even while they are in use. Once chosen, the thinblood's psionic powers no longer have any visible effects other than external effects created by the power itself (knocking a door down with *telekinesis*, flying, and so on). Powers with obvious physical manifestations, such as *finger of fire* or *ectoplasmic armor* cannot be made invisible using this ability.

Prerequisite: Lesser Psionics II.

Talent Feats: When the thinblood selects this racial talent, he gains one of the following bonus feats: any metapsionic feat, any psionic item creation feat, or Psionic Focus.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial talent may not be selected twice in a row.

Talent Skills: When the thinblood selects this racial talent, he gains a total talent bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Craft (any), Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Knowledge (any), Profession (any), and Sense Motive.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 talent bonus from this ability.

Identify Psionic Item: By concentrating for 10 minutes on a psionic item, the thinblood can identify all of its psionic properties. A thinblood can identify whether or not an item has any psionic properties at all as a free action.

Craft Power Stone: This ability grants a thinblood the ability to craft a power stone even if he does not have the Encode Stone feat or the ability to use psionics. He must still expend the gold, XP, and time costs as per the feat. Each time this trait is selected, the thinblood chooses three psionic powers of up to 3rd level from the psion or psychic warrior's lists. He may now create power stones that mimic the effects of these powers, and the thinblood's caster level is always considered the minimum necessary to cast the spell.

Prerequisite: Identify Psionic Item.

THINBLOOD RACIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Thinbloods may choose one racial transformation at 2nd level and every even level thereafter (4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th). The character must meet all the prerequisites of the selected racial transformation, if any.

Darkvision: When the thinblood selects this racial transformation, he gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet.

Prerequisite: Character level 6+.

Natural Armor: When the thinblood chooses this ability, his natural armor increases by +1. The thinblood

may only choose this transformation once.

Snake Form I: When this ability is selected, the thinblood gains the ability to *polymorph* into the form of a Medium constrictor snake once per day. This works just like the spell except that the thinblood can only take this specific form and he does not heal damage when he changes forms. The caster level is equal to the thinblood's character level.

Snake Form II: When this ability is selected, the thinblood gains the ability to *polymorph* into the form of a Tiny viper once per day. This works just like the spell except that the thinblood can only take this specific form (as well as any previous forms gained through this transformation) and he does not heal damage when he changes form. The caster level is equal to the thinblood's character level.

Snake Form III: When this ability is selected, the thinblood gains the ability to *polymorph* into the form of a Huge viper once per day. This works just like the spell except that the thinblood can only take this specific form (as well as any previous forms gained through this transformation) and he does not heal damage when he changes form. The caster level is equal to the thinblood's character level.

Transformation Feats: When the thinblood selects this racial transformation, he gains one of the following bonus feats: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes.

Prerequisite: Character level 4+.

Special: The character must still meet the prerequisites for any feat selected with this ability. Also, this racial transformation may not be selected twice in a row.

Transformation Skills: When the thinblood selects this transformation, he gains a total transformation bonus of +5 that may be distributed among the following skills: Escape Artist, Move Silently, and Swim.

Special: A skill may receive no more than a +3 transformation bonus from this ability.

Racial Level	Special
1	Racial talent, thinblood traits
2	Racial transformation
3	Racial talent, +2 Con
4	Racial transformation
5	Racial talent, +2 Wis
6	Racial transformation
7	Racial talent, +2 Int
8	Racial transformation
9	Racial talent, +2 Cha
10	Racial transformation



RACIAL MECHANICS

The races presented in the DAWNFORGE campaign setting gain fantastic powers as they increase in character level. This causes DAWNFORGE characters to become more powerful than standard characters. This means that the DM must adjust a party's average level in terms of the enemies they face and the treasure they accumulate. The following table shows the appropriate level adjustment for a DAWNFORGE character based on his level and racial abilities.

Character Level	Effective Level Adjustment
1–2	—
3–7	+1
8+	+2

Therefore, a party of 3rd-level DAWNFORGE characters should be prepared to face the challenges that a normal 4th-level party could face, while a party of 13th-level DAWNFORGE characters should be able to take on a 15th-level adventure with little problem. The wealth levels of DAWNFORGE characters will be higher than the guidelines presented in the core rules, although the amount will vary because of the scaling nature of the CR adjustment over the course of a character's adventuring career. No other effects of level adjustments should be applied to characters based on their racial talents and transformations.

CHAPTER TWO

CLASSES

NEW CLASSES

Several new classes are presented in this chapter for use in a DAWNFORGE campaign. Some, like the shaper and spirit adept, are new classes that fit into the particulars of the setting. The disciple and the shaman, however, are meant to replace certain core classes in the setting, namely the cleric and druid.

The absence of a traditional pantheon of gods who oversee the world's spiritual needs necessitated a reimagining of the core spiritual class, the cleric. The disciple is much closer to his immortal than a cleric is to his god, being able to call upon the immortal to intervene in a personal manner. The limitations of an immortal's powers also called for a diminishment in the disciple's granted abilities, albeit with a boost in other areas. Disciples can be found everywhere in the world of DAWNFORGE, although in some regions the worship of an immortal is still not fully accepted. Wandering disciples attempt to spread the word of their immortal, hoping to vault the immortal into true godhood through the faith of thousands of worshippers.

The powers of nature and the Spirit in DAWNFORGE also changed the druid's relationship with the world, so the shaman is presented in its place to better represent the particulars of the world of DAWNFORGE. The shaman presents a more elemental, primal take on the "nature's spellcaster" class. Note that in the world of DAWNFORGE, the Druids are an ancient order comprised largely of shamans, shapers, and disciples. Legend has it that they led the first tribes of humans north from the coast to settle the fertile lands that would one day become Anderland.

All four of these classes are balanced against the remaining core classes, and do not represent any challenge when integrating them with a normal party.

The names, game rules, and mechanics of the classes are designated as Open Game Content. The background and flavor descriptions of the classes are designated as closed content.

DISCIPLE

Although the concept of gods is not well developed among the people of the known lands, there exist a class of creatures whose powers far exceed those of mortals of all races. Disciples worship these creatures, collectively known as immortals, who can grant their most devout followers extraordinary magical abilities. Such worshippers can be found on every continent among every intelligent race, sometimes wandering in search of converts and sometimes using their gifts to help their families and communities prosper. These folks face skepticism from those who have grown up believing that there are no gods, but they also find that they give hope to those who have lost it in the face of the world's constant conflicts.

While shapers and shamans are connected directly to the essence of the world, and have been around for as long as history has recorded such things, disciples represent a fairly new tradition of spiritual progress whose powers are filtered through an intermediary being. As with all aspects of change, especially in the spiritual realm, this new kind of relationship is met with equal parts fear, fascination, and disdain.

Adventures: Disciples follow different paths, depending on their goals and their relationship with the immortal who grants them their powers. Some disciples choose to stay in the region in which they lived before they took up the call to worship, hoping to convert those they love and their communities for the mutual benefit of all. Those with good hearts that worship kind or protective immortals may work their whole lives to better

their communities, often enduring ridicule and hardship in hopes that their sacrifice will inspire those around them. Immortals sometimes demand more immediate results, however, and the disciples that follow them will use any means necessary to bring those around them into the fold.

Many disciples choose a life of wandering, bringing word of their new faith to communities across the known lands. Not all wandering disciples spend their time proselytizing, however. Some are sent by their immortals to seek out magic or artifacts that can strengthen both the immortal and his follower. Immortals sometimes send their disciples on mysterious journeys, even suggesting that they travel with others in order to mask their true purpose. Such journeys can demoralize less-faithful disciples who start to feel, sometimes rightly, like pawns in a game they do not understand.

Characteristics: Disciples draw strength and power from the immortals they worship. This gives them a diversity in spells that is greater than that of a shaper, at the cost of having to ask another being to grant access to these spells. Over time, a disciple's relationship with his immortal grows strong enough that he may draw on some of the Immortal's strength without a formal request.

Alignment: Disciples tend to favor alignments similar to those of the immortal they worship. Any further than one step away and the disciple has a hard time truly putting his faith in the other being. That said, characters of any alignment can be attracted to the life of a disciple. Although it requires worship of another being, such worship can take on many forms. Chaotic disciples might find new and different ways to venerate their immortals, but the core of their belief system (and powers) comes from their faith in the other. Lawful disciples favor rituals as a way to show their dedication and belief in an immortal. They are far more orderly in their worship and make reliable followers and servants.

Background: Immortals often seek out promising individuals to act as their followers. They watch, and even help at times, the development of their future disciples for years, perhaps appearing to them in dreams or visions. Such a disciple grows to fully believe that his purpose is to serve the creature that has guided him, so that when the immortal finally reveals himself the new disciple is willing to devote his life to service. The

immortal may have already started granting the disciple powers by the time he reveals himself fully, or he may never reveal himself, constantly testing the faith and devotion of those who follow him.

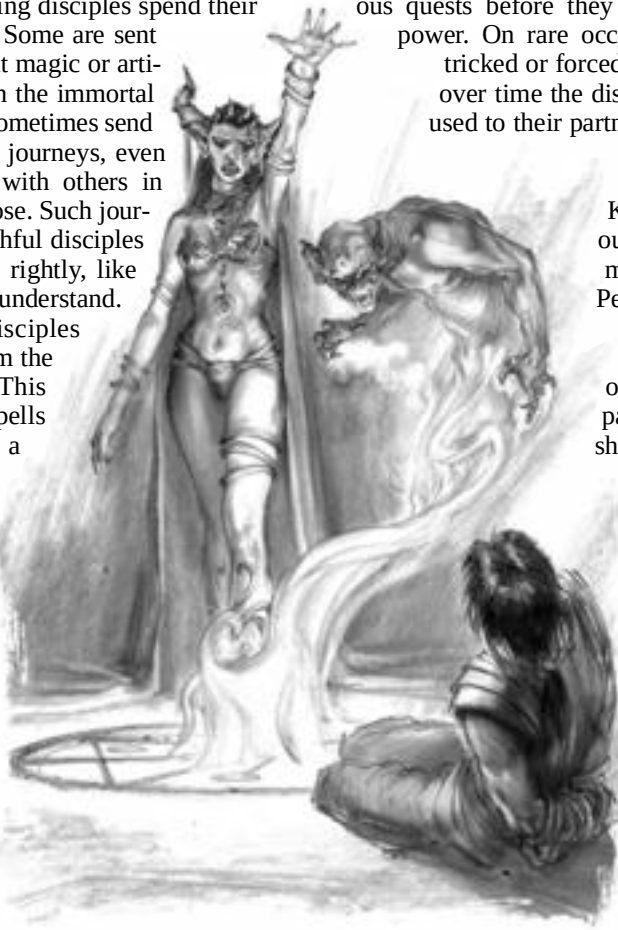
Sometimes future disciples seek out creatures who can grant them power in return for service. These disciples must often convince a creature to take them on as a follower, and the immortal may send them on dangerous quests before they will relent to sharing their power. On rare occasions an immortal may be tricked or forced into such a relationship, but over time the disciple and his immortal grow used to their partnership.

Races: The humans of Ambria, particularly the Kingsmarch trueborn, seek out creatures to worship far more than any other race. Perhaps this is because shapers and shamans are more rare among humans than the other races, or maybe it is a particular human need to worship a more powerful being. The trueborn consider it a boon to have immortals watching over them, since their lands are constantly besieged on all sides. Tiedflings, too, have a good number of disciples, most of whom worship fiends that exact terrible prices for the pleasure of their power.

The elves have few disciples, although some powerful fey creatures have come through the portal in Sildanyr and are now worshipped as gods of the forest. One such creature, an

dryad who lives in the First Tree, is revered by the elves. Not surprisingly, the orcs, goblinoids, and ogres of the Icehammer Front have few disciples among them, their spellcasters being primarily animist shamans. But a few disciples have been seen roaming the north, proclaiming a new age under the rule of their god, Anlar Icefang. The rangers of the Griffin Company are not sure if these are true disciples or overzealous shamans, but even rumors that Anlar is an immortal has sent fear through Firebrand Keep.

Other Classes: Disciples often train in other professions before they become disciples, or choose to practice other skills that help venerate their immortal or aid them in their questing. Fighting skills are valued for disciples that are often sent on quests or who travel to spread the word of their faith. Bardic disciples are not uncommon among those who remain in their communi-



INTERCESSION CHECK MODIFIERS

Condition	Modifier
Every 100 gp worth of sacrificial offerings	+1
Every 5 disciple levels of supplicant	+2
Every 5 ranks in Knowledge (religion)	+1
Every 5 ranks in Diplomacy	+1
Disciple is on a mission from his Immortal	+3
Immortal is of good alignment	+2
Immortal is of evil alignment	-4

INTERCESSION CHECK RESULTS

Check Result	Intercession Effect*	Special**
0 or less	Up to 1st-level effect	Disciple only
1-5	Up to 2nd-level effect	Up to one other creature
6-10	Up to 3rd-level effect	1.5 times normal area
10-15	Up to 4th-level effect	Up to three other creatures
16-20	Up to 5th-level effect	3 times normal area
21-30	Up to 6th-level effect	Up to five other creatures
31-40	Up to 8th-level effect	5 times normal area
40+	Up to 9th-level effect	Up to 10 other creatures

* The intercession can take any form, but judge the power of the effect based on arcane and divine spells of the listed level. The maximum level of effect an immortal may grant is equal to half its CR.

** The area multiples apply to the spell effect generated, and represent the maximum space over which the intercession can take place. They do not allow more targets than listed to be affected, and the disciple can always choose to affect less than his maximum number of targets.

ties. When a disciple travels, he often finds it beneficial to have companions with a good mix of abilities. Variety helps him to achieve his goals no matter what challenges may be laid before him.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Disciples have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Wisdom determines how powerful a spell a disciple can cast, how many spells he can cast per day, and how hard those spells are to resist (see Spells below). A high Constitution score improves a disciple's hit points, and a high Charisma helps him spread the word of his faith to others.

Alignment: A disciple's alignment must be within one step of the immortal that grants him his spells (that is, it may be one step away on either the lawful-chaotic axis or the good-evil axis, but not both).

Hit Die: d8.

CLASS SKILLS

The disciple's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at First Level: $(2 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: $2 + \text{Int modifier}$.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the disciple.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A disciple is proficient with all simple weapons, with all types of armor (light, medium, and heavy), and with shields (except tower shields).

Spells: A disciple casts divine spells, which are drawn from the cleric spell list (see PHB). However, his alignment may restrict him from casting certain spells opposed to his moral or ethical beliefs; see Chaotic,

THE DISCIPLE

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Divine spells, intercession 1/day
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Innate spell (0-level)
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Innate spell (1st)
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Immortal's gift
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Innate spell (2nd)
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Innate spell (3rd)
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	Innate spell (4th)
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Intercession 2/day
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Innate spell (5th)
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Innate spell (6th)
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Innate spell (7th)
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Innate spell (8th)
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Innate spell (9th)
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Intercession 3/day

Level	Spells Per Day									
	0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1st	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	5	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	5	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	5	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	6	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	6	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
9th	6	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
10th	6	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
11th	6	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
12th	6	5	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—
13th	6	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—
14th	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	2	—	—
15th	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	—
16th	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	2	—
17th	6	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	1
18th	6	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	2
19th	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	3
20th	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4

Evil, Good, and Lawful Spells, below. A disciple must choose and prepare his spells in advance.

To learn or cast a spell, a disciple must have a Wisdom score equal to at least 10 + the spell level (Wis 10 for 0-level spells, Wis 11 for 1st-level spells, and so forth). The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a disciple's spell is 10 + the spell level + the disciple's Wisdom modifier.

Like other spellcasters, a disciple can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. His base daily spell allotment is given on the disciple table. In addition, he receives bonus spells per day if he has a high Wisdom score.

Intercession (Su): Once per day, a disciple can pray for his patron's intercession. This requires a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity but cannot be disrupted like a spell. To determine whether the immortal heeds this plea, the disciple makes an intercession check (1d20 + disciple level – immortal's CR), the result of which determines the level of aid granted. The immortal directly aids the disciple in some way, depending on the result of the check. This check may be modified by several factors, as shown on the table.

If the intercession check fails, you may not try again for 24 hours. You can continue to ask for your patron's help until such aid is given. At 10th level you can receive this aid twice per day, and three times per day at 20th level.

Intercession is not limited by range, though an immortal's powers are stronger near his demesne (see the Power of Immortals sidebar).

The level of aid that an immortal grants through intercession can be no more than half its CR (see the intercession tables on page 59).

Immortal's Gift (Su): By 4th level, the disciple has proven his devotion to his immortal such that the immortal grants him a special ability. The ability varies by the individual immortal, as noted in their stat blocks in Chapter Three. If a disciple ever takes more levels in other classes, he loses access to this gift, as his devotion to his immortal wanes.

Innate Spells (Ex): Starting at 2nd level, the disciple's relationship with his immortal grows. The immortal begins to trust him with small bits of his power without having to call upon him each day. Each time this ability is gained, the disciple chooses a single spell of the listed level. This spell becomes innate to him—shared power granted by the immortal that he venerates. He may now spontaneously cast this spell just like a cleric can spontaneously cast *cure* spells. In addition, any metamagic effects the disciple applies to an innate spell have their cost reduced by one level, to a minimum of one.

THE POWER OF IMMORTALS

Immortals are beings of great power that offer some of that power to their mortal worshippers, much like the true gods of other settings. Unlike gods, however, an immortal's power is linked to a specific area of the campaign world. While they are able to answer the prayers of their worshippers no matter what distance separates them, a disciple is even more powerful when he is in his immortal's demesne.

A disciple gains the following benefits when he is within his immortal's sphere of influence.

- The disciple gains a +20 bonus on all intercession checks.
- The disciple can cast each innate spell he knows once per day without using a prepared slot. Metamagic effects may not be applied to spells cast in this way.
- Divination spells such as *commune* automatically succeed in providing a correct answer.

SHAMAN

Outside the arcane energies of the world and the divine essence of the Spirit lies another force—nature. It is present in all the world's trees, rocks, rivers, and oceans. Nature is more than a force, however. It is these things as much as they are a part of it. Although sentience, and thus the worries of consciousness, often causes people to lose connection with nature, some folks feel more a part of the world than they do a particular race, culture, or family. These individuals often spend their lives away from civilization, communing with the natural world and drawing sustenance and meaning from it.

Adventures: Shamans adventure as a way of life. They stay away from great cities and small towns alike, as well as the people that inhabit them. Their bond with nature drives them to find new species of plant and animal with which they can bond, and to nurture and grow all living things in order to empower nature itself. They can tolerate other adventurers, and often find that they delight in the company of other sentient beings (even if they are not as in tune with nature as the shaman).



Characteristics: Shamans are masters of the natural environment of the world. Through their bond with nature, they are able to draw sustenance from its energy. Their power over nature grants them many abilities, and they often borrow ambient power to fuel their spells and rituals. While not warriors, shamans put their instincts to good use in combat, and they often travel with powerful animals that can rip their enemies to shreds. That they can control the land around them makes them even more dangerous to those who are not prepared for a sudden change in the rules of engagement.

Alignment: Shamans are most often chaotic beings who see themselves as outside the “created” concepts of personal property, land ownership, taxation, and so on. They respect others and their views, but they do not believe that nature can be traded as a commodity in the ports and guildhouses of the world. A connection with nature usually softens the views of a shaman; even though he may harbor some resentment toward civilized peoples, they are still of nature and therefore to be protected and revered. Some shamans adopt a different view, however, believing that all who do not have a connection with the land were meant to serve it or die. Shamans are common among the less-civilized peoples of the world, and those serving goblinoids, giants, and other evil races commonly use their power and insight for dark purposes.

Background: A shaman knows that he is different from the moment he is born. He can feel the spirits of nature pulling at his soul, and by the time he reaches maturity he knows he must make a choice. Those who go on to become shamans choose their connection to the world over any racial or social ties. They say goodbye to family and friends and begin to wander, learning about the world and fine-tuning their senses. Once their powers begin to manifest, they often seek a master, or one seeks them out who can train them in shamanic knowledge and craft. The old nurturing the young is the way of nature.

Races: A great many of the shamans in the known lands are gnomes, likely due to their strong fey nature. While their connection to nature is not as strong as that of the gnomes, elves are also deeply bonded to the natural world. The shamanic worldview integrates seamlessly with the dawn elves’ traditional spiritualism, but for the same reason, few night elves become shamans.

Shamans are more common than the other divine classes among the savage humanoids of the north. Humans, though, find themselves too focused on worldly concerns to make good shamans in most cases. Tiedflings, yuan-ti, and doppelgangers rarely become shamans, although they are technically of this world. Some believe that these races have their own allegiances to alien entities or planar energies that keep them from becoming shamans.

Other Classes: Most shamans find that their devotion to nature and the powers they share because of it give them everything they need. Sometimes a shaman finds training in the arts of combat or even arcane magic to be beneficial in protecting and nurturing the world, but only rarely do they pursue the shadow arts. When a shaman decides to travel with others, he feels most comfortable around others who can sense part of the natural world. Shapers, source adepts, and disciples all make fine companions, as do nature-sensitive creatures of any class or race.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Shamans have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Wisdom determines how powerful a spell a shaman can cast, how many spells he can cast per day, and how hard those spells are to resist. To cast a spell, a shaman must have a Wisdom score of 10 + the spell’s level. A shaman gets bonus spells based on Wisdom. The Difficulty Class of a saving throw against a shaman’s spell is 10 + the spell’s level + the shaman’s Wisdom modifier. Dexterity helps improve a shaman’s Armor Class, and Intelligence gives a shaman more skills to aid him on his adventures.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d8.

CLASS SKILLS

The shaman's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at First Level: $(4 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: $4 + \text{Int modifier}$.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the shaman.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A shaman is proficient with all simple weapons, light armor, medium armor, and shields.

Spells: A shaman casts divine spells, which are drawn from the druid spell list. A shaman must choose and prepare his spells in advance (see below).

To prepare or cast a spell, the shaman must have a Wisdom score equal to at least $10 + \text{the spell level}$. The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a shaman's spell is $10 + \text{the spell level} + \text{the shaman's Wisdom modifier}$.

Like other spellcasters, a shaman can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. His base daily spell allotment is given on the shaman table on the following page. In addition, he receives bonus spells per day if he has a high Wisdom score.

A shaman may prepare and cast any spell on the druid spell list, provided that he can cast spells of that level, but he must choose which spells to prepare during his daily meditation.

Spontaneous Casting: A shaman can channel stored spell energy into summoning spells that he hasn't prepared ahead of time. He can "lose" a prepared spell in order to cast any *summon nature's ally* spell of the same level or lower.

Bonus Languages: A shaman's bonus language options include Sylvan, the language of woodland creatures. This choice is in addition to the bonus languages available to the character because of his race.

Animal Companion (Ex): A shaman may begin play with an animal companion selected from the following list: badger, camel, dire rat, dog, riding dog, eagle, hawk, horse (light or heavy), owl, pony, snake (Small or Medium viper), or wolf. If the campaign takes place wholly or partly in an aquatic environment, the following creatures are also available: crocodile, porpoise, Medium shark, and squid. This animal is a loyal companion that accompanies the shaman on his adventures as appropriate for its kind.

A 1st-level shaman's companion is completely typical for its kind except as noted under the druid's animal companion in the PHB. As a shaman advances in

level, the animal's power increases as shown on the table. If a shaman releases his companion from service, he may gain a new one by performing a ceremony requiring 24 uninterrupted hours of prayer. This ceremony can also replace an animal companion that has perished.

A shaman of 4th level or higher may select from alternative lists of animals (see PHB, Chapter Three, Druid). Should he select an animal companion from one of these alternative lists, the creature gains abilities as if the character's shaman level were lower than it actually is. Subtract the value indicated in the appropriate list header from the character's shaman level and compare the result with the shaman level entry on the table to determine the animal companion's powers. (If this adjustment would reduce the shaman's effective level to 0 or lower, he can't have that animal as a companion.)

Nature Sense (Ex): A shaman gains a +2 bonus on Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks.

Wild Empathy (Ex): A shaman can improve the attitude of an animal. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check made to improve the attitude of a person. The shaman rolls 1d20 and adds his shaman level and his Charisma modifier to determine the wild empathy check result.

The typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals are usually unfriendly.

To use wild empathy, the shaman and the animal must be able to study each other, which means that they must be within 30 feet of one another under normal conditions. Generally, influencing an animal in this way takes 1 minute but, as with influencing people, it might take more or less time.

A shaman can also use this ability to influence a magical beast with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2, but he takes a -4 penalty on the check.

Craft Spell Fetish: A shaman gains Craft Spell Fetish as a bonus feat at 2nd level.

Rituals of Power (Su): Starting at 3rd level, a shaman learns to draw power from the land itself, although doing so corrupts his connection to the natural world. A shaman can perform a ritual at any time. The process takes one hour, during which time the shaman cannot be interrupted or perform any other action. Disrupting the ritual completely neutralizes it, forcing the shaman to start over from the beginning.

Performing a ritual of power carries a terrible price. The land around the shaman begins to wither, animals feel nauseous and plants lose their color, and the shaman suffers Wisdom damage (see below) as he feels the world around him dying for his benefit. All such damage to the natural world heals within 24 hours, while the shaman must rest for one full night to regain all Wisdom damage suffered in this way. A shaman can never drop his Wisdom below 11 in this way.

The radius of this weakening is one mile, and if the shaman leaves this area any benefits he gained from

THE SHAMAN

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Animal companion, nature sense, wild empathy
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Craft spell fetish
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Rituals of power I
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Companion sight
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Medium elemental form 1/day
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Trackless step
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Rituals of power II
8th	+6/+1	+6	+2	+6	Treant form 1/day
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+6	
10th	+7/+2	+7	+3	+7	Huge elemental form 1/day
11th	+8/+3	+7	+3	+7	Second elemental type
12th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Quickened rituals
13th	+9/+4	+8	+4	+8	Rituals of power III
14th	+10/+5	+9	+4	+9	Improved elemental form
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+5	+9	Timeless body
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Greater elemental form 1/day
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Third elemental type
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Rituals of power IV
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Elder elemental form 1/day

	Spells Per Day									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1st	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	5	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	5	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	5	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	6	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
8th	6	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
9th	6	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
10th	6	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—	—
11th	6	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
12th	6	5	4	4	3	3	2	—	—	—
13th	6	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—
14th	6	5	5	4	4	3	3	2	—	—
15th	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	—
16th	6	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	2	—
17th	6	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	2	1
18th	6	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	3	2
19th	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	3	3
20th	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4

the ritual are lost. He can suffer additional Wisdom damage to increase this radius, doubling it for every point of Wisdom damage suffered.

At 3rd level, the shaman learns the first level of ritual. For every point of Wisdom damage suffered, the shaman gains enough energy to spontaneously cast one spell that he can cast of up to 3rd level. He does not need to prepare this spell as normal; instead he can cast any spell from the druid list as needed. This power drains away when the shaman next rests.

At 7th level, the shaman learns the second level of ritual. For every two points of Wisdom damage suffered, the shaman gains enough energy to spontaneously cast one spell that he can cast of up to 5th level. In addition, he may suffer two points of Wisdom damage to grant himself the ability to use the next larger elemental form when he uses his elemental form ability. Thus, a 9th-level shaman could use this ritual to allow himself a Huge elemental form whenever he used his elemental form ability.

At 13th level, the shaman learns the third level of ritual. For every three points of Wisdom damage suffered, the shaman gains enough energy to spontaneously cast one spell that he can cast of up to 7th level. In addition, he may suffer three points of Wisdom damage to immediately remove all poisons, diseases, and physical damage from his body. Ability damage suffered from poison is immediately healed, although other ability damage is not. The shaman may not quicken this healing ritual.

At 18th level, the shaman learns the fourth level of ritual. For every four points of Wisdom damage suffered, the shaman gains enough energy to spontaneously cast one spell that he can cast of up to 9th level. In addition, he may suffer four points of Wisdom damage to immediately free himself from all harmful magical effects that are targeting him specifically, heal all ability damage, and remove all negative levels. Area of effect spells and effects are not affected. The shaman may not quicken this healing ritual.

Companion Sight (Su): Starting at 4th level, a shaman can enter a trance that allows him to see through the eyes of his animal companion. The shaman goes into a helpless state during the trance, although he can remain standing or seated if that was his position before entering the trance. While he is using companion sight he sees as his companion sees, and can make a Spot check to detect hidden creatures and objects in his companion's vicinity. While in the trance, the shaman cannot sense anything around him by sight. He also suffers a –10 penalty to all Listen checks to detect noises.

When the shaman comes out of his trance, he is nauseated for one minute.

Elemental Form (Su): Starting at 5th level, a shaman gains the ability to transform himself into a single type of elemental. The shaman chooses the elemental type upon first gaining this ability and may not change it. He gains a second type at 11th level, and a

third type at 17th level. The transformation lasts for up to one minute per level and may be dismissed at any time. This ability works exactly like *polymorph* except that the shaman gains all the special attacks and special qualities of the elemental, while losing his own. The shaman may still cast spells and communicate normally while in elemental form.

At 10th, 16th, and 20th levels, the shaman gains the ability to transform into larger elementals. A shaman may substitute a larger transformation for a smaller one, but not the other way around. So, a 10th-level shaman that has already transformed into a Medium elemental once in a day but does not want to grow larger can use his Huge elemental form ability to transform into a Medium elemental instead.

At 14th level, the shaman's ability to transform into an elemental improves. The transformation now lasts for one hour per level, and the shaman may freely shift between any form he knows, including his natural form but not his treant form, during this time.

Treant Form (Su): Starting at 8th level, a shaman gains the ability to transform himself into a treant once per day. The transformation lasts for up to one hour and may be dismissed at any time. This ability works exactly like *polymorph* except that the shaman gains all the special attacks and special qualities of the treant, while losing his own. The shaman may still cast spells and communicate normally while in treant form.

Quicken Rituals (Ex): Starting at 12th level, a shaman can perform a ritual as a full-round action, but he must use any abilities gained through the ritual immediately following the ritual.

Trackless Step (Ex): Starting at 6th level, a shaman leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked. He may choose to leave a trail if so desired.

Timeless Body (Ex): After attaining 15th level, a shaman no longer takes ability score penalties for aging and cannot be magically aged. Any penalties he may have already incurred, however, remain in place.

Bonuses still accrue, and the shaman still dies of old age when his time is up.

SHAPER

The untamed divine power that surrounds everything in the world is invisible to most. In fact, there are many who do not believe it exists at all. A very few individuals, however, can sense the power around them. They feel it flowing around them like water, and can shape it into many different forms and use it to perform miracles. Shapers know the true divine essence of the world, which they call the Spirit, and do not need to have it channeled to them like disciples or gain access to it only through nature.

Adventures: Shapers adventure to increase their personal connection to the Spirit. Most shapers have an affinity for certain locations or things that provide them



with a closer connection to the energies around them. These, they feel, are their divine birthright, and a shaper will attempt to protect and gain knowledge of them in their quest to become as gods. Even those that do not feel the pull toward godhood wish to learn more about the energies that they can touch and bend to their will.

Many shapers are sponsored by their clans or leaders to go out and adventure in hopes that they will indeed become gods, or at least demigods capable of leading an army of worshippers to victory over their enemies. These sponsored shapers often travel alone, or with groups of bodyguards, and their motivations are such that they are not willing to let anyone get in the way of their righteous goals.

Characteristics: Shapers gain abilities that mimic the divine spells that disciples are granted by their idols. Each shaper has a unique connection to the Spirit, so one can never be sure just what capabilities a given shaper will have. Some are great healers, others have an affinity for nature, and yet others focus on defending themselves and their allies in combat. Not all shapers manifest powers with a distinct theme—some have a variety of abilities that seem to have no connection to one another at all. The fact that shapers gain their powers naturally rather than through a granted boon means that they manifest abilities more slowly than disciples. Shapers have a derogatory saying to describe this and to slight the disciple's relationship with his god—“flash bright, die young.”

Because shapers do not spend time developing a connection with a divine entity, they have much more time to devote to skills and other pursuits than disciples.

Alignment: Even when they are on a sponsored mission, shapers tend to live life however they wish. As heirs apparent to the divine mandate of the world, most shapers see themselves as beings outside the traditional cultural and racial boundaries of the world. This leads them to a chaotic and individualistic outlook on life, and most shapers follow their instincts when it comes to dealing with others—there are those that believe they must protect their future worshippers, while others believe they exist to be exploited.

Background: Since shapers feel the Spirit from an early age, many do not even know that they are special until they have grown into their teenage years. It is only when they come into their first powers, generally around puberty, that they realize they are different from those around them. Some cultures, particularly tielfings and dwarves, actively seek shapers among their youth so that they might train them to one day become great leaders, or even immortals.

Shapers are rare, and as such they do not often have other shapers around to train them in the use of their powers. Many simply go about their lives as normal, always expecting to awaken with the ability to manifest a new power. Others, however, seek solitude or the company of other shapers in order to learn more about why they are who they are.

Races: Most shapers are tieflings, humans, and dwarves, but almost every race in the world boasts individuals connected to the Spirit. Tieflings believe shapers to be individuals with a strong connection to the lower planes, which grants them a high station in tiefling society. Several of the Valhedrin dominars are shapers, while only a single disciple holds that honor (disciples are thought to be more mind-slaves than servants to their fiendish masters). Saltbloods and Kingsmarch trueborn have no special regard for the shapers among them, but the Anderlar revere them. Every town tries to court a shaper into being its official wise man, even if the shaper does not reside in the town. Shapers are renowned throughout the communities of Anderland, and one's arrival within a community is yet another reason to hold a celebration. Dwarves believe that shapers are the direct descendants of the generals that fought the giants in the belly of the world. As such, shapers are often great leaders among the dwarves, and as they grow old they become sages and advisors to the next generation.

Elves are rarely shapers since they are not from this world, but more and more they have been manifesting the unique abilities of shapers. The reasons for this are unknown, but each race has its own explanation. The night elves say that their new goddess is granting them these powers, but the difference between shapers and disciples calls this explanation into question. The dawn elves believe they are being punished by the fey of Itheria for becoming too attached to their new home. Shapers are shunned in elven society, and many of the elves wandering free in Ambria and beyond do so because of their connection to the Spirit.

Other Classes: Shapers sometimes dabble in a fighting class so that they can better defend themselves. Others become bards so that their tales can be written and sung exactly as they would have them. They only rarely try to learn arcane magic, and the divine powers of spirit adepts, disciples, and shamans are considered inferior to the shapers' connection to the Spirit.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Shapers have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Charisma is important for determining the power and availability of a shaper's innate spellcasting. It also helps them communicate with other creatures in their search for the truth about the Spirit. Intelligence helps a shaper learn more quickly, and Wisdom helps a shaper stay true to his path.

Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d8.

CLASS SKILLS

The shaper's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha),

Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at First Level: $(4 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: $4 + \text{Int modifier}$.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the shaper.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A shaper is proficient with all simple weapons, light armor, medium armor, and shields.

Spells: A shaper casts divine spells, which are drawn from the cleric spell list (see PHB). He can cast any spell he knows without preparing it ahead of time, the way a wizard or disciple must.

To learn or cast a spell, a shaper must have a Charisma score equal to at least $10 + \text{the spell level}$ (Cha 10 for 0-level spells, Cha 11 for 1st-level spells, and so forth). The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a shaper's spell is $10 + \text{the spell level} + \text{the shaper's Charisma modifier}$.

Like other spellcasters, a shaper can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. His base daily spell allotment is given on the shaper table. In addition, he receives bonus spells per day if he has a high Charisma score.

A shaper's selection of spells is extremely limited. A shaper begins play knowing four 0-level spells and two 1st-level spells of your choice. At each new shaper level, he gains one or more new spells, as indicated on the shaper spells known table. (Unlike spells per day, the number of spells a shaper knows is not affected by his Charisma score; the numbers on the spells known table are fixed.)

Upon reaching 4th level, and at every even-numbered shaper level after that (6th, 8th, and so on), a shaper can choose to learn a new spell in place of one he already knows. In effect, the shaper "loses" the old spell in exchange for the new one. The new spell's level must be the same as that of the spell being exchanged, and it must be at least two levels lower than the highest-level shaper spell the shaper can cast. A shaper 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 the level.

Unlike a wizard or a disciple, a shaper need not prepare his spells in advance. He can cast any spell he knows at any time, assuming he has not yet used up his spells per day for that spell level. He does not have to decide ahead of time which spells he will cast.

Focuses: All shapers must choose two focuses that will define their connection to the Spirit. Each grants him special abilities as he rises in level. The focuses are Alignment, Defense, Elemental, Nature, Power, Shadow, and Vitality. Each of these has several

FOCUS DOMAINS

Focus	Domains	Granted Ability
Alignment	Chaos, Good, Evil, Lawful	Cast <i>undetectable alignment</i> at will
Defense	Protection, Sun, Travel	+1 bonus to AC
Elemental	Air, Earth, Fire, Water	Elemental resistance 10 (choose one)
Nature	Animal, Healing, Plant	+2 bonus to Handle Animal, Heal, and Survival
Power	Destruction, Strength, War	Free Martial Weapon Proficiency feat
Shadow	Luck, Magic, Trickery	Free Fortune's Favor feat
Vitality	Death, Life, Knowledge	Free Endurance and Toughness feats

ADVANCED ABILITIES

Focus	Granted Ability
Alignment	Damage reduction 1/opposed alignment*
Defense	+1 bonus to AC
Elemental	Elemental resistance 10, or immunity if the same element is chosen
Nature	Animals and plants cannot attack you
Power	Cast <i>harm</i> once per day
Shadow	Cast <i>spell immunity</i> once per day
Vitality	Cast <i>divine power</i> once per day

* The character may choose an alignment that is opposite his own on either axis. A true neutral character may choose any alignment. So, a lawful good character could choose chaotic or evil, while a lawful neutral character could choose chaotic, good, or evil.

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Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Divine spells, divine focuses
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	First specialty, enlarge specialty spell
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Second specialty
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	
8th	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	Empower specialty spell
9th	+6/+1	+3	+3	+6	
10th	+7/+2	+3	+3	+7	Advanced divine focuses
11th	+8/+3	+3	+3	+7	Third specialty
12th	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	
13th	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	
14th	+10/+5	+4	+4	+9	Extend specialty spell
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+9	
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	Maximize specialty spell
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+11	Fourth specialty
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	

THE SHAPER: SPELLS PER DAY AND SPELLS KNOWN

	Spells Per Day									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1st	5	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	6	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	6	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	6	6	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	6	6	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	6	6	5	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	6	6	6	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
8th	6	6	6	5	3	—	—	—	—	—
9th	6	6	6	6	4	—	—	—	—	—
10th	6	6	6	6	5	3	—	—	—	—
11th	6	6	6	6	6	4	—	—	—	—
12th	6	6	6	6	6	5	3	—	—	—
13th	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	—	—	—
14th	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	3	—	—
15th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	—	—
16th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	3	—
17th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	—
18th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	3
19th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4
20th	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6

	Spells Known									
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1st	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	5	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	5	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4th	6	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5th	6	4	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6th	7	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
7th	7	5	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
8th	8	5	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
9th	8	5	4	3	2	—	—	—	—	—
10th	9	5	4	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
11th	9	5	5	4	3	2	—	—	—	—
12th	9	5	5	4	3	2	1	—	—	—
13th	9	5	5	4	4	3	2	—	—	—
14th	9	5	5	4	4	3	2	1	—	—
15th	9	5	5	4	4	4	3	2	—	—
16th	9	5	5	4	4	4	3	2	1	—
17th	9	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	2	—
18th	9	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	2	1
19th	9	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	2
20th	9	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	3

of the traditional domains associated with it (as shown on the focus domains table), and the shaper's choices affect his spellcasting in several ways.

First, a shaper's choice of focuses affects how his spells manifest. For instance, the spells of a nature-focused shaper might be accompanied by the spontaneous growth of small plants or grass around him. An elemental-focused shaper might cause the temperature to rise or drop every time he shapes a spell. No matter what effects are chosen, they should not give any advantage to the shaper—they are only secondary, ambient effects.

A shaper's focuses also give him special granted abilities, as shown on the focus domains table. At 10th level, the shaper's focus abilities advance. These abilities are in addition to those granted at 1st level.

At least half of a shaper's spells known must be from the domain lists associated with his focuses or be related to them in some way, at the DM's discretion. So, any air, earth, fire, or water spell is appropriate for an elemental-focused shaper, but an acid spell may or may not be at the DM's discretion.

Specialties: In addition to the granted abilities, a character gains the ability to apply spontaneous metamagic to certain spells based on specialties within his area of focus. Shapers get a specialty at 2nd, 5th, 11th, and 18th levels. Each time he gains this ability, he chooses one domain from those available in his focuses. This becomes a specialty domain.

Once per day, a character can choose to apply a metamagic effect to a spell he casts that is associated with his specialty domain. It does not require any additional casting time or increase in spell level to use this metamagic ability. Only one spell per specialty can be so enhanced each day. So, if a character had the Water and Death specialties, he could not enlarge two *obscuring mists* per day in this way.

At 2nd level the character can enlarge a specialty spell. At 8th, 14th, and 17th levels he gains the ability to use other metamagic feats as needed. These abilities work just like the feats of the same name, but may only be applied to a specialty spell.

SPIRIT ADEPT

There are those walking the known lands who can feel the Spirit flowing through them, but are unable to create the spectacular effects that define a shaper's power. Instead, the divine essence soaks into their muscles, bones, and mind, allowing them to augment their natural abilities in a variety of ways. Some choose to use this ability to make them better fighters—stronger, faster, and more deadly than those without the essence. Others choose athletic prowess, mental focus, and heightened awareness over the more brutish aspects of the Spirit. However they choose to use the power, it shapes their lives and ultimately helps them decide how best to live.

Adventures: Like shapers, a spirit adept's connection to the Spirit often drives him to want to explore the world in an attempt to better understand the power within him. Some believe that the Spirit itself is driving them to wander; they see their entire lives as a test for the rewards they will be given once they die. Adventurous souls who find themselves enhanced by the Spirit adventure in order to seek new challenges, to test the limits of their newfound powers. They seek higher mountains, deeper oceans, and more fearsome beasts to challenge, believing that no matter how great the challenge the divine essence will grant them the strength and will to overcome it.

Characteristics: Spirit adepts have an inherent connection to the Spirit that they do not understand. This gives an adept the ability to enhance his senses, gain remarkable speed and agility, and devastate his enemies. Adepts are skilled adventurers with a variety of useful tools at their disposal; they are warriors who can augment their training with surges of divine power.

Alignment: Spirit adepts can be of any alignment, although the Spirit tends to polarize them to extremes. If they had lawful tendencies before they could control the power within, they become extremely ordered and ritualistic. Evil adepts tend to use their abilities to punish others rather than exalt themselves, or to prove their superiority to those around them. Some of the cruelest creatures in the world are evil adepts who have never known defeat. Conversely, those who dedicate themselves to righteous causes find their will to do good bolstered by the powers of the Spirit.

Background: It is said that one cannot choose to become a spirit adept—rather, the Spirit chooses those with the most potential to receive its blessing. It has nothing to do with the good or evil within a person—there are adepts of all philosophies—rather it is the will to make the world conform to their desires that opens a person's body, mind, and soul to the Spirit.

Spirit adepts often gather to explore their connection to the Spirit. They form monasteries far from civilization in which they can train, and build complex training facilities to compliment the natural terrain that they use to test their abilities. These monasteries only take in those with the potential to enhance themselves with the Spirit.

Not all spirit adepts train in such facilities, however. Sometimes an individual adept, perhaps one who feels his wandering days are over but still wishes to explore the Spirit, will take on an apprentice and teach him to feel the Spirit and to use it. These relationships can get very personal, and when the master dies the apprentice often claims to be able to still hear and feel his presence.

Races: Spirit adepts can be found among any of the races of the world. The Spirit does not seem to care who it manifests within as long as they are strong of will. Ogre and orc adepts are rare because of this, but not unheard of, with minotaurs showing slightly higher

numbers. Trueborn humans are perhaps the most common spirit adepts, although a surprising number of salt-bloods are called by the Spirit. Yuan-ti have the capabilities to become adepts, but the Spirit seems to ignore them for this purpose. Adepts and shapers alike have told tales of meetings with yuan-ti in which they felt their connection to the Spirit wavering. This phenomenon has yet to be explained. Gnomes too, while wise, seem to lack a connection with the Spirit in many instances, possibly due to their strong fey nature. The Spirit seems to be a phenomenon that is not closely connected to the nature of the gnomes or shamans.

Other Classes: Spirit adepts often find that their unique abilities compliment those of other classes well, although an adept that strays too far from the path risks losing much of his focus. Fighters and rogues can be well served by some of the Spirit's gifts, although each likely chooses to focus on different abilities. Barbarians are a natural fit, as they already know how to get more from their bodies than they are normally capable of by flying into a rage.

Dedicated adepts sometimes choose to travel alone, believing that too much contact with others will weaken their connection to the Spirit. They spend their days wandering alone with their powers. Others prefer the company of fellow adventurers, who can help the adept should his natural gifts ever fail him. They believe that the Spirit is life, and that to ignore people is to ignore the Spirit itself.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Spirit adepts have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Strength helps an adept overcome the challenges he faces, and Wisdom helps him to better choose those challenges. These two natural abilities, along with Dexterity, are the most enhanced by a adept's connection to the Spirit. Intelligence grants him valuable skill points and Charisma helps him deal with those he meets on his travels.

Alignment: Any.

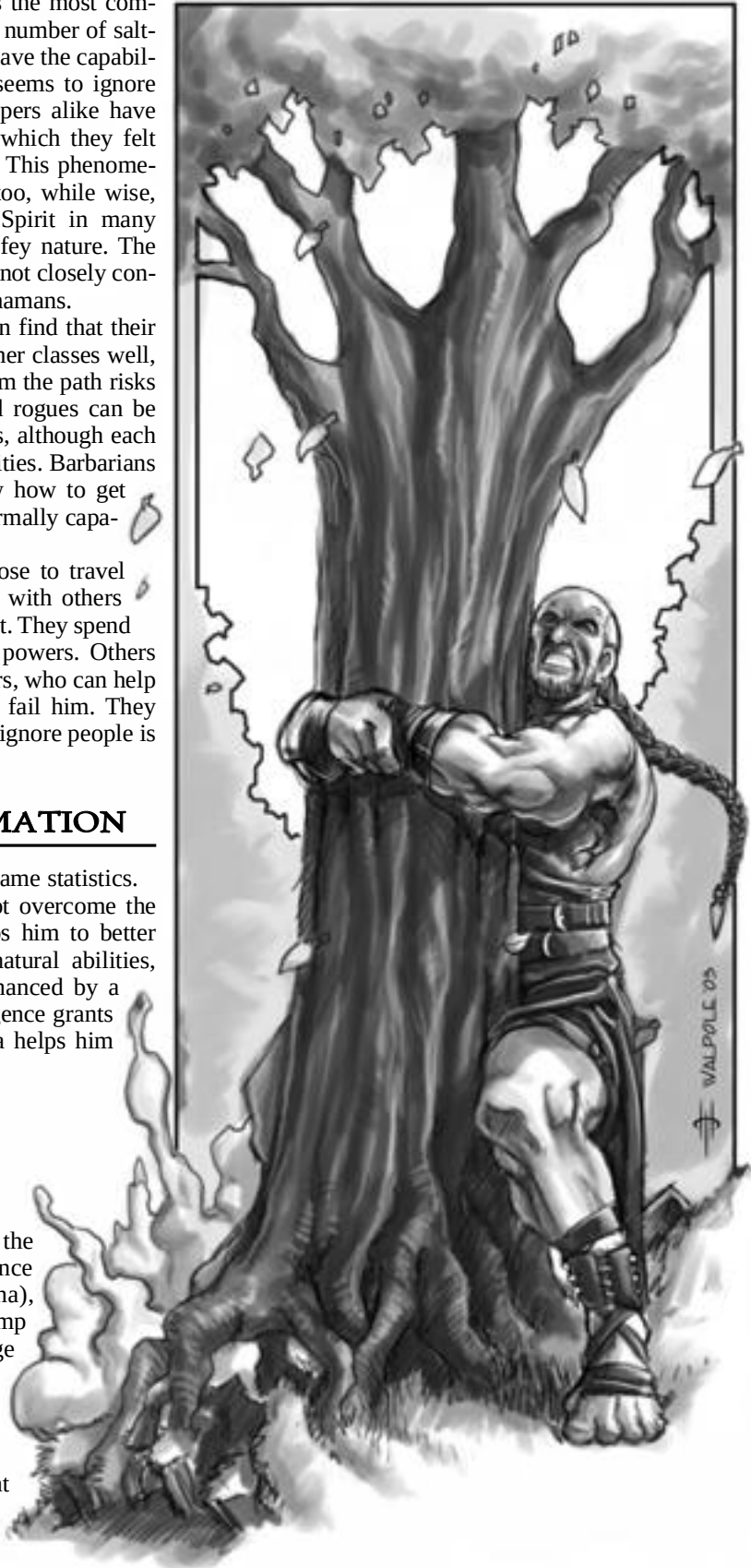
Hit Die: d10.

CLASS SKILLS

The spirit adept's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen, Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), and Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at First Level: $(4 + \text{Int modifier}) \times 4$.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: $4 + \text{Int modifier}$.



CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the adept.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A spirit adept is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, light armor, and shields (except tower shields).

Evasion (Ex): A spirit adept of 2nd level or higher can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can only be used if the adept is wearing light or no armor. A helpless adept does not gain the benefits of evasion.

Feather Fall (Sp): Starting a 5th level, a spirit adept can expend two points of adept strength to be affected by a *feather fall* spell. He can do this at any time as a free action.

Improved Evasion (Ex): At 9th level, a spirit adept's evasion ability improves. He still takes no damage on a successful Reflex saving throw against attacks that normally deal half damage on a successful save, but henceforth he takes only half damage on a failed save. Improved evasion can only be used if the adept is wearing light or no armor. A helpless adept does not gain the benefits of evasion.

Spirit Sense: Starting at 1st level, the spirit adept gains access to a host of extraordinary abilities that are tied to his ability to channel the power of the Spirit. He gains access to only a few abilities at lower levels, but as he grows in power he is able to channel more and more power into each ability that he knows.

At 6th level, the adept is able to perform even greater feats with the adept powers that he knows, and they grow stronger still at 11th level. The adept may always opt to use less adept strength (see below) to get a lesser effect.

Spirit Strength: An adept gains spirit strength each level, which can be spent on adept powers as he sees fit (see Activating an Adept Power below). These points are regained fully after 8 hours of sleep but cannot be regained in any other way.

Adept Powers: A spirit adept awakens his first power at 1st level and then a new power at every other level after that. Once a power has been awakened, the adept may use it at any level of spirit sense that he possesses—he need not pay to use the power at full strength each time. Adept powers are all extraordinary abilities unless otherwise noted.

Activating an Adept Power: Activating an adept power is a free action and requires the expenditure of the appropriate number of spirit points, as shown in the table below. Only one adept power may be activated per round, and doing so does not provoke an attack of opportunity. A spirit adept can have as many powers activated as he has points available, but an individual power may not be activated if it is already in effect (no matter which level he chooses).

Spirit Sense Level	Adept Power Activation Cost
1	1
2	5
3	10

SPIRIT SENSE I POWERS

Improved Movement: Choose either Climb, Jump, or Swim each time this ability is activated. You gain a +5 bonus on any skill check made with that skill in this round. Improved movement can only be used if the adept is wearing light or no armor.

Smite Enemies: As a full-round action, you may make a melee attack with any weapon that deals +2d6 points of damage.

Burst of Speed: Your ground movement speed increases by 20 feet for one minute. Burst of speed can only be used if the adept is wearing light or no armor.

Evasive Action: You gain a +2 bonus to AC for one minute. In addition, you gain the benefits of the Mobility feat during this time. Evasive action can only be used if the adept is wearing light or no armor.

Piercing Strike: Your melee attacks bypass damage reduction as if they were made with a magical weapon for one minute.

Purify Self: You receive the benefit of either *slow poison* or *remove disease* when this power is activated.

Heightened Senses: You gain a +4 bonus to all Listen and Spot checks for 10 minutes.

True Vision: You can sense and target invisible and concealed creatures (including those using the Hide skill) within 15 feet of your position. In addition, your miss chance to strike invisible creatures is reduced to 20%. This ability lasts for 10 minutes each time it is activated.

Spirit Warrior: You can sense the presence of those who have no connection to the Spirit (undead and outsiders) as if using the *detect undead* spell. The initial scan takes place as a free action, but you may continue to concentrate on the effect as described in the spell if you desire.

Extreme Focus: Choose one of the following skills each time this ability is activated: Balance, Bluff, Concentration, Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Disable Device, Escape Artist, Forgery, Open Lock, Perform, Search, Sleight of Hand, Use Magic Device, or Use Rope. You gain a +4 bonus on any skill check made with that skill this round.

SPIRIT SENSE II POWERS

Improved Movement: Depending on which skill you choose, you gain one of the following bonuses. Improved movement can only be used if the adept is wearing light or no armor.

Climb: +15 bonus on checks this round, and double your climb speed.

THE SPIRIT ADEPT

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spirit Strength	Adept Powers
1st	+0	+2	+2	+2	Spirit sense I	2	1
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+3	Evasion	4	1
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+3		6	2
4th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Bonus feat	8	2
5th	+3	+4	+4	+4	<i>Feather fall</i>	10	3
6th	+4	+5	+5	+5	Spirit sense II	15	3
7th	+5	+5	+5	+5	Wholeness of body	20	4
8th	+6/+1	+6	+6	+6	Bonus feat	25	4
9th	+6/+1	+6	+6	+6	Improved evasion	30	5
10th	+7/+2	+7	+7	+7		35	5
11th	+8/+3	+7	+7	+7	Spirit sense III	45	6
12th	+9/+4	+8	+8	+8	Bonus feat	55	6
13th	+9/+4	+8	+8	+8		65	7
14th	+10/+5	+9	+9	+9		75	7
15th	+11/+6/+1	+9	+9	+9		85	8
16th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+10	Bonus feat	95	8
17th	+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+10		105	9
18th	+13/+8/+3	+11	+11	+11		115	9
19th	+14/+9/+4	+11	+11	+11		125	10
20th	+15/+10/+5	+12	+12	+12	Bonus feat	135	10

Jump: +15 bonus on checks this round, and no maximum distance.

Swim: +15 bonus on Swim checks this round, and double your swim speed.

Smite Enemies: You can make a normal melee attack this round that deals +2d6 points of damage. This attack can be part of a normal attack combination, but you must designate which attack the power applies to before you roll.

Burst of Speed: Your ground movement speed increases by 40 feet for one minute. Burst of speed can only be used if the adept is wearing light or no armor.

Evasive Action: You gain a +4 bonus to AC for one minute. In addition, nothing you do provokes an attack of opportunity during this time. Evasive action can only be used if the adept is wearing light or no armor.

Piercing Strike: Your melee attacks bypass damage reduction as if they were made with an aligned weapon (choose one of your alignments, or any if you are neutral) for one minute.

Purify Self: You receive the benefit of either *lessen restoration* or *neutralize poison* when this power is activated.

Heightened Senses: You gain a +10 bonus to all Listen and Spot checks for 10 minutes.

True Vision: You gain the benefits of the *see invisibility* spell for 10 minutes.

Spirit Warrior: All melee attacks you make for one minute act as if the weapon you wield had the *ghost touch* special ability.

Extreme Focus: You gain a +8 bonus on the skill check you choose, and you may take 10 even if circumstances would normally forbid it.

SPIRIT SENSE III POWERS

Improved Movement: Choose one of the following effects. Improved movement can only be used if the adept is wearing light or no armor.

Dimension Door: You can use an ability that works exactly like the *dimension door* spell, except that it is a free action.

Leap of the Gods: You can make a horizontal jump of any distance, although you must be able to see the place where you can land. This jump does not allow any vertical movement, so it is useful for crossing huge chasms or pools of lava but not for leaping to the top of a wizard's tower.

Levitate: You gain use of the *levitate* ability once. You can go up as far as you need, but once you stop your ascent you must either end the effect or descend.

Smite Enemies: All of your attacks this round deal an additional 2d6 points of damage.

Burst of Speed: Your ground movement speed increases by 60 feet for one minute. Alternatively you can use this ability to move incredibly fast when not in combat. Your base ground speed becomes 60 feet for one hour plus one hour per point of Constitution bonus. If you stop or engage in any activity other than running, the effect ends immediately. Burst of speed can only be used if the adept is wearing light or no armor.

Evasive Action: You gain a +8 bonus to AC for one minute. In addition, nothing you do provokes an attack of opportunity during this time. Any attack that targets you during this time suffers a 20% miss chance. Evasive action can only be used if the adept is wearing light or no armor.

Piercing Strike: Your melee attacks bypass damage reduction as if they were made with an adamantine weapon for one minute.

Purify Self: You receive the benefit of either *restoration* or *remove curse* when this power is activated.

Heightened Senses: You gain a +20 bonus to all Listen and Spot checks for one hour.

True Vision: You gain the benefits of the *true seeing* spell for 10 minutes.

Spirit Warrior: All melee attacks you make for one minute act as if the weapon you wield had the *ghost touch* and *disruption* special abilities.

Extreme Focus: You gain a +15 bonus on the skill check you choose, and you automatically receive a 20 on your roll no matter the conditions in which you use it.

LEVEL 1 ABILITIES

- +5 to Climb, Jump, or Swim checks
- One attack deals +2d6 points of damage as a full round action
- Burst of speed +20 ft. for one minute
- Evasive action, +2 AC, +4 vs. attacks of opportunity for one minute
- Strike as a magic weapon for one minute
- Slow poison or remove disease (self only)
- +4 bonus to Listen and Spot for ten minutes
- Sense Invisibility (reduces miss chance, can target within 15 feet)
- Detect undead and outsiders (those with no connection to the Spirit)
- Extreme focus, +4 to skill used under pressure

LEVEL 2 ABILITIES

- +15 to Climb and double speed, +15 to Jump and no max distance, +15 to Swim and double speed
- One attack deals +2d6 points of damage as a normal attack
- Burst of speed +40 ft. for one minute
- Evasive action, +4 AC, no attacks of opportunity for one minute

- Strike as a weapon of your alignment for one minute
- Neutralize poison or lesser restoration (self only)
- +10 bonus to Listen and Spot for ten minutes
- See invisibility for ten minutes
- Ghost touch for one minute
- Extreme focus, +8 to skill used under pressure, and can Take 10

LEVEL 3 ABILITIES

- Dimension door, horizontal jump any distance, levitate
- All attacks in one round deal +2d6 damage
- Burst of speed +60 ft. for one minute
- Evasive action, +8 AC, no attacks of opportunity, 20% miss chance for one minute
- Strike as an adamantine weapon for one minute
- Restoration or remove curse (self only)
- +20 bonus to Listen and Spot for one hour
- True seeing for ten minutes
- Melee attacks gain ghost touch and disruption ability for one minute
- Automatic 20 on skill check, +15 bonus, even under pressure

LEGENDARY CLASSES

Legendary classes are the culmination of a character's career, representing his ultimate achievements in the world. They grant him the extraordinary abilities that mark him as a living legend and insure his name will never be forgotten. Legendary classes have all the same progressions as normal classes—base attack bonus, saving throws, and special abilities. They also have unique class skill packages and proficiencies. Each legendary class has one or more legendary paths as prerequisites for entry, and some of the prerequisites for each class are left open. This allows the DM to customize his campaign and also to choose which secondary sources and non-core rulebooks to use in his game.

Legendary characters have access to powers and abilities beyond the reach of those who have chosen ordinary lives and less impressive legacies. They also wield greater control over the development of their powers than other characters, having choices to make as they rise in level and power. Even though two characters march down the same path, each may end up quite differently depending on these choices.

For each legendary class level gained, the character may choose one special ability from those listed. The power and scope of this ability are determined at that time, based on the character's level in the legendary class, and do not increase as the character goes up in levels. No power may be chosen more than once. This

always means a sacrifice for the character, but sometimes the rewards of patience are worth the wait.

The names and game mechanics of the legendary classes are designated as Open Game Content. Descriptions and backgrounds are designated as closed content.

DAWN ARCHER

The dawn elves of Sildanyr have taken up archery as their favored sport and the bow is their chosen weapon of war. They can seemingly cause their arrows to avoid tree trunks and low-hanging branches to strike concealed enemies at unbelievable ranges. They can spot distant enemies from high branches, and the most powerful among them can imbue their arrows with a wide variety of magical abilities.

Dawn elven children are trained in the bow alongside their magical and wilderness training, and most dawn elves are experts with the bow. In the war against the night elves, these skills have become even more valued among the dawn elves, who must often spot and take out stealthy targets. The elves' secrets have leaked out to the communities of Anderland, and even as far away as the mounted archers of Valhedar. It is rare for a human to show the same level of mastery as the most skilled dawn elven archers, but humans have shown themselves to be far more adaptable than the other races of the known lands.

Hit Die: d10.

REQUIREMENTS

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

Skills: Hide 8 ranks, Listen 5 ranks, Move Silently 5 ranks, Spot 8 ranks.

Feats: Improved Precise Shot, Far Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow or shortbow), any one feat of the DM's choice.

Legendary Path: 5th Circle Path of the Swift.

CLASS SKILLS

The dawn archer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the dawn archer legendary class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Dawn archers are proficient with all simple weapons, as well as all

LEGENDARY POWERS

Example powers of a 5th-level epic general:

Shielded Mind I: The character gains a +2 bonus on all Will saves versus mind-affecting effects.

Summon Conscripts II: The character can summon 18 1st-level warriors and 2 2nd-level fighters, who will serve him for up to two days.

Heroic Inspiration III: Three times per day the epic general can activate this effect, which grants a +3 bonus on attack rolls and Will saves versus fear or mind-affecting effects to all allies within 30 feet. The ability last for three minutes.

Enhanced Strength IV: The character gains a +4 legendary bonus to Strength.

Enhanced Charisma V: The character gains a +5 legendary bonus to Charisma.

longbows (including composite longbows) and shortbows (including composite shortbows). They are proficient with light and medium armor, as well as bucklers.

Enhanced Dexterity: The dawn archer gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Dexterity per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Enhanced Wisdom: The dawn archer gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Wisdom per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Second-Nature Senses (Ex): When the dawn archer chooses this ability, he selects one skill per power level from the following list: Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, and Survival. The character is always considered to be taking 10 on the selected skills even if he is not actively using them (unless he is impeded in some way, such as being blinded for Spot), and he need not roll even under stressful circumstances.

Deadeye (Ex): When the dawn archer selects this ability, he is able to ignore range penalties when firing his bow. The character's penalties on attacks beyond the first range increment are reduced by 2 per power level.

Unstoppable Arrows (Su): Arrows fired from a dawn archer's bow are able to bypass many types of damage reduction regardless of their actual composition



or enchantment. The dawn archer chooses one category per power level from the following list, and from then on any arrow he fires acts as though it had those properties for purposes of bypassing damage reduction: adamantine, chaotic, cold iron, evil, good, lawful, magic, or silver.

Enchanted Bow (Su): The character can choose any magical weapon properties with a market price modifier of up to +1 per power level when this ability is selected. From then on, any bow wielded by the dawn archer is considered to have these abilities as long as it remains in his hands. This has no effect on the arrows fired unless a selected weapon property states otherwise.

Crippling Accuracy (Ex): Once per day per power level, the dawn archer can choose to fire a trick shot that has an effect in addition to causing damage. The dawn archer can choose to silence his foe, deal Dexterity damage to his foe, disarm his foe, or target an object worn or held by his foe. The effects are each described below. This ability can be used more than once per round.

Silencing Strike: The target is silenced unless he makes a successful Fortitude save (DC 10 + power level + damage dealt). This effect remains until the arrow has been removed with a successful Heal check (DC equal to the initial Fortitude save) and the wounds have either healed naturally or with the application of magical healing. Creatures that are immune to critical

hits are not affected by the silencing strike.

Incapacitating Strike: The target suffers 4 points of temporary Dexterity damage unless it makes a successful Fortitude save (DC 10 + power level + damage dealt). This damage remains until the arrow has been removed with a successful Heal check (DC equal to the initial Fortitude save) and the wounds have either healed naturally or with the application of magical healing. Creatures that are immune to critical hits are not affected by the incapacitating strike.

Disarming Strike: The dawn archer may target a weapon or object held by the character for disarming, although the attack deals no damage. The dawn archer does not provoke an attack of opportunity for the attempt, and the opponent may not attempt to disarm the dawn archer in return. The attack does not count as if it were made with a light weapon, so the dawn archer does not suffer the normal penalty for doing so. The dawn archer does gain a bonus to the attempt equal to the power level at which this ability was selected. All other modifiers remain the same.

Sundering Strike: The dawn archer may target a weapon or object held or worn by the target, although the attack deals no damage to the target (only to the object targeted). The dawn archer does not provoke an attack of opportunity for doing so, and to hit the target the dawn archer need only strike its AC (even if it is a melee weapon or shield). An object's AC is 10 + its size

THE DAWN ARCHER

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Power-level 1 ability
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	Power-level 2 ability
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+1	Power-level 3 ability
4th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Power-level 4 ability
5th	+3	+4	+4	+1	Power-level 5 ability

modifier + the wearer's Dexterity modifier. The dawn archer gains bonus damage equal to the power level at which this ability was selected.

FLEETWIND

Legends abound among the humans of the Kingsmarch and Anderland of speedy couriers that can run messages between battlefields with amazing alacrity. These legends are called fleetwinds, and it is said that the most powerful among them can run so fast that they fly. In the constant wars that rage across the Kingsmarch, fresh information from key battles and fronts can often mean the difference between victory and defeat. Mages on the battlefield are often relegated to throwing battle spells at their enemies, not using their magic to send messages across the field. This is where a fleetwind can turn the tide.

Fleetwinds gain incredible speed, not just in combat situations but also when engaging in overland travel. A fleetwind can easily outrun the fastest horses, and can travel ceaselessly for days on end. Their speed is so great that they can run on almost any surface, and indeed can even blaze a trail across empty air.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

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

Skills: Balance 4 ranks, Climb 8 ranks, Jump 8 ranks.

Feats: Endurance, Run, any one feat of the DM's choice.

Legendary Path: 5th Circle Path of the Swift.

CLASS SKILLS

The fleetwind's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex),

Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (local) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Magic Device (Cha), and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the fleetwind legendary class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Fleetwinds are proficient with all simple weapons. They are proficient with light and medium armor, as well as shields (except tower shields).

Enhanced Dexterity: The fleetwind gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Dexterity per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Enhanced Constitution: The fleetwind gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Constitution per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Trailblazer (Su): Fleetwinds are capable of traversing great distances quickly without the aid of magic. Once per day a fleetwind can run 20 miles per hour for up to 2 hours per power level. The character cannot stop and then restart during this run; once he has stopped, he is done. Once the character stops, he is fatigued until he gets 8 hours of complete rest.

Walk on Water (Su): Once per day per power level, the fleetwind can traverse any horizontal liquid surface without actually touching it. This allows him to travel across the top of water, acid, lava or any other liquid unharmed. Once the character has entered the water, he may do nothing but double move or run each round, otherwise the ability fails and he falls into the liquid. Other than this restriction, the character can remain on the liquid for up to one hour per power level. This ability can be combined with the trailblazer ability to allow the fleetwind to cover great distances even when confronted by large lakes and rivers.



Walk on Air (Su): Once per day per power level, the fleetwind can walk on air. Once in the air, he may do nothing but double move or run each round, otherwise the ability fails and he falls. Other than this restriction, the character can remain in the air for up to one hour per power level. This ability can be combined with the trail-blazer ability to allow the fleetwind to cover great distances even when confronted by wide chasms and deep valleys.

Stunning Speed (Ex): Once per day per power level, the fleetwind can run by enemies so fast he leaves them unable to act. When he uses this ability, he moves as far as he could normally move with a run action, but he can control his movement and does not need to move in a straight line. During this run, his movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Every opponent the fleetwind comes adjacent to during the run must make a Will save (DC 10 + power level + fleetwind's Dexterity modifier) or be stunned for one round. Each use of this ability lasts for only one round.

Wall Fighting (Ex): The fleetwind can use his incredible speed to climb, leap from, and run on walls during combat. Whenever a fleetwind makes a melee attack from a square adjacent to a wall or other vertical surface, he gains a +1 bonus on attack rolls per power level. In addition, a fleetwind adjacent to a vertical surface gains a +1 bonus per power level to his AC.

EPIC GENERAL

Many wars are being waged across the known lands, and armies of nearly all the races regularly take to the field of battle. Tielfing commanders lead their legions into battle with the serpentine forces of Zangala and the mounted trueborn of the Kingsmarch. Dwarven generals lead their axe-and-hammer and crossbowman units up the slopes to counterattack rogue giants. And goblinoid warleaders press combat against the wild forces of the Icehammer Front, creating barbaric hordes of controlled fury that can someday rain destruction upon the enemies of Anlar Icefang. In the midst of these great battles, one day an epic general will arise.

Great leaders are not born but are forged in the deadly fires of combat, and some rise to epic stature and legendary status. Epic generals have been in many conflicts, some on a massive scale and some only in tactical combats. As long as he has experience directing others in combat, he can learn the skills necessary to become a legend. An epic general can instantly communicate tactics to his allies and can even confer the benefits of his skills to others. He can take greater advantage of battlefield maneuvers and tactics and inspire fear into the hearts of his enemies. A war host or adventuring band led by an epic general is a fearsome sight that rarely leaves the battlefield without a victory.

Hit Die: d10.

THE FLEETWIND

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+2	+2	Power-level 1 ability
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+3	Power-level 2 ability
3rd	+2	+3	+3	+3	Power-level 3 ability
4th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Power-level 4 ability
5th	+3	+4	+4	+4	Power-level 5 ability

THE EPIC GENERAL

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Power-level 1 ability
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Power-level 2 ability
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Power-level 3 ability
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Power-level 4 ability
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Power-level 5 ability

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become an epic general, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Diplomacy 8 ranks, Intimidate 12 ranks, Knowledge (war) 2 ranks.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Leadership, Weapon Specialization, any one feat of the DM's choice.

Legendary Path: 3rd Circle Path of the Persuasive, 1st Circle Path of Strength.

CLASS SKILLS

The epic general's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (war), Listen (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the epic general legendary class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: An epic general is proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with all armor (heavy, medium, and light) and shields (including tower shields).

Enhanced Charisma: The epic general gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Charisma per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Enhanced Strength: The epic general gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Strength per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Heroic Inspiration (Su): Once per day per power level, the epic general can use his commanding presence to bolster and aid allies that surround him. When he does this, all allies within 10 feet per power level gain a +1 legendary bonus per power level on attack rolls and Will saves versus fear or mind-affecting effects. This ability lasts for one minute per power level.

Shielded Mind (Ex): When the epic general selects this ability, he gains immunity to all fear effects. In addition, he gains a +2 bonus per power level on all Will saves versus mind-affecting spells and effects.

Combat Sense (Ex): When the epic general selects this ability, he and all allies within 5 feet per power level cannot be flanked, cannot be caught flat-footed, and gain a 10% chance per power level to negate any confirmed critical hit (this works as if they were wearing armor of fortification).

Fearful Presence (Su): After this ability is selected, any creature with less HD than the epic general must make a Will save to attack him. The DC of this save is equal to 10 + Charisma modifier + 1 per power level. If the epic general attacks a creature, it need not make this save to counterattack. Once a creature makes the save, it is immune to the epic general's fearful presence ability for 24 hours. This is a mind-influencing, fear effect.



Summon Conscripts: Given one day, the epic general can summon a band of conscripts from any friendly territory. These conscripts number 10 per power level and each is a 1st-level warrior. Ten percent of the conscripts will be leaders with one fighter level per power level. So, at power level three, the epic general could summon 30 conscripts: 27 1st-level warriors and three 3rd-level fighters. These conscripts serve the epic general in any capacity for up to one day per power level before returning to their homes. The epic general can only summon conscripts once per week per power level.

THE ICON

With the fate of nations constantly in the balance, great leaders are needed in every region of the world to attract, motivate, and retain followers of the cause. Many use this power for good, becoming shining beacons of hope in a world of conflict, while others use their incredible magnetism to attract cronies and followers to do their infernal bidding. Cults such as this are a major problem in Valhedar, where the tieflings' dark nature and the existence of so many powerful fiends make them susceptible to a glib-tongued and intimidating leader. The dwarves, too, have many icons among them who draw strength from their clans. The trueborn would seem to naturally spawn many icons, but their faith and devotion is of a more internal variety.

Icons hold incredible sway over people, although unlike epic generals their abilities are not focused on leading their followers in battle. Instead, icons are able to convince people to undertake dangerous missions, band together under a common cause, and to give up control of their resources to the icon and his trusted cronies. An icon that is destroyed leaves a legacy behind—some resent the control he had over them, while others spend their lives longing for the leader to return or searching for a new object of worship.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

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

Skills: Diplomacy 10 ranks, Intimidate 8 ranks, Sense Motive 8 ranks.

Feats: Leadership, Persuasive, any one feat of the DM's choice.

Legendary Path: 5th Circle Path of the Persuasive.

CLASS SKILLS

The icon's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str),

THE ICON

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Power-level 1 ability
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+2	Power-level 2 ability
3rd	+2	+1	+2	+2	Power-level 3 ability
4th	+3	+1	+2	+2	Power-level 4 ability
5th	+3	+1	+2	+2	Power-level 5 ability

Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (n/a), Spellcraft (Int), Swim (Str), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the icon legendary class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Icons are proficient with all simple weapons. They are proficient with light armor, but not with shields.

Enhanced Charisma: The icon gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Charisma per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Enhanced Intelligence: The icon gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Intelligence per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Natural Leader: When this ability is selected, the icon gains an additional cohort per power level. Each cohort follows the normal rules for the character's cohort from the Leadership feat.

Captivating Speech (Su): Once per day per power level, as a full-round action, the icon can make a captivating speech that acts as a *mass suggestion* spell. Creatures with less HD than the icon do not gain a save against this effect, and those with equal or greater HD suffer a –4 penalty on their Will save. The DC to resist this effect is 16 + the power level of the ability.

Unexpected Aid: Up to once per week per power level, the icon's presence inspires those behind the scenes to do things to aid him. The exact nature and timing of the aid is up to the DM, but it can come in any form. The monetary value of this aid should not exceed 1,000 gp per power level, although not all such aid can be measured as such. An admirer might arrange for the icon to have an easy time with the king's guard, or may show up in the nick of time to lend the icon a hand when he needs it most.

Cheat Death (Ex): The icon is destined to greatness and sometimes fate itself seems to smile on the character. Once per day per power level, the icon can declare any one of his saving throws to be an automatic success without rolling.

Skill Mastery: The icon has an unearthly mastery over the arts of communication and persuasion. The character gains a +5 bonus per power level to all Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks.

MASTER ARCANIST

Some legendary arcane spellcasters have learned to break through the intuitive barriers of conventional magical thought, further breaking down magic into its component schools. These arcanists are not bound by the traditions most often taught in arcane colleges and by masters to their apprentices, having come upon a revelation about the nature of magic through investigation and exploration. Revelations such as this do not come from studying the tomes and lessons of the schools of Ebernath, but experiencing magic in its essence at the eldritch wells of the world. Although it is in Ebernath that one finds the most opposition to such an understanding of magic, it is also on that island of riches that one finds its most fervent followers—the Panthic Order. This secretive cabal seeks to find a rational basis for all magic, and will employ any means necessary to study, isolate, and control the world's eldritch wells.

Hit Die: d6.

REQUIREMENTS

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

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 15 ranks, Spellcraft 15 ranks.

Feats: Improved Counterspell, Skill Focus (Knowledge (arcana)), any one feat of the DM's choice.

Legendary Path: 5th Circle Path of the Learned.

Special: The character must have bonded to an arcane aspect.

THE MASTER ARCANIST

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Power-level 1 ability	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Power-level 2 ability	
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Power-level 3 ability	+1 level of existing class
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Power-level 4 ability	
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Power-level 5 ability	+1 level of existing class

CLASS SKILLS

The master arcanist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (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 master arcanist legendary class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Master arcanists are proficient with the club, dagger, heavy crossbow, light crossbow, and quarterstaff, but not with any type of armor or shield. Armor of any type interferes with an master arcanist's movements, which can cause his spells with somatic components to fail.

Enhanced Intelligence: The master arcanist gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Intelligence per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Enhanced Wisdom: The master arcanist gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Wisdom per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

The Essence of Magic: The master arcanist understands magic at a more fundamental level than other arcane spellcasters. As a result, he may select one school of magic per power level. The character learns and casts spells from these schools as if they were available to his bonded aspect.

Master of the Mundane Arts: Along the way, the master arcanist has gained an incredible knowledge of those things that allow magic to function in the world. He gains a +5 bonus per power level to Craft (alchemy), Knowledge (arcana), and Spellcraft checks.

Unearthly Might: The master arcanist can manipulate his magic so that it affects creatures that are normally resistant to arcane attacks. He gains a +2 legendary bonus per power level on all caster level checks related to overcoming spell resistance.

Increased Spell Power: The character must

choose one school of magic per power level. Selected schools must be from the character's bonded aspect. Spells that the character casts from these schools have their save DCs increased by 2.

Arcane Resistance: The character gains a +1 legendary bonus per power level on all saving throws against spells and spell-like abilities.

THE UNSUFFERING

The wars and conflicts that wrack the world have caused much pain and suffering among its peoples. Born of the flames of these conflicts is a tough breed of warrior whose ability to continue fighting through the most excruciating wounds is a legend on battlefields across the known lands. Even though they participate in the wars of every culture, the unsuffering are rarely good company when not in the midst of a life-and-death struggle. Many say that these tragic heroes channel the physical pain that they seemingly do not feel into a mental anguish that pervades everything they do, making them sad and forlorn. The dwarves of the Stormfells are perfect candidates for the ranks of the unsuffering, having known losses greater than many while having the fortitude to resist the most grievous blows from a giant's hammer.

The unsuffering are usually large men and women whose thick muscles and large frames allow them to continue their work even when wounded. They shrug off the pain of arrows and magical flames to cut down their enemies, reinforce a siege tower, or hold a collapsing bridge together so that their compatriots can finish crossing to safety. They are never distracted by the pain of wounds, can channel such pain into positive effects, and even ignore the effects of magic and other baleful attacks.

Hit Die: d12.

REQUIREMENTS

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



Skills: Concentration 4 ranks.

Feats: Diehard, Toughness, any one feat of the DM's choice.

Legendary Path: 5th Circle Path of the Unyielding.

CLASS SKILLS

The unsuffering's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Ride (Dex), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the unsuffering legendary class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: An unsuffering is proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with light armor, medium armor, and shields (except tower shields).

Enhanced Constitution: The unsuffering gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Constitution per power level. This is a one-time bonus.

Enhanced Wisdom: The unsuffering gains a +1 legendary bonus to his Wisdom per power level. This is

a one-time bonus.

Rage Against Death (Ex): As an unsuffering takes damage, he becomes more and more resolute in his desire to live. When reduced to 50% or less of his normal maximum hit points, the unsuffering gains a +1 legendary bonus per power level on attack and weapon damage rolls. The unsuffering retains this bonus until he is healed of enough damage to return his hit points to greater than 50% of his normal maximum.

Unstoppable (Ex): The unsuffering fights to the brink of death and beyond. There is no longer such a thing as unconscious to the warrior—he fights until he is dead. The unsuffering continues to fight to an extra –10 hit points per power level. Thus if he takes this ability at power level two, he gains the ability to fight to an additional –20 hit points, so he does not die until he reaches –30 hit points. The unsuffering cannot exist in this pitiable state for long periods, however. If he does not receive healing that brings him up to at least –9 hit points within one minute per power level of dropping to –10 or below, the unsuffering dies. If he is not at 0 or greater, he immediately begins dying as per the normal rules (although his Diehard feat keeps him conscious).

Sorcery Overpower (Su): The unsuffering can shrug off baleful magical effects just as well as he can physical attacks. He may ignore up to three spell levels per power level per day. The spell is not dispelled or negated, but simply has no effect on the unsuffering

THE UNSUFFERING

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Power-level 1 ability
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Power-level 2 ability
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Power-level 3 ability
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Power-level 4 ability
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Power-level 5 ability

character. He must choose to use this ability before he rolls his saving throw against the spell.

Drain Resistance (Ex): The unsuffering is able to shrug off ability damage no matter its source. He can ignore up to three points of ability damage per power level per day.

Energy Resistance (Ex): The unsuffering gains energy resistance 15 against one type of energy per power level. He can choose to trade in two such resistances to become immune to one energy type.

CHARACTERS OF LEGEND

Characters in DAWNFORGE have the opportunity to do more than adventure in the world—their actions can help shape it. Not only that, they themselves can become legends in their own time whose deeds will be sung by bards for thousands of years. A DAWNFORGE character can, over time, wield great strength and command massive armies, bring his unearthly intellect to bear on the problems of the world, and even follow the path of righteousness to found a new religion or even ascend to immortality himself. The great stories of the world have yet to be told, but heroes across the known lands stand poised to claim history's greatest prizes.

LEGENDARY PATHS

The first step on the road to becoming a legend is to walk the path of greatness. A character can choose to pursue many paths, but the more focused he is the more powerful he can become—and the more likely he is to be remembered for all time. Legendary paths do not represent innate abilities or powers granted by magic or faith. Rather, they represent the will of a being to make his mark on the world around him. They represent effort, focus, and determination on all levels, physical and mental.

There are six legendary paths in the core book,

each representing a growing potential in one of the character's ability scores.

Path of the Mighty: Those who follow this path are capable of great feats of strength. They can block a key dungeon passage by pushing a huge boulder in front of its entrance and wrestle huge monsters into submission. The mighty are revered by all who value strength and power, from the barbaric orcs of the Frostfells to the minotaurs throughout Ambria.

Path of the Swift: This path grants incredible quickness and agility to those who walk it. A swift character can jump from branch to branch through a forest or disassemble a trap before it can crush him and his allies. The dawn elves of Sildanyr and the halflings of Anderland are already building legends around the swift heroes of their respective races.

Path of the Unyielding: The unyielding never stop, never tire, and their dedication is unmatched by any in the known lands. An unyielding hero can carry his king's body across the Kingsmarch without stopping to rest or press on in the face of debilitating wounds. The giants and dwarves of the Stormfells both value stories about such legendary heroes.

Path of the Learned: Those who walk the path of knowledge gain keen insights into the nature of the world and can recall almost any fact that they have heard or read. A learned hero might recall the exact meaning of a long, lost hieroglyph or may be able to absorb and recall huge quantities of information in a short time. The human scholars in Ebernath, the tieflings of Valhedar, and even the mysterious yuan-ti thinbloods all seek to emulate these legendary minds.

Path of the Wise: Many characters seek to become the wisest in the land, and their dedication to the path grants them a deep empathy with other people as well as the natural world. Such characters can feel and treat the pain of others as well as develop a supernatural sense of the world around them. Many humans across Ambria, whether in Anderland or the Kingsmarch, revere the wisest among them and gladly grant them power over their lives in exchange for guidance and protection.

Path of the Persuasive: The path of persuasion is itself an undeniable calling for many on the road to legend. This legendary path grants incredible presence and personal magnetism to its devotees, who can persuade even the angriest mobs to lay down their arms or swindle the cheapest merchant out of his prize wares. The saltbloods of Seagarden, the dawn elves of Sildanyr, and the Faring Folk of Ambria are enamored with persuasive legends, while the tieflings and night elves understand their more sinister place in society.

LEGEND POINTS

Characters do not gain access to legendary paths through XP, instead acquiring legend points (LP) to gain the powers and abilities associated with becoming a legend. Legend points are accumulated by accomplishing legendary deeds, which can be an end of their own or realized as part of a greater adventure.

A legendary deed is anything defined by the DM as having an important impact on the world at large. It need not be immediately recognized as such, but it must have the potential to be sung in tales throughout the ages. Destroying the legendary weapon wielded by a giant king, finding a stone that deciphers the language of the Wohm, and destroying a legendary creature are all feats that are worthy of a legend point.

When a party of adventurers completes a legendary deed, each character gains a legend point. It does not matter what the deed is, or what path the character chooses to follow with his accumulated points. These legend points may be used to qualify for legendary paths, which can then be used to qualify for legendary classes. They are not a replacement for experience points and do not help a character gain levels or perform any tasks that require XP, such as magic item creation or the casting of powerful spells.

GAINING A LEGENDARY PATH

A character must meet several prerequisites before he can take each level in a legendary path. First, he must accumulate enough legend points to do so. He must also have a minimum score in the ability that corresponds with the legendary path he would like to pursue. This ability score must be a natural score and cannot include any ability points gained through magic items. Finally, a character must meet a level requirement. Characters must gain legendary status through a life of adventuring, so no matter how many legendary deeds a character can pack into a given week, he can only gain so much renown.

USING LEGEND POINTS, PATHS, AND CLASSES

The legend point system allows the DM to interweave legendary themes with his normal adventures at any pace that he desires. If he wants his characters to begin achieving legendary status fairly early in their careers, he can begin inserting legendary deeds within the adventures. Characters can even begin accumulating legend points before they are able to gain legendary paths, although the benefits of such do not kick in until the character reaches the prerequisite level and ability score.

Since characters accumulate legend points at the same rate, there is little for the DM to worry about as far as characters outstripping one another with their legendary powers. Of course, it is still possible for some characters to be able to gain legendary paths more quickly than others. This should not be too much of an issue, however, unless some characters are never able to reach legendary proportions while others do. The DM should be careful to moderate this, and to make sure that all of the characters in the party will be able to qualify for legendary paths at some point in their careers.

Of course, legendary classes require access to certain legendary paths before a character takes them. This means that if you are going to allow some characters to progress to these levels, then they will invariably be more powerful than those who do not. While this might be fine for some games, a DM should always be careful when balancing one party member against another.

Path Circle	LP	Ability Score	Character Level
1st	1	18	5
2nd	2	20	7
3rd	3	22	9
4th	4	24	11
5th	5	26	13

Legendary paths grant similar abilities to their devotees, although how those abilities are used varies as much as the characters who pursue them. Each time a character achieves the next circle in a legendary path, he gains the following bonuses and abilities:

- A +1 legendary bonus to the ability score associated with the path. Legendary bonuses always stack.



- Once per day, the character gains a +20 legendary bonus on an ability check (or skill check that uses the relevant ability score). Furthermore, if the character continues to perform the same action in each following round, he retains the bonus on the subsequent checks. If he ever stops performing the action, then he loses the bonus. This bonus can extend to a maximum number of rounds equal to the relevant ability score with each use. For example, a swift legend with Dexterity 20 could use the bonus on a Balance check to stride across the treetops of Sildanyr. He could apply the same bonus on checks for up to 20 consecutive rounds before he loses the bonus. The character gains an additional daily use of this ability with each new level.

- The character may choose a skill from the following lists. He may substitute the ability relevant to his legendary path for the skill's normal ability when making checks with that skill.

Mighty: Escape Artist, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Open Lock, Use Rope

Swift: Climb, Intimidate, Jump, Perform, Swim

Unyielding: Climb, Escape Artist, Intimidate, Survival, Swim

Learned: Bluff, Climb, Diplomacy, Hide, Survival

Wise: Concentration, Diplomacy, Hide, Ride, Tumble

Persuasive: Concentration, Heal, Ride, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand

A character can only achieve up to 5th circle in a single legendary path, or a combination of circles that does not exceed five. A focused character might advance in a single path (and some legendary classes require this), while a character with multiple interests might divide his legendary aspirations among several of the paths. A character may continue to accumulate legendary paths throughout his career, and is not limited by his class or level, except where the prerequisites are concerned.

CHAPTER THREE

NEW RULES

FEATS

This section presents a selection of new feats for use in a DAWNFORGE campaign. The text of this section is designated as Open Game Content.

EXOTIC SHIELD PROFICIENCY [GENERAL]

Choose a type of exotic shield, such as the breaker shield or flankshield. You understand how to use that type of shield in combat.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1 (plus Str 13 for breaker shield or flankshield).

Benefit: You can use the special qualities of the shield.

Normal: A character who uses a shield with which he is not proficient cannot use its special qualities.

Special: You can gain Exotic Shield Proficiency multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new type of exotic shield. Proficiency with the breaker shield or flankshield has an additional prerequisite of Str 13.

A fighter may select Exotic Shield Proficiency as one of his fighter bonus feats.

CRAFT MAGIC POUCH [ITEM CREATION]

You can create magic pouches, which carry spells within themselves.

Prerequisite: Caster level 5+.

Benefit: You can create a magic pouch out of any

4th-level or lower spell that you know and that targets a creature or creatures, an item or items, or an area. Crafting a magic pouch takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its base price. When you create a magic pouch, you set the caster level, which must be sufficient to cast the spell in question and no higher than your own level. The base price of a magic pouch is its caster level x the spell level x 75 gp. To craft a magic pouch, you must spend 1/25 of this base price in XP and use up raw materials costing one-half this base price.

When you craft a magic pouch, you make any choices that you would normally make when casting the spell. If the spell targets a person, you can decide that the opener is the target or that the opener may choose the target upon opening the pouch. If the spell targets an item, the opener must decide its target when he opens the pouch. If the spell targets an area, you may decide that the pouch is the center of the area when it is opened, or that the opener may choose a target location.

Any magic pouch that stores a spell with a costly material component or an XP cost also carries a commensurate cost. In addition to the costs derived from the base price, you must expend the material component or pay the XP when creating the magic pouch.

CRAFT SPELL FETISH [ITEM CREATION]

You can create spell fetishes, which carry spells within themselves.

Prerequisite: Caster level 1st, Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks.

Benefit: You can create a spell fetish of any divine spell that you know. Crafting a spell fetish takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its base price. The base price of a spell fetish is its spell level x its caster level x 25 gp. To

USING A SPELL FETISH

Spell fetishes are bundles of herbs, plant, and animal matter whose combined properties can be used to store the Spirit's power in the form of divine spells. Using a spell fetish requires the user to unleash the spell from the fetish, as described below.

Attune to the Spell Within: A character that creates a spell fetish automatically knows which spell is held within it. Others who wish to use the fetish must make a Spellcraft check (DC 20 + spell level) in order to attune his mind to the fetish. Five ranks in either Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (the Spirit) provides a +2 synergy bonus on this check.

Special cursed fetishes may erupt when this process is completed, but attuning normally does not activate its spell. A spellcaster can attune himself to the spell before he intends to use it so that he can proceed directly to the next step when the time comes to use the fetish.

Activate the Spell: The character only needs to have a spell fetish in hand to activate the spell within.

Activating a spell fetish requires no material components or focus. (The fetish's creator provided these when he created the fetish.) Activating a spell fetish is subject to disruption just as casting a normally prepared spell would be.

To activate a spell fetish, a character must meet the following requirements.

- The user must be able to cast divine spells.
- The user must have the spell on his class list.
- The user must have the requisite ability score.

Determine Effect: A spell cast from a spell fetish works exactly like a spell prepared and cast in the normal way. As soon as a spell is cast from a fetish, the item loses all magical ability and the materials used can never again hold a part of the Spirit's power.

create a spell fetish, you must spend 1/25 of this base price in XP and use up raw materials costing one-half of this base price.

Any spell fetish that stores a spell with a costly material component or an XP cost also carries a commensurate cost. In addition to the costs derived from the base price, you must expend the material component or pay the XP when creating the spell fetish.

RACIAL EQUIPMENT

The diverse races of the world of DAWNFORGE have developed many unique weapons and defenses. The text of this section is Open Game Content.

ANDERLAR

Bladestaff: The Anderlar are not a warlike people, and carrying weapons in the open is frowned upon in many communities. Still, Anderlars must often defend themselves from the brigands and monsters that inevitably plague their homeland. For this reason, many farmers and travelers have taken to carrying bladestaffs. The bladestaff looks just like a normal walking staff or quarterstaff, but a blade can be made to swing out of the wood when the weapon is activated by its user. It can then be wielded like a scythe, a weapon with which many of the farmers of Anderland are already proficient.

DAWN ELF

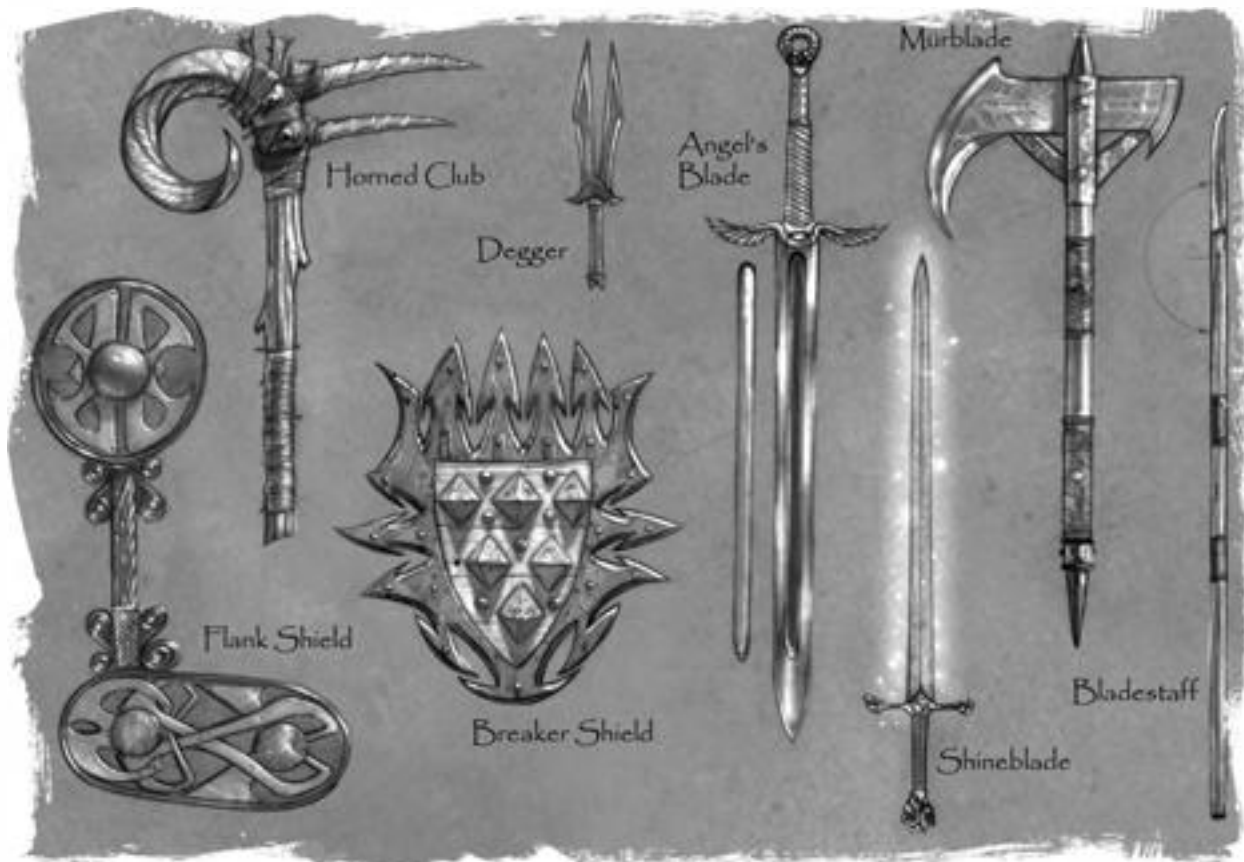
Shineblade: Shineblades are special longswords made from a metal found only in the fey realm of Itheria. When struck by a proficient user as a free action, a shineblade sheds a purplish light that helps negate the concealment of hidden or obstructed creatures. The character wielding the shineblade gains an immediate Spot check to notice hidden creatures, and dawn elves gain a +4 bonus on this check due to the strange nature of the light generated. If the character makes an attack against a revealed creature in the same round, the miss chance due to concealment is reduced by one step.

DWARF

Mürblade: This hefty dwarven axe has a hooked blade, allowing for debilitating strikes against even the most well-armored foes. These weapons were developed by the dwarves to hamstring the giants that rule the peaks of the Stormfells. A proficient user can choose one of two strikes when using a mürblade, and may even use both in a round in which he has multiple attacks. Non-proficient users can only strike effectively with the normal axe blade.

HALFLING

Chainball: The chainball consists of a metal ball the size of a halfling's head attached to a short length of chain. Only Small creatures can use a chainball without modifying the chain length to suit their size, at a cost of 100 gp. Halflings swing the chainball around their heads, building up enough force to smash the ball into



their opponents. A chainball can also be hurled with a range increment of 10 feet. An opponent of Medium size or smaller that is struck by a hurled chainball must make a Reflex save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or be knocked back 5 feet by the force of the impact.

Spike Balls: Halflings are fond of juggling and throwing, so the spike ball is the perfect mix of fun and defensive capability. These small metal globes have a smooth surface until they are activated by a flick of the wrist when thrown. When this happens, the spike ball sprouts sharp barbs that dig into the flesh of its target.

Non-proficient users must make a Dexterity check (DC 15) to properly activate a ball each time one is thrown. If the check fails, the ball deals only 1 point of damage upon impact.

Juggling Attack: If a character makes a successful Perform (juggling) check (DC 15) he can throw an additional spike ball at his highest base attack bonus any time he makes a full attack action. So, if a character that normally had two attacks at +6/+1 makes a juggling attack with spike balls, he can make three attacks at +6/+6/+1. If the character fails his check, however, he makes only his normal attacks and he suffers a -2 penalty on each.

This attack can be combined with the Rapid Shot feat and similar abilities.

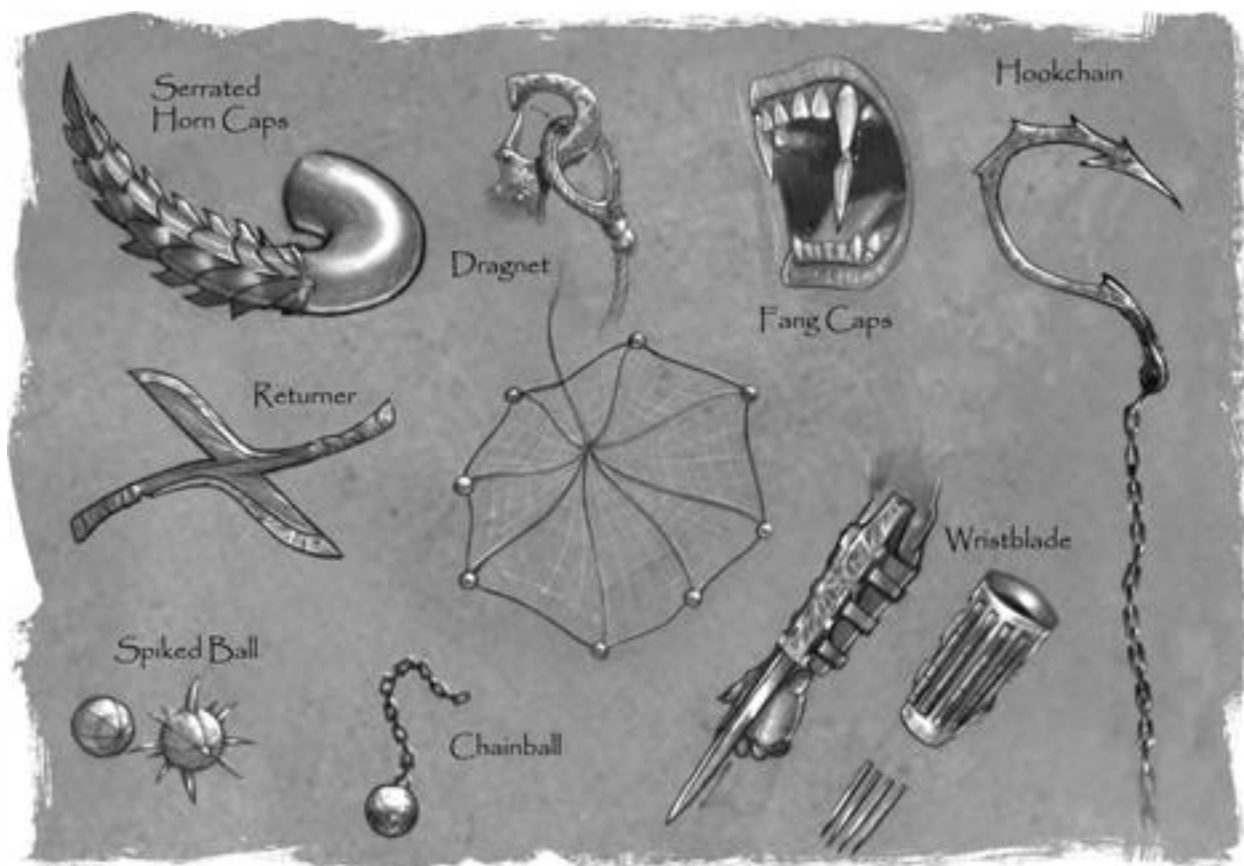
LIZARDFOLK

Returners: When the first explorers reached the shores of Tamerland, they found tribes of lizardfolk living in the forests and rivers of the new land. These lizardfolk had unfamiliar customs and wielded strange weapons. One such weapon was the returner. This weapon is made almost completely of wood, with a sharpened bone edge on one side that creates a deadly striking surface. It resembles a primitive kukri, except that it has two opposite handles that allow it to be thrown from a variety of positions without losing its balance.

A proficient wielder can throw a returner in such a way that it returns to its user if it does not strike its target. This can be very useful to characters who cannot carry a lot of equipment—bolt cases, quivers, and so on—but still wish to deliver deadly attacks at range. Non-proficient users cannot use this ability, although they may still throw a returner with the normal penalties for non-proficiency.

MINOTAUR

Serrated Horncaps: These razor-lined horncaps must be specially fitted to each individual. Existing horncaps can be refitted for a cost of 100 gp. When a minotaur is wearing serrated horncaps, his gore attack



deals 1d10 points of damage and threatens a critical on a 19–20. In addition, he adds an additional 1d6 points of damage when using his powerful charge ability.

NIGHT ELF

Wrist Sheaths: Night elf assassins can walk the streets of Ersevor and many other elven communities without causing an uproar, simply because not all night elves are part of the ongoing civil war that has erupted within Sildanyr. This gives them an advantage that they do not wish to counter by walking around with unconcealed weapons. Thus the wrist sheaths were born. A sheath is fitted to one or both of the night elf's wrists that contains a spring-loaded blade or dart. The sheath can also hold pouches of poison, use-activated spells (see the Craft Magic Pouch feat), and other things that a night elf might wish to use in conjunction with her weapon.

A wrist sheath does not impede the wearer's movement unless a blade is out, in which case that hand may not be used to cast spells or use skills. Putting a blade in the wrist sheath (or removing one) is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. Popping a blade out is a free action, while resetting it into the sheath is a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

A wrist sheath normally contains only one com-

partment, but it can be built with more for an additional cost. Normal wrist sheaths can have up to four compartments, while masterwork versions can have up to six.

Wristblades: A wrist sheath can hold a small blade that functions as a short sword. The wrist sheath confers a +10 bonus on any roll made to avoid being disarmed.

Wristbolts: A wrist sheath can hold a single dart-like projectile in each pouch. These special darts can be thrown at an enemy with a flick of the wrist. A character with multiple attacks can throw one dart per attack, up to the number of darts he has loaded at the time. Because of the ease with which these darts may be thrown, a character that makes only a single attack with a wristbolt does not reveal his position if hidden, although any character hit by the bolt can make an immediate Spot check to detect his assailant.

OGRE

Horned Club: The ogres of the north often use giant clubs made of the short, thick trees that can be found growing near the Icehammer Front. They attach the horns of mammoths and other beasts to the clubs so that they can better penetrate the thick hides of those animals. Against armored foes, horned clubs can be deadly as they decimate the armor even as they tear the flesh of the creature inside.

A creature wielding a horned club ignores up to

two points of armor or natural armor bonus when attacking with it. At the end of any combat in which a character or creature wearing armor was struck with a horned club, he must make a Reflex save (DC 10) or his armor bonus and armor check penalty each become worse by one point. It requires a repair job equal to 1/4 of the armor's value to fix armor damaged in this way.

ORC

Breaker Shield: A breaker shield is a devious orc invention that causes their opponents' weapons to shatter or snap when they hit it. This large shield is covered with jagged metal or specially carved wooden fins that can trap and break weapons. Any time a character using a breaker shield takes a total defense action, he can attempt to sunder an attacking opponent's weapon as an attack of opportunity. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If the opponent's attack misses by less than the total AC bonus provided by the total defense and the breaker shield, then the character may attempt to sunder.

Only one-handed Medium weapons and smaller can be sundered by a breaker shield. Only proficient users can use the special ability of a breaker shield, which requires the Exotic Shield Proficiency feat or racial proficiency with the breaker shield.

SALTBLOOD

Degger: The degger is a two-bladed knife that is useful for quickly cutting ropes, skinning fish, and disarming opponents. The two blades are slightly angled in the pommel and offset to create a small opening in which blades can be trapped momentarily. A proficient user that attempts to disarm an opponent with a degger gains a +2 equipment bonus to the attempt. In addition, because of its strange construction, a degger's wielder gains a +2 equipment bonus on any attempts to avoid being disarmed.

Part of a degger's training involves learning to catch weapons in the space between the two blades. As a result, if the character wielding the degger readies an action he may attempt to disarm any opponent that attacks him as an attack of opportunity. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity, although a normal disarm attempt still does.

TIEFLING

Hookchain: After centuries of fighting the mounted knights of the Kingsmarch, the tieflings developed this weapon to help the legions counteract their enemies' advantages. This weapon consists of a man-size, barbed hook at the end of a length of chain. The hookchain has reach. Its wielder can strike opponents 10 feet away with it, but cannot use it against an adjacent foe.

Hookchains can be used to make trip attacks. If

the wielder is tripped during his own trip attempt, he may drop the hookchain to avoid being tripped. In addition, the wielder can pull a mounted enemy from his horse with a successful trip attack.

THINBLOOD

Fangcaps: As diplomats, thinbloods are rarely seen openly carrying weapons unless they are away from their diplomatic duties for some reason, or are thinblood refugees adventuring in Ambria or Tamerland in order to escape their woeful existence in Zangala. Fangcaps are small mouth darts that can be fitted over a thinblood's oversized teeth and then removed and spit at opponents. These darts have a 10-foot range increment and a maximum range of 20 feet, unless they are fired from a blowgun or other device in which case they have the standard range for that weapon.

In addition, fangcaps can be filled with poison which can be kept at the ready should a thinblood need to deliver it. Thinbloods that can generate their own poison (through the poisonous bite racial talent) can deliver their natural poison via a fangcap as well. It is a free action to fill a worn fangcap with natural poison in this way.

Any character with sharpened teeth could conceivably wear fangcaps, although they would have to be specially made. A character under the effects of an *alter self* spell could cause his teeth to fit into fangcaps.

TRUEBORN

Angel's Blade: These large greatswords are the favored weapon of trueborn spirit adepts and fighters. They look just like normal greatswords except for the rectangular groove cut into the center of the blade. This groove accepts special slotted metal strips that are fitted to the sword to allow it to bypass damage reduction based on a weapon's composition. Thus, a character might fit a silver strip into the slot in order to more effectively fight a werewolf, or a strip of cold iron when attacking a rampaging horde of dretches.

It requires a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity to add or remove a strip from the weapon.

A weapon does not gain any special abilities of the metal used in the strip, such as the enhancement bonus of adamantite.

Dragnet: The trueborn of the Kingsmarch fight best from horseback, and they breed the largest and strongest steeds in Ambria. The dragnet was created to take advantage of the horses' great strength as well as the mounted prowess of their riders. This net is attached to a rope that can be wound about a special saddle's pommel, which snaps down to secure the rope to the horse.

When a mounted character throws a dragnet, he makes a ranged touch attack against his target. A drag-

EXOTIC WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Racial Affiliation	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>								
Dagger	4 gp	Saltblood	1d4	1d6	19–20/x2	—	2 lb.	P
Serrated horncaps	75 gp	Minotaur	Special	Special	Special	—	5 lb.	S
Wristblade	20 gp	Night elf	1d4	1d6	19–20/x2	—	2 lb.	P
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>								
Mürblade	50 gp	Dwarf	—	—	—	—	8 lb.	—
Axehead	—	—	1d6	1d8	20/x3	—	—	S
Spike	—	—	1d4	1d6	18–20/x3	—	—	P
Shineblade	50 gp	Dawn elf	1d6	1d8	19–20/x2	—	4 lb.	S
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>								
Angel's blade	150 gp	Trueborn	1d10	2d6	19–20/x2	—	8 lb.	S
Adamantine strip	500 gp	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cold iron strip	75 gp	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Silver strip	200 gp	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bladestaff	20 gp	Lowlander	Special	Special	Special	—	8 lb.	B or S
Chainball	10 gp	Halfling	1d6	1d8	x2	10 ft.	8 lb.	B
Hookchain	25 gp	Tiefling	1d6	2d4	x2	—	10 lb.	P
Horned club	15 gp	Ogre	*	*	x2	—	12 lb.	B & P
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>								
Dragnet	25 gp	Trueborn	—	—	—	5 ft.	8 lb.	—
Fangcaps	2 gp	Thinblood	1	1–2	x2	5 ft.	0 lb.	P
Returner	2 gp	Lizardfolk	1d4	1d6	x2	30 ft.	2 lb.	S
Spiked ball	5 gp	Halfling	1d3	1d4	x2	20 ft.	1 lb.	B & P
Wristbolt	1 gp	Night elf	1d3	1d4	x2	30 ft.	1/2 lb.	P

* The special armor-crunching property of a horned club only works when it is size Large or larger. The Large version deals 2d8 points of damage.

EXOTIC SHIELDS

Shield	Shield Cost	Armor Bonus	Arcane Spell Check Penalty	Failure Chance	Weight
Shield, breaker	20 gp	+2	–3	15%	15 lb.
Shield, flank	20 gp	+1/+2*	–2	20%	15 lb.

*The number before the slash is the wielder's shield bonus to AC, the number after the slash is the mount's AC bonus.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment	Cost	Weight
Wrist Sheath	20 gp	2 lb.
Additional pouch	20 gp	0 lb.

net's maximum range is 5 feet. If he hits, he can choose to release the net and entangle his foe or attempt to drag the opponent.

An entangled creature takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls and a -4 penalty on Dexterity, can move at only half speed, and cannot charge or run. If you control the trailing rope by succeeding on an opposed Strength check while holding it, the entangled creature can move only within the limits that the rope allows. If the entangled creature attempts to cast a spell, it must make a DC 15 Concentration check or be unable to cast the spell.

An entangled creature can escape with a DC 20 Escape Artist check (a full-round action). The net has 5 hit points and can be burst with a DC 25 Strength check (also a full-round action).

In order to drag a creature, the attacker's mount must make a Strength check (DC 10 for Small creatures, 15 for Medium creatures, and 25 for Large creatures). If the target is prone the mount gets a +4 bonus to its Strength check. The target adds any bonuses it gains to avoid being tripped (such as the stability provided by multiple legs or the dwarves' natural ability) to the DC of the drag attempt.

If the mount's Strength check fails, it stops 10 feet from the creature it attempted to drag and takes 1d6 points of damage. The mount's rider must make a Ride check (DC 20) or fall to the ground prone, suffering 1d6 points of damage. If the mount's Strength check succeeds, it pulls the target to a prone position and drags it behind. For every 20 feet the mount moves with a trapped creature, the creature suffers 1d4 points of non-lethal damage. A creature being dragged must make a Reflex save (DC 15) each round or be unable to act in any way.

A dragnet is useful only against creatures within one size category of the attacker.

A dragnet must be folded to be thrown effectively. The first time you throw your dragnet in a fight, you make a normal ranged touch attack roll. After the net is unfolded, you take a -4 penalty on attack rolls with it. It takes 2 rounds for a proficient user to fold a dragnet and twice that long for a non-proficient one to do so. A character attempting to fold a dragnet while mounted must make a Ride check (DC 5) as a free action to guide his mount with his knees.

Flankshield: A flankshield is a specially designed shield used by mounted defenders to ward off attacks against both them and their mounts. It is a small buckler that has an extension with another, oval-shaped shield to protect a horse's flank. It provides a +1 shield bonus to its wielder and a +2 shield bonus to his mount.

Only proficient users can gain the benefits of a flankshield while mounted, which requires the Exotic Shield Proficiency feat or racial proficiency with the flankshield.

ARCANE MAGIC IN DAWNFORGE

The world's arcane magic has yet to clearly define itself into the eight standard schools used in the core rules. It is still wild and untamed, leaking into the world through arcane wellsprings that can be found all throughout the known lands. The nature of magic is still not fully understood by the sages and wizards of the world—they have yet to decipher the common bond that holds all magic together and allows it to function the way it does. Instead, they understand it only on the surface. Arcanists know many of the arcane rituals, vocalizations, and gestures that can bring magic to life, but they do not understand it at its essence. This has led to magic being an artistic and much less scientific pursuit, with the delineation between schools being less refined than it may one day become. In game terms, this means that there are no specialist wizards in DAWNFORGE.

Instead, practitioners of the arcane arts organize magic into four aspects. Each aspect is comprised of several schools of magic, some of which overlap. When a wizard learns his art, he focuses on the study of a single aspect, known as his bond. Once a wizard chooses his bond, it cannot be changed. He is not precluded from learning to cast the other aspects, but he will never be able to master them in the same way. Sorcerers, on the other hand, are not bound by this same understanding of magic and may therefore cast any spell, regardless of its classification. Some sorcerers adhere to the magical traditions of one aspect or another, however, and direct their inner will toward only one type of magic. These sorcerers are looked upon with a mixture of pity and contempt by wizards, who refer to them derogatorily as *cazaran*, or pretenders, but wizards and especially the Panthic Order are not above using their talents to further their own purposes.

THE FOUR ASPECTS

Wizards and arcane sages refer to magic in terms of the four aspects—life, entropy, dreams, and dominion. Each of the four aspects is represented by a principle of the universe that is given anthropomorphic motives and thought in some traditions. While this may seem to have religious connotations, these arcane theories have never been applied to a religious framework. Still, arcane magic has a spiritual aspect for its practitioners, who bond closely with one of the aspects and draw energy and inspiration from its practice.

Life: Wizards who bond with the aspect of life tend to be civic-minded helpers rather than bold adventurers or manipulative warlocks. They use their magic to aid in the construction of buildings and the defense of the communities in which they live. Sometimes a life-bonded wizard will be moved to leave his home in



search of powerful artifacts or in support of friends and family who choose to seek their own legend in the world at large. This is the most common of the four aspects to be studied by wizards in the human lands, especially in the wizard colleges of Ebernath.

Schools Available: Abjuration, Conjunction, Divination, and Transmutation.

Entropy: Pursuers of the secrets of entropy are obsessed with the processes of destruction and the link between life and death in a world without gods. Many believe that magic holds the spirit in the body, explaining why magic has the power to sever, weaken, and repair the connection. Golems and other constructs hold fascination for entropy-bonded wizards, who regard this life without spirit as fascinating, and potentially leading to the secret behind true life.

Schools Available: Evocation, Necromancy, and Transmutation

Dreams: Wizards bonded to the aspect of dreams use their magic to mislead, disguise, and alter perceptions and reality to get what they want. They believe magic is just another tool with which to further their goals, although those goals are not always selfish or narrow-minded. They often learn the arts of stealth and disguise to augment their magical abilities, and enjoy testing their magic in real situations and adventures.

Schools Available: Abjuration, Enchantment, Illusion, and Transmutation

Dominion: Very few wizards choose the path of

dominion, as it lacks the diversity of life or dreams and the raw power of entropy. What the aspect of dominion grants, however, is a unique combination of powers that allows a bonded wizard to attract and control others, be they living, dead, or not of this world. Dominion is widely regarded in human lands as an evil and taboo art, while it is embraced in the southern cultures of Valheddar and Zangala. An all-female group of dominion cultists lives on the plains of northern Anderland. They are the subject of many halfling and Anderlar legends that say these witches steal away their children for vile experiments and to act as slaves once they are fully grown.

Schools Available: Conjunction, Divination, Enchantment, and Necromancy

THE BONDING

When a character takes his first level in wizard, he must undergo a ritual known as the Bonding, which determines which aspect of magic is strongest within him. Many magic schools will only grant students one choice, perhaps two, when it comes time for him to undergo this ritual. The schools of Ebernath most often bond new wizards with the aspect of life, while the aspect of dominion may be forced onto tiefling students in Valheddar whether they wish them or not. Once a character has undergone a bonding ritual, he can never undergo another—his soul is now inexorably linked with this aspect of magic.

A bonded character gains full access to all of the

available schools within his aspect. He is not prohibited from learning and casting spells from other schools, but the following restrictions apply.

- The two spells a character learns for gaining a level in wizard must come from his bonded aspect.
- The Spell Mastery feat can only be applied to spells available in his bonded aspect.
- The Spellcraft DC to learn new spells outside a character's bonded aspect is increased by 5 and doing so costs the wizard 25 XP per spell level.
- The experience cost for creating a magic item using spells from outside the character's bonded aspect is increased by 20%.
- A wizard can never know more spells outside his bonded aspect than those he knows in it.

In return, the wizard gains several advantages within his bonded aspect, as follows.

- He gains a +2 bonus on Spellcraft checks to learn new spells within his bonded aspect.
- Spell Focus feats grant a +2 bonus on save DCs for an available school instead of the normal +1.
- The experience cost for creating a magic item using spells from available schools is reduced by 10%.
- Once per day, the character can spontaneously apply a metamagic feat to a spell with no change in the spell's level, even if he does not have that feat. The character gains access to one feat at 1st level, and then another for every five wizard levels, as shown below. This ability can be combined with a spell prepared with a metamagic effect normally.

Character Level	Metamagic Feat
1	Silent Spell
5	Still Spell
10	Empower Spell
15	Widen Spell
20	Quicken Spell

ELDRITCH WELLS

Places of power exist in the young world of DAWNFORGE where unshaped magic coalesces into the very air, stone, and land—these are known as eldritch wells. Magical energy fills the air around the eldritch wells of the world, and those attuned to the forces of magic can sense their presence long before they can tap into their power. Some of the world's eldritch wells have been discovered and are well known to trained spellcasters, while others lie waiting for a magic-sensitive creature to discover and tap into their power.

Some of the world's known eldritch wells are heavily guarded by the denizens of the surrounding lands. The volcanic well in Valhedar, for example, is guarded by tiefling troops and their fiendish allies.

Other known eldritch wells are written off as local legends or natural wonders that are not to be disturbed. The wild clansmen of the Durning Highlands have an attitude bordering on reverence for the eldritch wells they know of, and they are loath to let outsiders tap into their power.

Any character with spellcasting ability that approaches within a quarter mile of an active eldritch well can detect and locate it with a successful Spellcraft check (DC 20 + the well's strength). Characters with knowledge of an area might know of the presence of a well, and more rarely its location, according to the following chart. Characters with Knowledge (religion) may also know of the existence (DC 25) or location (DC 35) of eldritch wells of divine magic.

Skill Used	Knows Exist	Knows Location
Knowledge (local)	25	30
Knowledge (history)	20	35
Bardic Knowledge	20	30

ELDRITCH WELL PROPERTIES

All eldritch wells share certain properties, as explained below.

STRENGTH

Some eldritch wells are more powerful than others. Often times an eldritch well is nothing more than a trickle of energy from another plane, whereas the most powerful wells represent the confluence of powerful auras and energies that can grant spectacular power boosts to those skilled enough to tap them. Eldritch wells have a strength ranging from 0 to 10, which represents the raw power that can be harnessed by spellcasters within their range of influence.

RANGE OF INFLUENCE

This number represents the radius of the eldritch well's power. While a well can usually be sensed before a spellcaster comes within its range of influence, none of the well's powers can be tapped until the spellcaster is within range.

A spellcaster within an eldritch well's range of influence may attempt to utilize the well's eldritch energies to increase the power of any spell he casts. The spellcaster must use the type of magic, arcane or divine, that flows in a given well in order to use it. The caster must make a successful Spellcraft check (DC 15 + twice the well's strength) as a free action in order to tap into the well's power (the spellcaster can tap into a lesser amount of energy in order to keep the DC lower).

Success allows the spellcaster to increase his



effective caster level for any spell he casts that round by the well's strength. So, if a 5th-level wizard taps into a Strength 3 eldritch well and casts *fireball*, the *fireball* causes 8d6 points of damage (as if his caster level were 8). The increased caster level might also affect caster level checks, range, duration, or any other spell variables that depend on caster level. The increased caster level still does not allow a spellcaster to exceed built-in limits on a spell (thus, a character could not cast an 11d6 *fireball* simply by raising his caster level to 11).

WELL MAGIC AND ASSOCIATED SPELLS

In addition to allowing spellcasters to bolster their spells with their energies, eldritch wells are associated with a number of spells that a caster can access when he is within a well's range of influence. These spells reflect the essence of an eldritch well, and are always tightly grouped around a central theme. Each well has a number of spells associated with it equal to its strength rating. The maximum spell level available is equal to a well's strength rating. Thus, an eldritch well with Strength 4 could have up to four associated spells of 4th level or lower.

Depending on whether or not a spellcaster prepares his spells or casts them spontaneously, associated

spells grant specific benefits to those tapping into their power. Sorcerers, bards, shapers and other spontaneous casters can use the energy of the eldritch well to cast associated spells as if they knew the spell, even if they do not. Wizards may prepare associated spells as if they were mastered spells; they need not have an associated spell in their spellbook to prepare it. The wizard must be in the range of influence of the eldritch well during his normal spell preparation time in order to take advantage of this ability. A spontaneous caster must also meditate within the eldritch well, but he may then cast the eldritch well's associated spells as if they were on his spells known list. He may do this for 24 hours, or until he next meditates to refresh his spells.

In order to prepare spells in this manner (or to temporarily gain access to spells as if they were spells known), the character must make a successful Spellcraft check (DC 15 + twice the well's strength + the number of spells utilized). If this check fails, the character may not attempt to prepare spells from the same well for 24 hours.

AFFILIATED ASPECT

All eldritch wells have an affiliated aspect. An eldritch well's associated spells do not have to be from the well's affiliated aspect, but there are advantages to it. Similarly, any eldritch spellcaster can tap an eldritch well, but those who are bonded to a particular well's aspect gain additional benefits from it.

A character who is bonded to the aspect of an eldritch well that he is trying to tap gains a +2 bonus on all Spellcraft checks related to the well. In addition, the character may prepare a single associated spell that falls within his bonded aspect without taking up a spell slot—in effect, the character gains an additional spell slot of the appropriate level for preparing that spell. Since spontaneous casters do not bond with an aspect, they gain no benefit from this aspect of an eldritch well.

ASPECT POWER

Every eldritch well has an aspect power that can be tapped into by eldritch spellcasters who have bonded with the affiliated aspect of the well. These powers range from small benefits for strength 0 and 1 wells to wondrous abilities granted by wells of strength 8 and higher. A spellcaster must make a successful Spellcraft check against a DC equal to 15 + the strength of the well in order to harness this power, and this may only be attempted once per day whether or not it succeeds.

SAMPLE ELDRITCH WELL

MOUNT VALHEDAR

The great volcano overlooking the city of Valhedar smokes and rumbles, and lava bubbles at the top of the cone and bursts forth from the rock like infected wounds in many places on the mountain. The top of the mountain is a very powerful eldritch well whose power and secrets are jealously guarded by the realm's rulers. Only a select few are able to tap into this well's immense power, both because of its high strength and the fact that it is guarded at all times by a legion of Valhedar's finest warriors and a pack of devils under control of the Dominion.

Strength: 9

Range of Influence:
1,000 feet

Associated Spells:
*Summon monster I**,
*summon monster II**,
*summon monster III**, *summon monster IV**,
lesser planar binding, *planar binding*, *summon monster VII**, *greater planar binding*,
*summon monster IX**.

*Evil outsiders only.

Affiliated Aspect:
Dominion

Aspect Power: Once per day, a 17th-level or higher dominion-bonded wizard may use the well to *gate* in a creature from the lower planes. Using the *gate* in this manner does not carry the normal XP cost for using the calling function of the spell.

THE IMMORTALS

Although there are no true gods in the world of DAWNFORGE, immortal beings of great power walk among the warring civilizations of the known lands. These immortals grant spells and power to their followers, and also wield great personal power. While some are content to merely live among the peoples of the

world, guiding them with their wisdom and lending a helping hand, others possess mortal ambitions and work to build armies with which to destroy hated enemies and to eventually conquer the world. While mortal armies fight and heroes forge their own legends, the future of the world may yet be in the hands of these powerful beings and those that follow them.

As mentioned in the disciple class entry, an immortal's worshippers gain special abilities when they are within their immortal's demesne. Immortals are free to go wherever they choose, however, and many times

they will be traveling the planes or searching the world on a personal quest. As an optional rule, the DM may deny the special abilities granted to a disciple within his lord's demesne if the immortal is not present. This underscores the very personal nature of a disciple's link with the immortal, but it may also make players think that their characters are being weakened unfairly.

An immortal's demesne is not specifically defined as a number of miles radius from a point, but rather in broad terms of a region of the world. These regions vary in size, and many overlap as several immortals occupy the same area. At the moment, it has not been shown to give any advantage to an immortal to destroy another, so sharing

space in this manner is not automatically a reason for conflict between two immortals. In any case, a region

should not be too large or too small, since that would either limit or expand a disciple's power. As a general rule of thumb, an immortal's demesne should encompass a specific point of power and perhaps one or two landmarks around it, whether they are man-made, such as a city, or natural, such as a mountain or river section. An immortal's region need not be calculated in a radius, either. It may be in the irregular shape of a certain valley, or perhaps the immortal holds sway over an entire river, but no more than a quarter mile from its banks.

IMMORTAL TRAITS

All immortals possess the following traits (unless otherwise noted in an immortal's entry).

—Darkvision 60 feet and low-light vision.

—Damage reduction 10/*. A weapon that has any alignment that opposes the immortal's bypasses this damage reduction. Neutral immortals gain damage reduction 10/magic.

—*Teleport (Su)*: Immortals can use *greater teleport* at will, as the spell (caster level 20th), although the immortal may only transport himself and his equipment.

—*Scrying (Su)*: Immortals can use *greater scrying* at will, as the spell (caster level 20th), but only when they are within their demesne and only to scry on their demesne.

—Grant Powers (Su): An immortal can grant spells and his immortal gift to any creature that he has accepted as a disciple.

—Spell Resistance: Immortals gain spell resistance of 11 + the immortal's HD.

Below are presented several immortals that currently walk the land or have influence over a great number of the world's denizens.

ALHARRA DAWN-BEARER

The benevolent warrior-woman known throughout the Kingsmarch as Alharra has existed since the beginning of the world. When the barbarian tribes first immigrated to the Kingsmarch region, they brought with them a tradition of tribalism and internecine warfare. Alharra saw this and she wept for these humans who brought war to one another, for she knew that there were many other enemies in the world who would take advantage of their strife. She first appeared to the kings of the Deluin tribe in the guise of a beautiful and powerful woman clad in fine plate armor and riding a stout white steed.

She advised the kings of Deluin for generations, and some even whisper that the last few kings have her blood flowing through their veins, although the rumor is hushed for the most part. She slowly helped them to build their tribe into the greatest of all, a unified group of clans who all fought under a single banner—the Kingdom of Deluin. Alharra has not been active for more than a hundred years, but her legend is well known throughout the Kingsmarch and she has the largest active following of disciples in that land. She is the patron of Avennar and of the Order of Knights Adamant. Even some of the Faring Folk have taken to her legend and become active followers.

For her part, Alharra has retreated from actively influencing the affairs of Deluin—her principles and guidance have become entrenched within the society itself. She is rumored to live in a large lake near the city of Avennar, where the main body of her worshippers is located. Some of her faithful make annual pilgrimages

to the lake where she is said to make her home, and the area is a popular place for the disciples of Alharra to perform rituals in her honor and to beseech her aid.

Immortal Gift: Once per day, a disciple of Alharra can invoke a *magic circle against evil* (caster level 12th) as a free action.

Alharra Dawn-bearer: CR 14; Medium Outsider (Archon, Extraplanar, Good, Lawful); HD 12d8+72; hp 126; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 90 ft. (good); AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 24; Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +12/+17; Atk +21 melee (2d6+11/19–20, +4 *greatsword*); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (2d6+11/19–20, +4 *greatsword*); SQ Aura of menace, damage reduction 10/evil, darkvision 60 ft., grant powers, immortal traits, immunity to electricity and petrification, low-light vision, *magic circle against evil*, *scry*, spell-like abilities, spell resistance 29, *teleport*, *tongues*; AL N; SV Fort +14 (+18 vs. poison), Ref +11, Will +11; Str 20, Dex 17, Con 23, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +21, Diplomacy +20, Escape Artist +18, Handle Animal +18, Knowledge (any one) +18, Listen +18, Move Silently +18, Perform (wind instruments) +18, Ride +20, Sense Motive +18, Spot +18, Use Rope +3 (+5 with bindings); Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect evil*, *continual flame*, *message*. Caster level 12th.

Aura of Menace (Su): Any hostile creature within a 20-foot radius of Alharra must succeed at a Will save (DC 21) to resist the effects of this ability. Those who fail take a –2 penalty on attacks, AC, and saves for 24 hours or until they successfully hit Alharra in melee combat. A creature that has resisted or broken the effect cannot be affected again by Alharra's aura for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Magic Circle against Evil (Su): A *magic circle against evil* effect always surrounds Alharra (caster level 12th). (The defensive benefits from the circle are not included in Alharra's stat block.)

Tongues (Su): Alharra can speak with any creature that has a language, as though using a *tongues* spell (caster level 14th). This ability is always active.

Spells: Alharra can cast divine spells as a 14th-level cleric. Alharra's domains are Good and Law. The save DCs are Wisdom-based.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/7/7/6/5/4/4/3; DC 13+spell level): 0—*detect magic*, *light*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*, *resistance* (2); 1st—*bleed* (2), *divine favor* (2), *protection from chaos**, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*aid**, *bull's strength* (2), *consecrate*, *lesser restoration*, *owl's wisdom* (2); 3rd—*daylight*, *invisibility purge*, *magic circle against chaos**, *magic vestment*, *protection from energy* (2); 4th—*dismissal*, *divine power*, *holy smite**, *neutralize poison*, *spell immunity*; 5th—*dispel evil**, *mass cure light wounds*, *plane shift*, *raise dead*; 6th—*blade barrier**, *banishment*, *heal*,

undearth to death; 7th—dictum, holy word, mass cure serious wounds.*

*Domain spell.

Trumpet (Su): Alharra carries a trumpet that produces music of utter clarity, piercing beauty, and, if she wills it, paralyzing awe. All creatures except archons within 100 feet of the blast must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based. Alharra can also command her trumpet to become a +4 *greatsword* as a free action. If Alharra's trumpet is ever stolen, it becomes a chunk of useless metal until the owner can recover it.

ATHIG STONEDWELLER

As the giants and dwarves battled for dominion over the Stormfells, their war raged in the caverns of stone. At one point in these battles, before the betrayal of the fire giants, a group of dwarves from Clan Isgar split off from the main force, dedicated to finding an emergency refuge for their brethren. The leader of this force was a tough warrior named Athig, whose concern for the dwarven people's survival was well known. Athig's force dug into the stone where no passages existed, using magic and muscle to carve out a future for his people. Then suddenly the dwarves were unable to find their way out of these caverns. Tunnels that should have been there were not, and individuals began to go missing. Meanwhile outside, the war raged on.

Athig soon found himself alone and unable to contact any dwarves on the outside of his self-made prison. The last few of his band were able to destroy the horrific creatures that had trapped them within the stone, but all died from their wounds. Dwarves on the outside were too busy fighting the giants to worry about their lost comrades, but the name of Athig would not be forgotten. Once the first war had ended and the dwarves had established their kingdoms on the surface of the world, dwarven sorcerers began to search for evidence of the lost party in the stone itself. Miraculously Athig heard their calls, having been kept alive by the energies of the earthen prison in which he found himself. After many centuries below ground, he had no desire to leave his stony prison, especially now that he could speak directly to his descendants through their links in the earth.

Athig's tale spread throughout Clan Isgar, and it was not long before many began to worship the miracle of his survival—or as they referred to it, his resurrection in stone. Athig now aids his clansmen as best he can, granting them wisdom and power to defeat their enemies. Athig especially supports the idea that all dwarves should retreat below ground, even though such an idea is still not widely popular within the Three Kingdoms. Many dwarves of Clan Isgar revere Athig, but some dwarves of other clans believe that he may be a malevolent influence trying to draw the dwarves to their doom beneath the surface of the world.





Immortal Gift: Disciples of Athig Stonedweller gain the Blind-Fight feat for free at 4th level.

Athig Stonedweller: CR 13; Medium Humanoid, male dwarf Ftr6/Sh7; HD 6d10+7d8+65; hp 161; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 24; Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +11/+15; Atk +20 melee (1d10+9/x3, +3 *dwarven waraxe*); Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (1d10+9/19–20/x3, +3 *dwarven waraxe*); SQ Animal companion, companion sight, damage reduction 10/chaotic or evil, darkvision 60 ft., elemental form 1/day, grant powers, immortal traits, low-light vision, nature sense, rituals of power, *sCRY*, spell resistance 24, *teleport*, trackless step, wild empathy; AL LG; SV Fort +17, Ref +5, Will +13; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +12, Handle Animal +10, Jump +10, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +6, Knowledge (nature) +11, Spellcraft +11, Survival +14; Augment Summoning, Blind-Fight, Die Hard, Empower Spell, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (*dwarven waraxe*), Iron Will, Leadership, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (*dwarven waraxe*), Weapon Specialization (*dwarven waraxe*).

Dwarven Racial Talents: Giant Fighter, Identify Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Magic Arms and Armor I.

Dwarven Racial Transformations: Improved Climber, Damage Reduction 2/–

Shaman Spells Prepared (6/5/4/3/2; DC 14+*spell level*): 0—*create water*, *detect magic*, *know direction*, *mending*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*; 1st—*detect animals or plants*, *hide from animals*, *pass without trace*, *speak with animals*; 2nd—*barkskin*, *delay poison*, *hold animal*, *spider climb*; 3rd—*cure moderate wounds*, *meld into stone*, *stone shape*; 4th—*dispel magic*, *air walk*.

LATHAIL

When the elves of Itheria first emerged into Sildanyr, they knew they had found a special realm. It did not take long for the night elves to begin to resent their inferior status and wish for a more equal role in elven society. When this was not forthcoming, the night elves began to meet in secret to discuss their options and give themselves a sense of purpose. While open warfare was not considered an option, the night elves plotted to advance themselves within society. During this time some of the rebellious elves heard a voice calling to them from beneath the earth. They followed the voice to the Morningstar Mountains, where they descended into the depths to have their first meeting with the creature known as Lathail.

Lathail appeared to them in a form they could

relate to—that of a night elf. She whispered dark things into their ears, slowly corrupting them and turning them into preachers of hatred against the dawn elves who had effectively enslaved their people. She granted powers to these first few disciples so that they would see what she could give them, and encouraged them to spread her faith in secret so that the night elves could at long last have something of their own in which to take pride.

She revealed herself as a lover of predators, especially those who hunted by stealth or in the night. Wolves, bats, and spiders were her favored animals, and these became a part of the growing night elf underground. When her followers could no longer keep their plotting secret, they struck at the dawn elves. The result was horrific, as nighttime raids and assassinations shed blood across the forest of Sildanyr. Lathail pressed her followers to take more and more action against the dawn elves, who were taken by surprise and were having trouble repelling the surprise attacks. Through all of this, Lathail's name was not to be spoken. The night elves took this prohibition to be sacred, and to this day they do not speak her name except to privately invoke her aid.

Now, as the civil war rages in the heart of Sildanyr, Lathail has removed herself from view to watch the strife that she has wrought. She still speaks to her most loyal disciples, and grants them aid whenever she sees fit. Her chaotic nature only fuels the night elves' desire to please her, and her cult is growing ever stronger as the war rages on.

Immortal Gift: Disciples of Lathail gain the ability to *spider climb* three times per day, as the spell (caster level 6th).

Lathail: CR 23; Huge Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil) Sor6/Asn3; HD 12d8+6d4+3d6+150; hp 230; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +17/+34; Atk +19 melee (2d6+9 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +19 melee (2d6+9/19–20 plus poison, bite) and +14 melee (2d4+4, 2 claws) or +11 ranged (web); SA Death attack, poison, poison use, sneak attack +2d6, web; SQ Damage reduction 10/good, darkvision 60 ft., grant powers, immortal traits, immunity to electricity and poison, low-light vision, *plane shift*, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, fire 10, scent, spell resistance 23, telepathy 100 ft., *teleport*, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +20, Ref +16, Will +16; Str 28, Dex 16, Con 26, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +14, Climb +20, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +7, Hide +18, Intimidate +7, Jump +24, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Listen +16, Move Silently +18, Search +15, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +18, Spot +16, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks); Cleave, Eschew Materials, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Grapple, Power attack, Track, Weapon Focus (bite).

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 25, initial dam-

age 1d6 Con, secondary damage 2d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Web (Ex): Lathail can throw a web up to four times per day. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 30 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet. This attack is effective against all targets of up to Gargantuan size. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement.

An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 24) or burst the web with a successful Strength check (DC 24). The check DCs are Constitution-based. The web has 14 hit points and hardness 0. There is a 75% chance that the webbing will not burn if any sort of fire is applied to it (check each round).

Plane Shift (Su): Lathail can use this ability at will as the spell (caster level 20th), but it only affects her.

Assassin Spells Known (3/2; DC 14+spell level): 1st—*obscuring mist, sleep, true strike*; 2nd—*darkness, pass without trace*.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/6/4; DC 14+spell level): 0—*arcane mark, detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, message, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st—*cause fear, charm person, hypnotism, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd—*alter self, invisibility*; 3rd—*suggestion*.

MORDRIN

The dwarves believe that they emerged from deep in the earth in the elder days. Some claim they were the first race born into the world, though others believe that the dragons or giants were first. Whatever the case, most dwarves believe that when they were born, Mordrin was there. An ancient spirit of flame and stone, Mordrin is said to dwell deep below Mount Aradrun in the place where the dwarves first came into the world. Some believe that Mordrin is the father of the dwarves, having hewn them from the living rock itself. Others believe that Mordrin opened the tunnel from the otherworld from which the dwarves emerged. All believe that Mordrin dwells under the mountain still and that he watches over and guides the clans.

Immortal Gift: Disciples of Mordrin gain a +1 natural bonus to AC.

Mordrin: CR 16; Huge Outsider (Earth, Extraplanar); HD 20d10+160; hp 293; Init +11 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 60 ft. (12 squares), burrow 60 ft., climb 60 ft.; AC 39, touch 15, flat-footed 32; Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +20/+37; Atk/Full Atk +28 melee (2d8+13 plus 2d6 fire, bite); SA Entomb, heat, improved grab, spell-like abilities, swallow whole; SQ Damage reduction 15/cold iron, darkvision 60 ft., earth glide, grant powers, Immortal traits, immunity to fire, low-light vision, scry, spell resistance 31, teleport, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +20, Ref +19, Will +17; Str 29, Dex 25, Con 27, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +26, Diplomacy

+25, Escape Artist +23, Hide +24, Intimidate +18, Jump +17, Knowledge (nature) +23, Listen +24, Move Silently +24, Sense Motive +24, Spot +23; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (bite).

Earth Glide (Ex): Mordrin can glide through stone, dirt, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. His burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other signs of its presence. A move earth spell cast on an area containing a burrowing Mordrin flings him back 30 feet, stunning him for 1 round unless he succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.

Entomb (Su): As a standard action, Mordrin can cause the earth around any Large or smaller creature to flow up around it, trapping it in a tomb of solid stone. Mordrin can decide to leave a creature's head or arms free of the stone if he wishes, or he may cover the entire creature. If a creature is completely entombed, it must hold its breath or begin to suffer the effects of drowning. Creatures with only their heads exposed are considered helpless.

A creature that succeeds on a successful Reflex save (DC 27) avoids being entombed, and a successful Escape Artist check (DC 27) allows a creature trapped but not fully entombed to escape.

Heat (Ex): Mordrin's body generates intense heat, causing opponents to take an extra 2d6 points of fire damage every time the creature succeeds on a bite attack. Creatures attacking Mordrin unarmed or with natural weapons take this same fire damage each time one of their attacks hits.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Mordrin must hit an opponent of Large size or smaller with his bite attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and can attempt to swallow the opponent the following round.

Swallow Whole (Ex): When Mordrin begins his turn with a grappled opponent in its mouth, he can swallow that opponent with a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 2d8+13 points of bludgeoning damage plus 8d6 points of fire damage per round from Mordrin's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 20). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. Mordrin's interior can hold 1 Large, 2 Medium, 4 Small, 16 Tiny, 64 Diminutive, or 256 Fine or smaller opponents.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*soften earth and stone, stone shape, stone tell, transmute mud to rock, transmute rock to mud*; 3/day—*wall of fire, wall of stone*. These abilities are as spells cast by a 13th-level druid (save DC 14 + spell level).

THE STORM KING

Balon Thunderhorn is a great hero of the giants of the Stormfells, a masterful leader in the wars against the dwarves and the most skilled dragon hunter in the history of the known lands. He has dwelled in the mountains since the time before history when the glaciers claimed Ambria, and he waged war with the Wyrms of Winter at the dawn of time. He exiled the frost giants, turned back the onslaught of the fire giants, and united the remaining giant clans into a loose nation.

Now the Storm King rules from his citadel atop Mount Imperion, staying hidden within its walls and leaving the everyday affairs of his kingdom to those beneath him. The giant tribes are unified by his power, both military and spiritual. Even those that do not believe in him as a god-figure are awed by his military genius and the truce he forged with the dwarves that saved them from endless war. While the Storm King is rarely seen, even by the disciples who call upon his power, he holds sway over all the giants of the Stormfells and his rule is not questioned openly by any in his kingdom.

Immortal Gift: Once per day, a disciple of the Storm King can invoke a field of electricity around his body as a free action. This field lasts for one minute and any creature that makes a successful strike unarmed, with a natural weapon, or with a metal weapon suffers 1d6 points of electricity damage per successful hit.

The Storm King: CR 22; Huge Giant, male storm giant Rgr11; HD 17d8+11d8+168; hp 308; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft. (8 squares); AC 30, touch 10, flat-footed 28; Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +23/+43; Atk +39 melee (4d6+21/19–20 plus 1d6 electricity, *Abustril*); Full Atk +39/+34/+29/+24 melee (4d6+21/19–20 plus 1d6 electricity, *Abustril*); SA Rock throwing, ranged combat style mastery, spell-like abilities; SQ Animal companion, damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., evasion, favored enemies (dragons +6, dwarves +2, monstrous humanoids +2), grant powers, immortal traits, low-light vision, nature sense, oversized weapon, rock catching, scry, scent, spell resistance 39, *teleport*, wild empathy, woodland stride; AL N; SV Fort +23, Ref +13, Will +13; Str 35, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +27, Craft (metalworking) +11, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +25, Perform (harp) +2, Search +8, Sense Motive +16, Spot +25, Survival +17; Awesome Blow, Cleave, Endurance, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (warhammer), Improved Overrun, Iron Will, Leadership, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (warhammer).

Possessions: *Abustril*, +3 breastplate of heavy fortification.

THE WYRM OF WINTER

Before the age of man and orc in the north, great glaciers spread across the plains and mountains of Ambria. This frozen land was ruled by two godlings, the Storm King and the great white dragon called the Wyrms of Winter. The battles between the giant and dragon endured for centuries and became a tale that is told by giant skalds to this day. In the end, despite the treachery of the frost giants, Balon Thunderhorn was victorious over his enemy. The Storm King killed hundreds of dragons, and the Wyrms of Winter was forced to withdraw, fleeing to a secret lair deep in the northern mountains. With the great wyrms' retreat, the glaciers were forced back as his chilling influence on the lands of Ambria faltered, and then failed. A warming sun heralded the end of an age, and civilization dawned in the world of Eadar.

The Wyrms of Winter slept for many generations. The exiled frost giants who followed him north slowly built their own civilization, as men, orcs, and other humanoids began to appear in the icy plains that were left by the receding glaciers. When the dragon awoke, he found that many of these new civilizations had grown around his worship, and he made himself known to the most powerful—the frost giants. Eventually the Wyrms of Winter mated with a powerful frost giant queen, who gave birth to their half-breed son, Anlar Icefang.

The Wyrms of Winter has not been active for nearly two decades, and rumors abound as to the reasons for his absence. His disciples still receive their spells, however, and a white wyrm visits them on occasion when they call for his assistance.

Immortal Gift: Once per day, a disciple of the Wyrms of Winter can shoot forth a cone of icy breath. The cone is 20 feet long and deals 6d6 points of cold damage to all creatures within its area. Creatures are entitled to a Reflex save (DC 10 + 1/2 the disciple's HD + the disciple's Con modifier) for half damage.

The Wyrms of Winter: CR 21; Gargantuan Dragon (Cold); HD 36d12+288; hp 522; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 60 ft. (12 squares), burrow 30 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy), swim 60 ft.; AC 41, touch 6, flat-footed 41; Space/Reach 20 ft./15 ft. (20 ft. with bite); Base Atk/Grapple +36/+61; Atk +45 melee (4d6+13, bite); Full Atk +45 melee (4d6+13, bite) and +44 melee (2d8+6, 2 claws) and +43 melee (2d6+6, 2 wings) and +43 melee (2d8+19, tail slap) or +45 melee (2d6+19, tail sweep); SA Crush, tail sweep, spell-like abilities; SQ Blindsight 60 ft., damage reduction 20/magic, darkvision 60 ft., frightful presence, grant powers, icewalking, Immortal traits, immunity to *sleep*, paralysis, and cold, keen senses, low-light vision, *scry*, spell resistance 47, *teleport*, vulnerability to fire; AL CE; SV Fort +28, Ref +20, Will +24; Str 37, Dex 10, Con 27, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +47, Diplomacy +43, Escape Artist +39, Intimidate +43, Knowledge

ABUSTRIL

Minor Artifact

This +3 *shocking burst dragonbane warhammer* has been in the possession of the Storm King since before recorded history. When wielded by a giant, this gargantuan hammer confers to the wielder immunity to acid, cold, electricity, and fire. In addition, it can be used to cast *chain lightning* (caster level 15th) three times per day.

Strong abjuration and evocation; CL 20th; Weight 85 lbs.

(arcana) +43, Listen +43, Search +23, Sense Motive +43, Spot +43, Swim +33, Use Magic Device +43; Blind-Fight, Eschew Materials, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Weapon Focus (claw), Wingover.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every four rounds, the Wyrms of Winter can breathe a 60-foot cone of cold. Cone of cold, Reflex save DC 36, 12d6 cold damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Icewalking (Ex): This ability works like the *spider climb* spell, but the surfaces the dragon climbs must be icy. It is always in effect.

Freezing Fog (Sp): The Wyrms of Winter can use this ability three times per day. It is similar to a *solid fog* spell, but also causes a rime of slippery ice to form on any surface the fog touches, creating the effect of a *grease* spell. The dragon is immune to the *grease* effect because of its icewalking ability. This ability is the equivalent of a 5th-level spell.

Other Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*fog cloud*, *gust of wind*, *wall of ice*; 1/day—*control weather*.

Crush (Ex): The Wyrms of Winter can land or jump on a creature of up to Medium size using this special attack.

A crush attack affects as many creatures as can fit under the dragon's body. Creatures in the affected area must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 36) or be pinned, automatically taking 4d6+19 points of bludgeoning damage during the next round unless the dragon moves off them. If the dragon chooses to maintain the pin, treat it as a normal grapple attack. Pinned opponents take damage from the crush each round if they don't escape.

Tail Sweep (Ex): The Wyrms of Winter can sweep with its tail as a standard action. The sweep affects a half-circle with a radius of 30 feet, extending from an intersection on the edge of the dragon's space in any direction. Only creatures of up to Small size are affected by this attack. A tail sweep automatically deals

2d6+19 points of damage to all affected creatures. Affected creatures can attempt Reflex saves (DC 36) to take half damage.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Whenever the Wurm of Winter attacks, charges, or flies overhead, all creatures with less than 36 HD within a 360-foot radius must make a Will save (DC 32) or those with 4 or less HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds and those with 5 or more HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds. A successful save renders that creature immune to the Wurm of Winter's frightful presence for 24 hours.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/7/6/4; DC 14+spell level): 0—*arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, message, open/close, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*cause fear, charm person, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, silent image*; 2nd—*alter self, darkness, invisibility, mirror image, resist energy*; 3rd—*displacement, haste, major image, suggestion*; 4th—*fire shield, hallucinatory terrain, ice storm, wall of ice*; 5th—*dominate person, feeblemind, wall of force*; 6th—*disintegrate, true seeing*.

ZALAPH

In a time before the dwarves wrote of the Battle of the First Stone, when the glaciers still cast their icy shroud over the hills of Ambria, there was an emperor in the south whose poison gaze fell over all the world. His form was both man and snake and he felt a burning hatred and contempt for all those not of his blood. The snake men were trapped on their continent of sweltering forests and blazing deserts, however, and so he watched from afar as the dwarves, giants, and humans made their way onto the northern continent.

Zalaph impressed this hatred onto his people as he whipped and brutalized them into a mass of serpentine followers whose devotion was without fail. The yuan-ti empire spread across the continent and Zalaph commanded his people to build temples in his honor, great stone ziggurats that featured bloated statues of the snake god. The walls of these great stone temples and mau-

soleums were filled with paintings and carvings showing their god-emperor in all his cruelty and glory. The yuan-ti's fanaticism was unwavering.

Centuries ago, however, Zalaph withdrew into a pit below the great city of Marazan and fell into a deep slumber. As the centuries passed, the power of Zalaph's cult waned, as the yuan-ti turned their prayers and sacrifices to new gods, the talazur.

Recently construction has resumed on temples, mausoleums, and other structures across Zangala. Rumors out of the jungle empire speak of a grand scheme put into place centuries ago but only now being brought to its conclusion. None have so far braved the jungle realm to find out what is really going on, but all the world fears the day when Zalaph will awaken and unleash his poisonous fury on the world.

Immortal Gift: Disciples of Zalaph can cast *confusion* once per day as a spell-like ability (caster level 8th).

Zalaph: CR 27; Large Monstrous Humanoid, male yuan-ti abomination Psi20; HD 9d8+20d4+87; hp 187; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 21; Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +9/+17; Atk +13 melee (1d8+4/18–20, masterwork scimitar) or +10 ranged (2d6+4/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+4 Strength); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+4/18–20, masterwork scimitar) and +7 melee (2d6+3 plus poison, bite) or +10/+5 ranged (2d6+4/x3, masterwork composite longbow (+4 Strength); SA *Aversion*, constrict 1d6+6, improved grab, poison, *produce acid*, spell-like abilities, SQ Damage reduction 10/lawful or good, darkvision 60 ft., grant powers, Immortal traits, low-light vision, *scry*, spell resistance 40, sympathetic psicrystal, *teleport*; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +13, Will +12; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 19.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +25, Gather Information +29, Hide +18, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (psionics) +28, Listen +29, Move Silently +22, Psicraft +35, Remote View +30, Sense Motive +32, Spot +29; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Disarm Mind, Dodge, Greater Power Penetration, Improved Initiative, Mental Adversary,



Mobility, Power Focus (Telepathy), Power Penetration, Quicken Power.

Aversion (Sp): Zalaph can psionically create a compulsion effect targeting one creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a Will save (DC 22) or gain an aversion to snakes for 10 minutes. Affected creatures must stay at least 20 feet away from any snake or yuan-ti, alive or dead; if already within 20 feet, they move away. A subject unable to move away or one attacked by snakes or yuan-ti, is overcome with revulsion. This revulsion reduces the creatures' Dexterity score by 4 points until the effect wears off or the subject is no longer within 20 feet of a snake or yuan-ti. This ability is otherwise similar to *antipathy* as the spell (caster level 16th). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Constrict (Ex): Zalaph deals 1d6+6 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Zalaph must hit a Large or smaller creature with his bite attack. He can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If he wins the grapple check, he establishes a hold and can constrict.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Produce Acid (Sp): Zalaph has the psionic ability to exude acid from his body, dealing 3d6 points of damage to the next creature he touches, including a creature hit by his bite attack. If Zalaph is grappling, constricting, or pinning a foe when he uses this power, his grasp deals 5d6 points of acid damage. The acid becomes inert when it leaves the yuan-ti's body, and the yuan-ti is immune to its effects.

Chameleon Power (Sp): Zalaph can psionically change the color of himself and his equipment to match his surroundings, granting him a +10 circumstance bonus on Hide checks.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*animal trance* (DC 16), *entangle* (DC 15); 3/day—*deeper darkness*, *neutralize poison* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 17); 1/day—*baleful polymorph* (DC 19; into snake form only), *fear* (DC 18). Caster level 10th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Psionic Powers
Discovered: 0—*catfall*, *control shadow*, *detect psionics*, *far hand*, *inkling*, *know direction*, *missive*, *telepathic projection*; 1st—*destiny dissonance*, *lesser mindlink*, *matter agitation*, *sense link*, *steadfast gaze*; 2nd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *detect thoughts*, *recall pain*, *see invisibility*, *sensitivity to psychic impressions*; 3rd—*charm monster*, *crisis of breath*, *mindlink*, *non-detection*, *remote viewing*; 4th—*aura sight*, *detect remote viewing*, *domination*, *forced mindlink*, *telekinesis*; 5th—*mind probe*, *recall agony*, *sense psionics*, *true seeing*; 6th—*mass suggestion*, *mind switch*, *precognition*, *shield of prudence*; 7th—*contingency*, *emulate power*, *mass domination*, *sequester*; 8th—*foresight*, *mind seed*, *recall death*; 9th—*greater emulation*, *thrall*.

Power Points: 237.

Psionic Combat Modes: All.



CHAPTER FOUR

HISTORY

This chapter presents the brief history of the world of Eadar. The text of this chapter is designated as closed content.

THE MAKING

With no true gods to guide them, the peoples of the world have been left without guidance in its ways, its meaning, and its origin. All of the great races have their own names for the world, though it is the dwarven name, Eadar, which has been most widely embraced, simply because Dwarven is the oldest written language.

The world's origin is also unknown, although all cultures have unique explanations for how the world came into being. Most races believe that they were created by patron immortals or other powers, or that they came into the world from another place. The dwarves of the Three Kingdoms of Aradath, for example, believe that they emerged into this world through a hole in the deep earth that was opened for them by an immortal that dwelled there. The elves and gnomes are the only race that knows with certainty their origins in the world, as they immigrated to Eadar from the fairy realm of Itheria in the living memory of their elders.

The scholars of the Panthic Order believe that Eadar coalesced out of the raw planar matter and energy that drifts through the multiverse. These sages believe that new planes and worlds are constantly forming and dissolving in an eternal symphony of creation and destruction. In this view, the creation of the world was a natural event and it will have a natural and predictable end. No gods are needed to explain the creation of the world, but should true gods arise and gain dominion over Eadar, they may well play a role in its destruction.

Eadar is young still and most of the races have yet to forge their place in it or chart their destiny. Each of the world's great civilizations strives to do so, however,

and so the whole of known history is one of wars, displacement, and the establishment of great works that define the cultures of the world and give them claim to some piece of it. Even now wars rage across Ambria as dwarves, giants, humans, and elves all struggle to master their own destinies.

The bones and flesh of the world also tell of its youth. Great mountains soar to the sky and vast glaciers have only recently withdrawn from northern Ambria, leaving rugged hills and deep valleys in their wakes. The arcane energies of creation still flow strongly in the world and in many hidden places they eddy and pool, creating ancient wellsprings of magical power or natural rifts that allow planar magic to wash across the world.

Where worlds are concerned, youth is a relative notion, and even the sages of Ebernath do not know Eadar's true age. It is known that before the rise of civilization almost a thousand years ago, there was an indefinite age of bitter cold and darkness when much of the world was locked in ice. It is believed that the continent that would become Ambria was ruled by giants and dragons during this time, and that they warred endlessly for supremacy over the untamed and still-unformed land. The giants, under the leadership of Balon Thunderhorn, called the Storm King, emerged victorious and dragons were largely driven from Ambria as this prehistoric age drew to a close.

MOUNTAINS OF BLOOD

Recorded history begins 997 years ago, with the recording of a great battle between dwarves and giants in the Stormfell Mountains. This event is now referred to as the Battle of the First Stone, both for the tablet

upon which it is written as well as its metaphysical significance. The words carved in Dwarven on the First Stone mark the emergence of true civilization on Eadar.

All written records of the era that immediately followed the Battle of the First Stone deal with the war between the dwarves and giants. Tales of their epic battles can be found scrawled in the countless tunnels and caverns beneath the Stormfells. When the dwarves first emerged from the deep earth into the light of Eadar's sun, they found the giants waiting for them on the slopes of the great mountains that the dwarves would make their home. The giants and dwarven newcomers battled on and off for centuries, but neither side could gain any lasting advantage. The giants, even under the Storm King's rule, lacked unity and organization. The dwarves simply lacked resources and a real foothold in the surface world.

FIRE AND SCALES

While the dwarves and giants carved out the first strongholds of their respective empires, another war raged on the continent to the south. At that time the island of Valhedar was the homeland and only major holding of the fledgling tiefling empire. The tieflings had thrown down the ancient human kingdom of Serilia, but the desert and marsh limited southern exploration and the tieflings had few vessels capable of crossing the Summer Sea to Ambria. Under the reign of High Dominar Nephis and his successor Raela, Valhedar began an aggressive campaign of southern expansion. The ancient city-states of Gedon and Erenak in northern Zangala were annexed through intimidation, intrigue, and subversion, and Valhedar turned its eyes south beyond the desert.

In the year 338 a tiefling exploration party brought back rumors of endless gold mines and hordes of weak-willed slaves in the Blackscale Mountains. The tiefling dominars began preparation of a host of warriors and conjurers who would travel south and take the mountains for their own. They knew that there were dangers in the jungles to the south, although they did not know what or who they would face. A colonization party was formed and sent down the Alizan to find a suitable location to base their army, and the fortress town of Saredrin was born. Ten years after preparations began, the tieflings sailed down the Alizan on flat boats and assembled in Saredrin to begin their conquest.

South of the Blackscale Mountains the yuan-ti overlords had been watching these preparations and waiting. They conducted divination rituals in their smoky temples and made a dozen blood sacrifices every day for a decade to gain strength for the war to come. It was their gold in the Blackscale mines and their slaves working them, and they made ready to throw back the tieflings when they came.

As the tieflings amassed in Saredrin and began to summon the demonic allies that they would need to take the mines from an enemy that they did not know, the yuan-ti gathered in the Blackscapes and prepared to fight. The psionic interference created by the yuan-ti overlords had denied the tieflings even basic information about their enemies in the mountains. All scouting parties had been destroyed, and the tieflings' fiends had mysteriously refused to scout into the jungles south of the mountains. The tieflings, however, were determined to press on.

The first wave of tiefling warriors crashed into the mountains and were delighted to meet only a token resistance from the slaves who had not fled the mines. Once the conjurers were brought up, however, the yuan-ti descended on the tieflings, unleashing horrific, mind-melting psionic attacks and sending millions of poisonous serpents to do their work on the amassed armies. The serpents were deadly assassins that could get into even the most heavily guarded camps and target the tiefling leaders with their cruel fangs. Bewildered by the strange appearance of their enemies and the deadly tools at their disposal, the tieflings were forced to retreat to Saredrin, where the yuan-ti did not follow. After this stunning defeat and the purges of the Valhedrin court that followed, the Dominion would turn its attention to the north.

THE GREAT MIGRATIONS

At the time the Valhedrin were fighting the yuan-ti in the Blackscale Mountains, human tribes began building the first permanent towns in the fertile river valleys and on the coastal islands of southern Ambria. There are no written records of these earliest human settlements, and it is unclear if humans first emerged in this region or migrated to southern Ambria from ancient Seralia or the cities of northern Zangala. While the origins of the race are unknown, however, it is certain that southern Ambria was the cradle of human civilization.

By the fifth century after the Battle of the First Stone, the populations in the southern settlements were growing rapidly, driven by a steadily warming climate, the spread of agriculture, and the growth of cities. Ebernath, once little more than the enclave of an ancient Druidic sect, had grown into a bustling trade town, and other early towns were thriving as never before. During this time, human tribes began migrating north and west, following the retreating glaciers and the setting sun to find new lands and new opportunities.

Some of these tribes pushed northward, settling the Ambrian heartland and eventually building the Seven Cities of Anderland. Others moved west, founding the old city of Kor at the tip of the Emerlyn peninsula and Avennar on the southern coast of the Kingsmarch. These latter tribes pushed as far north as



the Durning Highlands, but they discovered that this wild, rugged place was already settled by tribes of savage hill men. It remains unclear whether the clansmen were native to the highlands or whether they were descended from even earlier human migrations.

Not all of these migrations were made by land. As the coastal cities grew in size and prosperity, trade between them intensified. In these early years, Ebernath was the trade empire, with merchant captains hugging the coasts in small, shallow-draft vessels between the ports of the Parthian Sea and as far west as Kor and Avennar. Eventually, these ships sailed even farther to the west and discovered the archipelago that would become the Dreaming Isles. The islands, like the Durning Highlands, were already inhabited, but the seagoing newcomers would integrate with the native tribes and create a new human nation.

This was a time of dramatic change for the race of men. The civilization of humans developed from humble beginnings and is only now approaching its pinnacle in Avennar, Seagarden, and the Seven Cities. The humans' racial diversification is even more remarkable than their cultural development. Most of the humans living in Ambria are descended from the common stock that first built cities in the south 500 years ago. But in that time, these common ancestors have spawned distinct racial groups: the lowlanders, highlanders, true-born, and saltbloods. In the last five centuries, the humans of Ambria have changed the land, but they have also been changed by it—not by its natural forces, but by its magic.

The early settlers who immigrated up the Imilbar River into the heartland found some of the richest, most fertile land in Ambria waiting for them. They settled all along the Imilbar and in the river valley between it and the Dural in the south. The verdant fields of the Imilbar river valley were a paradise that yielded endless food and bountiful shelter. The immigrants immediately set to work learning the land and how to grow on it, as well as building defenses from the goblin attacks that they feared would follow them.

Early days in the Imilbar river valley were difficult for the settlers as the goblins did come—in massive hordes. The goblins of the far north had never encountered humans before, but they believed the newcomers were weak and desired the bounties of their lands and villages. The goblinoid tribes were nomadic raiders: They had little agriculture of their own and viewed the rich southlands as a source of plunder, not of land to settle and cultivate. Even if they had succeeded in destroying the humans—who vigorously defended their new paradise—the goblins would not have settled the land and made it their own. They would have taken what they wanted and moved on. The humans beat them back time and again, however, and the goblin armies retreated to the north, to familiar lands and familiar ways.

Once the goblins had been driven off, the humans were left in peace to learn the land. It took time to

understand the farming and growing methods used, but the land was easy, the Druids wise, and the seeds already strong. So by the early years of the sixth century, the Imilbar river valley was a burgeoning farmland with abundant food and a peaceful people not plagued by goblins or any other constant foe.

SETTLEMENT OF THE WEST

As the humans of the Imilbar river valley were learning to cultivate their lands, others were beginning to settle the lands to the west. They set out along the southern coast of the Kingsmarch, building small settlements along the Horn and the Hound, the greatest of which would become the city of Avennar. Over the years, the villages multiplied, the few cities grew, and the tribal lands developed into a hundred petty kingdoms and principalities. The men of the Kingsmarch built forts, keeps, and armies to defend their domains and titles. The great rivers that divided the lands of the Kingsmarch also divided the people and the armies, and no unified nation would emerge between the Horn and the Hound. As the trueborn saying goes, “The Horn and the Hound are the only true kings in the Kingsmarch.”

The expansion of civilization requires abundant resources, and this need creates opportunities for both exploration and trade. Thus, as the cities grew in southern Ambria, the merchant captains of Ebernath sailed west past Avennar and the western edge of the mainland, eventually to discover the emerald archipelago they would name the Dreaming Isles. The islands were already sparsely populated by the Madoc tribesmen, but the two cultures learned to coexist quickly and with little violence. In a remarkably short time, the small port town of Seagarden emerged as one of the largest cities in the known lands and a new seagoing nation was born.

The tieflings, meanwhile, had been exploring the Emerlyn peninsula and finding it to their liking. They were not affected by the heat and humidity of the place, given the tropical climate of their homeland and the planetouched blood that coursed in their veins. They established a foothold on the southwestern coast and quickly occupied the old city of Kor. The city became more of a garrison as Valhedrin legions poured into the new land to secure it for the Dominion. They found little resistance, however; only a few small tribes of humans inhabited the place, and they were easily conquered by the warriors and fiends of Valhedar.

The two exploring cultures remained aware but apart until, in 581, a war galley from Ebernath happened upon three merchant ships bound from Valhedar to Kor. The Anderlars called a parley with the tiefling commanders, who knew that their small, flat-bottomed vessels were clearly outmatched by even a single war galley. The commander of the Anderlar ship, Chron Verrach, saw an opportunity in their encounter. The

ships set out for Kor, where Verrach—with the blessing of the merchant princes in Ebernath—met with the tieflings and negotiated one of the great treaties in the history of the world. Armed with lies about an enormous fleet waiting in the Parthian Sea, Captain Verrach convinced the tieflings that it was in their best interest to avoid war with Ebernath and the Seven Cities.

Instead Verrach suggested that the tieflings should attack to the west, where the warring clans of the Kingsmarch would provide little resistance thanks to their internal conflicts. The tieflings were surprised that the humans were so eager to bring war to their brothers, and in fact had little interest in supporting a war effort across the Summer Sea against an enemy with a markedly superior navy. An enmity older than time abided in the hearts of the tieflings and drew their eyes west to the celestial-blooded trueborn of the Kingsmarch. So, in the year 582 with a single stroke, the Treaty of Kor was enacted, sparing the humans of Anderland from the war that would consume the Kingsmarch for the next 400 years.

Chron Verrach lived for another 52 years and became one of the wealthiest and most influential merchant princes in Ebernath. As he aged he came to appreciate fineries and beauty of all kinds. Under his patronage and the direction of the remaining Druids, Ebernath was transformed from a sprawling port town into a thing of beauty. Perfectly kept gardens and parks were interspersed throughout the city, and Verrach used his wealth to commission great works of art and architecture. Legend has it he fitted all the ships in his fleet with sails of spun seagold, and the opulence of the palaces and parks he built leaves little doubt that it is true.

Verrach was also instrumental in forging closer ties with the Dreaming Isles, despite the nations’ rivalry in matters of trade and commerce. Throughout the remainder of his life, Verrach remained convinced that Seagarden, Ebernath, and the other great city-states of the human lands should continue to build up their navies. Verrach believed it was crucial to lend some substance to the bluff that had won him the Treaty of Kor. Eventually, he feared, the tieflings would break the agreement and attack the wealthy heartland of Ambria if the city-states did not give them ample reason not to do so.

CONFLICT IN THE WEST

For more than 10 years after the signing of the Treaty of Kor, the tieflings consolidated their position on the Emerlyn peninsula and readied their forces for a massive assault on the nations of the Kingsmarch. It was necessary to build roads and forts throughout the swampy peninsula to make large-scale troop movements possible, so an immediate assault was not a possibility. The tieflings did not expect it to take a decade

to clear out the land. Even the new princes of Ebernath thought it strange that the war they had negotiated had failed to come for so long.

Eventually, however, the buildup ended and the tieflings marched on the Kingsmarch, intent on conquering its divided kingdoms and establishing the Valhedrin Dominion as the premier power on the continent. Deluin and a few other realms in the Kingsmarch were aware of the mounting threat from Emerlyn, but they had been unable to organize a sufficiently unified response to it.

During the decade of buildup on the Emerlyn peninsula, the realms of the Kingsmarch had been warring amongst themselves without regard to the tiefling threat. This had been the way of the Kingsmarch for more than a hundred years, with its many lords each claiming dominion over the fertile valleys and farmlands between the Horn and the Hound. Some had tried to unite the clans for the common good, but there were too many lords and too much bad blood between them to establish any permanent peace. One clan, Deluin, had been successful at uniting several clans under the banner of their king, Enir. Wise Enir traced his lineage back to the first chieftains that settled the lands of the west and built the city of Avennar.

King Enir had managed to unite many of the clans from the Horn River in the west all the way to the Shield River in the east. Under his banner, a gold leopard stalking on a purple background, the southern realms united to form the first true kingdom of the Kingsmarch. As the largest and greatest realm of the Kingsmarch, it fell to Deluin to bear the brunt of the Valhedrin attack.

After consolidating their positions in northern Emerlyn, the tieflings pressed on toward the Shield River, which they called the Azanvor, at the beginning of spring in the year 593; there they met the knights of the Kingsmarch in battle. If not for the united clans of the fledgling kingdom of Deluin, the tieflings would have rolled through the Kingsmarch and been at the Hound by summer. The first battles were small, as the Valhedrin legions and their fiendish allies probed the clans, searching for weakness. Deluin, on the other hand, threw everything it had against the tieflings, sealing off the Kingsmarch by defending the Shield's fords and bridges. The first two years were marked by such activity.

But in 596, the world exploded as the tieflings crossed the Shield for the first time and rained a tempest of arcane magic upon the Kingsmarch, whose people had never witnessed such a display. The tieflings and their allies summoned forth the hosts of hell to do battle, and the Valhedrin legions were able to cross the Shield and threaten the trueborn's homelands. The grasslands west of the Shield are still scarred by the unholy fires brought by the devils at the vanguard of this disciplined army. The fiends fought day and night, attacking the armies in their camps and forcing the men of the Kingsmarch to rotate fresh troops to the front on

a daily basis.

Despite this tiring onslaught, the Kingsmarch knights were able to hold onto their territory. The tieflings had never fought mounted enemies and were completely unprepared for the swiftness and tactics employed by the men of the Kingsmarch. Their weapons did not have the reach to take down the mounted assailants, and their legions were flanked time and again by the more mobile Kingsmarch cavalry. More importantly, perhaps, the celestial patrons of the Kingsmarch nations fought beside their children against the tieflings—sometimes literally, but more often through their chosen paladins and disciples.

By 600, the first tiefling invasion of the Kingsmarch was at an end. The Valhedrin legions and their demonic allies retreated back across the Shield, establishing camps just across the river from their enemies. They decided that a time of consolidation was at hand, especially since minotaurs and other threats from the lower Stormfells threatened to spill out into the territory they had acquired.

THE LAST WAR

While the conflict between giants and dwarves raged for hundreds of years, it was marked by only a few periods of truly intense and prolonged fighting. The last such period was in the closing years of the seventh century, a time the dwarves eventually called the Last War.

After hundreds of years exploring their mountain homes and building great cities and citadels, the giants of the Stormfells once again turned their attentions to the dwarves who lived in the low mountains and valleys beneath them. The giant clans had established their territories, mostly in the northern Stormfells, and had also subjugated the minotaurs and ogres that called the mountains home. With these new thralls and their preoccupation with establishing themselves in their new home waning, the giants found themselves driven to destroy the dwarves that blighted their homes.

The dwarves, meanwhile, spent their first centuries on the surface of the world girding themselves against a future attack. The dwarves devoted their trade and craft to preparing for another open war with the giants. They built an incredible array of trapped bridges, deadfalls, and other deterrents to an attacking force. They began to hoard food in small, defensible caves that could not be reached by the giants. Dwarven children were drilled in survival techniques, and great palisades were built to protect surface communities from a giant invasion. Huge rope nets were woven to deter the hurled boulders that are a favorite tactic of giant warriors.

It was during these long centuries of preparation that the dwarves first began to explore caves and underground tunnels. While building their cities and clanholds on the slopes of the great peaks, the dwarves dug deeper and deeper in the earth, searching for the pre-



cious metals, gem stones, and other treasures that they so loved.

Long ago, the fire giants had discovered a tear in the rock of a deep cavern that spilled forth flame and molten rock from the elemental plane of fire. The fire giants called this powerful eldritch well the Earth Forge. They considered it sacred and with it they created many mighty artifacts of power. When dwarven miners from the kingdom of Grimhal discovered the Earth Forge, the fire giants were incensed. They had listened with growing hatred and rage at the dwarves' incessant pecking at the rock above, and the desecration of their most sacred site spurred them to war. The fire giants spilled up from below and nearly destroyed the dwarven kingdoms. But Hael Ironforge, the king of Grimhal, unified the dwarven clans under a single banner for the first time and drove the fire giants back into the deep underground.

Despite the dwarves' name for the conflict, the Last War would hardly mark the end of violence between giants and dwarves. Nevertheless, Hael Ironforge and the Storm King signed an uneasy truce, and for a time there was peace between the two races. The dwarves resumed their explorations of the tunnels and caverns below the mountains south of the Torvun River and expanded the three kingdoms that had become a single nation. The dwarves built great watchtowers and holdfasts on the northern slopes from which they could monitor their enemies' movements. The

giants withdrew to the northern Stormfells, claiming the tallest mountains in the range and becoming rulers of all they surveyed. In truth, they considered the dwarves in the distance little threat, but as the decades and centuries passed their constant presence would come to be seen as an insult to the giants who ruled beneath the sky.

The whole of dwarven society let out a collective sigh at the giants' retreat. The psychological pressure of the last 500 years was released in a relatively short time, and change spread through dwarven society quickly. Warriors laid down their arms to spend time with families, the younger generations began to explore art, culture, and craftsmanship like never before, and many of the elder dwarves finally drifted off into a peaceful and eternal slumber. Many could not let go of their warlike ideals, however, and they soon found dwarven society turning against them, as these diehards reminded them of a recent past they would like to forget.

Meanwhile, the giants retreated to their homes, having tired of a war that in the end had gained them almost nothing. The Storm King's already loose grip on the clans weakened and many withdrew into their own territories. The giants' thrall races, the ogres and minotaurs, also began to diverge in their attitudes toward their masters. The ogres become loyal servants in the aftermath of the short war, helping the giants to defend themselves in their weakened state and voluntarily building large monuments and halls to the masters that

they came to revere. The minotaurs, on the other hand, began to express their independence more and more. Rebellions erupted in the peaks, and the minotaurs became outlaws and refugees.

Within a decade of the forging of the truce between giants and dwarves, the majority of the minotaur clans had broken away from the Storm King's rule. They were able to make a modest and dangerous life for themselves by raiding giant outposts and keeping to small, mobile bands. Eventually, though, the giants decided it was time to do something about these pests. They began to hunt the minotaurs, slaughtering their bands and killing their leaders.

The minotaurs lacked the unity and discipline needed to develop an effective response, and within a few short years the minotaur culture of the Stormfells had faded into history. The minotaurs scattered to the four corners of Ambria, some making peace and settling amongst the dwarves, some drifting into the Durning Highlands or northern Anderland, and others joining the frost giants in exile in the icy north. By the middle part of the eighth century, the minotaurs had become a people without a nation. Today, even small minotaur settlements are incredibly rare, and most minotaurs have been forced to build lives for themselves in the lands of the other races.

THE GOBLIN WARS

In the early years of the eighth century, the civilization of Anderland was emerging into a golden age. The Seven Cities had grown to become thriving trade centers, and the countless towns and villages spread across the vast plains were themselves prospering as never before in their brief history. This prosperity would be threatened, however, when goblinoid raiders began

pouring south across the frontier. The goblinoids set upon the villages and farms of northern Anderland with iron and flame, leaving the land burning and drenched in blood. The people of Anderland were, by and large, peaceful farmers and herders, and they were ill-prepared for such an assault. For a time, it seemed that the goblinoids might burn their way all the way down the Imilbar to the shores of the Parthian Sea.

After a brutal winter stained red with blood and tainted by the smoke of a hundred burning villages, the attacks began to dwindle and finally stopped altogether. The goblinoid tribes returned to the north in the first months of spring and Anderland was spared further destruction. The princes of the Seven Cities breathed a collective sigh of relief. They knew it was no war host or great hero of Anderland that had saved them—it was the goblinoid tribes' own lack of vision, ambition, and discipline. The goblinoids' lack of interest in true conquest was a welcome weakness, but all knew that the day might come when a leader would unite the tribes and lead them south to conquer and occupy, rather than just pillage and plunder.

AN UNEASY PEACE

With the the goblinoid threat to Anderland ended, at least temporarily, the princes of the Seven Cities turned their attention to defense against future attacks. Four veteran commanders that had served in the war—and, according to some, dishonored themselves—were tasked with building and garrisoning forts along the northern frontier. The men would form the Griffin Company and learn the ways of the wilderness so that they might defend Anderland from the savage threats that loomed beyond its borders. In a year's time the four fortresses of the Griffin Company—Firebrand, Blackhall, Fall's Point, and Forest Edge—had been completed and the rangers began their training.

Just to the east an event that would change the world forever was quietly taking place deep in Sildanyr, close to the northern peaks of the Morningstar Mountains. A portal from the fey realm of Itheria opened. Dawn elves filed through the portal, looking



with wonder and awe at the pristine forest they saw around them. Some said it was as if they had never left Itheria. Others believed they had found a new home and immediately bonded with the land. The night elves came as well, not as settlers but stragglers and tagalongs, although not unwelcomed by their kin.

The elves were not the only fey to slip through the first portal and those that followed. Gnomes came as well, eager to explore a new world. The gnomes were more affected by the strange world than the elves—as soon as one set foot into Sildanyr, he felt an intimate connection with the forest and the world.

So it was that these new races slipped unnoticed into the world as warring men and goblinoids settled into new lives just outside their forest home.

A TIME OF PROSPERITY

The close of the eighth century and the dawn of the ninth was a time of relative peace and prosperity throughout the known lands of Eadar. Border conflicts flared up occasionally in the Blackscale Mountains, the plains of Dor Erlon, or along the Torvun River. But for a time no great wars ravaged the world and the emerging nations began to focus on building new civilizations.

Great architectural marvels were constructed in Ebernath, Valhedar, and Seagarden. The arts and learning flourished, as the gifted of all nations sought new ways to express and understand their world. The dwarves of the Three Kingdoms crafted artifacts of power and beauty beneath the mountains, the giants built castles in the sky, the elves raised cities in the trees, and the knights and bards of the Kingsmarch tempered the feuds of a hundred warring nations with the ideals of chivalry. Across the known lands, great monuments to civilization were created, monuments that would surely endure forever.

DISCOVERY OF TAMERLAND

For more than 300 years, the merchants and seamen of Ebernath and the Dreaming Isles had argued the existence of a mythical, primeval land far to the west. As time went on, powerful wizards visited this land using magic and brought back tales of boundless riches and untouched resources. This land remained a legend to most, however, until Maruphel of Seagarden made the first voyage across the Sunset Reach and landed on the shores of Tamerland.

Maruphel set sail from the Dreaming Isles in the year 967 and did not return for five years. When he did, it created a sensation and news of the new land spread like wildfire. It did not take long before explorers,

adventurers, wizards, and criminals were making their way to the newly established port of Landsgate in hopes of finding riches and freedom in the new land.

A fort was built on the delta where the Caracas River fell into the Sunset Reach. Expeditions into the land's interior made first contact with the lizardfolk, who were the most populous of the continent's sentient races. The lizardfolk were suspicious of the newcomers, but this distrust rarely led to bloodshed. The overriding feelings were of curiosity and adventure, and so a friendly, but distant, relationship was forged between the explorers and the lizardfolk tribes.

In the past 30 years, Landsgate has grown into a small frontier town, guarded by high wooden walls and the natural barrier of the delta. Explorers mount regular expeditions into the pristine forests of Tamerland and the Wildermark Mountains, bringing back gold and tales of wondrous monsters and eldritch wells of a power not seen in Ambria or Zangala. The new continent is a land of untold wealth and promise, but its riches are already breeding greed, crime, and intrigue on the muddy, twisting streets of Landsgate.

THE KINGSMARCH INVASION

In 995, with all eyes turned west toward Tamerland, the tieflings amassed their legions at the Shield River and once again invaded the Kingsmarch. Both the leaders and troops seemed to have a new purpose, an energy that had not been present for centuries. They fought furiously for their new fiendish generals, who were seen with advisors that looked not quite human. Rumors began to trickle through the Kingsmarch of yuan-ti emissaries in the courts of Valhedar, and an alliance between the two evil nations was said to be the beginning of the end for the nations of Ambria. Still, there was no real evidence of such a pact, and the nations of the Kingsmarch were concentrating on defending their lands rather than rooting out the truth of these fantastic, and frightening, claims.

As the tieflings pressed into the Kingsmarch, it appeared that Avennar would be sacked by the fiendish legions for the first time in its history. King Enir II, king of Deluin and the most powerful leader west of the Stormfells, did not have an answer to the tieflings' renewed passion and sense of urgency. It was then that a hero emerged from the ranks of the Knights Adamant, a religious order that represented the kingdoms' last hope. The knights had ridden forth from Avennar to meet the Korish mercenaries, Valhedrin legions, and infernal host on the field of battle.

The charge of the Knights Adamant smashed through the lines of Korish sellswords and pikemen, but

dark clouds gathering over the Valhedrin host began to blot out the light of dawn and cast the field in shadow. The legions parted as a great black gate opened in the middle of the plain, and the Knights Adamant reigned in their chargers when they saw the infernal things that shambled through the gate on twisted legs and took to the air on dark wings. The disciples of the order stepped forward to unleash the wrath of their goddess on the summoned fiends, but the knights of the vanguard began to buckle. The infernal horde swarmed over them, and they began to break.

And then a young, female knight, barely more than an initiate, rode onto the field carrying the banner of the Knights Adamant and sounding the call to arms on a great, golden trumpet. Valia Perenor, watching as defeat reached for her brothers and sisters with razor claws and blasphemous magic, had ripped the banner and horn from the grasp of a herald standing beside her on the hill. With whispered prayers on her lips and a song of praise in her heart, she rode into the very heart of the infernal horde. Spells and arrows rained down on her, and the air was black with the beating wings of the fiends that tried to bring her down. And still she rode, waving her banner and sounding her trumpet. When the Knights Adamant rallied and pressed their attack, it was the fiends and the legions behind them that broke, vanishing in the morning air like the memories of a nightmare, throwing down their pikes and bows and fleeing the field.

The legions of Valhedar were defeated on the fields of Dor Erlon and a new legend was born in the Kingsmarch. But this victory was only the first battle in what promises to be a long and relentless war.

CURRENT DAY

It is the 997th year after the Battle of the First Stone. The dwarves and giants of the Stormfells stand opposite one another in an uneasy truce, battling the fire giants that periodically boil up out of the depths of the earth. The tieflings are once again at war for the Kingsmarch, seeking a prize that only they know.

The elves in Sildanyr are engaged in a full-fledged civil war, as the humans to the west recover from their own internal bloodshed.

And the new continent of Tamerland reveals its secrets day by day to any adventurer puissant enough to withstand its primal and untouched dangers.

The wise say that all things must pass, and even during this flowering of civilization, the seeds of darkness are sown. In Sildanyr, the court of the elven king and queen mirror the fey courts of Itheria. But the night elves have realized that they will never rule in this new world and many have grown resentful. A new goddess, called Lathail, has emerged among the night elves, and she teaches her children that they must take what is theirs by birthright if the dawn

elves refuse to surrender it. As the Valhedrin legions crash against the valiant defenders of the Kingsmarch, the sorcerous dominars begin practicing more brazen rituals. The pacts they forge with the fiends they summon become ever darker, and the great volcano that looms over their city begins to rumble. In the Stormfells, the dwarves of Grimhal dig ever deeper and they have discovered worse things than fire giants in the deep places of the earth.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANDERLAND

The chapter presents background and setting details of Anderland, the heartland of the continent of Ambria. The text of this section is designated as closed content.

THE HEARTLAND

Anderland occupies a vast swath of central Ambria, descending from the highlands south of the Icehammer Front. The region spreads as far west as the Stormfells and is bordered on the east by the carefully guarded borders of Sildanyr, the great elven forest. Though large, Ambria is not densely populated, its residents instead preferring to live in scattered villages that lie within the boundaries marked by the Seven Cities of Anderland.

Each of these city-states is ruled by one of the princes of Anderland. Though loosely allied, the princes are more concerned with the welfare of their own people than with the well being of their neighbors. While a stronger alliance might benefit all of the rulers in the region, the princes have difficulty seeing this, as each hopes to eventually unite all of Anderland under his or her own banner. For now, the city-states work together when it is convenient and help defend one another from threats when they can, but it is a rare prince who will put his own lands at risk for another.

Anderland is blessed with many natural resources, including forests of towering oaks and supple maples, a wealth of natural springs and flowing rivers, and fertile plains that bloom in the spring and bring forth great bounties in summer and fall. Only the steppes and highland regions near the Icehammer Front can be considered harsh terrain, while the rest of the region is domi-

nated by gently rolling plains and expansive stretches of forest waiting to be harvested. The river valleys of Anderland, especially, are favored by farmers, despite the risk of flooding when the spring rains come. Many claim that the river spirits fuel the growth of their crops, and the enormous fruits and vegetables produced near these rivers seem to bear this out.

Perhaps the most notable feature within Anderland is the Goldspring Sea. This vast body of water is fed by powerful subterranean springs, producing water that is cool and fresh even in the height of summer. More importantly, the springs are rich in natural minerals and exotic metals, which coalesce as a fine, golden foam near the eastern shore of the sea. Once harvested and refined, seagold fetches a very high price from craftsmen of all types, as well as from practitioners of the magical arts. The princes of Anderland have worked out an extensive network of trade contracts governing how this priceless resource is handled and its distribution is as fair and equitable as possible.

The weather in the Anderlands is milder than in many areas, but unpredictable and violent weather patterns have led its inhabitants to carefully venerate the spirits of the storm and their relatives. Winter brings bitter cold and deadly ice storms down from the Icehammer Front, followed in the spring by unpredictable thunderstorms and torrential rains that fill the Goldspring Sea to overflowing. With the change of seasons from spring to summer, the storms die down to be replaced with hot, humid days in the central and southern portions of Anderland, while the northern highlands enjoy a relatively mild season of warm sunshine and calm winds.

The last harvest of summer, though, marks the beginning of another storm season. The cooling air that sweeps down from the Icehammer Front brings with it swirling vortices that become dangerous tornadoes



when they reach the central plains. Over the centuries, those who live in the path of these deadly storms have adapted, building their houses in the sides of hills or at the bottoms of valleys to avoid the worst danger from the tornadoes.

Whatever the season, however, the weather in Anderland is prone to sudden and unpredictable changes. Surprising warm spells in the deeps of winter transform blankets of snow into slushy quagmires, and the warm breath of spring sometimes becomes the frigid fangs of a northern wolf without warning. The halflings of Anderland perhaps sum up the weather best: “Wear your spring tunic, but keep your winter cloak handy.”

Though most of central Anderland is well patrolled by the princes’ soldiers, its borders are fraught with peril. The Pale Forest in the north disgorges packs of goblins and their allies with frightening frequency, while the forces of Anlar Icefang continue to swell beneath the banner of the winter wolf in the Icehammer Front. In the east, the conflict of the elves threatens to spill over into Anderland, as night elf patrols begin venturing beyond the borders of the elven lands to seek out suitable sites to build their secret fortresses.

Though the dwarves of the Stormfells are ostensibly neutral to the dealings of the men of Anderland, the fire giants who dwell in the deepest caverns of this great mountain range are not. Their periodic raids to procure food and other goods to take back to their subterranean

homes are becoming more frequent, leading many to wonder if another giant war is not brewing beneath the dwarven homelands.

Just as troublesome is the rise of strange creatures in the swamps of northern Emerlyn. These creatures periodically swarm out of the peninsula and rampage through southern Anderland like a plague of reptilian locusts. Though they are so far easily dealt with by the princes’ patrols, their numbers are increasing and their attacks against Anderland are becoming more frequent.

In all, the threats to Anderland, coupled with the unpredictable weather and dangerous tornado season, make it a country quite open to adventurers and others who might be able to lend a hand with its troubles. Though the princes watch closely for any trouble makers, those who swear fealty to the Thorned Thrones are treated well and rewarded richly for their service.

HISTORY

Legends say that Druids led the first human immigrants into the fertile river valleys of central Ambria from Ebernath and the coastal cities on the Parthian Sea. Under the watchful eyes and wise guidance of the Druids, the human tribes traveled north through central Ambria in search of new and bountiful lands to call their own. They settled at last near the shores of the Goldspring Sea, where they found a wealth

of mineral resources and fertile land that supported crops and livestock with equal ease.

Comfortable in their new homes, the men of central Ambria grew in number. The lands were rich with food, allowing the men to expand their numbers greatly over the generations, until the first city could no longer support them. The Druids grew wary of the effect this might have on the surrounding land and counseled the leaders of the powerful city of Seaward to spread their numbers across the land, to make room for all.

It was agreed that the Druids would lead six groups of men and women into the wilderness. These would form new settlements and all would work together in their times of need to support one another as they were able. The plan was a good one and the Druids were happy with their success—they were able to expand the territories of men without placing undue strain on nature. It seemed as if Ambria would stretch on forever before them, its vast plains like an undulating green sea that called to the explorer in them all.

In time, the Druids and their followers founded six new cities. Though there were perilous dangers in the land, the magic of the nature priests and the strength of their followers were enough to drive their foes back. The Seven Cities—the first being Seaward—rose in Ambria, forming a circle that would define the perimeter of human lands for generations.

But the monstrous inhabitants of the northern frontier proved to be a grave danger for the new settlements. Goblinoids, ogres, and giants thundered down from the Icehammer Front and the Pale Forest, crashing into the first human settlements and laying them to waste. Within the span of a few short years, the work of decades was shattered and the men of the region found themselves again at the mercy of powerful, implacable foes. Their farms destroyed, their livestock taken by the humanoids, the men of what would one day be called Anderland despaired.

The giants and evil humanoids were raiders, however, and never stayed in the south for long. When they withdrew, the humans of Anderland learned to defend themselves. They built walls of timber and stone around their villages, traded with the dwarves for steel weapons, and formed militias that taught young men and women the ways of war.

In the wake of the largest goblinoid incursion into Anderland, in the eighth century, the princes of the Seven Cities sponsored the creation of the Griffin Company, a small army of rangers tasked with defending Anderland from future attacks. Forts were built all along the northern frontier and the people of Anderland sent their children north to man the walls. For more than 200 years, the Griffin Company has been remarkably successful in preventing goblinoid incursions across the frontier—or, when prevention failed, punishing those responsible.

While Anderland has enjoyed an extended period of relative peace, the rangers of the Griffin Company are

beginning to whisper that the greatest threat yet is rising in the frigid peaks of the Frostfells and Icehammer Front. They speak of vast armies of goblinoids, orcs, and giants massing under the banner of the winter wolf and plead with the princes of the Seven Cities for increased support and new recruits.

THE FARING FOLK

While men struggled against the humanoids and scattered the seeds of civilization into the winds, the halflings endured their own quiet war. The goblins of the Pale Forest stalked and harried the Faring Folk wherever they traveled, enslaving those they captured or hauling them off to be used for food in the cold, dark winters of the north. As their numbers dwindled, the halflings banded together for protection. The size of their wagons increased, as well, becoming more heavily armored and less likely to fall prey to a small group of bandits or goblins.

It was during this time that the Faring Folk first encountered the newly arrived men. The two races traded frequently over the years, forging a bond of trust between civilized people in an uncivilized land. This bond allowed the halflings to prosper, as they traded their knowledge of the land and its inhabitants for the swords and Druidic magic of the humans. Together, they drove the goblins and their giant allies back to the borders of the Pale Forest and the peaks of the Icehammer Front. Freed from immediate concerns over survival, the halflings formed a trade route between the cities of men in the north, transporting goods and news across Anderland.

THE ELVES

As men expanded their territory, their crude villages and tilled farmlands became known to the Sildanyr elves. Curious about these new arrivals so near their own homelands, the elves sent their scouts to watch the humans. Over the years, the cautious elves began initiating trade with humans living in the east, exchanging their own goods for the farmed vegetables and domesticated animals of the humans. Surprisingly, the elves and men along the border were able to hold their distrust in check, preventing any bloodshed between their peoples and fostering a healthy trade.

Near the same time, the Druids that had built an enclave at Ebernath forged their own links with the elven community. They offered an exchange of their magical talents and secrets of the natural world for elven craftsmanship. In time, this arrangement became more favorable to the elves than the simple exchanges of food with the mainland and soon elven ships were making regular trade voyages to the island. Over the course of the next few years, the elves became convinced by the Druids to funnel all their trade through the island. Thanks to their new allies, the Druids were once again

in a position of power within the lands of men.

The conflict between the elves has thus far not affected Anderland. The Anderlars continue their trade unabated, trafficking with both the dawn elves and night elves. One potential threat still looms in the north, however, as some extremist night elves consider expanding their territory beyond Sildanyr and into lands now held by men. Should this come to pass, the battle would be fierce and both sides would suffer greatly as the greater numbers of men in the region faced off against the magically adept elves.

THE PRESENT

The men of Anderland are united by heritage, but divided by their determination to maintain their independence and avoid the sort of costly, albeit temporary, unification they faced during the goblin wars. The number of small cities and villages has increased through the years, expanding the territory once encompassed by the Seven Cities. Though none of the newer towns are as large as the original seven, they have developed their own specialties and are thriving.

The cities, towns, and villages of Anderland trade with one another, but tend to use river travel rather than overland routes to transport their goods. This, combined with the lack of a central ruler to pay for such projects, means there are few roads through Anderland. Most of the few existing trade routes are little more than rutted tracks through the wilderness, guarded only by members of the Griffin Company who can be spared from the fierce battles in the north. In turn, the lack of roads leads to an even greater isolation for the cities and villages of Anderland—few make trips outside their home areas now, preferring to stay where they are rather than brave the open spaces.

In the north, the halflings still travel from city to city, buying goods from one village and selling them at another. Now, however, they face renewed threats as the scouting forces of Anlar Icefang descend from the mountains. The halflings do provide support to the Griffin Company when they can, but even the vaunted legion of rangers is hard-pressed to deal with the myriad threats storming toward them from the north. As they construct one fortress to withstand the assaults of their enemies, another is set ablaze by goblin raiders or leveled by stones thrown by frost giants.

PEOPLE

Two main groups populate Anderland. The Anderlar, lowland humans, make up the bulk of the population. The halflings are a sizeable minority of nomads scattered throughout the region. There is considerable trade and contact between the two groups, but their cultures remain as distinct as their appearances.

ANDERLARS

The Anderlars, those lowlander humans who settled this region, have grown to be a prosperous and populous people. Dark of hair and fair of skin, they have maintained their distinctive look even while spreading themselves throughout central Ambria. Though it is believed the Anderlars descended from the same human tribes as the men of the Kingsmarch and Durning Highlands, these origins are now lost to the knowledge of men. The Druids whisper that, in fact, the Anderlars are descended from a much older race that was driven from their homeland by the barbarians that eventually settled the Kingsmarch.

In general, Anderlars are sturdy men and women who wear their hair long in the winter and cut it short in the summer heat. Men favor beards during the fall and winter months, but the humidity and presence of pests (such as mosquitoes and fleas) during the warmer months encourage them to shave during the Bringing of the Green each spring.

Blue and green eyes are most common amongst the Anderlars, with black or gray eyes being regarded as a symbol of nobility. Though the origins of this belief are lost to the past, it has held true—the greatest heroes of Anderland are said to have had eyes the color of coal, and each of the current rulers of the Seven Cities is likewise blessed with slate or black eyes.

THE FARING FOLK

Scattered throughout Anderland, the halflings are found in the lands from the northern frontier to the coastal cities. They travel frequently in large clans, their ponies hauling their enormous wagons over the hills. While the wagons are far from speedy, they are well armored and the halflings have long-since learned to fight to protect them from goblinoids, brigands, and other attackers.

The Faring Folk stay on the move because they believe it is easier to defend their wagons and caravans than it would be to protect stationary homes. They have seen the struggle the Griffin Company deals with to keep their fortresses intact and wish no part of it for themselves. Instead, they migrate constantly, hoping to stay ahead of their enemies and avoid problems with other peoples.

These travelers also provide a valuable service by trading with villages and cities as they move from place to place. This frees the Anderlars from developing their own trade routes through the inhospitable places and spurs the economy of Anderland. Though trade is not fast, the halflings buy in large quantities, ensuring steady trade throughout the region.



SETTLEMENTS

There are seven large metropolises in Anderland, a dozen or more smaller cities, scores of towns, and countless villages and hamlets. This does not even begin to count the small collections of farmers that have banded together for mutual protection, nor does it take into account the forts of the Griffin Company, the most successful of which are quickly becoming small towns in their own right. Due to its vast size, Anderland is not crowded, but the area has clearly been tamed by men.

In general, the Seven Cities of Anderland are home to roughly 30,000 people each. Ringed by tall walls and guarded by fierce warriors, these towns appear strong enough to ward off virtually any attack. Seaward held off the massed might of the goblinoids and their giant allies centuries ago and, having increased in size and strength since then, is probably ready to put down any army foolish enough to march against it.

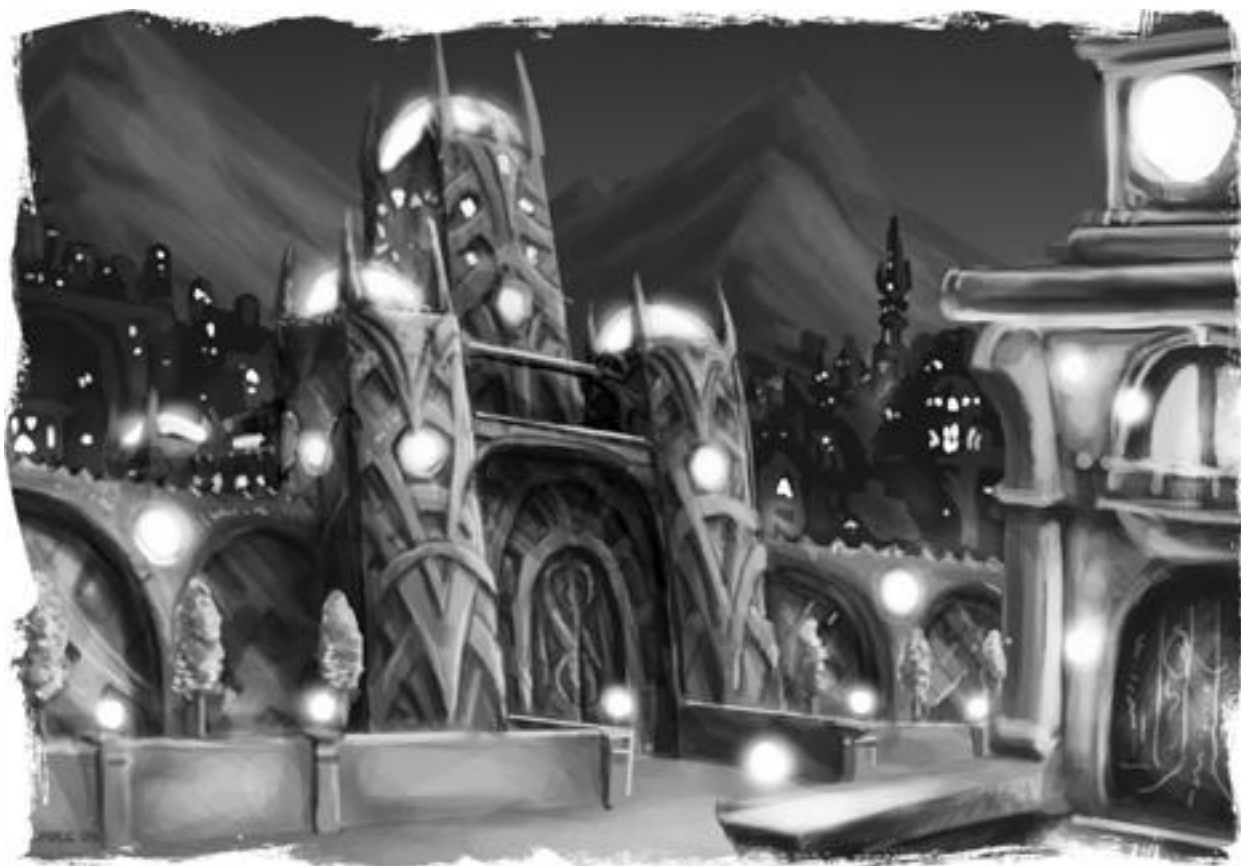
Smaller cities are walled as well, but rely more heavily on prevention than their strength of arms. These cities all lie within the ring formed by the Seven Cities and rely heavily on the lords of those cities to protect them from attack. If a determined foe ever punched through the defenses of the Seven Cities, they would find the interior of Anderland ripe for the taking, despite the strength of arms and determination of the Anderlars. Several lords of the cities have begun urging the small-

er cities to step up their defenses, but the cost of doing so can be prohibitive, especially when danger seems remote. This may change now that Anlar Icefang is starting to march, however.

Towns are normally scattered collections of farmsteads, craftsmen, and the businesses they support. Walls may exist, but given the agricultural base of the region, it is likely that most of the inhabitants of the town would live beyond its walls on their farmland, rendering such defenses moot. Like the smaller cities, they rely heavily on their larger neighbors for support and protection in times of need. Town militias are usually capable of putting down attacks by bandits or a rogue band of goblinoids, but a determined attacker with a decent force could rip through them easily.

Villages, with inhabitants numbering in the scores, are of two types: agricultural and mercantile. Agricultural villages tend to be larger and often center on communal storehouses and granaries that the farmers can use to store and sell their goods. The farmers are so scattered, however, that there is little chance of quickly coming to one another's aid in time of emergency. More than one farmstead has been destroyed by a quick raid by the enemies of Anderland, its inhabitants unable to call for help when they needed it most.

As fiercely independent as their barbarian ancestors, many Anderlar farmers live quietly on their own land, far from cities or villages of any kind. These iso-



lated families are impossible to count but can be found throughout Anderland. In heavily forested regions, they become woodcutters and haul loads of lumber to trade in the market towns for what they need in food and clothing. Farmers, on the other hand, dot the rolling plains and are almost completely self-sufficient. They prefer to be left alone and there are large, extended families living on these farmsteads that have not interacted with outsiders in dozens of years. Such isolation leaves these farmers in danger from enemies, but most of them find the risk worth the solitude and peace they have attained through their lifestyle.

Most construction in Anderland is done with wood or mud and wattle. The numerous forests dotting Anderland provide ample building supplies and the actions of the remaining Druids keep the forests growing strong. In the cities and metropolises, stone construction is more common, especially as relations with the dwarves continue to warm, enabling the wealthy to purchase quarried stone of the highest quality. Seagold, as well, plays an important part in the construction of estates or government buildings, both for reinforcement and ornamentation.

Most of the older cities of Anderland, including the Seven Cities, were laid out by the Druids. Because of this, they have a circular, organic style that is rarely seen in other construction. Central parks form the hubs

of these cities and stands of trees bring bursts of green life throughout.

EBERNATH

As their role in the affairs of men began to diminish, the Druids returned to the enclave they had established at Ebernath in ancient days. Though not large by the standards of the day, Ebernath has since grown into a true city that possesses great magical and mercantile power and influence. The city has played a prominent role in the affairs of men for centuries.

Through their magic, the Druids of Ebernath reshaped the entire island, transforming its once barren and rocky surface into a lush paradise of wild growth. Having integrated so well with nature, Ebernath is hardly visible from the shore. Massive trees grow wild around the city and further shield it from view, and the walls of the city are fashioned from living wood, further heightening the camouflage. Wizards, sorcerers, spirit adepts, and bards have, in recent years, added their magic to that wrought by the Druids, and Ebernath is one of the most awe-inspiring sites to be found anywhere in Eadar.

Ebernath is open to all spellcasters who wish to study with the Panthic Order, and the city also serves as a major mercantile port. Trading ships from Sildanyr, Valhedar, and the Dreaming Isles are common sights in

the Parthian Sea, and Ebernath features one of the most cosmopolitan cultures of the known lands. From the time of the original Druidic enclave, the people of Ebernath have preferred trade and diplomacy to war. The merchant-princes who rule the city have been successful in securing treaties with the lords of many lands, even Valhedar, but most believe that these agreements are backed with the threat of arcane force presented by the island city's powerful spellcasters.

ELNARIA

Rising above the rushing waters where the Frostflow crashes into the thunderous span of the Torvun River, Elnaria is a proud and wealthy city. The city is named for the famed trader Elnarik, who not only forged some of the first trade agreements with the Faring Folk, but who was also responsible for designing Anderland's currency. If you cannot find it anywhere else in Anderland, there is a good chance it can be found in Elnaria.

As with the other great cities of Anderland, Elnaria was constructed for defense as well as hospitality. The entire city rests atop a massive span of bedrock at the junction of the two rivers. It can be approached in only one of two directions, both of which are heavily guarded by the soldiers of the city watch. Though there has been some fear in the past of giants raining boulders down on the city in an attempt to tumble its walls into the water, the engineers claim the city's foundation is strong enough to support the city through even the direst of calamities.

Because of its location in the far north of Anderland, Elnaria is not normally a stop for the traditional traders and merchants from the more hospitable southern climes. Instead, Elnaria has its own merchant houses that specialize in procuring the goods produced in the north—often from the Faring Folk—and transporting them south, where they are then distributed throughout Anderland. Thus, Elnaria is a supplier of exotic goods to the rest of Anderland, but is not much of a consumer. It maintains its own food stores thanks to deals struck with the many farmers of the area and uses its wealth to purchase some of the finest mercenary units to be found in Ambria. Like Riversend, Elnaria is a haven for adventurers, who can always find work with the relic hunters and the merchants who will purchase any exotic item they can find.

LARAKIS

Where the Dural River enters the Parthian Sea, Larakis serves as one of two major seaports for Ambria. Its sheltered bay provides a gentle mooring for trade ships and even the strongest storms rarely reach the city with any strength. For this reason, and its proximity to Ebernath, Larakis has become the most prosperous of the Anderlar mainland ports.

Due to its preoccupation with the sea and trade, Larakis has allowed its defenses to decline dramatically. The stone wall that once surrounded the city was long ago allowed to crumble into a snaking ruin, with more than half the wall's stones since taken and used to construct houses and walls in the surrounding countryside.

Still, for all its lax defenses and inattention to security, Larakis has become a preeminent naval power. Its ships sail across the Parthian Sea in great numbers and its merchants engage in regular trade with Ebernath and points more distant. The fastest and most capable ships even sail around the southern end of Emerlyn to engage in highly lucrative trade with Kor, with a few even braving the dangerous journey to Valhedar or Seagarden. For sailors and captains, there is no better place to look for work or drop anchor than Larakis.

IRONWALL

A few score miles from the easternmost edge of the Pale Forest, the city of Ironwall stands guard over Anderland. Its squat, sturdy buildings are surrounded by a sloped wall surmounted by jagged iron barbs stained an ominous green by the poisons slathered across their tips. Since Ironwall was founded 400 years ago, it has endured some of the worst attacks from the north of any Anderland city and has risen to meet the challenge. The entire city has been rebuilt to provide a defense against invaders, from the sloped walls to the network of supply and escape tunnels that were carved through the rich soil.

The people of Ironwall are grim and quiet. They readily admit traders and visitors to their city, but the guard watches all strangers with hawks' eyes and will not hesitate to step in at the first sign of trouble. These people have seen strife and they are prepared to deal harshly with any who bring trouble into their home. Furthermore, the men and women of the city all receive military training during their teenage years, preparing them to fight should the need ever arise. While the guards do not appear, at first, to be especially numerous, one quickly realizes that all citizens of Ironwall are ready and willing to fight to keep the peace.

Ironwall takes its name from the enormous watch towers it has positioned at each corner of the city. Enormous magical searchlights sweep the plains beyond the walls all night, while guards watch eagerly for any sign of intruders. When the Pale Forest disgorges another horde of misbegotten monstrosities, the people of Ironwall will be ready to meet them in battle.

RIVERSEND

This rough and tumble city is renowned for the heroes who dwell there, men and women of uncommon strength and enormous bravery. Individuals and small groups constantly embark from Riversend to raid the Pale Forest, attack wild giants in the Stormfells, or sim-

ply to wander the plains in search of evils to fight and wrongs to right. These Anderlar heroes are the lifeblood of the city: The adventurers support the city's economy, and also provide a powerful deterrent against outside attack.

Located on the juncture of the Torvun River and the Goldspring Sea, Riversend has profited well from trade along the river. The city used its wealth to construct an enormous tower in the center of the city, a place to honor the warriors of the land. The lower chambers of the tower house the Thorned Throne and government offices, while the upper floors have living quarters for the city's most revered heroes. The outside of the structure is decorated with images of famous battles, heroic events, and legendary feats of the city's mightiest and most renowned heroes.

Adventurers love the city, because it caters to them so well. Smiths of all types flock to the city for the chance to sell their wares to famous heroes, while shops and outfitters have sprung up all over Riversend to provide for the traveling needs of adventurers and wanderers. Though Riversend is not the most famous place for magical research, the sheer number of common magical texts available for sale in the city make it an ideal stop for any wizard seeking to add a rare volume or two to his library.

SEAWARD

The largest of all Anderlar cities, Seaward is also the first city-state to have been founded in Anderland. It was in Seaward that the Druids fashioned the first Thorned Throne, in Seaward that seagold was first harvested, and in Seaward that men organized the defense of Anderland during the goblin wars.

As the birth place of Anderland, Seaward is important to the people of the region as a symbol of their past, but it maintains its relevance in the present through its massive trade network and military strength. Seaward handles all harvesting and distribution of seagold, giving it a steady source of income with which to fund its navy and enormous army.

Situated on the juncture of the Dural River and the Goldspring Sea, Seaward is a gleaming monument to human strength and engineering. Unlike the other city-states, Seaward has an enormous stone fortress at its center. The structure contains the city's Thorned Throne and is so heavily ornamented and reinforced with seagold it seems to be made entirely of metal when the rays of the setting sun play across its surface.

SARANOR

At the eastern edge of Anderland, near the banks of the Netheryn River, Saranor stands guard over the richest farmlands to be found in central Ambria. While the city proper has a stone wall surrounding it, the residents long ago outgrew the circumference of the protec-

tive circle and now spill out around the town in an unruly tangle of cobbled roads and sod or timber houses. Farms fan out from the city, as well, following the river back to the east for a hundred miles or more. The land is so rich near this river that many proclaim it blessed by elven magic and even the Druids believe that the river may be fed by an eldritch well somewhere in Sildanyr.

The largest concentration of elves in Ambria can be found in Saranor, where elven explorers have been known to rest during their wanderings and travels from Sildanyr. Unfortunately, this has also made Saranor a focal point for the civil war raging in the heart of the elven wood. Agents of the dawn elves and night elves are dispatched to the city in search of Anderlar aid and become embroiled in a secret war of espionage and assassination. The government of Saranor, of course, frowns upon the elves using the city's alleys and dark corners as a battleground, but the city guard is simply ill-suited to police the well-trained and often magically gifted elven agents.

Saranor is renowned as a city of great fertility. Children outnumber adults nearly five to one, contributing to the city's explosive growth. Trees grow faster in the city and its environs, and even the Thorned Throne must be trimmed every few weeks. Whether the seasonal rites in honor of the Green Man and Lady of Flowers have anything to do with this, or whether they are held in Saranor because the land was so fertile in the first place, is a question sages and Druids have never been able to answer.

STORMHAVEN

Founded shortly after Seaward, Stormhaven is a port where Anderlar goods are transported for trade across the ocean. The city has benefited greatly from its trade arrangements with Seaward but has never really flourished like Larakis. This is due mainly to the ironfisted leadership of the city, coupled with greed leading to exorbitant tax rates on trading vessels seeking to weigh anchor in Stormhaven.

As a result, Stormhaven is small and a bit run-down in comparison to the other city-states. Though its wall is in good repair, the city streets and buildings within are weathered and faded by exposure to the sea and storms. Though stone is scarce, when timber is used for construction it rots quickly in the damp atmosphere, giving the whole city a musty, mildewed smell.

The only ships that use the port are those trading in goods other than seagold and those with a desire to avoid the questions asked in more legitimate ports. In Stormhaven, as long as one is willing to pay the mooring fee, there are rarely any questions asked. Just as importantly, to some, the city cannot afford to maintain a large constabulary, making law enforcement sketchy at best.

LANGUAGE

The common tongue of Anderland is Anderlar, a rough, guttural language descended from the barbarian tribes that once ruled the plains. The Halfling language has heavily influenced Anderlar over the centuries, and the Faring Folk have incorporated a fair amount of Anderlar into their speech. Now, the two languages sound quite similar but retain enough idiosyncrasies that speakers of one language can understand no more than a few words or phrases of the other. The Common trade tongue is used in Anderland as well, though travelers who make the effort to learn the language will be rewarded with better prices and more friendly welcomes.

GOVERNANCE

Following the goblin wars, the Seven Cities broke their traditional alliances and agreed only to support one another when mutually threatened. Though trading relationships endured, this effectively ended all military cooperation between the city-states. It also put an abrupt end to common political and cultural development that might eventually have led to the creation of a unified nation. While the cities now each have their own prince, the lands controlled by these princes have shrunk dramatically until they are no more than small city-states with minimal direct influence outside their walls. Despite this, the Seven Cities are still the largest and most powerful settlements in Anderland and are regarded with great respect by the other nations.

The central areas of Anderland are similarly fractured, with countless small towns and villages under no rule but their own. The citizens all regard themselves as Anderlars, but there is no common political tradition or authority to bind them together. While there is no central authority to unite the Anderlars, they do have an ingrained tendency to flock together in time of need, and this makes Anderland a more formidable power than it might otherwise be.

Each of the Seven Cities is ruled by a prince, and the noble families all trace their roots to the first settlers who founded the city-states centuries ago. The power and authority of the nobility is based on either commerce or military might, and so the nobles are uniformly either merchant princes or warlords. Some city-states boast entrenched and influential families of both sorts, and there is often a great deal of political conflict and rivalry between the two. Violence is uncommon but not unheard of, and the Thorned Thrones of several cities have at times changed hands through bloodshed.

RELIGION

Most of Anderland still follows the religion of its barbarian ancestors, worshipping the local spirits and small gods, while venerating sacred sites with an almost



atavistic zeal. When the Druids withdrew from Anderland, they took with them the first attempts at a truly organized, canonical religion, leaving the Anderlars to fall back onto a patchwork quilt of half-formed dogma and ancient superstition.

For the Anderlars, the world is inhabited by myriad spirits and spirit dwells in all things. Swords that stay sharp and rust-free are that way because of the spirit within them; likewise, when a mighty oak rots from within and dies, it is because the spirit of the tree became ill or corrupted.

Though the Anderlars have no true gods to speak of, they do venerate three spirits of the land—the Green Man, the Lady of Flowers, and the Harvester. These ancient figures are prominent in the myths and legends of the Anderlars, who regard them as fey, powerful creatures that govern the cycles of life.

TRADE AND CRAFT

Seagold is the most lucrative export of Anderland, but this resource is almost entirely controlled by Seaward, which has arranged extensive trade agreements with the other Seven Cities to provide them with their share of the profits. Lately, Seaward has been seriously reconsidering these ancient agreements, which could lead to serious conflict between the city-states for the first time in Anderland's brief history.



Livestock are another highly prized export. The cows, pigs, and sheep raised in central Ambria tend to be larger, stronger, and healthier than their counterparts elsewhere, inspiring a constant demand in the Kingsmarch and Emerlyn for breeding stock from these herds.

Trade with the elves of Sildanyr is also increasing, creating a new source of wealth for Ebernath and, by extension, the trade city of Larakis that distributes most items from that city. This trade is thriving despite—or perhaps because of—the conflict in the elven wood. As both the dawn elves and night elves become more focused on the war, they become less and less focused on the horticulture and craftsmanship that once made them so self-sufficient.

The trading ports also receive regular visits from ships flying the flags of Valhedar, the free city of Kor, and the Dreaming Isles. Exotic goods from faraway Tamerland are making their way into Ambria through Stormhaven and Larakis, most frequently transported from Landsgate in the holds of Seagarden's merchant fleet. The princes of Anderland, though, have financed the construction of deep-water vessels and are beginning to launch their own expeditions to Tamerland.

Internal trade is minimal in Anderland, except for seagold shipments and the work of the Faring Folk. Seagold is transported in massive, armored caravans from one city to the next, while the halflings move

spices, herbs, vegetables, textiles, and simple crafted items from village to village. Otherwise, most trade is local, as farmers bring their produce to nearby market towns to barter for the work of artisans and craftsmen.

WAYS AND TRADITIONS

BARROW MOUNDS

When Druids led the first tribes into a new land, they brought with them traditions as ancient as the world itself. To this day, burial barrows can be seen dotting Anderland, places where fallen chiefs and Druids were laid to rest beneath mounds of earth and stone. This tradition has largely been abandoned, save for occasions of state when important lords are given monumental barrows to commemorate their deeds.

ANDERLAR FESTIVALS

The festivals of spring and fall are said to govern the fates of all Anderland's people. Even the Faring Folk have begun to celebrate these holidays, incorporating them into their own worship of nature spirits.

In the spring, each city, town, and village draws lots amongst the young adults of their community. A man and woman between the ages of 16 and 22 are chosen to become the Green Man and his Lady of Flowers. Dressed in elaborate, traditional costumes, the two are completely disguised, though most will know who they are in the smaller towns.

For most of the festival, this is merely a figurative title—the two preside over cooking contests, judge the relative size and taste of vegetables grown on various farms, and rate the merits of flower arrangements from local gardens. On the morning after the festival, however, the Green Man and Lady of Flowers have distinctly more active duties and must lead the other young people of the town in the Bringing of the Green. This ancient ceremony, intended to excite and entice the spirits of the land, involves young couples consummating their feelings for one another in the light of dawn. The Green Man and his Lady of Flowers must, by tradition, show the others how to perform their sacred duties.

The Green Man and Lady of Flowers are local fertility gods, and the spring festival was created in reverence of them. The traditions of Anderland have it that first the Lady and then the Green Man perish at the onset of winter, only to return the following spring. In elder days, the man and woman chosen to represent the Green Man and Lady of Flowers were feted and pampered throughout the summer, but were then bound to a tree and sacrificed on Harvest Night. The selection of a new Green Man and Lady of Flowers the following spring represented the resurrection of the gods and the return of life to the land. Today, this ancient tradition is practiced in only a few of the oldest and most isolated regions of Anderland.

The festival of Winter's Fire is likewise a grim ceremony designed to pacify the spirits of death and darkness, beseeching them for a mild winter. In this ritual, Druids sacrifice livestock and wild animals in ancient groves and stone circles, offering their souls to the ancient Wyrms of Winter. In the Seven Cities, the living wood of the Thorned Thrones is drenched in the blood of sacrificial animals, and it is believed that this blood renews them each year. As with the Harvest Night festival, legend suggests that the people of Anderland, rather than animals, once shed their blood under the Druids' knives. This tradition, like the sacrifice of the Green Man and Lady of Flowers, was largely abandoned hundreds of years ago.

THE PANTHIC ORDER

While most of the arcanists in Anderland are lowlander humans by birth, all have forsaken their heritage in exchange for studying with the largest group of magical scholars in the world. Druids originally founded the city of Ebernath, and this magical origin is reflected in the modern Panthic Order, the most powerful fraternity of the magical arts in Eadar. Not all who make the jour-

ney to Ebernath for training will receive it, but those who do are destined to become some of the greatest spellcasters of their time.

Spellcasters come to Ebernath from all over Eadar and bring with them their diverse knowledge, experience, and magical traditions. Their skill is honed and broadened in Ebernath, where the order's council meets and where all members of the Panthic Order are expected to spend at least one month out of every year.

Though they originally founded the city centuries ago, Druids are few in Ebernath. A few still live in Anderlar society, or at least live very near it. Some offer advice to the princes, but most live as local healers and protectors for the scattered communities of Anderland. An even smaller number of Druids work closely with the Griffin Company to help protect the northern cities from giants and goblinoids. These Druids are far more militant in their training and are as comfortable on the battlefield as they are in the depths of a sacred grove.

THE GRIFFIN COMPANY

With an honorable tradition of service going back more than a century, the Griffin Company is viewed as a heroic, necessary part of Anderlar culture. Its members are primarily natives to Anderland, but Durning Highlanders, renegades from the Kingsmarch, and those from even stranger or more distant lands can be found amongst this collection of rangers. No matter their place of origin, all members of the Company agree to one thing—the fell forces from the north must be stopped before they can sweep into civilized lands.

To this end, the Griffin Company has established dozens of small, wooden forts across the northern frontier of Anderland. Until the past few years, these forts have stood unmolested and served well as headquarters for small units of rangers who scouted and drove back enemy forces.

Anlar Icefang's coming has changed all that. Where the banner of the winter wolf flies, the Griffin Company has learned to retreat, regroup, and fight a running battle from the safety of its forts. The marshal of the Griffin Company is even now rethinking his strategy in the hopes of striking a more decisive blow against the giants and their allies. Currently, the Griffin Company stations no more than 20 men in a typical fort and uses roaming squads of four or five men and women to scout out enemy activity. When goblinoids were the biggest threat in the north, this worked well, as even a small unit could dispatch them as needed. But now, with much stronger and more dangerous foes on the move, it may be necessary to abandon some forts and reinforce others to provide stronger units a chance against their enemies.

PERSONALITIES

WILLIAM OSKAR

A wolf changeling who fled the Durning Highlands in shame and ranged alone in the north for years, William Oskar has become a legend in Anderland. As the lord marshal of the Griffin Company, William has proved himself not only exceedingly brave in combat but also an insightful tactician capable of taking on much larger forces with great success. Though stories of his wild rages and solitary missions against the denizens of the Pale Forest are probably exaggerated, the goblinoid tribes of the northern frontier hold greater respect for the warrior they call the Wolf King than do the people of Anderland.

PRINCE BARIS LUCHEN

The ruler of Stormhaven has a checkered past, and legends concerning his previous life are rife within his city. In truth, Baris was a pirate who made a good living raiding the ships of Larakis and sinking them to the bottom of the sea. He sold the goods in Emerlyn, where none asked their provenance and Korish merchants welcomed the discounts he offered.

After a serious injury sustained in a scrap with a megaladon, Baris was determined to give up the seagoing life. Though the ocean is in his blood, he cannot bring himself to heed its call any longer. Instead, Baris used his newfound wealth to buy his way into Stormhaven's aristocracy and, eventually, to succeed the former prince through a complicated series of assassinations, enormous bribes, and secret agreements with Stormhaven's dominant families.

While he rules the city as well as can be expected, Baris is in constant fear that the rightful heirs to the throne will one day claim it for themselves. As insurance against that day, he is more than willing to hire adventurers, sellswords, or other ne'er-do-wells to deal with any emerging rivals.

GYRN ANNATH

The oldest Druid in Ebernath, Gyrn has lived for centuries thanks to magical herbal concoctions and the natural side effects of his advanced magical prowess. In his later years, he has become dependent on a particularly powerful draught prepared for him by the night elves, whom he regards as the lesser of two evils. In truth, Gyrn is a remarkable shaman in that he deeply resents the incursion of elves, gnomes, and other fey creatures from Itheria. He believes that they are an unnatural, alien presence in this world and that the great forest would be better served under the care of the Druids.

For now, Gyrn is content to deal with the elves as equals, but he constantly plots to find some weakness, some way to exploit their nature to drive them from Sildanyr, and perhaps all of Eadar, once and for all. He hopes against hope that the night elves will provide the wedge he needs to shatter their culture, and he plans accordingly.

SITES AND FEATURES

BARROWS OF THE OLD KINGS

The barrows of the old kings, built when human barbarians first migrated through Anderland, can be found throughout the region. While plundering these tombs is out of the question for the residents of Anderland, some outsiders have no such compunctions. These thieves brave the vengeful spirits and angry Anderlars to seek out ancient treasures and lost secrets.

CAVES OF THE GIANTS

Along the base of the Stormfells, hardy adventurers explore caves and tunnels that lead into the subterranean realm of the fire giants. Towns in the region offer bounties on the heads of these vicious creatures, leading adventurers to hunt them for fame and wealth. To the north, where the Icehammer Front rises like a white wall, similar caverns claimed by frost giants can be found. Of course, exploring these caverns has become more dangerous in recent years as the giants of the north have been somewhat unified and organized by Anlar Icefang.

THE GOLDSRING SEA

The Goldspring Sea is, of course, a fantastic attraction and travelers come from hundreds of miles around to stay in the many inns that face its gleaming waters. Most importantly, there are submerged caverns and strange catacombs beneath the metal-tinged surface of the sea. While exploration of these caverns has only recently begun, there is no telling what might be found in the golden depths. While the soldiers of the Seven Cities patrol the shores, independent—and illegal—prospecting of gold from the waters of the sea is also becoming more common.

RUINS OF THE SERPENT FOLK

The most ancient ruins of Ambria are crafted from an odd, greenish stone that has yet to be found anywhere else in Anderland. These strange, subterranean con-



structions are built with shorter halls than men are used to and are entirely devoid of stairways, instead featuring gently sloping ramps and slender columns. From the imagery found within, it is believed that these are the residences and temples of ancient serpent-men, creatures that may very well be the precursors of the yuan-ti. Whether this suggests that the yuan-ti originated in Ambria, or that they once established enclaves on the continent, remains a mystery.

SEAWARD

Seaward (metropolis): Conventional; AL NG; population 30,000 adults, 100,000 gp limit; Assets 1,500,000 gp; Mixed (80% human, 15% dwarf, 3% halfling, 2% tiefling).

Authority Figures: Berandurak Holas (prince of Seaward, male human fighter 10/rogue 5), Varalik (Druid advisor to Berandurak, female shaman 13)

Important Characters: Hursta Malagris (rogue queen, female tiefling rogue 12); Karas Horshta (captain of the guard, male human fighter 12); Falaris Humbottle (merchant prince, male human bard 10); Turg Burnok (dwarven emissary, male dwarf, disciple 10)

Typical Guard Patrol: With its history steeped in warfare and struggle, Seaward maintains heavy patrols that guard the city from dangers within and without. A typical patrol consists of a captain (fighter 8) and 1d6+3

guards (warrior 3). Captains are most often clad in breastplates and wield greatswords and crossbows. Guards are not as well armed, typically wearing a chain shirt and wielding longswords and large steel shields, with crossbows at the ready.

Healing: Even though the Druids of Seaward are long past their prime, they still remain a strong presence in this great city. Healing magic of up to 6th-level is available in the city at regular prices.

With its complete control over the seagold supplies, Seaward is a wealthy city with a burgeoning population. Tens of thousands of residents live within its walls, while a powerful military patrols the lands surrounding it. Though it has been years since the humanoid hordes attacked, Seaward is prepared to defend itself should such an enemy threaten it again.

In addition to the impressive fortress at its center, Seaward is protected by a tall, thick wall on the landward side, and an armada of warships patrols the sea. The docks of Seaward are another source of income for the city, as the vessels from its shipyards are favored by sea captains and river merchants alike. The long, elegant lines of the craft conceal their heavy armor and sturdy seaworthiness.

CHAPTER SIX

THE KINGSMARCH AND THE HIGHLANDS

This chapter presents background and setting details on the Kingsmarch and the Durning Highlands. The text of this chapter is designated as closed content.

THE KINGSMARCH

The open plains and rolling fields of the Kingsmarch stretch across the southwestern expanse of Ambria, from the Sunset Reach to the Stormfells and the occupied peninsula of Emerlyn. In these green and lush lands, numerous petty kingdoms and noble courts contest with one another, ruled by local lords who would claim the supreme throne and stewardship over all the Kingsmarch.

Though occupied by intermittent forests and woods, the Kingsmarch consists largely of rolling grasslands, the hills of inconvenient height to those afoot but otherwise negligible until one reaches the foothills of the Stormfells or the cliffs of the Durning Highlands in the north. Cooled by breezes from the Sunset Reach and the Summer Sea, the Kingsmarch knows summers far milder than those of the Emerlyn peninsula. Winters are frigidly cold, accompanied by chill rains more often than sleet or snow. Paradoxically, while it is the breezes off the oceans that keep summers mild, those same oceans—this time in the form of the warm currents that flow from the south—ensure that winter rarely lingers past its allotted time. The folks of the coastal territories have learned to welcome the darkening clouds and terrible storms (and even tornados) that lash the seaboard early in the year, for while these signs of nature's fury cause great damage and suffering, they also mark the end of winter and the start of planting season.

And the planting season of the Kingsmarch rivals

that of Anderland. The plains are lush, the soil fertile, and rows of golden wheat and colorful vegetables stretch as far as the eye can see throughout much of the year. Enormous herds of cattle, sheep, and goats graze upon the verdant grasses, and deer run wild through the few small woodlands. The region's two great rivers, the Horn and the Hound, carry fresh water to the far reaches of the Kingsmarch. These serve as nigh-insurmountable obstacles to those who would unite the Kingsmarch under a single banner, but more importantly, the fresh water they provide and the transportation they offer are responsible for much of the region's prosperity.

The blood spilled yearly across the Kingsmarch, greedily consumed by the thirsty soil, is thought to contribute to the region's bounty and fertility. The grasses are all too often trampled beneath the hooves of warhorses, the crops stolen or even burned by invading armies, and the people caught between this potential conqueror and that. These once-pristine reaches have been sullied by the presence of man, irrevocably marked by the constant violence. Between the ever-looming threat of invasion by the forces of Valhedar to the east, and the constant internecine warfare throughout the Kingsmarch, it seems as though peace and tranquility must remain forevermore a distant memory.

HISTORY

Though humans had been migrating north and west in small numbers, through treacherous passes and dangerous terrains, the seeds of what would blossom into the nations of the Kingsmarch were planted during the so-called Great Migration of the fifth and sixth centuries. Leaving the growing cities of southern Ambria behind, a great many human tribes reached the fertile plains of the Kingsmarch. For a time these tribes remained entirely nomadic, trading or warring with one

another as they met, but largely avoiding their neighbors where possible.

Only as competition for the land increased, due both to the ever-growing numbers of humans and the arrival of goblinoids determined to take the fertile lands for themselves, did the Kingsmarch tribes start forming permanent settlements. They fortified themselves in palisade-ringed towns and learned how best to cultivate the land in a given region rather than constantly moving on in search of greener pastures. The chieftains of the human tribes learned swiftly what sort of lands were best for long-term habitation, and many of these earliest towns have survived the centuries to become the great cities and capitals of the modern kingdoms. Avennar, Vensuliard, and the lower levels of Schonne all date back to this period.

The allied tribes eventually fended off the goblin hordes, forever claiming the Kingsmarch plains for humanity, but their victory came at a price that even the wisest of them could not foresee. This cost was measured not in lives—though many died, the losses were no worse than the ragged nomads were accustomed to—nor was it measured in resources, for the plains were bountiful and fertile, a veritable paradise matching or even exceeding the blessings of the southern cradle from which they had come. The cost was one of innocence. As warlike and competitive as many of the tribes had been, they always found a way to share the vast plains for the benefit of all. Now, barricaded behind walls of sharpened wood and hastily dug pits, their swords and axes wet with the blood of goblins, they suddenly grew jealous of what they owned. Neighboring tribes were no longer potential allies, trading partners, or even competition—they were enemies who might steal the lands so recently won. This was the beginning of the endless warfare and struggle that has wracked the Kingsmarch ever since.

Of course, an endless and purposeless war served nobody's interests, and all the chiefs were wise enough to see that. All of them maintained that the future of the Kingsmarch could be bright, so long as all the tribes could be united under a single banner. Doing so would prevent war and struggles for land and supremacy, for all would bow to a single sovereign, all would work alongside one another for the benefit of the entire region.

Each chief, of course, was firmly convinced that *he* would make the greatest ruler.

Though hundreds of tribes populated the plains, several dozen swiftly clawed their way to the top. When the nomads first arrived, they brought with them their tribal deities, gods who would come to be known as patrons of specific regions and peoples of the Kingsmarch. Several of the tribes found new gods in this untamed land, however. The worship of celestial immortals became ingrained in the people of the Kingsmarch from these earliest times, and today, many of the trueborn lines claim descent from celestials.

These tribes grew to prominence, and the greatest of them all was the Deluin tribe. King Enir I of the Deluin was the first chieftain to conquer or annex sufficient territory and additional tribes to declare himself a king, rather than a chief. Deluin became the first true nation of the Kingsmarch, its capital in the newly expanded port city of Avennar, which had been barely more than a coastal town.

Other great tribes swiftly followed Enir's example, though none could claim the degree of success he enjoyed. First Irilgaine, with its theocratic hierarchy, claimed dominion over many tribes. Then the tribes of Andlemere united, followed swiftly by Taloria and, some decades later, the province of Riest. Other tribes consolidated themselves into kingdoms, and some even tried to claim complete sovereignty without joining with their neighbors, but none have even approached the size or strength of these great five.

Even these kingdoms might have failed to materialize had an outside threat not presented itself, convincing at least some of the tribal chieftains that cooperation was vital if the Kingsmarch was to survive at all.

The Valhedar Dominion launched its first incursion into the plains across the Emerlyn peninsula at the end of the sixth century. King Enir and several other chieftains were able to meet the massed tiefling armies in force, spilling substantial blood across the battlefields of Dor Erlon. Though the hellish armies advanced, even crossing the Shield River in 596, the mounted tactics and fierce resistance of the Kingsmarch forces stymied them. After years of bloody warfare that cost both sides far more than they could afford, Valhedar retreated by the year 600. Even the most independent-minded of the Kingsmarch chiefs could not deny that it was the presence of the kingdom of Deluin, with its substantial armies and unified clans, that tipped the balance in favor of the defenders, and this was the inspiration that cemented the shaky foundations of the other great kingdoms.

Alas, though the need for unity had been brought home even stronger than before, the kings of the plains still could not agree on who should rule. The wars and political alliances and double-dealings resumed as intensely as ever. The eastern nations split their attentions between Valhedrin forces to the east and their hostile neighbors to the west, while the other kingdoms squabbled only among themselves, for fear of weakening Deluin and thus their own defense against Valhedar.

This has been the sad history of the Kingsmarch for more than five centuries. Though they have occasionally put aside their differences and worked with one another, these nations have battled with one another endlessly. In the past years they have engaged in few open wars, preferring border skirmishes and games played with maps, borders, and ambassadors.

Two years gone, in 995, the situation changed once more, as Valhedar launched another invasion across Dor Erlon. To date, Deluin has led the fight



against the tiefling Dominion, though all of the other great kingdoms, and dozens of minor ones, have thrown their forces into the fray as well. Even now, however, the political machinations continue, the most recent major play coming barely a year ago, with the mysterious assassination of King Orlaf of Andlemere and the forced ascension of Baron Haullard to the throne. All eyes now rest on Andlemere, for King Haullard now holds in his hands the fate of all the Kingsmarch. Should he maintain his alliance with Deluin, the armies of the Kingsmarch can most likely hold the Dominion at bay. Should Haullard prove as traitorous as he is sneaky, however, the Kingsmarch might finally fall beneath the tiefling advance.

PEOPLE

Though dwarves and giants occasionally form settlements in the foothills of the Stormfell Mountains, and tiefling generals rule military encampments at the border with Emerlyn, the overwhelming majority of the Kingsmarch population is human. Though substantial immigration has occurred throughout the years, the majority of the population, and certainly all of the noble class, can still trace its ancestry back to the first settlers of the region.

While the Kingsmarch is home to dozens of small kingdoms, some of which contain little more than a sin-

gle large town and surrounding farmlands, it contains five large nations in particular that define the culture of the region. Just as these five kingdoms represent the source of most Kingsmarch attitudes, traditions, and styles, so too do they represent the source of the familiar characteristics of the people of the Kingsmarch. Not everyone in a given kingdom looks the same, of course, especially given the various immigrations and mixed marriages that have occurred over the years. Nevertheless, in general terms, anyone familiar with the Kingsmarch can tell a Deluene from an Talorian on sight—and the populations of most of the smaller kingdoms surrounding these five nations share their physical characteristics.

DELUIN

The blood of celestials flows strongest in the people of Deluin. Though the nation has expanded substantially, by uniting smaller communities under its banner and through constant immigration, the traits of the Deluene have bred true. The people of this largest nation often near, or even exceed, six feet in height. They are stocky and strong, not in the way of the dwarves, but enough that they have little difficulty with the long hours and hard days of work required both to feed and defend so large a kingdom. Deluene tend toward fair hair, with blonds and light browns the most common,

and blue or green eyes. The men prefer to wear neatly trimmed beards (allowing one's beard to grow too wild is usually a sign of sloth), while women prefer long hair in a style that can be easily bound up out of the way for toil in the fields or combat. The Deluene are, for the most part, fiercely loyal to King Enir. They credit him with defending them from the Valhedar and believe that he will someday lead them to dominance in the region.

The population of Deluin is estimated to be 1,500,000, if one counts all the scattered farms, outlying communities, and the small baronies that pay homage to King Enir despite being at least partially independent. The size of the kingdom could support a larger population, but the constant war and hardship have taken their toll on the people.

ANDLEMERE

The folk of Andlemere are easily distinguished from their neighbors in the Kingsmarch, even by those not familiar with the region. Where most of the people in the Kingsmarch feature rugged or large builds, the Andlemerans tend to be lean and wiry. Though no shorter, on average, than the Deluene to the south, the Andlemerans tend to weigh substantially less. They still have the endurance for a hard day's work, but their aptitudes lean more naturally toward swiftness and grace. Their hair is darker, tending to browns and blacks, and their eyes are most often gray or hazel in color. Most Andlemeran men wear no beards (many cannot even grow them), and those who do usually keep them trimmed quite short. Men and women both tend to keep their hair trimmed short as well, and only the nobles of the land usually wear it longer than neck length.

The Andlemerans were loyal to King Orlaf; he was not well loved, but he was respected. Since Baron Haullard took the throne, the Andlemerans have grown wary, uncertain of their future.

Andlemere boasts a population of perhaps 600,000 humans, and approximately 2,000 dwarves whose mountain homes fall within their borders.

IRILGAIN

The heavily religious people of Irilgain seem to be built much like their Deluene neighbors—until you place them together. The Irilgainans are also a broad-shouldered people, but even the trueborn tend to be shorter than those found elsewhere in the Kingsmarch, rarely topping five feet, seven inches. Their hair seems to run the gamut, from as pale as the blond locks of the Deluene to black as the darkest Andlemeran, and even with the occasional shock of red to match any native Talorian. Eye color is similarly diverse. Because of their religious tenets, which encourage the Irilgain to accept anyone who shares their beliefs, their appearance varies more widely than many of the other nations. Few sages have hazarded a guess as to why the size and build of the

native Irilgainans seems to breed so consistently true, when other features like hair and eyes do not.

Nobles and clergy tend to go clean-shaven, while commoners wear beards or not as they prefer. Women wear long hair, which they often keep covered (especially among the nobility). Irilgainans are almost fanatically loyal to their queen, as the monarch of the nation is also the head of the Irilgainan Church.

Irilgain boasts a population of about 700,000.

RIEST

Rarely topping six feet, Riestans are deft and lithe, though not so slender as the people of Andlemere. Despite their almost fragile appearance, Riestans are as tough as any of their neighbors, able to endure great hardships—an important skill, given their constant skirmishes with both the occasional giant in the Stormfells and the powerfully built soldiers of Taloria.

The people of Riest are dark of both hair and skin, at least compared to other people of the Kingsmarch, appearing as though they've spent substantial time in the sun even during the most overcast days of winter. Blond hair is almost unknown among them, and their reds and browns are always of darker shades. Riestans tend to move and speak quickly, and often lose patience with those who cannot keep up, either literally or conversationally. Most are fond of Duke Lygus, as they feel that he is more truly noble than other local rulers, yet does not put on the same airs.

Riest has a population of approximately 450,000 humans, along with perhaps 1,000 dwarves and a scattered population of about 2,000 halflings who travel throughout the Kingsmarch.

TALORIA

Most of the nations of the Kingsmarch can trace their descent to barbarian tribes who immigrated to the region, but Taloria is the only major nation to remain true to that heritage. While certainly not primitive, Taloria has not taken on quite so many of the trappings of the modern feudal court as the other nations, and its people seem similarly wild in the eyes of others. The average Talorian is taller than six feet, the women not much shorter, and all are bulky and imposing. Most are heavily muscled. Talorians tend to have brown or red hair, though black and blond are not unheard of, and they usually have green or brown eyes. The men normally wear thick beards, and men and women both wear their hair long and often braided. Cross-cultural marriages with the tribes of the Durning Highlands are not uncommon, both for personal and political reasons, and it seems likely that the Talorians will maintain their comparatively barbaric cultural traits for generations to come.

The current monarch of Taloria, Queen Theudecia, is still in the process of earning her people's

respect. The Talorians honor their rulers for their noble and celestial bloodlines, but they truly respect only those kings and queens who have proven themselves, either in battle or in the political intrigues of court. Theudecia has been queen for but a couple of years, and while she has done well in the eyes of her people so far, they are not yet fully certain of her abilities. That said, the Talorians are fiercely devoted to protecting themselves and their queen from outsiders. They may speak, in private, of their doubts and questions regarding Theudecia, but let any outsider speak ill of the queen and a brawl is likely to ensue.

Taloria itself boasts a population of only 250,000. Given their alliances with many of the Durning clans, however, should an emergency arise they can field a force far larger than their population would suggest.

SETTLEMENTS

Despite the cultural differences between the nations of the region, the majority of villages and communities throughout the Kingsmarch look very similar to one another. Some of these villages date back to the days when the newcomers first ceased their nomadic wanderings and put down roots, while others are based on the same traditional model even if they aren't quite as old. When first constructing their new homes, the tribes were forced to take two overriding concerns into account: available materials and defensibility.

Constructing their homes of stone was simply not feasible. Only those communities nearest the Stormfells and the cliffs of the Durning Highlands had access to a substantial supply of stone, and even those tribes lacked the means to quarry that stone. The Kingsmarch was never heavily forested, and is even less so today after so many centuries of building and farming, but it does boast a substantial number of small, scattered woods, and timber is especially abundant along the banks of the great rivers. Wood has therefore always been the building material of choice for the locals, though villages near the rivers sometimes supplement it with mud brick.

In order to protect themselves against rival tribes and goblin hordes, most ancient Kingsmarch villages were built with defense in mind, and this tradition has only grown stronger in these days of constant war. Nearly all villages are surrounded with a palisade, a defensive wall constructed mostly of wooden logs (many of which are sharpened and allowed to jut out at sharp angles). The main gates are heavy timber, banded in iron where possible. Numerous raised wooden platforms serve as watchtowers and are manned throughout the day and night, ensuring that no enemy can approach a town unnoticed.

Homes and shops are usually flat-roofed, except in regions of the Kingsmarch where the heavy rains require sloping, to allow archers to use any available building as a vantage point. Main thoroughfares are wide enough for wagons, to facilitate trade, but most

side streets are narrow and unpaved. Roads are rarely built straight, instead following a seemingly random cobweb pattern that makes a straight charge from the outer walls to the inner portions of the community absolutely impossible. Most windows are narrow, especially on the first floor, and doors are built thick and equipped with bars.

Stone construction is common in some of the largest cities of the modern nations, including the capitals of the five great realms of the Kingsmarch. Over the generations, builders have learned to quarry the stone, often benefiting from the expertise of the dwarves of Aradath. Even those capital cities not built along the mountains have been able to transport large quantities of stone downriver. These few fortunate cities feature guard towers, outer walls, castles, and—in some instances—the homes of the nobility and the wealthy constructed of stone. Even in these cities, however, most buildings are constructed of timber and often look as though they were simply plucked out of a smaller village. The stone structures tend to be larger than their wooden neighbors but are otherwise built along similar principles. Only the castles of the trueborn lords tend to stand out, boasting multiple towers, crenellated walls, drawbridges, and other traditional defensive measures, as well as unseen arcane wards to prevent easy bypass of those defenses.

Most cities that make substantial use of stone boast populations of at least 10,000 and are home to kings or dukes. Smaller communities and lesser nobles simply cannot afford the cost of transporting stone across the Kingsmarch.

LANGUAGE

The barbarian tribes who first settled the Kingsmarch spoke many dialects of a common root language. Some were so similar that they barely had an accent to distinguish them, others so different they practically qualified as second languages. During the years of settlement and war, those dialects drifted further apart, until it was a toss up whether a clansman could understand the speech of any other clan.

In more recent years, however, the process has begun to reverse itself. With the formation of the kingdoms, many of which have unified previously disparate tribes, communication barriers have begun to break down and linguistic similarities have come to the fore. To outsiders, the people of the Kingsmarch all speak dialects of a single language referred to as the King's Tongue. This common ancestral tongue is used by some of the nobility, ambassadors, and various sages and scholars. Among the common folk, the King's Tongue is so influenced by local dialect that people from different regions often have some difficulty communicating. All five of the great kingdoms have their own dialect—Deluene, Andlemeran, etc.—which they share with most of the smaller communities around them. Most

natives can make themselves understood by citizens of the other kingdoms if they speak very slowly, repeat themselves constantly, and use simple words, but few have that sort of patience when dealing with outsiders. The Common tongue has become much more popular as trade between the nations of the Kingsmarch and with other lands grows in importance.

GOVERNANCE

Traditionally, all the lands of the Kingsmarch, regardless of their cultural differences, share their forms of government and social status. When the Kingsmarch tribes began to coalesce into true kingdoms, both through political alliances and conquest, the victorious chieftains such as Enir I realized quickly that they had to allow the chiefs of the conquered or assimilated clans to hold onto *some* degree of power, or the system would break down as resentment ate away at the various alliances. The feudal system, in which each noble has power over those below but owes fealty to those above, allowed these lords to maintain a position of authority without challenging the king's own rule. Thus, the local kingdoms are, to the last, feudal monarchies, ruled by trueborn families who can trace their ancestry to the barbarian chieftains who first settled the region.

A few of the trueborn of the Kingsmarch also manifest traits most often associated with celestials or other outsiders. Some family historians believe that one or more celestials were responsible for leading their people on their migration to the Kingsmarch in elder days, and that their bloodlines subsequently became intermingled. Others believe that a well of celestial magic located somewhere in the Kingsmarch is responsible for the celestial traits of some trueborn lords. While few of the trueborn manifest overt celestial qualities, all take substantial pride in their exotic lineage. Most outside observers point out that the celestial influence on the trueborn of the Kingsmarch adds fuel to the fire in their war with the tiefling empire.

In most of these kingdoms, a single, self-proclaimed monarch—normally a king, but almost as frequently a queen—wears the crown. He or she may marry, but the spouse is referred to as prince, princess, or royal consort; only a monarch *born* into the ruling family may claim a royal title. On a strictly legal basis, the monarch owns the entirety of the nation, and all other landlords are simple custodians. In more practical terms, nobles own their own land, and while the monarch can technically take it from them, doing so without valid legal reason is a sure step toward rebellion.

Most of the Kingsmarch nations use the traditional titles of nobility. Dukes are second only to the monarch in power, counts below dukes, barons below counts, and landed knights and ladies below barons. Each pays taxes, delivers crops, and raises armies for his or her liege, all the way up to the king or queen. Some

of the small kingdoms owe fealty to their larger neighbors, in essence paying tribute in exchange for the right to remain independent.

The realms of the Kingsmarch, in addition to sharing a tradition of inherited royalty, all adhere to strict chivalric codes. While the details of these codes vary from kingdom to kingdom, they all define the obligations a landholder owes his vassals and vice-versa. Alas, many knights and lords of the Kingsmarch feel less obliged to treat their neighbors with even the modicum of respect they treat the peasants of their own lands, and the various wars that mar the landscape bear witness to some of the most horrific civilian treatment seen in modern human-on-human conflict.

DELUIN

Monarch: King Enir II

Capital: Avennar

Ensign: A gold leopard, trippant, on a field of royal purple

The oldest and largest of the great kingdoms has also become one of the most tradition-bound. The laws and chivalric codes of Deluin are stricter than those of almost any other nation of Eadar. Nobles are absolutely forbidden from abusing their people (though the boundaries of abuse may be rather firmly pushed in the domains of those less scrupulous lords). Enir knows full well that ultimate victory over the Valhedar Dominion may someday rely on his people's willingness to fight and die under his banner, and he'll not have some selfish or shortsighted landowner brewing resentment among the peasantry. Citizens are expected to obey the law, and crime is punished strictly but fairly. Commoners who feel a lord is abusive are legally guaranteed the right to bring their complaint to someone higher up the chain of fealty, and even unto King Enir himself should it come to that. Unfortunately, few peasants have the *means* to do so, as they cannot afford either to travel far or to leave their shops and fields untended for long.

The throne of Deluin is passed down through a rigid system of familial inheritance that is, in its own way, less progressive than some of the younger kingdoms surrounding it. While most of the great nations of the Kingsmarch may be ruled by either a king or queen, the crown of Deluin is still passed only to the eldest male heir. First the sons of the previous king are considered, then brothers, then nephews, then cousins, then more distant cousins. Only if no male heir of appropriate age can be located at all is a princess permitted to ascend the throne.

This tradition is one not especially well-liked by the Deluin nobility. During the days when Enir I was assimilating other clans into his nation, the decision to limit the throne to male rulers was made to placate one particularly large tribe, the Sharhoun. Enir required their presence in his new kingdom, but the Sharhoun fol-

lowed a strict division of gender roles. Only men could rule or lead in war, only women could practice magic. Many times in the years since the formation of Deluin as a true kingdom, the nobility has pushed to remove this particular restriction, but to date tradition has held more strength and momentum than efforts at reform.

The restriction on gender applies to the throne only, and has never filtered down to other noble positions. Thus, Enir claims the fealty of duchesses, baronesses, and ladies as well as dukes, barons, and landed knights.

ANDLEMERE

Monarch: King Haullard I

Capital: Obanshire

Ensign: A gold sun, rays stretching across the banner, in the upper left corner of a field of red

Andlemere has always been a traditional monarchy, modeled very closely after Deluin. The realm lacks institutionalized restrictions on its rulers: The eldest heir of the previous monarch, regardless of gender, assumes the throne. The nobility of Andlemere is less wealthy than that of Deluin; knights and barons dwell in large manors as often as they do in keeps or castles, though higher nobles more frequently live in castles or other structures capable of weathering siege. Because they dwell among the peasantry rather than above them, the lesser lords of Andlemere often have greater sympathy and respect for their vassals and serfs than do the higher nobles, or the nobility of other nations. Even in Deluin, where the king has forbidden his nobles to abuse their people, those who live in prosperity often have little sympathy for those who do not. It is not that they are cruel or unfeeling, merely that they cannot comprehend the situation and lifestyle of the common man. The knights and barons of Andlemere, however, see firsthand how the commoners live, and while the populace of Andlemere is relatively well off so far as peasants go, peasants they are still. These nobles have a reputation for pressing the dukes and the king for greater tax breaks, fewer military conscriptions, and anything else to make the peasants' lives just a bit easier.

These nobles now watch almost as nervously as their serfs to see how the new King Haullard will lead the country. Haullard is the first king since the founding of Andlemere to take the throne by force rather than through either genuine inheritance or political wrangling. So far, he has shown no sign that he intends to make life harder for the peasantry, but rumors circulate that the warlike liege is planning to vastly increase the size of his armies, something that would undoubtedly lead to increased taxes and conscriptions. Many of the nobles are too afraid to speak out against this, for fear they will suffer the fate of their former king. Should Haullard prove as power-hungry as his detractors whisper, Andlemere stands on the brink of becoming a true tyranny.

IRILGAINÉ

Monarch: Queen Evineida III

Capital: Moordest

Ensign: Three black lions, rampant, on a field half of red, half of blue (bisected diagonally from upper left to lower right)

Irilgaine is unique among the Kingsmarch nations in that its government, while still technically a monarchy, also qualifies as a theocracy. The Irilgainan Church is inextricably tied in with the nobility. The monarch of Irilgaine, currently Queen Evineida, is head not only of the nation but also of the church. Disciples make up a substantial portion of her advisory council, and every noble with the rank of count or higher is also an ordained clergyman. The only structure in Irilgaine larger than the queen's palace is the great cathedral recently completed in Moordest.

The Irilgainans worship an expansive pantheon of celestial immortals that are more than saints but not quite true gods. Alharra, the patron goddess of Avennar and the Kingdom of Deluin, holds a place among this pantheon, as do the patron celestials of dozens of other nations in the Kingsmarch. The Irilgainans believe that the first human tribes were led to the Kingsmarch by these celestial beings and that only by understanding and doing their will can the people of the Kingsmarch fulfill their destiny. While most of the nations of the Kingsmarch have their own local deities and small gods, the Irilgainans believe that all among the Celestial Host are equal and that national borders have no proper role in religion.

The theocratic nature of the government has only a marginal effect on the commoners. They are required to practice certain religious rites, and the worship of deities other than the Celestial Host is discouraged (but not openly persecuted). To the nobility, however, the mingling of church and state has a profound impact. Many of the noble and royal lines of the Kingsmarch claim descent from celestial beings, and this belief has gained the weight of dogma in Irilgaine.

Purity of the blood is, therefore, of major concern to the Irilgaine nobility. Nobody, not even the monarch, may marry without the approval of the priesthood, who cast all manner of divinations to determine a potential spouse's suitability to the Celestial Host. Further, they have developed magics and rituals to measure the strength of a person's celestial blood. It is this process, rather than birth order, that determines the heir to a particular noble title. If the fourth-born daughter has "purer" blood than the eldest son, it is she who ascends the throne or takes possession of the land. On very rare occasions, a child is born to the nobility who is more celestial than human. Such a birth is cause for great celebration, as they occur far less frequently than even once a generation.



RIEST

Monarch: Duke Lygus

Capital: Vensuliard

Ensign: A pattern of silver arrowheads, pointing downwards, across a field of black

Riest boasts a traditional feudal system, but it is not technically a monarchy. The youngest of the five great nations, Riest bears the distinction of being the only one of the five that gained its current borders purely through political alliance, rather than through conquest. This is not because the ruler of Riest is any less interested in becoming monarch of all the Kingsmarch than the others, but because Lygus is as much a politician as he is a warlord.

The so-called Silver Duke refuses to take a royal title, despite the fact that he is the undisputed sovereign of one of the largest realms in the Kingsmarch. Lygus maintains that only the liege of all the Kingsmarch can rightfully assume the title of king, and until he has gained that throne, he will not claim honors above his station. Duke Lygus prefers to make alliances and treaties, but he is fully prepared to go to war when necessary—and he makes no secret of his ambitions to reign over the entire region once he has both strength and opportunity to do so. It is a common sentiment throughout the Kingsmarch that Riest is a good neighbor to have now, but a bad neighbor to have tomorrow.

Riest is the only one of the five great kingdoms to have nonhuman members of the nobility. One of Riest's barons is a halfling who married into a noble family, and two of the landed knights are dwarves of the Stormfells who assisted Duke Lygus in battling back Talorian aggression some years gone by.

TALORIA

Monarch: Queen Theudecia VII

Capital: Schonne

Ensign: A gray wolf's head, facing left, on a field of deep green

The government of Taloria combines a feudal realm's courtly intrigues and layers of fealty with the "rule by the fittest" mentality of the old Kingsmarch tribes and the highland clans. The eldest child of the monarch ascends the throne, regardless of gender, as in most of the Kingsmarch realms. At any time, however, another member of the royal family or one of the noble houses may challenge the king or queen for the crown. The sitting monarch may refuse this challenge only if she can show pressing reason why accepting it would prove harmful to the good of the nation. A council of elders and advisors decides the issue, either declaring the challenge null until the circumstances change, or informing the monarch that she must accept. Most challenges during wartime or other ongoing dangers are dis-



missed, unless the current monarch is clearly doing a poor job ruling the nation. The challenged monarch decides the nature of the contest, which can be either an exercise in tactics, in politics, or in personal combat. Such challenges are never set deliberately to the death, though accidents happen. Someone who challenges a monarch and is defeated is forbidden from ever challenging that monarch again. This, combined with the monarch's right to decide the nature of the contest, keeps the number of challenges to a minimum.

Once the contest is complete, the same council of elders reviews the events to ensure the victor competed fairly. If so, and if the challenger won, the current monarch is granted one month to put her affairs in order. She then steps down, to make way for the new monarch. Most such deposed monarchs have other familial titles and responsibilities, so they usually remain involved in government in some form or fashion. A deposed monarch must wait at least one year before challenging the one who defeated her, if she chooses to do so. Of course, like all other challengers, she is allowed only a single test.

This system of challenges perfectly describes the Talorian nobility as a whole. The rulers of Taloria are invariably warriors, from hulking swordsmen to quick-minded tacticians. They are not a cruel people by nature, but they are quick to resort to war, even as compared to the other Kingsmarch nations. All Talorian monarchs

are, of necessity, war-leaders, and few last long if they don't bring their people victory in the many border skirmishes that occur both on the Kingsmarch plains and against the highland clans.

RELIGION

The people of the Kingsmarch still pay homage to local and tribal deities, some of which date back to the original barbarian settlers of the plains. Not merely any given kingdom, but any given town and city boasts its own patrons, local gods that watch over and protect their people but have little power, or even name recognition, beyond a day's travel. These tend to be deities of specific locations, events, or geographical features. For instance, the people of Obanshire worship a number of celestial deities represented by particular mountain peaks. Almost all the Kingsmarch nations include revered heroes of the past in their local pantheon of deities, and while they often refer to the departed as saints or avatars rather than as true gods, their worship is no less fervent.

A few of the small gods of the realms have gained wider recognition and are now worshipped throughout the Kingsmarch. In most cases, these powers still claim many more worshippers in the land where they originated, but enclaves of the devoted can be found anywhere. As a rule, these deities are thought to be celestials, angelic immortals that are greater than men but less than true gods. The Irilgainan Church teaches that the divinity of these immortals is dependent on the worship of mortals and that their status waxes and wanes with the faith of their children.

ALHARRA DAWN-BEARER

A goddess of valor, courage, and righteous battle, Alharra is the patron goddess of Avennar, but finds worshippers among all the Kingsmarch nations. She is particularly honored by knights and soldiers, and has an order of knights and paladins devoted to her. The Sacred Order of the Knights Adamant is loyal to no throne, but fights to protect all the Kingsmarch from the Valhedar Dominion and other outside threats.

The Deluene believe that Alharra is an ancient and powerful angel who dwells in a pristine lake near Avennar. Legend has it that she embraced and adopted the first humans who came to her lands, that she helped to build the Kingdom of Deluin and even took its first kings as her consorts for a time.

ST. BAEDRAS OF THE DUSK

A former hero of Riest, Baedras is now the patron saint of Vensuliard. Those who love and worship him grant him respect for the many times he defended Riest from attack and defeated a much stronger enemy.

Worshippers of more traditional deities, such as Alharra, disdain St. Baedras as a coward and a traitor to the principles of chivalry. He is the patron of those who believe that a cause worth fighting for is worth fighting dirty for, and who believe that dishonorable tactics are allowable against a superior foe.

TRADE AND CRAFT

Most of the regional kingdoms are largely self-sufficient. They have to be, really: In the cutthroat world of Kingsmarch politics, reliance on rival nations is a weakness none of the Kingsmarch realms can truly afford. In years gone by, more than one tribe or kingdom conquered their neighbors simply by threatening to cut off much-needed supplies if they did not submit. After a few decades of this, the remaining nations learned to fend for themselves at any cost.

Fortunately, the plains of the Kingsmarch are well suited to such endeavors. The soil is fertile, allowing both crops and livestock to thrive. Substantial trade does take place, of course, but it is almost entirely within specific kingdoms, rather than across borders. Farmers trade crops for finished goods and tools, craftsmen swap with other craftsmen, and commerce remains, for the most part, simple and straightforward. Some of the smallest kingdoms do not even use a regular system of coinage, instead relying solely on the barter system, though most nations—including the great kingdoms—use both.

A regional lack of two rather vital resources prevents the Kingsmarch realms from being entirely self-sufficient. While Taloria, Riest, Andlemere, and several of the smaller nations have access to the Durning Highlands and the Stormfells, the majority of the Kingsmarch nations—including Deluin and Irlgaine—do not. This means that these nations are forced to import large quantities of both quarried stone, for constructing fortifications, and steel for armor and weaponry. The Horn and Hound rivers provide convenient means of transporting such goods from the mountains, and the dwarves make eager trading partners, allowing the southern and western kingdoms to acquire materials without having to deal with rival nations. Still, shipments of such goods make wonderful targets for raids, and the theft of stone and iron bound for points south is a common occurrence.

WAYS AND TRADITIONS

It is a long-lamented irony that the same culture that unifies the people of the Kingsmarch is also the cause of their irrevocable division. Each of the local monarchs, with only a very few exceptions, is convinced that all would be well in the Kingsmarch if only he or she ruled a united nation. The precepts of honor,

chivalry, and divine right by which the lords conduct themselves are intended to protect the people, but they also ensure that the struggles and wars that ravage the land will assuredly never end—for to back down from a challenge is to admit cowardice or unsuitability to the task of ruling.

The majority of the people living in the Kingsmarch are lowlander peasants and craftsmen. They dwell either in the few great cities, fashioning their wares, or else serve as farmers and rangers on lands owned by their local lord. None outside the nobility even make a pretense of owning their own land, instead living and working on fields owned by knights, barons, and dukes, offering a portion of their yearly yield in exchange for the right to work the soil and feed their own families.

While many of the local kingdoms have laws forbidding peasants to carry weapons, most of the citizens receive at least a bare minimum of training with spears and pikes or the short bow. Because most of a lord's armies are made up of conscripted peasantry, with landed knights and professional soldiers forming only a small portion of those forces, the trueborn Kingsmarch nobles walk a fine line between ensuring their citizenry is sufficiently well trained to fight when necessary, yet not so martially skilled that the knights and regular troops could not put down a rebellion should one arise.

That said, few revolts have occurred in the years since the founding of the first realms of the Kingsmarch. While some local nobles treat their peasants harshly, even cruelly, most of the lords offer their people at least the bare minimum of respect and protection demanded by the chivalric codes. Most peasants of the Kingsmarch learn to be content with their lot in life—especially since, short of marrying into nobility, they have few if any opportunities to improve their station.

THE FIVE GREAT KINGDOMS

Each of the five largest nations of the Kingsmarch, in addition to being greater in size than the others, shapes the society of those smaller communities surrounding them. That is, the smaller kingdoms nearest Deluin are likely to follow Deluin's example in terms of fashion, architecture, and the like; those nearest Irlgaine follow Irlgaine, and so forth.

DELUIN

While the capital city of Avennar lies deep in the south, a substantial portion of Deluin's population dwells near the border with Emerlyn. The battlefields of Dor Erlon have been swamped time and again with the blood of Deluin knights and conscripted peasant soldiers, and though they have never failed to repulse the invading soldiers of Valhedar, the price they have paid is

high indeed. To the other nations, the presence of Deluin on the eastern border is a blessing twice over. No other kingdom would have had the might to repel the legions of Valhedar, and nothing other than the constant losses to Valhedar could have prevented King Enir from pursuing the throne of all the Kingsmarch.

This has given the Deluene—even the common folk—a rather martial outlook on life. The plate-clad knights are popular figures of romance and adventure, seen as champions of the people as much as they are champions of the crown. These knights follow the chivalric code even unto death, and these attitudes have filtered down to the peasants themselves. Few folk anywhere in Ambria are as honorable as the citizens of Deluin, who consider a handshake or even a nod as binding as an oath taken before their gods.

Unfortunately, constant hardship and violence have also rendered the Deluene a hard people, relatively humorless and unable to relax. They care little for fashion; even the nobles tend to dress in utilitarian garb unless attending the most formal affairs. Men garb themselves largely in simple tunics and leggings, and women wear long, loose skirts and blouses almost indistinguishable from men's tunics.

Most drinking and working songs are either epic tales or soldier's ditties. Only in the homes of the Deluene do they seem to let color into their lives, decorating the interiors with all manner of cloths and paintings. Only the insides see such decoration, however: The exteriors are uniformly bland, as though the inhabitants fear to draw the attention of potential invaders.

ANDLEMERE

Until very recently, the people of Andlemere seemed the lighter-hearted cousins of their Deluene neighbors to the south. They have lost more soldiers on the fields of Dor Erlon than any other nation save Deluin itself. Their chain-clad knights are no match for the knights of Deluin, but Andlemere's martial strength is in its longbowmen, the greatest archers of the Kingsmarch. On any given day, these bowmen may have their arrows trained on the knights of Deluin in yet another skirmish across the empty lands and tiny kingdoms between the two nations, or drawn in support of Deluene knights, launching flight after flight of arrows at Valhedar legions.

The people of Andlemere are no less determined than those of Deluin, but they refuse to become as grim and dour. To the Andlemerans, the situation has never been as dire as it might be. Deluin protects them from the worst of the Valhedar advance, and Deluin itself has never been able to mount more than a token invasion, thanks to its split attention. The Andlemerans remain, though often besieged, a cheerful people. Their garb is colorful, consisting largely of blues and greens. Men and women both prefer flowing tunics and tight leggings, though robes, skirts, and long kilts are also com-

mon among noble men and women of any status. Their religious ceremonies are loud and bright, involving strident songs and much dancing in the streets, and they eat and drink and love as voraciously as they fight.

All this may soon be a thing of the past, however. Since the death of King Orlaf and the ascension of Haullard, the celebrations have grown more somber, the jokes have grown stale, and all eyes in the region—Andlemeran and otherwise—remain fixed on the new capital of Obanshire. King Orlaf was not the most popular monarch Andlemere had ever known, but he was respected and, more importantly, a known quantity. Deluin and Valhedar hold their collective breaths, waiting to see how Haullard will rule, but their concerns are insignificant compared to those of Haullard's own people. The new king has not yet revealed his political ambitions (if any) beyond the throne of Andlemere. Andlemere stands on the precipice not only of a political and martial shift, but even a cultural one; depending on how it slides, it may well reshape the face of the eastern Kingsmarch.

IRILGAIN

The Irilgainans are a somber people in many respects. Remarkably (some would say excessively) devout, everything to them has some bearing on religion. They have a prayer or ceremony for almost everything, from rising in the morning to sitting down to a meal to entering battle. They are not joyless—many of their religious rites are jubilant affairs, especially the feasts that accompany some of their major holidays—but they never allow themselves to forget for even an instant that they owe everything they have, and everything they are, to the Celestial Host. A substantial minority of their armies are made up of paladins and war-clerics, so while the forces they can field may be smaller and less expertly trained than those of Deluin or Taloria, they are more than capable of holding their own with maces and magic.

The men of Irilgaine tend to dress in dull colors, largely in browns, blacks, and deep blues. Women wear more colorful garb and often include ribbons or shawls to adorn their hair. Farmers, laborers, and soldiers of both genders prefer tunics and pants, while craftsmen and nobles often wear robes, dresses, or even cassocks. Disciples traditionally go clean-shaven, though this custom has begun to fade of late. Irilgainans are great believers in the obligations of a host to his guests, but only when those guests are also followers of the Celestial Host. This is not to say that they are rude to houseguests of other faiths, merely that they do not feel the same sense of duty to them.

RIEST

The people of Riest seem strangely urban, even those who dwell in small towns far away from the capi-

tal or other large cities. They lack the rustic quirks of villagers, seem remarkably cosmopolitan, and even—when not actively toiling in field or foundry—dress in more elegant garb. They are not truly foppish, though some have accused them of that; they merely seem to have a greater concern for their appearance. This is partly due to the fact that Riest has a widespread, albeit rudimentary, system of public education, making even the lowest peasants more learned and more aware of the activities and fashions of the nobility than their counterparts in other nations.

Most Riestans prefer to dress in bright colors, flashy without quite crossing the line into garish. Reds, greens, yellows, and blues are popular among the peasantry, while purple is reserved for the nobility. It is not illegal for a peasant to wear purple; it is just considered tacky and presumptuous. Men prefer thick vests, blousy tunics, and pants or leggings, while women normally wear skirts and bodices. The gowns and coats of the nobles are particularly striking, and some would argue that Duke Lygus and his court are the finest dressed trueborn in all the Kingsmarch. Men prefer to wear their beards and moustaches trimmed and shaped, or else go clean shaven. Most women would not dream of going outside without their hair braided, tied, or piled in some fashion.

Riestan warriors run the gamut, from plate-clad knights such as those of Deluin to expertly trained pike-wielding footmen. The armies of Duke Lygus do not focus on any specific style of warfare, preferring to maintain flexibility and readiness. Even the most honorable of monarchs might occasionally find himself forced to resort to less than honorable combat tactics, but Riest is the only one of the five great realms to make a regular practice of it. As the smallest of the five kingdoms, Riest has no compunctions about using poisons and assassinations to even the odds, though the Duke tends to restrict such activities to battlefield encampments and military leaders. Duke Lygus draws the line at attacking his trueborn neighbors in their homes; he seeks a fighting chance, rather than the wrath of the entire Kingsmarch aristocracy.

TALORIA

Many people of the Kingsmarch consider the citizens of Taloria to be barbarians, barely more civilized than the highland clans or the nomadic tribes from which all the Kingsmarch nations descend. And indeed there is some truth to that sentiment, though not so much as outsiders believe. The commoners of Taloria do maintain a slightly more primitive lifestyle than their neighbors. Their homes are made of mud brick as often as wood, and they tend to be rather more coarse and earthy. They drink a great deal, they like their meat red, and they are quick to brawl. Men prefer thick leggings of leathers and furs, though some wear the kilts of their ancestors. Women tend to wear long, loose skirts that do



not impede movement. Muted earth tones such as greens and browns are popular, with brighter hues like yellows and reds reserved for more festive occasions.

The lower Talorian nobles don't appear much different from the small folk, dwelling in wooden long-houses and gauging their worth through feats of strength and tales of combat prowess. Only the counts, dukes, and monarchs seem more sophisticated, dressing in fine clothes, holding balls and fetes, and entertaining envoys with great etiquette. Even these trueborn, however, must earn the respect of their people, and anyone who believes a Talorian noble must be softer than his fellows because he dresses in silks rather than furs makes a potentially lethal mistake.

Despite their looks and their disdain for soft living, however, the people of Taloria are no less capable of grace and gentility than the others. Religious and social ceremonies—marriages and births, in particular—are somber, dignified affairs, though often followed by substantial drinking and merriment. The Talorians are quick to anger but equally quick to forgive, so long as the insult was not a mortal one. They are fierce warriors with little concept of mercy, but they are loving and giving to their friends, quick to sacrifice for loved ones in need.

The Talorian warriors are equally at home on foot or on horseback. They rarely wear heavy armors or carry lances, and they do not tend to ride the chargers favored by knights of other lands. Instead, they prefer the shaggy mountain horses of the highlands, heavy beasts that are no match for an eastern charger in speed but can run all day without breaking a sweat. Talorians prefer to fight with axe and bastard sword from horseback, and a Talorian knight can cut a swathe through an entire army with his tremendous strokes.

PERSONALITIES

HAULLARD I

The former baron of a small Andlemerean province called Obanshire, Haullard has single-handedly thrown the politics of his nation into an uproar, with the entirety of the Kingsmarch not far behind. During the most recent battles with the forces of the Valhedar Dominion, the former monarch, King Orlaf, sent the vast majority of his troops to the front, as he had done so many times in the past. This time, however, the lack of a sizable bodyguard was his downfall. Orlaf was slain by assailants still unidentified, and Baron Haullard—the only noble still in Andlemere with a sizable force—marched on the capital and assumed the throne “for the good of the nation.” Once he had complete control, Haullard declared himself king and had the seat of government moved to his home province.

None in Andlemere know what to make of their new king. An iron-haired man with intense blue eyes,

Haullard stands only six feet tall, yet he has the physique to overpower men substantially larger. He is the first king to take the throne of Andlemere by force since the nation was founded, and he is the first to sit on the throne without even a hint of celestial blood. Haullard has already proven himself a hard man, strict and demanding of instant obedience, but Andlemere has had severe rulers before. Haullard is a martial man, that is clear enough, but whether he intends to turn his eyes and his swords against the Dominion, against his neighbors, or even against his own people is still unclear.

KALDAHAR ENTRESS

An older man but still in the best of health, Kaldahar is a potent and powerful force in the Irlgainan Church. The former high priest of the High Temple in Moordest, Kaldahar has moved on to become one of the highest-ranking members of the entire church hierarchy. It would be inaccurate to call Kaldahar an “inquisitor,” as the Irlgainan religion, for all its claims to supremacy over other faiths, does not condone their persecution. Still, Kaldahar is the head of a group of disciples and church soldiers tasked with protecting the church from enemies within and without, and he takes his duties with deadly seriousness. Kaldahar has waged war against the Dominion, against soldiers of other kingdoms and other gods, and even against traitors among his own people—and he expects to do the same again many more times in the future.

Kaldahar has a weather-beaten, almost leather face. He is bald, with eyebrows and a beard of deepest black. He is a tall man, and wiry without quite crossing the line into thin. He prefers dark robes of office, worn over a suit of mithral chain.

VALIA PERENOR

Valia is the current leader of the Sacred Order of the Knights Adamant, an organization loyal to no crown and no liege but the goddess Alharra herself. Valia gained fame and renown in one of the many battles against the Valhedrin on the plains of Dor Erlon, where she single-handedly rallied the forces of the Kingsmarch against what seemed, at the time, to be an overwhelming tiefling and demonic force. Valia is herself not entirely human, bearing obvious physical signs of her celestial heritage. Though related to King Enir, who has more than once attempted to lure her away from the Knights Adamant, Valia remains steadfastly loyal to her goddess and her order, refusing to take sides in the constant struggle for supremacy over the Kingsmarch.

Valia has long golden hair which she normally keeps tied tightly beneath her steel helm. She is not overly tall, but she bears the hard musculature shaped by many years of experience with both training and war. She can be amazingly gentle to those in need but is utterly without equal on the field of battle.

SITES AND FEATURES

SCHONNE

Schonne (small city): Conventional; AL LN; Population 11,219 adults; 15,000 gp limit; Assets 8,415,000 gp; Isolated (96% human, 2% dwarf, 1% halfling, 1% other races).

Authority Figures: Queen Theudecia VII, female human aristocrat 4/fighter 8 (monarch of Taloria); Duke Rufus Laughlin, male human aristocrat 6/barbarian 3 (governor of Schonne).

Important Characters: Daimlir Rese, male human disciple 10 (high priest and advisor to Theudecia); Grieden Orslow, male human expert 12 (renowned weapon smith, military weapons consultant to the queen and the duke); Tyssa Marrown, female human wizard 11 (the so-called Witch of the Cliffs, she is both feared and respected by the populace and often consulted, in secrecy, by the nobility).

Schonne stands at the base of the highland cliffs and is in fact built on three separate levels—the ground, the foothills above to the east, and a massive cliff ledge even higher up to the west. The three levels are connected by both massive stairs carved from the rock and by spiral staircases within some of the tallest towers of the keep, and it is this construction that has inspired outsiders to call the city the Tripartite Citadel.

The capital of the semi-barbaric kingdom of Taloria, Schonne is the strangest and most distinctive of the Kingsmarch cities. Originally constructed as a sprawling defensible complex, Schonne has grown and expanded as the years have passed, until it is today many times larger than its original size. With each expansion, the outer walls and defenses have moved out with it. Though the size of a small city, it still resembles a citadel in almost all respects. The walls that surround the city are 20 feet in height at their lowest, and only a select few heavy gates provide access to the interior. Roads are guarded, and many of the city's major structures, guard towers, and government buildings are linked by stone bridges that arc high above the streets and the wooden rooftops. This only adds to the impression that the entire city is a fortress, with the markets and private homes built within its stone embrace.

The city is absolutely self-reliant and could stand for months if not years even if all the rest of Taloria were to fall. The walls surround not only homes and shops but farms and fields of livestock on the upper levels. Several streams flow down the highland cliffs, and multiple wells dive deep into the earth within the citadel. Food, water, stone, and iron are all offered in plenty by the surroundings, and the people of Schonne rest secure indeed.

THE BASIN OF BONES

At the northernmost extent of Deluin, some 50 miles east of the Horn River, lies a large basin. A shallow, bowl-shaped depression surrounded by gentle rolling hills, this hollow is nearly a mile on a side and consists of relatively flat terrain through most of its area. At the northern edge of the basin stands a ruined keep, the former capital of a small kingdom long since subsumed into the expansion of Deluin. This was once the heart of the small but martial kingdom of Ballan, and to this day it is territory that has brought only ill to those—including Deluin—who would claim it.

When Ballan still thrived, its presence at the center of the Kingsmarch made it the site of many great battles, even between nations that held no grudge against Ballan itself. As a way of protecting itself, Ballan developed a tradition of knights and tourneys second only to Deluin itself, and the trueborn of Ballan made all other nations this pledge: Any who participated in jousts and tournaments against Ballan's knights and proved victorious would be granted free passage through Ballan lands to reach their foes, so long as they committed no looting or plunder along the way. Those whom Ballan defeated would swear to go around the kingdom, else they would face Ballan's knights allied with the losing kingdom's foes. The basin beneath Ballan's capital became a jousting and tournament field, and hundreds of knights contested on its expanse.

The arrangement worked well until several of the warring nations simply tired of it. In hopes of slowing Deluin's advance, multiple smaller kingdoms allied to launch a major assault on King Enir's greatest warriors—while they were competing in tourney at Ballan. Many of the knights were indeed slain, but more importantly the capital city of Ballan was razed to the ground. Alas for them, these traitorous kingdoms spelled their own doom; without Ballan to stand between them, Deluin launched an invasion that swiftly conquered all the nations involved in the attack.

Since that time, few travelers dare enter the ruined keep, or the so-called Basin of Bones in which it stands. Legend says that the spirits of the knights who died so dishonorably, and those civilians massacred at the keep, have not gone on to their promised rewards. Travelers within miles of the basin swear they can hear the clash of arms and the thunder of hooves when the wind is still and the birds cease singing. Many who go to investigate return having found nothing abnormal, but others do not return at all. Further, these legends claim that any warrior who travels to the basin with the intent of challenging the dead knights to joust and tourney may do so, with great rewards, power, and knowledge to those who win—and an eternal spot on the ever-growing lists for those who lose.

THE DURNING HIGHLANDS

North of the Kingsmarch is a land of shimmering lakes and craggy highlands, a land where a man's worth is measured by the strength of his sword arm and his willingness to throw in with his clan. Home to barbarians and their enemies, the Durning Highlands are a rugged, inhospitable country filled with the wild and the lawless. Visitors who come seeking adventure should be prepared to deal with the clansmen, who can be just as much of a threat to those they dislike as the wild ogres that haunt the highlands.

HISTORY

The people of the Durning Highlands are very similar to the humans found in the Kingsmarch and Anderland, giving much credence to the idea that all three cultures sprang from the same forebears. The highlanders, however, see things quite a bit differently, viewing themselves as descendants of the local small gods. They claim that they lived in the highlands for centuries before the trueborn came and that they will live in them still long after the trueborn are gone.

The highlanders have one of the oldest surviving cultures in Ambria. Their stone cairns are as old, or older, as any of the strange ruins of Anderland or forgotten temples of the Kingsmarch and there are cave paintings and monolithic glyphs that are older still. Though inhospitably cold for most of the year, the highlands clearly served as the home of at least one civilization for centuries before human tribes migrated into the Kingsmarch.

To the highlanders, this tie to the past is critical, because it reaffirms their link to the divine and their right to rule the land. It is justification for their often-violent disapproval of all outsiders and for their penchant for hunting and killing travelers who stumble through their lands. Though honorable in their own way, the highlanders hold their lands sacred, not to be defiled by outsiders, and are fiercely territorial even amongst the various clans.

In the centuries since the highlanders carved their first hunting scenes into stone and painted images of their gods inside caves, their culture has changed little. They no longer live in caverns, but they do use them as simple shrines. They prefer to use iron weapons, but still chip their arrowheads from stone and lash them to the shafts with stringy lengths of sinew. They are a reluctant melding of the old and the new, with a decided emphasis on retaining their traditional lifestyle as much as possible.

PEOPLE

A dozen large clans of barbarians populate the Durning Highlands, along with 10 times that many smaller, nomadic clans. The large clans dominate the area by holding the best lands for hunting, herding, and farming. They have no qualms about cutting down anyone who enters these territories and have been known to put the men of rival clans to the sword for taking a single deer from their lands.

For all their rivalry and murderous rage, however, the highlanders are always ready to leap to the defense of other clans in times of trouble. When the giants rage from the Stormfells, the strongest of the clans are right there alongside the weakest, ready to test their might against these forces of nature. The same is true of internal disputes and it is an unwise clan that earns the ire of all of its neighbors. Even the strongest clan cannot stand alone, nor could it hope to stand against the wrath of the other highland clans.

It is this combination of kinship and the threat of annihilation at the hands of their own kind that sustains the highland clans. If there was ever an imbalance of power where one clan was able to fend off all others, their way of life could no longer be supported, and a short war of genocide would surely follow.

Fortunately, none of the clans truly want to rule the highlands. While the power-hungry certainly want to solidify their position against any challengers, none want the responsibility of watching over the entire region and being stuck in a castle somewhere like one of the Kingsmarch nobles. The highlanders' notorious bias and provincialism serve as well: Each clan lord believes his people and his lands are superior to the rest, so why covet the meager lands and weak subjects of one's fellows? For the clan lords, it is enough to watch over their own people, without having to worry about the followers in every camp of the highlands.

Most highlanders are slightly smaller than lowlander humans, though far quicker and more agile. Their bodies are lean and wiry, built for quick, violent battles and agile sprints across broken ground. They typically boast dark brown skin, the color of the hills themselves, and fine dark hair that they tie back in ponytails with bone clasps called *anunti*.

Typical dress for a highlander involves tanned hides and furs, usually layered to provide maximum protection and warmth. During the spring and summer months, the hides and furs give way to looser, lighter homespun clothing. The barbarians dress for comfort, not for style, using jewelry or other affectations to show their allegiance and wealth, not their fashion sense.

SETTLEMENTS

The highlands are not suited to large cities, or even to large buildings. The entire area is broken up by crags and chasms, tall hills and sunken vales, all punc-



tuated by crystal-clear lakes filled with chilling waters. While pine trees and other evergreens can be found clinging to the sides of hills or perched on the edges of cliffs, harvesting them is often difficult. Because of the difficult terrain and lack of ready construction materials, most highland settlements consist of no more than a few dozen buildings and most of these were constructed using uncut stone and mud plaster.

In general, most buildings in the highlands are round, with tall walls and shallowly domed ceilings. Fireplaces rise from the center of homes through chimneys in the roof and tend to burn dried goat dung for fuel. The homes of the wealthy tend to be formed of quarried stone from the many rocky areas in the highlands, with blocks set into the rectangular style favored by nobles in the Kingsmarch. This recent development has caused some grumbling amongst the traditionalists, but in the Durning Highlands speaking out against the clan chiefs is a good way to end up with one's head on the end of a spear.

Because it is so difficult to find large open spaces in which to construct larger villages or cities, the highlanders instead build close-knit networks of smaller villages. These networks are still divided on clan lines but rarely come into conflict with one another on a daily basis. Instead, villagers trade amongst themselves and even spend leisure time together when their clans are not at war. A more disturbing trend of late is the taking

of brides from neighboring clans without the permission of both clan chiefs. If this practice becomes too widespread, the intermarrying could easily end up merging two clans unintentionally, leading to issues of which clan lord should be regarded as the true leader of the people.

LANGUAGE

The highlanders have their own language, called Clan Speech, a sharper, more brutal cousin to that used in the Kingsmarch. The addition of centuries of dialect and the heavy accents of the barbarians make intercommunication all but impossible, however, and the two languages are considered to be entirely separate. Most highlanders also speak the Common trade tongue.

The highlanders also have two written languages and an additional spoken language. The first written language, called Highland Runic, is useful for communicating ideas related to trade or warfare and uses a simplified symbolic lexicon. Runes are used to indicate complete ideas quickly, enabling chiefs to transmit brief but detailed instructions to their troops and for merchants to accurately codify their sales and purchases. This language is rarely used by the common folk, however, who prefer to use a more complex but easier-to-use written form of Clan Speech.

The second spoken language, called Bard's



Tongue, is known only to bards and is composed of melodic syllables and rhythmic word patterns. This is the language in which all bardic performances are held, despite the fact that the common highlander cannot understand even a single word of it. Still, when the bardic tongue is spoken, it generates deep emotion and vivid imagery in the minds of the listeners, allowing the bards to pierce cultural and language barriers when telling or singing the sagas of their homelands. It is important to note that this is not a universal language; it is merely a language that stirs the soul in such a way as to evoke specific images and feelings relevant to the sagas of the highlanders. Bards cannot use it to communicate in any other way.

GOVERNANCE

There is no centralized government in the highlands, though the Elder Moot comes close to filling that role. During day-to-day life, the highest authority in a highlander's life is his clan elder. These men or women are not always the oldest members of the clan, but they are always the most respected and experienced. Warriors who have seen dozens of battles, heroes who have defeated legendary enemies, and even women who have given birth to large families have all been clan elders at one time or another.

A new elder is selected only when a current elder

dies. When this unfortunate event comes to pass, the village as a whole comes together to determine the successor. Generally speaking, a half-dozen or so nominees are selected by popular vote from the entire village. These nominees are then given the chance to speak their mind and the elder is selected by a second popular vote. This is not always the case, however, and in some of the more bloodthirsty clans, a trial of combat decides the next clan lord.

Once elected, an elder is expected to lead his community as well as possible. This includes settling disputes, providing for the defense of the community, and keeping the village running smoothly. In an environment as fractious and prone to sudden acts of violence as the Durning Highlands, the job can involve a significant amount of violence, so it is not one for the weak of heart or frail of body.

Twice a year, at the winter solstice and spring equinox festivals, the elders of all the highland clans meet on a hilltop above the Lake of Tombs, where they drink, feast, and discuss matters of import to all the clans. Recent Elder Moots have reconciled warring clans, helped a weakened clan grow in numbers through marriages and adoptions, and even discussed the possibility of extended mercenary contracts with the Kingsmarch and the Seven Cities of Anderland. These meetings are very important to the highlanders, providing the only times during the year when it is guaranteed that the clans will not fight and that all the clans can have a chance to be heard, no matter their size or influence.

RELIGION

The barbarians are an atavistic people—they believe that all things contain spirits and gods that should be worshiped and propitiated to avoid calling down their wrath. Unlike many other cultures, the barbarians do not see their gods as kindly or protective, but as wrathful and jealous creatures that must be pleased to avoid horrible consequences. While the highlanders believe they are descended directly from their own gods—or more precisely, that their gods are their own legendary ancestors—they know all too well how violent the anger of a parent can be.

For this reason, the highlanders are a very religious and even superstitious people. They pray to the spirits of any animals they kill to eat, they pray to the spirits of the land when they take food from plants or water from streams. When they kill an intelligent foe, they take great pains to make sure the body is buried properly and the correct prayers are said to keep the spirits from rising and seeking revenge. The highlanders believe that greed—second only to cowardice—is the vice that most enrages their gods and patron spirits. As a result, sharing holds an important place in their cultural traditions. A highlander is expected to share with the other members of his clan, and the highlanders as a

whole are expected to share with the other beings that share their home, whether spirits, immortals, or fey. No bread is baked without an offering of some portion to the little people; no mead is consumed without first sloshing a few drops on the table for the benefit of tankard spirits.

The highlanders' religion is not terribly formalized. While the bards do know and teach the prayers and little rituals needed to calm and appease many types of spirits, there are no churches or temples, nor do the people of the highlands feel the need for such structures. They worship regularly, in their everyday, practical way, because they must to avoid the dangerous spirits of the region, not because they feel beholden to some priest.

In addition to their atavistic religion, there is a new and growing cult worming its way through the highlands. Though it has only taken root in a single clan so far, it is a cult that appeals strongly to the highlander mindset, rewarding as it does battle and bloodshed. Known as the War Lodge, the cult believes that killing is the highest honor a man can give to himself, and that by killing one's enemies it is possible to gain the status and power of an immortal. If the ideology of this cult spreads throughout the highlands, it could very well spell the end of the culture, plunging the highlanders into a never-ending series of bloody clan wars for which there is no purpose but the battle and bloodshed itself.

TRADE AND CRAFT

The Durning highlanders, especially their bards, have developed numerous crafted items that are not found in other areas. Carved goat horns, which are transformed into drinking horns and sometimes into exotic scroll cases, are highly prized by the wealthy residents of Anderland and the Kingsmarch. The carefully crafted arrows of the highlanders have also become quite popular amongst the rangers of the Griffin Company, both for their exquisite balance and for their larger size and commensurately greater damage. Items of both types are exported in enormous numbers by the highlanders, whose bards often transport the goods around the Stormfells to the north or take them south to the Kingsmarch.

The highlanders are also becoming renowned for their fine woolen clothes. Specialized combs and techniques were developed by several clans and have since been used to make sturdy, rugged clothing that is resistant to water and is easy to repair if it should be torn. These items are crafted by the younger members of the Durning clans, those boys too young to go into battle or women who have not yet entered their child-rearing years.

Mercenaries are the final export of any note from the Durning Highlands. The Durning clans all send warriors to foreign lands to hire on as mercenaries with other nations. This has the advantage of bringing wealth into the clan but also allows the strong and durable high-

landers to train with more tactically savvy military commanders. This strengthens the clans and the good will earned by the practice has protected the highlanders from southern aggression for years.

In exchange for the goods and services offered by the highlanders, they most often receive livestock, rare foods, and other useful items from their trade partners. Jewelry and precious metals, while certainly worthy as status symbols, are not going to help a clan elder hold onto his position or defend his territory. Steel, however, is highly prized by the barbarians, who are currently unable to smelt and refine the metal themselves.

WAYS AND TRADITIONS

A superstitious lot by nature, the Durning clans have developed hundreds of little traditions over the years, from licking salt from the back of a virgin's hand to prevent an unwanted pregnancy to always looking away from your prey as it dies to avoid dying yourself. The following are some of the more important traditions and their meanings to the clans.

FEAST OF THE SLAUGHTER

A new tradition has sprung up amongst the War Lodge cultists, one that would certainly be viewed as perverse by other highlanders. Following a battle, members of the Lodge are expected to retrieve trophies from their foes—ears, fingers, eyes, and hearts are favorites. It is believed that these fetishes contain the power of the fallen foe and must be worn as ornamentation or even consumed for the Lodge warrior to claim that power for himself.

The other barbarians would not take note of this ritual because it involves cannibalism—in the dark of winter many clans have had to consume the flesh of the dead or dying to survive. The greater crime is that by consuming the flesh of these warriors, the Lodge denies them a proper burial, preventing them from passing onto the spirit realms for their just rewards—or punishments.

THE HORN RACE

The day after the winter solstice festival, all those highlanders present who are 15 years of age are entitled to take part in the Horn Race. The prize for this race is not large (a few goats and a carved horn), but the prestige is immeasurable and good for bragging rights for at least a year.

The race runs from the Lake of Tombs to the edge of the Stormfells, a distance of roughly 100 miles. Those who run the race are allowed to use any means at their disposal to reach the finish line. The young would-be warriors who take part in the race commonly use fights, ambushes, trickery, and other means, all of which are



greatly admired by the older clansmen.

The winner of the race is also traditionally eligible to claim any of the available women in his clan as a wife, but this claim is rarely made. No clansman wants an unwilling wife—she would likely just brain him in his sleep and return to her family.

THE SPRING DUNKING

This is the second of the highlander's most important ceremonial customs. Unlike the festival of the winter solstice, however, this practice—called dunking—is carried out in private by the elders and their assistants. Designed to usher in the spring and welcome the sun spirits back into the highlands, dunking seems pastoral enough on the surface but carries a dark secret.

Each year, the Elder Moot makes its way to the Lake of Tombs to watch the sun rise over the mountains. When the sun climbs above the horizon, three children are taken to the water's edge. The children are restrained and dunked below the surface of the water. This goes on for hours and the winter-chilled waters suck the warmth from the young bodies at an alarming rate. By the time the ceremony ends, when the sun has set below the hills, the bodies of the children are cold and lifeless, often covered with frost.

The highlanders who perform the ceremony believe that it is the duty of the elders to bring the sun

spirits back to the highlands and, without the sacrifice, the spirits simply will not return from the lands of the dead. They do not enjoy the ceremony and are torn with horror when they must select the children for sacrifice, but it is a necessary duty and one they cannot imagine shirking.

The Spring Dunking is followed by discussions of important matters amongst the clansmen of the Elder Moot. These meetings are typically more sober than the winter meetings and also discuss matters of more immediate concern—in the winter months, the highlanders are far less active than during the spring, summer, and fall, and the decisions made in the spring will affect the highlanders throughout the year.

THE WINTER BURNING

Every year, the sun spirits die and let the winter spirits fall upon the Durning Highlands with a vengeance. To venerate the passing of the sun spirits, the Durning barbarians hold an enormous sacrificial ceremony at the Lake of Tombs at the start of winter. The elders of all clans gather to oversee the ceremony, which involves a massive bonfire that can be seen lighting the night sky for miles in every direction. All manner of sacrifices are heaped upon the fire by the clans, from goats, to perfumes, to fine ales, to precious jewels. Each clan sends, at the least, a representative to the Burning in

order to place the clan's offerings upon the pyre. It is believed that more extravagant offerings earn the favor of the sun spirits and favored clans can expect an easy winter and a bountiful year once spring arrives again.

Of course, with so many of the barbarians in one area, the night often runs long into the wee hours of the morning with drinking and brawling filling the night hours. Though open conflict is frowned upon, the elders understand that rival clans will get their aggressions out somehow and provide fighting pits and wrestling circles for tests of personal combat.

PERSONALITIES

NAFRIK OLRANS

Nafrik is the lord of the largest clan of the Durning Highlands. His men are equipped with powerful magical weapons gained during mercenary tours in the Kingsmarch and his village is the home of many disciples and shamans who keep his people strong and healthy. In addition, Nafrik is a bard by trade and knows more than a little of the old lore himself. He is a natural leader and a capable warrior who has the respect of his people, no matter his decision. He is also a member of the War Lodge, one of the first prominent members in all of the highlands.

Nafrik first encountered the cult many years ago while leading a mercenary unit against the giants of the Stormfells. One of the enormous creatures would not surrender, despite the odds against it, and began spitting out some nonsense about death in battle being the highest form of honor in this life or the next. Nafrik used his magic to cripple the creature, then interrogated it for hours, while his men watched from a distance. Nafrik left that battle a different man—after consuming the giant's heart—and has been a valued member of the Lodge ever since. While only a few of his own people have been recruited into this secret clan, Nafrik has been working with agents in other clans to draw them in, hoping to increase his prestige in the Lodge while weakening the other clans.

JAKIB ORNSKAR

Jakib once led the most famed warriors into battle, but he has fallen onto hard times and disgrace in recent years. When it was learned that his son, William, was a

wolf changeling, Jakib did his best to keep his boy in the highlands. But the rest of the clan felt uneasy with the boy's presence and it was eventually decided that he would be banished, for the clan's safety and peace of mind. Jakib never recovered from the loss of his son and has spent the last few years in a black depression, broken only by moments of blind rage.

Nafrik once tried to bring Jakib into the War Lodge but was unable to stir the man from his despair. Now, Jakib leads his men into battle only when the odds of death are high or when he feels a great wrong must be avenged. Despite his desire to die, Jakib's strong sense of duty to his tribe keeps him alive and enables his men to survive battle after hopeless battle. Ironically, the one man in the Durning Highlands who wants nothing but death is the one man who seems unable to find peace in the grave.

Despite Jakib's depression and yearning for death, he is still a powerful champion for the down-trodden and those who are wronged by others. His men still value and honor his leadership, though they have become very leery of following him into battle in recent times. Still, Jakib seems to never lose, and nothing breeds loyalty like success. Until the day he finally falls in battle, Jakib will likely remain the most successful and driven of the highlanders' leaders.

THE WHITE LADY

The Lake of Tombs is well known as the site of the Elder Moot, but it is also the seasonal home of the White Lady, one of the highlands' most enigmatic and powerful figures. Once thought of as the angel of death, the White Lady has taken on a more beneficent and revered role in the past few centuries as a prophet and kingmaker. Though she appears only rarely, when she does find her way out of seclusion, it is always to issue some proclamation or declare a particular clansman as the future leader of one of the clans.

She has not been seen in more than a decade, however, which leads many to wonder if she has passed on. In truth, the White Lady still lives but is waiting for the appearance of heroes from beyond her lands to reveal herself and her next set of prophecies. She plans to reveal that an outsider will come to unite the barbarian clans and, in so doing, will usher in a new age of vio-



lence and battle, plunging the northern regions into a generation of slaughter. It is a dire prediction, but the White Lady believes it can be avoided if the clans are made aware of their dangerous future.

SITES AND FEATURES

The Durning Highlands are a beautiful and rugged region of Ambria, but also a land of extremes, with jagged peaks and plunging valleys. Hidden amongst this varied terrain one can find many sites of strange beauty and terrible danger, many of which have yet to be discovered by the barbarian clans.

GOATSCRAG

Goatscrag (Large town): Conventional; AL N; population 3,300 adults, 3,000 gp limit; Assets 495,000 gp; Mixed (90% human, 5% tiefling, 3% halfling, 2% dwarf).

Authority Figures: Genevir Loraska, female human, barbarian 14.

Important Characters: Lathan Enros (captain of the guard, male human, barbarian 10), Davos Orlans (mercenary liaison to the Tall Bear clan, male human, barbarian 8/rogue 3); Yavila Holrak (lore keeper of the city, female human, bard 12).

Typical Guard Patrol: Goatscrag is a town more than ready to deal with troublemakers, especially given the tensions between the Kingsmarch recruiters and the clansmen in the area. A typical patrol consists of a watchman (barbarian 4) and 1d4+3 deputies (warrior 2). Most wear hide armor and are equipped with great axes or morningstars and shortbows.

Healing: The highlanders have their shamans and disciples, but they are not terribly interested in helping outsiders with their troubles. Up to 3rd-level healing spells are available in Goatscrag at double the normal cost.

The largest town in the highlands, Goatscrag clings to the side of a steep, rocky hill, like the goats from which it takes its name. The other side of the hill is naturally terraced, providing excellent forage for the goats raised by the town's inhabitants and serving as a place for travelers to pitch camp when visiting the town. And travelers do come to Goatscrag often—the livestock is renowned for its hardiness, tender meat, rich hides, and tasty milk, so most clans visit once a season to pick up a few new goats and sheep with which to enrich their own herds.

Goatscrag is also fortunate to be far enough south that mercenary recruiters from the Kingsmarch find their way to the city on a regular basis. All of the clans leave a man or two in the town to listen for news of new employment. For its part, the chiefs and merchants of Goatscrag take a percentage from all the mercenary deals brokered in the town, making it not only the largest settlement in the highlands, but also the richest.

THE LAKE OF TOMBS

The people of the highland clans burn their dead, destroying the physical body to allow the spirit to roam free and find its way to the afterlife. But they take great pains to commemorate those who fall, by traveling to the Lake of Tombs and engraving their names on the Stones of the Dead. These enormous obsidian shards rise from the depths of the lake and extend hundreds of feet in the air. Roughly half of their surfaces are inscribed with the names of fallen clansmen. It is believed that when the stones are covered over with names, the day of the clans will be at an end and the spirits of the dead will rise up to consume the living.

There is some reason for them to believe this: Strange creatures that seem to flicker in and out of existence haunt the Lake of Tombs. Heroes who travel to this place may battle undead creatures that guard hidden entrances to otherworldly crypts. The greatest challenge a hero can face is to clear the haunted hills before the Elder Moots and many have died trying.

THE NIGHT HALLS

Long ago, an ogre tribe uncovered a clutch of demons lurking in a crumbling temple. The ogres were promptly beaten into submission and used for breeding stock and, over the generations, a tribe of fiendish ogres has risen in an expansive warren of tunnels winding through the highlands. Over the last decade, the demons and their kin have decided it is time to begin waging a war against the clansmen, to claim the highlands as a home for a new kingdom of fiends.

Their tunnels are now poised at the edges of the territories held by the highlanders. In the coming months, the fiendish ogres will emerge from their benighted realms to attack the clansmen, hoping to destroy them all. Any members of the clans who can fight their way into the Night Halls and destroy these evil creatures will earn not only a legendary reputation for himself but also the wealth and ancient magical items hoarded by the demons in their lair.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE MOUNTAIN KINGDOMS

This chapter presents background and setting details on the cultures of the Ambrian mountains. The text of this chapter is designated as closed content.

The Stormfell Mountains are a long chain that stretches from within sight of the northern Sunset Reach and down to the plains of Emerlyn in the south. The Stormfells are divided into two regions by the Torvun River. Bubbling up from an ancient spring in the bowels of the earth, the Torvun River is the widest, deepest river in the mountains and serves as a natural barrier between the northern and southern halves of the mountain range. Since the last giant war, the river has also served as the border between the kingdoms of the dwarves and the giants. To the north are the rugged, windswept peaks of Skyhome, realm of the giants. To the south is the region the dwarves call Aradath. Beneath both regions, in the unnamed deep places of the earth, the malevolent fire giants bide their time, waiting to destroy all those who live above them.

ARADATH

The Aradath region is often called “the land of green mountains,” and for good reason. The gradual western slopes are covered with fields of long grass and wildflowers swaying in the mountain wind. Hidden valleys and glittering lakes dot the mountainside, and countless streams gurgle across the land, feeding the green as they go. Thick forests carpet the eastern slope all the way up to the tree line, where the soil turns rocky but still supports heavy brush and thin crag grass.

Life flourishes on the slopes of Aradath. Deer, wolves, fish, and other natural woodland and grassland creatures abound—as do their dire cousins, and other, stranger creatures. Giant eagles make their nests in the highest peaks, and herds of goat-like *erkas* feed on the crag grass there. The deepest lakes and darkest woods

are known to breed wild, dangerous things that do not like to be disturbed. Dragons have not been seen in Aradath for almost a century, but stories of hidden lairs are still common in the area.

HISTORY

Since before the first days, the dwarves of Aradath shared a culture of stonecraft, mining, and metalworking, but divided themselves into three kingdoms: Kaenhar, Mathog, and Grimhal.

Kaenhar’s kingdom dominated the eastern slopes and later developed a tradition of trading with the other people of Ambria. Some Kaenharians went so far as to settle in the foothills to facilitate trade with the lowlanders. It was a controversial move at the time (living so far from the mountains was something of a scandal), but later proved a great commercial success.

The kingdom of Mathog settled the western slopes. The people of Mathog refined their skills and turned mere craftsmanship into artistry. Mathogian workmanship became known as the finest in the land, and its fine metal sculptures were prized by lords and princes.

Grimhal delved below the surface of Aradath and carved its kingdom out of the mountains’ solid rock. The Grimhal dwarves dug deep in search of untapped veins of gold, silver, and mithral. While the other two kingdoms were no strangers to mining, the people of Grimhal embraced the deep underground as a way of life.

As long as there have been dwarves in the Stormfells, they have been fighting with the giants to the north. For a thousand years, the fighting was so constant, the dwarves gave up trying to divide one giant war from the next, and the endless series of battles simply became known as the giant wars.



The giant wars raged for centuries. Sometimes a dwarven kingdom would establish a settlement north of the Torvun. Sometimes the giants would destroy a city south of the river. But neither side could get the advantage of the other...until the fire giants invaded.

Far beneath the surface of Aradath, a nation of fire giants worked their forges, readied their weapons, and found strange allies in the loathsome creatures of subterranean darkness. When the Grimhal dwarves discovered the fire giants' sacred Earth Forge, the fire giants streamed upward to destroy the intruders.

Grimhal was unprepared for an attack from below and was almost destroyed. Hael Ironforge, king of Grimhal, appealed to the kings of Kaenhar and Mathog. He promised that if they joined their forces to drive back the fire giants, he would lead them to victory against the surface giants as well. The kings of Kaenhar and Mathog realized the fire giants were their enemy, too, and quickly agreed to follow Ironforge into battle.

What followed came to be known as the Last War. Thousands of lives were lost from all three kingdoms, and years of production were devoted to the war effort. In the end, it was a group of warrior-priests who brought the dwarves victory. Disciples of Mordrin, a god said to dwell in the deep place where the dwarves were born, the warrior-priests threw themselves into the front lines to stand against the final fire giant assault. As the giants' flaming swords descended on the robed and armored figures, a furious red glow filled the chamber. The ground shattered beneath the giants' feet, plunging them into the white-hot river of magma below. The remaining fire giants glowered at the enemy from the far side of the chasm and knew the battle was over. While there were more battles to be fought, the fire giants were broken, and the Last War ended that day.

The Last War finally united the Three Kingdoms of Aradath. The dwarves enjoyed the strength their unity brought them and named Hael Ironforge as their High King. True to his word, Ironforge led the Three Kingdoms on a short-lived campaign against the giants in the north. After less than six months of fighting, the king of the giants offered a truce: There would be peace between dwarves and giants so long as each kingdom remained on its side of the Torvun. Wary from years of constant warfare, the dwarves accepted the truce.

The truce has lasted two hundred years. Without the constant threat of open war, the dwarves have turned their attentions as never before to massive mining, building, and commercial projects. The fire giants are still a danger, but the dwarves are confident that, in their unity beneath Mordrin's watchful eye, they will be victorious the next time the enemy erupts from darkness.

PEOPLE

The Three Kingdoms are populated almost exclusively by dwarves. There are nearly a thousand different clans, each of which swears fealty to one of the Three

Kingdoms. Most dwarves live in their traditional kingdoms, but the Last War forced many clans to relocate, so it is not unusual to find a Kaenhar clan, for example, living in Mathog. The underground kingdom of Grimhal is especially diverse, for it is the front line of defense against the fire giants.

Traders and merchants from around the world can be found in the vast dwarven cities, haggling for fine silver jewelry or offering contracts for architectural work. Some of these outsider merchants decide to live with the dwarves, usually in the cities of Kaenhar. The King's Road—the most accessible route through the Stormfells—brings thousands of travelers of every race and tribe through the tunnels and vaults of Grimhal each year.

The vast, grassy foothills of eastern Aradath are sparsely populated by human farmers. These are free lands, though most pay tribute to Elnaria or Riversend. A handful of villages support themselves by farming and trading with the dwarven kingdoms.

Since the truce, giants are seen only rarely south of the Torvun. Most giants are attacked on sight, because most giants are raiders who have slipped across the river looking for trouble. A few carry the seal of the Storm King, however, and terrible consequences would befall whoever harmed one of these ambassadors.

SETTLEMENTS

Most dwarves live in massive stone cities carved directly into the Stormfells themselves. Dwarven cities are several miles wide on the surface and twice as deep. As they have grown over the centuries, they have spread deeper under the surface of the mountains.

Like everything else the dwarves build, their cities are a mix of practicality and breathtaking beauty. Rivers and underground streams provide water and sewage systems. Hot and cold running water is common in the homes of wealthy dwarves. In the winter, buildings are heated by hot water running through their walls. The high towers of the dwarven cities are connected by bridges and narrow skyways.

It is a common belief that a blank wall is an unfinished wall. Therefore, almost every surface in a dwarven city is decorated with a tasteful carving, relief, or mosaic of some kind. High pillars and tall doorways are often carved in the shape of famous dwarven heroes or the faces of clan gods. Important public buildings are often decorated with images related to their function: a city hall, for example, may have a mural depicting famous past leaders dispensing wisdom, or a temple may be covered in tiny glyphs describing the god's blessings.

The dwarves often work magic into their designs, even in their architecture. Pillars too small to support their ceilings are common, and delicate stone work is reinforced with enchantments. Underground, many walls are enchanted to act as windows to the surface world, letting in sunlight by day and showing the stars

at night. Truly elaborate towers may even include enchanted rooms or floors that move, allowing visitors to quickly get to where they have to be by simply speaking their destinations aloud.

Elegant sculptures are common in public spaces. It is traditional for each clan to build and maintain at least one such sculpture as a monument to the clan, so most sculptures reflect some past glory: a victory in battle, an artistic achievement, or a hero who won renown for the clan.

Every settlement includes at least one temple to Mordrin. These temples are as large and elaborate as any other dwarven building and are always marked by magical flame statues made of molten rock. Through the magic of Mordrin and the artisans, these statues slowly move and change shape, yet are cool and safe to touch. These statues are informal shrines, and small mounds of flowers, trinkets, and other offerings tend to collect around their bases. Each temple contains an inner sanctum with a large hole in the floor, and the river of lava that flows below it often plays a part in religious ceremonies.

LANGUAGE

The Dwarven tongue is thick, hearty, and full of life. It is a language easily given to bawdy songs, mighty battle cries, and epic, bloody poems. Each of the Three Kingdoms has enough of its own dialect to confuse non-dwarven outsiders, but these dialects are not so different that the dwarves cannot communicate with each other. Many dwarves can also speak the Common trader's tongue, since it facilitates trade with Anderland, the Kingsmarch, and the highlands. Others speak Giant—an essential when facing giant warriors or ambassadors.

The underground inhabitants of Aradath have also developed a code system that serves as an effective means of communication. Designed by miners working far beneath the surface, Stone-speak is a system of raps and taps designed to echo down miles of sunless tunnels. It is said that if one is standing in just the right place, one can hear miners from all over Aradath tapping their Stone-speak to one another. Miners have also been known to tap out messages to each other on tavern tables when they do not want to be overheard.

GOVERNANCE

When Hael Ironforge united the dwarves, he knew that while the Three Kingdoms would fight beneath a common banner, no two would ever swear fealty to the third. For that reason, he abdicated the Grimhal throne and established a new line of high kings.

Today, the Three Kingdoms are still independent entities, each with its own king: King Angvar the Wise, an ancient monarch with hundreds of living descendants, rules Kaenhar with the help of his famous hundred-clan council. Rovus Bloodstone, a steel-eyed war-

rior-king, rules Grimhal and keeps watch on the fire giants below. The ruler of Mathog, Gyr Staster, is known for his fabulous inventions.

The three kings of Aradath swear fealty to the High King, Odvar Ironforge, and advise him on all matters of state. In turn, the chieftains of each clan swear fealty to their respective kings, and individual dwarves swear fealty to their clans.

The dwarves are utterly loyal to their clans (and by extension, their kings and the high king), but loyalty does not mean blind obedience. The dwarves are proud, independent, stubborn, and above all, practical. Before they will comply with a royal decree or a chieftain's order, their leaders must explain why these demands are being made and how they will affect those involved. As a result, dwarven politics are slow and marked with long rounds of debate.

One matter is rarely a topic of debate, and that is the war with the fire giants.

Now that they have a truce with the Storm King, the dwarves recognize the fire giants as a terrible threat to the Three Kingdoms and gladly set aside any internal conflicts in order to keep this threat at bay. The Diamond Guard is a military force made up of dwarves dedicated to defending not their home kingdoms, but the whole of Aradath from the fire giants. The warriors of the Diamond Guard are professional soldiers, paid by the taxes from all three kingdoms. While the formation of such a military would have been unheard of before the Last War, it now seems prudent to maintain one. The Diamond Guard has its headquarters near the Mouth of Shadow, the vast cavern from which the fire giants first emerged centuries ago.

RELIGION

The dwarves' chief deity is Mordrin, a god of stone and flame. Mordrin was a minor clan god until his disciples played a vital role in the defeat of the fire giants over two hundred years ago. After the Last War, High King Hael Ironforge decreed that temples to Mordrin be built throughout Aradath, and that every dwarf should give praise to the god who saved them. The dwarves believe that Mordrin dwells in a chamber deep below Grimhal, in the place where the dwarves first emerged into the world. They believe that Mordrin enabled their birth, though there are many accounts of how this was done. Some disciples claim that Mordrin carved the dwarves from the rock itself, while others say that he hewed a tunnel to the center of the earth and that the dwarves crawled forth from this passage.

Mordrin remains a popular god—especially with the miners. He gives practical gifts, such as magic to melt stone, shape rock, and direct magma away from where the miners are working. He also protects his followers from the hazards of landslides, cave-ins, and flooding. There are countless stories of those caught in underground accidents who called on the name of

Mordrin and were protected from harm.

The disciples of Mordrin are warriors, trained to fight with hammer, prayers, and spells. Dressed in their distinctive red robes, they are in the front line of any attack against the fire giants. While they are not technically part of the Diamond Guard, they can often be founds standing vigil with the soldiers guarding the Mouth of Shadow.

Each clan has one or more small gods of its own in addition to Mordrin. Some clans teach that their gods are Mordrin's subjects, while others believe that their gods are equals with Mordrin, or even rule over Mordrin. Mordrin is not a jealous god, and his disciples have remained silent on the matter of deity hierarchies. It is clear, however, that the Mordrin sect is becoming more and more influential and dominant under the patronage of the high kings.

The dwarves believe in an afterlife, and that what is said about a person after his death determines what that afterlife experience will be. If those who survive you sing of your bravery and goodness, you will be a king in the afterlife. If they tell their children terrible tales of your evil, your existence will be one of suffering. But worst of all, if they don't speak of you at all, you cease to exist. For this reason, it is important to dwarves that their deeds be known and recorded for posterity. This is partly why so much art and decoration is dedicated to images of dwarven ancestors.

TRADE AND CRAFT

The dwarves of the Three Kingdoms are famous throughout Ambria for producing metal and stone goods of exceptional quality and beauty. They are masters of stone, steel, gold, silver, and mithral. Their arms and armor are renowned not only for their strength and durability, but for their exquisite patterns and designs as well. The artisans of Mathog are acclaimed for their skill and fantastic sculptures—most rulers of Ambria have crowns crafted in Mathog. The weaponsmiths of Grimhal love to challenge themselves and each other by designing exotic, deadly weapons of unusual appearance: triple-bladed daggers, swords that double as axes, strange blades that return to the wielder's hand when thrown.

All these items and more are traded to the other races; dwarven goods are not especially rare in the rest of Ambria, but they are expensive. Merchants from the lowlands are common in Aradath and bring the craftsmanship of the dwarves to those willing to pay for it thousands of miles away. The dwarves of Kaenhar have established their own trading posts (some of which are villages unto themselves) in the eastern foothills. Some Kaenhar clans have even taken their trading posts on the road, and travel Ambria selling high-quality dwarven goods for prices that gradually increase the farther from home they travel. Other traveling clans offer their services as architects, smiths, and more to those who can

afford them. Many of these dwarves have long-standing trading agreements with the Faring Folk, and so their goods are available throughout Ambria.

Aside from trade goods, the dwarves also create unique and magical items, such as sculptures that move, ore carts that roll on their own, and golems that walk through places too dangerous for any dwarf. These are singular and precious items, often the result of years of work, and are almost never sold outside the Three Kingdoms.

THE FORGING TIME

The Forging Time is a tradition founded a century ago to help remind the people that they are united. Even though there are three kingdoms, there is but one dwarven nation.

Once a year, at the height of winter, the three kings of Aradath join with the High King for two weeks to forge a unique new artifact. The Forging Time is a festive event, with additional activities and social gatherings lasting until the night the new artifact is revealed, when the Three Kingdoms break into celebration.

Previous artifacts have included a statue of the first High King (magically animated to tell the tale of how Mordrin saved the dwarven people from the fire giants), a sword so sharp it cut rock like paper, and a crown of diamonds so dazzling, it could only be worn at night.

Forging Time artifacts are always given as gifts to foreign leaders as a sign of respect. A great deal of discussion and politicking surrounds the presenting of the artifacts, for everyone has his own ideas about who is and who is not worthy of the distinction. Throughout Ambria, to have such an artifact in one's possession is a fabulous honor.

EVER DEEPER

The world's hunger for dwarven goods is insatiable. To keep up with demand, the dwarves dig ever deeper beneath the Stormfells. They try to avoid the fire giants they know live beneath them, but it is impossible to always do so. Conflict is inevitable and happens often. When the miners follow a vein of ore into the fire giant domain, the Diamond Guard is called out to defend the lode while the miners finish their work. This often results in skirmishes or worse, and some veins have had to be abandoned, their tunnels collapsed, lest the situation escalate into another full-blown war.

As the dwarves reach places in the earth no mortal has ever seen, they encounter strange, magical creatures of earth, fire, and darkness. While lesser beings may interpret these encounters as a sign that they are digging too deeply, the brave and irrepressible dwarves forge onward, ever deeper, believing that their warriors and clan gods will always be able to watch over and protect them.

ORE FOR THE BELLY

Behind their high stone walls, the dwarven cities do not produce much food. The soil is not good for crops, so some dwarves raise sheep, goats, and erkas on the mountain slopes covered in crag grass.

Fruits and nuts are gathered from orchards and wild berry trees on the western side of the mountains. Grains and other produce are harvested by dwarven farmers (or human farmers who sell their crops) in the foothills to the east. Hunting is plentiful all over the mountains. There's plenty of game inside the mountains as well, but few find the taste of such subterranean meat appealing. The underwater streams, on the other hand, are prime fishing spots, and the only places to find dire trout.

WAYS AND TRADITIONS

BORN OF FIRE, BURIED IN STONE

One month after a dwarven child is born, his parents take him to the temple of Mordrin to be baptized. To show their faith, the child is taken to the river of lava, where he is baptized in Mordrin's name. He is protected by the god of stone and flame; neither the child nor the baptizing disciple has ever been hurt by the lava.

It is during this time of baptism that Mordrin chooses his servants. If a child rises from the lava with the red-flame mark of Mordrin upon his chest, then his family knows that his destiny lies not with this clan, but with the warrior-priests. The physical mark fades after a few days, but the touch of the immortal upon the child's spirit is permanent.

When a dwarf dies, his family takes his body to a temple of Mordrin for cremation. As the deceased's friends and family gather solemnly around, the warrior-priests once more consecrate the dwarf to Mordrin and, as during baptism, plunge him beneath the lava flow. The disciples hold the body in the lava until it has been entirely consumed, then lead those assembled in a prayer ushering the fallen into the afterlife.

MASTERS OF THE UNDERBEASTS

In their never-ending mining operations, the dwarves have come across innumerable subterranean creatures. Many of these are mindless monstrosities that are simply killed on sight. But some are intelligent and open to parlay, and the dwarves have befriended many of the strange creatures that live beneath the mountains.

Elementals of fire, stone, and steam are sometimes found in the mines, and are often willing to help in the mining process in exchange for simple gifts. Mephits are increasingly common in the Three Kingdoms. Amused and intrigued by the new world around them, many of them are allies to the dwarves, and some even consider them friends. A few delvers have also stumbled onto dwarven mining operations over the years, causing fear and disruption. Most were happy to go away after being bribed with metal, but a few have actually helped the miners by digging tunnels in exchange for gold or even mithral.

DWARF CLANS

There are nearly a thousand different dwarf clans in the Three Kingdoms. Dwarves consider their clans more than family; their clans are extensions of themselves. They can no more betray their clan than they can their own hands or feet.

Clans are organized in a simple tribal structure. At the top is the clan chieftain, which is usually a hereditary title (though it can be removed in cases of extreme incompetence). Below the chieftain are dozens of family elders who represent the individual dwarf families. Chieftains are not required to consult with or take advice from these elders, but it is considered wise to do so. Each clan has a clanhold, or communal gathering place. Some clans are organized as businesses, with each member expected to help fill the clan's coffers.

According to legend, there were originally only three clans—one for each kingdom. But the clans gave rise to great heroes, champions so mighty, they overshadowed the clans of their birth, and these heroes became founders of their own new clans.

Today, new clans are forged in the same fashion. It is a rare and amazing event, but if heroes rise to such glory, they have no choice but to start their own clans. Many dwarves who set out on the path of adventure dream of someday returning to Aradath to found their own clans. It is believed that no afterlife is as sweet as that of a dwarf who has won sufficient glory to found his own clan, for his name is truly immortal.

FAMILY EXCHANGE

After the Last War, High King Hael Ironforge was concerned about maintaining unity between the Three Kingdoms. One of the traditions he instituted was the exchange. Each year, one out of every hundred dwarven youngsters is exchanged with another youngster in another of the Three Kingdoms. The exchange lasts for three years, during which time the two children will live in each others' homes, be raised by each others' parents, and learn each others' customs. The purpose of the tradition is to teach the dwarves understanding and respect for those from other kingdoms, and for the past 200 years, it has served its purpose well.

AGAINST THE FIRE GIANTS

The fire giants are a constant threat to the dwarven way of life. Rarely a season goes by that a fire giant war party doesn't make its way up into the caverns of the Three Kingdoms to wreak havoc. These are usually limited attacks, more to terrorize than do any real damage, but the dwarven leaders worry that there is a pattern to these attacks they aren't seeing.

To protect their borders, the dwarves send soldiers down into the fire giants' realms on strategic raids and spying missions. These soldiers report that the fire giants are continuing to build their forces, and have enlisted the aid of hideous creatures from the darkest places below the earth. It is only a matter of time, they say, before the fire giants march to war once more.

PERSONALITIES

GROVAN OF CLAN GROVAN

Grovan Ropar was a low-ranking officer in the Diamond Guard who got caught behind enemy lines during a raid on a fire giant supply depot. Faced with overwhelming odds, he held an axe in each hand and strode into the enemy, determined to face his doom with honor and courage. When he instead staggered back to camp three days later, horribly wounded and covered in blood, he was immediately promoted and given three weeks' leave to recover at home.

Upon returning home, Grovan discovered that his clan treated him differently. They gave him more honor and respect than before, and even the elders asked him his opinions on clan matters. The only one who didn't treat him with deference was the chieftain, who seemed jealous of Grovan's new status. Shortly before returning to the Diamond Guard, Grovan's chieftain told him that he was too highly esteemed to remain part of the Ropar clan; he would have to start his own clan.

Grovan was shocked. It was an extreme honor, but not one he had sought or even wanted. He loved the Ropar clan, and didn't want to leave, but the chieftain and elders had made their decision. He had to go.

The Grovan clan has established its own small clanhold and is beginning to make a name for itself as a clan of fearsome giant-slayers. As clan chieftain, Grovan has offered clan membership to any brave enough to join. But Grovan is not happy, and truly wants nothing more than to rejoin his family in Clan Ropar.

SOMNOR THE SMITH

Somnor always wanted to travel, but his work at the forge kept him from the King's Road and the paths beyond. When he heard that his clan elders were looking for new ways to increase their income, he came up

with a proposal that would make all of them happy. The elders accepted his proposal, and the next spring Somnor packed his smithing tools onto the back of a pony and set out for Anderland.

Somnor is a traveling smith, selling his artistic craftsmanship to those who can pay his price. He carries with him a magical, portable forge that allows him to work wherever he may be. Once a year, Somnor returns to Aradath to pay his clan their due and report back all that he has seen and heard.

Those who encounter Somnor on the road find him a friendly, smiling fellow who is full of gossip and news of the realm. He loves his job and it shows—not only in his pleasant demeanor, but also in the joy that shines through his work.

SITES AND FEATURES

THE KING'S ROAD

The King's Road was another one of High King Hael Ironforge's projects, though he never lived to see it to completion. As the name would suggest, it is a wide road leading up through the foothills on the eastern and western slopes of the Stormfells, through the kingdoms of Kaenhar and Mathog, and into the underground kingdom of Grimhal.

The King's Road is by far the easiest and most efficient way to cross the Stormfells, and therefore sees an enormous amount of traffic. Merchants, pilgrims, and other travelers are welcomed every few miles with shops, inns, and other businesses. On the mountainside, the businesses are thick along the highway, transforming into one long bazaar. In the kingdom of Grimhal, however, the road dips deep underground and becomes more treacherous. Travelers are occasionally attacked by fire giant raiders and other creatures, but the Diamond Guard has thus far done a good job of patrolling the route, and these attacks are extremely rare.

THE EARTH FORGE

At the beginning of the Last War, the dwarves captured from the fire giants a cavern carved with strange symbols and magical glyphs. The dwarves didn't know what to make of these markings until they saw the forge. Made of mithral and scaled for use by giants, the Earth Forge was large enough for 10 smiths to work side by side, and was not fueled by ordinary fire, but by the heat from a planar fissure in the cavern floor.

Today, the Earth Forge is a key part of the dwarven economy. Because of the Forge's magical properties, items crafted in it are easily enchanted. Creating magical items is still draining, delicate work, but the Forge makes it commercially viable.

The fissure in the cavern floor is actually an open-



ing to the plane of fire and one of the strongest eldritch wells on Eadar. Most of the time, the fissure is simply a glowing, white-hot crack some five feet across and a hundred feet long. At other times, one can see flames and figures moving in them, or hear the hissing speech of strange fire creatures. On rare occasions, *things* slip through the fissure into the Forge cavern. Thus far, these creatures have never stayed long; they take one look around them and dart back into the fissure.

STONEGUARD

Stoneguard, the seat of the High King's power, is not a beautiful city. While generations of artisans have done their best to rectify this, there is simply no way to disguise that Stoneguard was founded nearly a thousand years ago as an impregnable fortress, and aesthetics had no place in its design.

The builders of Stoneguard are lost to history, but tradition has it that the first dwarves built it as a defense against the first giants. Magic was probably used in its construction, for its enormous stone walls are seamless and rise hundreds of feet above the peaks of Mount Aradrun, upon which it is built.

Today, Stoneguard is the cultural and diplomatic heart of the Three Kingdoms. The center of Stoneguard is a great tower where the High King lives and rules. It is here that the High King takes his council, holds court,

and passes judgment. The tower is as old as Stoneguard itself, but was remodeled when the Three Kingdoms were unified and now features a crystal dome at its top. On a cloudless day, the dome is visible for a hundred miles in every direction as it glistens in the sun.

Stoneguard is enormous, even by dwarven standards. While the ancient fortress is small, a vast city has grown up outside the original walls, and a hundred miles of labyrinthine tunnels run beneath the mountain's surface.

VORDUKAN

The subterranean city of Vordukan was founded a century ago on the shores of a great underground lake. At the center of this lake lies the enormous isle of Vorduk, which is rich with mithral. Dozens of clans have laid claims to portions of the island, and numerous battles have been waged for its control. Recently, however, the clans have started working together in the face of a common adversary.

A year ago, the cavern of Vordukan was rocked by an earthquake. Even as the city was repaired, its occupants realized that the waterline was higher than it was before the quake. In fact, the lake seemed to be rising a little bit each day—and with the rising water came the fishmen: vile, aquatic creatures that tipped ore boats and devoured sailors.

The rising water has now slowed to a trickle, but a significant portion of Vordukan is completely flooded. Nevertheless, the city is still thriving. The demand for mithral has only increased since the quake and shows no sign of diminishing, so mining operations have continued. The added risk to the operation has only increased the mithral's value. Residents of Vordukan have moved to higher ground on the cavern walls, but remain mindful of the dangerous things swimming through the flooded ruins beneath them.

MORDRIN KADAN

Mordrin Kadan, the House of Mordrin, is the monastery home of the Mordrinian warrior-priests. When a dwarf chosen of Mordrin reaches the age of 13, he is sent to Mordrin Kadan to receive his training and take his vows. New warrior-priests are sent out from the monastery to temples across Aradath but return once every five years to renew their vows and continue their training.

Deep inside one of the oldest caverns in Aradath, Mordrin Kadan is a roughly pyramid-shaped temple a hundred feet tall and thousands of feet wide. The building is hewn from a single outcropping of stone, forming a natural bridge that spans a vast chasm full of hot, glowing lava. Balconies and patios jut out from the pyramid and protrude dangerously over the lava flow. These are the training grounds where the disciples are taught and must prove their martial abilities.

According to the elders of Mordrin, the god himself created the monastery. When the first dwarves came to worship him, he directed them to this place where he could show them more of his glory. There is a pit in the lowest level of the temple that opens directly onto the lava flow. It is here, they say, that Mordrin physically appears to the chief disciples and makes known his will.

OUTCROP

A century and a half ago, while the King's Road was still little more than a dirt track with a big name, the village of Outcrop was founded by the dwarf Ingar Olvan, who established a trading post about 50 miles southeast of Stoneguard. He had expected to sell a few dwarf-crafted plows, jewelry, and other trinkets to the farmers in the area, but hadn't realized how popular the items would be. People were willing to pay handsomely for dwarven quality—especially if they didn't have to trek to the Stormfell peaks to do so.

Today, the village Outcrop is a major crossroads, and the easternmost point of the King's Road. The population is highly diverse, with about a quarter dwarves, a quarter humans, and the rest a healthy mix from all over Ambria. There are numerous trading posts in the town, each representing a different dwarven clan, and competition can be fierce, though it is usually friendly. Ingar's trading post remains the largest and best, however, and now offers food, lodging, and entertainment as well as low prices on fine dwarven goods.

Outcrop is also a major distribution point in the trade of seagold. The rare metal is transported from the Goldspring Sea to the mountains, usually in caravans or riverboats controlled by the merchants of Seaward. The seagold is exchanged in Outcrop for a variety of dwarven crafted goods and is then transported in mule trains to the dwarven clanholds.

Outcrop is a border town, responsible to no lord or kingdom. It has a village council, but it is a half-hearted affair, more concerned with lining its own pockets than maintaining order or building up infrastructure. The streets are mud, living conditions range from opulent to deplorable, and nothing is truly illegal so long as the bribe is right. Adventurers and other troublemakers are common in Outcrop, and often use it as a staging area for quests, raids, and other dubious activities.

MOUTH OF SHADOW

In the earliest days of the Last War, the fire giants hammered a hole through a thin wall between their kingdom and Grimhal. As their troops poured through the hole over the course of the war, the hole grew into a massive gateway, a portal some hundred feet wide and 50 feet tall. It became the key access point into the heart of the Three Kingdoms.

After the war, the dwarves sealed the hole with stone, steel, and magic. They set the Diamond Guard to



watch the portal, now known as the Mouth of Shadow.

The great seal has been broken seven times in the last two centuries. Each time, the fire giants have burst through to find their path blocked by the Diamond Guard and a furious battle ensued. After the dwarves' victory, the Mouth was resealed, stronger than before. It has been 10 years since the last time the Mouth was opened, but the Diamond Guard can hear the signs of fire giant activity on the other side.

SKYHOME

North of the Torvun River, the Stormfells reach upward with cold, stony fingers, leaving the deep forests and green fields of the lowlands far behind. This is Skyhome, a region occupied by the tallest mountains in Ambria. These peaks are shrouded in clouds on even the clearest days and patched with snow year-round. The mountain tops are barren and windswept, with little foliage to be found. Cliffs, chasms, and other sudden changes in elevation are common, as are caves and ancient networks of tunnels.

The eastern slopes of Skyhome gradually give way to meager forests that grow thicker closer to the foothills. Cold, heavy rains keep the slopes green, but the thin soil prevents the trees from digging deep roots. Forest tigers, wild boars, dire bears, worgs, and other predators share the woods with their prey.

To the west are wide plateaus covered in crag grass, making the region suitable for pastures. Wild erkas roam the area, and giants bring their flocks to these meadows to graze. Some pastures are better than others and the giants often fight over who controls the best land. The western peaks are home to wild rocs, giant eagles, griffins, and the few remaining Stormfell dragons.

HISTORY

According to legend, the first giants were children of the sky-father and earth-mother, given birth in the beginning of time. As the sky turned above the earth, the sky-father changed, first producing storm giants, then cloud giants, then giants of frost and stone. When he finally produced the hill giants, the earth-mother turned her back to the sky, fearful of what would come next. But the sky-father forced himself upon her and produced the vile fire giants. Ashamed of what he had done, the sky-father fled the mountains, leaving cold clouds behind.

The earth-mother nurtured her children. She opened the rocks and hard places, giving them shelter. She gave them streams of fresh water from below and gathered what crag grass could be found so their flocks could eat. She brought the dragons and wild beasts from the lowlands and set them on the slopes for her children.



to hunt. She hid the fire giants in the deep places of the earth. And with her final breath, she called down the stars so her children might have the power of magic.

In the ageless time that followed, two immortals rose to power in the Stormfells. One was Balon Thunderhorn, called the Storm King, the lord of the giants. The other was Thorngul, the great white dragon known as the Wyrm of Winter. The enmity between the Storm King and Thorngul ran deep, and the giantkind and dragons battled endlessly throughout this long night of ice and cold.

During these endless wars, the Storm King called all the giant clans together to battle the dragons. Thunderhorn's might was terrible, but two of the races of giants would never submit to his rule. The fire giants dwelled in the roots of the mountains and worshipped their own gods. The frost giants defied the Storm King and allied themselves with the Wyrm of Winter.

Over time, Thorngul's power waned. The Wyrm of Winter withdrew into the farthest reaches of the north and decades would pass before his hunger roused him from slumber. The Storm King built a nation of giants that endures to this day. As punishment for their ancient treachery, the frost giants were banished to the frigid peaks of the Frostfells and the Icehammer Front. The fire giants live still in the depths of the earth and periodically

make war on the other giant clans.

For the millennia that the giants have lived in Skyhome, the clans have never gotten along with each other. Resources are scarce, and the giant clans have fought over them for so long, they know of no other way to live.

The only times the clans have worked together was during times of war. They have warred against the dwarves for centuries, for dwarves are rich in food and plunder and encroach on giant lands all too often. They have also warred against the fire giants in the earth below, for they still try to lay claim to the bounty that the earth-mother denied them long ago.

The last great war with the dwarves was more than 200 years ago. United by their High King, the dwarves fought off a fire giant incursion, then turned their sights north to the giants of Skyhome. The war raged for six months, gradually pushing the giants northward until the Torvun River was at their backs. It was then, for the first time in centuries, that Balon Thunderhorn appeared.

Few had seen the Storm King since the exile of the frost giants, but stories of his mighty presence and magical power were legendary. When he spoke, the earth shook. When he frowned, the sky darkened. When he laughed, birds in Anderland took flight.

Without explanation, Thunderhorn approached the dwarves and offered them a truce: As long as they stayed on their side of the Torvun, he said, there could be peace between the two races. The dwarves agreed to the deal, and allowed the remaining giants living south of the river to move back north.

PEOPLE

The highest, most barren peaks of Skyhome are claimed by storm and cloud giants, who carve their palaces out of stone and the clouds themselves. Below these peaks lie the rocky mountain caves and villages of the hill and stone giants, who often range down to the lower slopes while hunting and raiding.

A few humans make their homes in the foothills of Skyhome, making their living through farming and trade. Some are the giants' vassals, as the minotaurs once were and many ogres remain, and pay tribute in exchange for protection from dragons and other dangers of the mountains.

Dwarves and fire giants sometimes make their way into Skyhome, almost always as enemies. A small group of dwarves might be emissaries from the High King, but most giants will kill them on sight just in case they are not.

Small bands of frost giants are commonly found sneaking around the borders of Skyhome. They may be searching for something but are usually killed in battle without being interrogated, so no one knows for sure.

SETTLEMENTS

Hill giants usually live in large caves built into the sides of hills. They sometimes dig out tunnels themselves, but prefer to move into natural caves or burrows dug out by long-dead beasts. Hill giant clans live together in enclaves that range from single caves to warren-like tunnel complexes, depending on the size of the clan.

Stone giant clans build villages, either by stacking stones or by carving them out of the walls of the mountain. These villages usually have a central gathering point where the clan elders can meet and discuss the future.

Storm and cloud giants live in massive castles carved from stone and imbued with magic. Many of them also live in the clouds themselves, and drift slowly over Skyhome's mountain peaks.

Every village has at least one mystical god-torch, which represents a star-god worshipped by the village. As long as the villagers have the star-god's favor, the torch will never burn out. If they fall out of favor, the torch turns to ash and will not burn until favor is restored. At night, one can tell a village's magical power by the number of god-torches it has burning.

LANGUAGE

The giants speak a common language, though each race has its own distinctive dialect. Hill giants have a raw, guttural way of speaking that makes every word sound like a hurled curse. Stone giants ponder their words before speaking and are given to long pauses between words. Cloud giants have an almost musical quality to their speech that makes it pleasant to the ear, while storm giants speak little at all.

Giant shamans speak the language of the star-gods, a variant of Celestial, which has been passed down from master to student for thousands of years. Shamans are also the keepers of the written word. Hill giant shamans don't bother trying to teach any but their students to write. Literacy is more common amongst the other giants—the cloud giants are even known for their epic poetry.

Most giants can speak at least a little Dwarven and the Common trade tongue of men. It makes it easier to demand tribute when you can threaten someone in his own language.

GOVERNANCE

While Balon Thunderhorn is acknowledged as the one true ruler of the Stormfell giants, the truth is he is almost never seen outside the city of Skyhold, and he interferes with the clans almost not at all. Driven by fear and awe, the giants pay the tributes the Storm King demands but are largely left to rule themselves.

Each clan is ruled by a chieftain and a shaman. The chieftain's position is precarious and determined by current popularity, but once a shaman has been appointed, he is shaman for life. Shamans rule on purely internal matters, while chieftains, advised by a council of hunters, decide how the clan will get along (or not) with others in the region.

When two clans have a dispute, they usually resolve it through battle. If the conflict is not important enough to fight over (or too important to fight over), the clans call upon the Storm King to make a ruling on the matter. When this happens, Balon Thunderhorn sends one of 10 storm giants he has appointed to speak for him. These thunder lords, as they are called, carry the Storm King's words and the strength to enforce them.

RELIGION

The giants believe that when the earth-mother died, she called down a thousand stars from the sky. The stars fell upon the mountains, where they became gods trapped in stone. These star-gods were instructed by the earth-mother to bless her children with fertility, health, and victory in war.

Some legends tell that the Storm King arrested his fall in the clouds wreathing Skyhome, and did not become bound to the stone like the other star-gods.

Others claim that Balon Thunderhorn is not a star-god at all, but rather the first of the giants, and that he gained his divinity in the course of his eons-long battles with the Wurm of Winter in the elder days.

Today, Skyhome is dotted with hundreds of standing stones, sacred groves, cairns, and other markers, each of which signifies the presence of a star-god. Most of these sites have been claimed by one clan or another, and countless battles have been fought over the control of them. The star-gods are jealous, and only bless the clan that best honors them. The clan that has the most star-gods' blessings is considered the strongest clan in Skyhome.

Only disciples, who are born to hear spirits, can listen to the voices of the star-gods. They intercede with the star-gods on their clans' behalf, offering tributes of food, worship, or whatever the star-god may need. Once a disciple has secured a star-god's blessing, he lights a god-torch in its honor. If that immortal already had a god-torch kept by another previously favored disciple, it goes out when the new torch is lit.

NIRGAH THE SNAKE

The shrine of Nirgah is marked with a 20-foot-tall boulder carved into the form of a pillar of snakes. The hill giants who honor Nirgah cover themselves with snake-like markings. Nirgah gives her children the ability to hear footsteps in rock and sense enemies long before they are seen. Her most devout disciples develop an immunity to poison, and some have even developed fangs.

SANTUR THE HEALER

Santur's shrine is a circle of trees on an otherwise barren, rocky plateau. Santur's cloud giant followers may be healed of any wound or disease by spending the night in the circle accompanied by a live animal sacrifice. In the morning, the animal is dead and the supplicant is healed.

THRON THE NIGHT MASTER

The shrine of Thron is an obsidian pattern seemingly poured into the face of a cavern wall. Thron's stone giant children can sense vibrations in stone, and this gift grants them tremorsense out to 60 ft.

TRADE AND CRAFT

While some clans are open to trading with one another, most prefer to simply raid a rival clan and take what they need. Trading with non-giants is even rarer, but it does occur, especially with the men of the Durning Highlands and Anderland.

Far more common are giants who offer protection

to the humans and others who live on the eastern slopes and the edge of the Pale Forest. In exchange for tribute, some clans keep the people safe from brigands and goblinoids from the forest looking for easy prey.

A few giants sell their services as dragon-hunters. While there are few in the Stormfells who would employ them, they have found work in the Durning Highlands and even as far away as Tamerland.

WAYS AND TRADITIONS

WAY OF THE HUNTER

To the giants, hunting is more than just a way to feed one's family. Hunting is a way of life, a set of rituals demonstrating the giants' natural superiority to all other living things. A hunt is a chance to prove one's worth to the clan.

At least once a year, each clan sends out a hunting party to take down the best game it can find. The hunters split up, spread out, and return to camp each night to feast on the day's kills. After three days, the hunter who has brought back the most impressive game is given the title of chief hunter. For the rest of the year, the chief hunter is expected to advise the chieftain, teach the youngsters to hunt, and lead the next annual hunting party.

AGAINST THE DRAGONS

There is nothing giants love to hunt more than dragons. Dragons are the perfect game: They are strong, smart, and gifted in magic. A giant who can kill a dragon is truly worthy of honor.

There are few dragons left in the Stormfells, and those that remain do their best to stay hidden. They have no further interest in ruling the peaks or killing giants for sport. They just want to dream, scheme, and count their gold. Unfortunately for them, their very rarity makes them a more desirable target.

An adult dragon can usually take out a lone giant without much effort. A full hunting party might be more of a challenge, but not if the dragon knows the party is coming. Still the giants persist in their dragon-hunts, for the danger is partly the point of the hunt. If there isn't a lethal risk involved, it's not worth doing.

THROWING ROCKS

Just as their ancestors did millennia ago, the giants of Skyhome throw rocks at their enemies. But unlike the savages of the past, giants now use smooth, sharpened rocks etched with runes and their owners' names. These are not stones picked up on the road, but

handcrafted weapons designed to be thrown with deadly accuracy.

The best throwing rocks are passed down from one generation to the next and take on names and personalities of their own. The star-god Rood often provides his children with thin, disc-like rocks that slice through armor. Rood's rocks seem to choose favored targets (orcs, dwarves, or dragons, etc.) that they love to kill.

FLYING ROCs

Several cloud giant clans raise small families of rocs that they use as mounts. Roc-riders are rare and highly respected. It is considered an honor to have a roc-rider visit one's village, and good luck if they stay the night.

Roc-riders often serve as messengers, diplomats, and couriers between the far-flung giant settlements. A handful of them have been given the title Storm Rider and serve as the Storm King's personal envoys. Storm Riders are sometimes given missions that send them soaring far from the Stormfells, and have even been seen in the Dreaming Isles and Tamerland. Many of the giant guardians of Skyhold itself ride rocs into battle as well.

SOUNDING THE HORN

Each giant settlement has a unique, sacred horn that is blown in times of war, mourning, or celebration. This horn is traditionally crafted from the horn of a dragon and produces a surprisingly wide range of sounds.

Horns are used to communicate over great distances. They can be used to call the giants of a clan together, warn another clan of a dwarven attack, or announce the birth of the chieftain's son. The horn is never sounded lightly. The command to sound the horn must be given by both the disciple and the chieftain.

Individual giants often have their own, smaller horns. These horns are not as sacred and are used for more trivial matters: announcing a hunter's kill, calling the family together for a special meal, or just greeting an ally on the far side of the valley.

THE GREAT GAMES

The giants of Skyhome are fiercely competitive in all they do. Each year, the giant clans send their fastest, strongest athletes to the Field of Games on Mount Imperion. In this sacred place, the giants represent their clans as they compete in running, climbing, rock-throwing, hunting, and other competitions. It is an honor just to compete in the great games, but to win is likely the greatest achievement a giant will ever know.

The Field of Games is the shrine to Wopan, a star-



god said to be the patron of sport. The clan whose members win the most competitions is awarded Wopan's favor for the next year. Wopan's children are always born healthy and are immune to disease for their first 10 years of life.

FIGHTING FIRE AND ICE

The Storm King has long ago given up hope of any reconciliation with the fire or frost giants. There can be nothing but war between the exiles and the giants of Skyhome.

The clans of the northern Stormfells patrol the slopes, guarding against frost giant incursions. While there has never been a full-fledged incursion from the Frostfells, there have been many raids. There is no doubt that if those raiding parties had found the Stormfells undefended, they would have been followed by an entire army of frost giants.

Unlike the far-off frost giants, the fire giants are nearby and a constant threat. They are like lava seeping up from the dark places beneath the earth. They raid villages when they can and have recently taken to destroying star-god shrines. This hasn't affected the star-gods in any way the disciples can detect, but it is clear the fire giants are working according to a plan.

PERSONALITIES

BALON THUNDERHORN

The Storm King is as enigmatic as he is powerful. A solemn storm giant with long, dark green hair, he rarely speaks and prefers to keep to himself. He is reputed to be a fearsome warrior and a powerful wielder of magic, but beyond this, little is known. He has a few storm giant advisors but no family or clan, and none call him friend.

Thunderhorn has little interest in ruling the giants. He is mostly interested in locating every last one of the star-gods and keeping them out of the hands of the dwarves—or worse, the fire giants. Despite what the legends say and regardless of his power and immortality, the Storm King is not a star-god. Thunderhorn privately believes that if he can discover the secrets of the star-gods, he can ascend to true godhood himself. The Storm King is already an immortal, but he wants to become the true god of all giantkind. He is still researching the magic involved and the star-gods themselves, but remains confident that someday he shall be a true god.

TOVAK THE HUNTER

After Tovak the stone giant was appointed his clan's chief hunter for the sixth year in a row, he began to seek out bigger challenges. He hunted dragons for a few years, but they are so rare he was only able to find one in all that time, and it abandoned its lair once it was found out. And so he turned to the most dangerous game of all: fire giants.

Armed with a spear blessed by Gendir, a star-god of the hunt, Tovak slipped down through the mountain tunnels until he found a fire giant outpost, where he began his hunt. Tovak is surprisingly stealthy for a giant and has been known to take out a dozen fire giants without raising an alarm. He cuts off the heads of his enemies and brings them home as trophies.

Tovak's hunts have riled the fire giants and instigated many retaliatory raids. Once Tovak's chieftain realized what was happening, he forbade Tovak from hunting fire giants anywhere near his clan. Tovak agreed, and now hunts in the tunnels beneath enemy clans, or clans far away from his. Most clans don't know what's happening, only that the fire giants are attacking them.

CRON THE COLOSSAL

Cron is a hill giant who is larger than any storm giant. He stands 40 feet tall (when he can stand) and his massive girth measures more than 30 feet around. While his size makes him seem slow, Cron is actually quite

intelligent (especially for a hill giant) and has an unmatched memory. He spends most of his time with his clan's shaman, learning his peoples' history and ways, as well as those of the star-gods and the other clans.

Cron is not a normal giant, and the disciples of every clan agree that his presence is a sign from the star-gods—but what the sign means, they can only guess. One theory is that he is destined to become the repository of the giants' culture, and must someday take that knowledge to Tamerland and start a new giant colony there. Another is that he is the first of a new race of giants, larger and smarter than any that have come before. Cron would like to test this theory and see if his children turn out like him, but his mother has had a hard time finding him a suitable mate.

Late at night, when the children are asleep and the old ones have had too much wine, Cron's mother sometimes tells of when Cron was just a child. She would ask him what he wanted to be when he grew up and, without hesitation, he would reply, "The Storm King!" Struck with horror at what he had said, she forbade him to ever say such a thing again. Cron hasn't mentioned another word on the subject since that time, she says, but sometimes she can see the same glimmer of ambition in his eyes.

SITES AND FEATURES

SKYHOLD

Mount Imperion is the tallest mountain in all of Ambria, and its topmost peaks are the lowest foundations of the city of Skyhold.

Skyhold is an azure jewel glinting from behind the clouds at the top of the mountain. It is a city on a massive scale, wherein every door, window, and wall is designed to intimidate any non-giants who visit. Even the hill and stone giants who come to Skyhold to pay their tributes feel a bit dwarfed by the scale. Skyhold is not only a city of storm giants, but far more importantly, it is the home of the Storm King.

The city is ringed with an enormous wall built into the stone of the mountain itself. The wall is intricately decorated with bright blue patterns highlighted with thousands of blue sapphires. There is magic in the wall, for the finely crafted blue lines of the patterns never fade and can be seen dimly even at night. Only one road leads to Skyhold, and there is only one gate in the wall. Outside the wall at every other point is nothing but a thousand-foot drop to the rocks below.

Inside the walls, the city is cramped. Hundreds of shops, inns, smithies, and other buildings—all of giant dimension—have grown up over the past thousand years, gradually choking the city streets and turning them into narrow, twisting alleys. The city produces very little food or raw materials and must rely on the tributes paid by the clans below.

At the center of the city stands Castle Skyhold, its central tower glowing with blue sapphires, where the Storm King sits atop a throne crafted from the bones of a great wyrm. It is in this keep that he spends most of his days in isolation, and only grudgingly holds court every few months to keep his kingdom from falling to internal conflict.

The walls of Castle Skyhold are topped with hundreds of god-torches, most of which are burning. Popular opinion has it that each torch represents one of the thousand star-gods. When a star-god chooses a clan as its own, its torch begins to burn. There is much speculation about the actual nature and purpose of the torches, but only Balon Thunderhorn knows the truth.

GROLLOCK'S WAY

Grollock's Way is a road that winds through a narrow mountain pass in the northern Stormfells. It is not an easy road to travel, but it is the simplest, most direct route across the mountains north of the Torvun. Unfortunately for those who use the road, it is always guarded by a giant who demands a toll of anyone who would use it.

To make matters worse, the road is constantly changing hands as the clans fight for control of the region. While one clan may accept one gold piece per traveler as tribute, another may demand 10 percent of a caravan's load, and still another might require nothing less than a blood sacrifice to its favorite star-god. If travelers on the road are truly unlucky, several different clans may claim different stretches of the road, and each clan will need its own tribute.

VANDORN RIVER VALLEY

The Vandorn River bursts out of the western slopes of the northern Stormfells, and then settles into a wide, slow-moving stream at the heart of a fertile valley in the hills below. This pleasant river valley is lined with orchards tended and harvested by human farmers who live in the region.

Each year, the farmers of the Vandorn river valley tithe a portion of their harvest to the Cracksky clan of cloud giants. In return, the giants protect their vassals from goblinoids and orcs, as well as the attacks of rival giant clans and wild ogres and trolls. This arrangement has lasted for 200 years, but the Cracksky clan isn't as strong as it used to be. Unless its chieftain soon provides a display of power, one of the other nearby clans may claim the Vandorn river valley as its own—and will likely prefer raiding the valley to protecting it.

TANDOR'S DALE

Hidden behind the natural walls of the Stormfell peaks, Tandor's Dale is a lush, magical grove of fruit trees surrounded by fields of vegetables. The food is ripe and ready for the harvest; whatever is harvested grows back in a matter of days.

At the center of the dale is a gnarled, ancient tree that serves as the shrine to Tandor, a star-god of fertility and plenty. Tandor demands nothing of her children except that they tend to her dale and do no violence in it.

Tandor's Dale was kept secret by the Kingstar clan for almost a century, but when that clan was wiped out by its rivals, its star-gods became public knowledge and the clans have been fighting over Tandor's Dale ever since. There can be no fighting inside the dale itself, of course, for Tandor will deny the bounty of the dale to any who defile it.

SHADOWSTORM FALLS

There is a star-god sleeping in the Shadowstorm waterfall. Many shamans have felt its presence, but none can wake it up. Still, the clans fight to control the thousand-foot-tall waterfall and the vast lake at its bottom.

Every few years, the Storm King sends out a proclamation: For the next two moons, the first clan to wake the sleeping star-god will have Shadowstorm Falls as its heritage forever. Clans from across the realm send their best shamans in hopes of securing the site, but thus far all have failed.

CLOUD CITIES OF TALLIDUR

Floating above the peaks of the Stormfells are dozens of magical clouds. Because of their magical nature, they are thick enough to walk or even build on, and fertile enough to grow crops. Their magic also keeps them close to the mountains; while stiff winds may push them this way or that, they always drift back to their center as if magically tethered. The clouds were first settled by the Tallidur clan of storm giants. While the clan has since passed into history, the name has stuck.

Today, each cloud is its own city-state, not ruled by any one clan but still swearing fealty to the Storm King. These cities are mostly populated by cloud and storm giants who have no use for the clan wars beneath them. Instead, they dedicate themselves to art, science, and magic. There are no star-gods in the cloud cities, but the Tallidurians claim they have no use for such primitive deities anyway.

THE ICEHAMMER FRONT

Arctic winds from the Winter Sea sweep across the peaks of the Icehammer Front, a mountain range far to the north that shields Anderland and the rest of the southlands from those frozen gales. A bleak and frost-enshrouded wasteland, the Icehammer Front is home to the exiled clans of the frost giants and tribes of goblinoids that have fallen under the sway of fiends. Strange ice magics and spirits of snow can be found in the north, as well as danger lurking both within and without the mountains themselves.

HISTORY

Long ago the mighty Storm King, ruler of giantkind, grew wroth with his frost giant subjects and banished them from his realm. Exiled, the frost giant clans sullenly departed, roving north to the coldest regions of the world. Some of these clans migrated into the Frostfells, while others settled amongst a rugged mountain range against the shores of the Winter Sea. The clans carved homes for themselves out of the glacier ice and settled into a new life, yet their cold hearts still were warmed by embers of frustration and hate for the Storm King who had cast them out.

From among the many frost giant clans, one quickly rose to power—the Kargain. Somehow they had learned mystical secrets that allowed them to create things from the ice itself: weapons, walls, and tools as hard as iron. *Frostforging*, as this process came to be known, brought supremacy for the Kargain clan in short order. Soon they became the greatest of the clans, ruled by a chieftain who claimed dominion over all frost giant clans who lived in the mountain range.

That chieftain's name was Sargos the White, and it was he who had brought *frostforging* to his people. He bore with him a mighty weapon of power, so unstoppable that he easily defeated all challengers for his throne. The weapon was a massive warhammer, carved from the heart of a glacier, its head formed of ice that glowed blue and that was so cold that it numbed even the flesh of a frost giant.

Under the leadership of Sargos, the frost giant clans began to spread out, using the powers of *frostforging* to raise keeps made of ebony-black ice to stand watch along the borders. Some of these keeps lie silent and empty, however, for there are dangerous monsters who also call the Icehammer Front their home, other powerful denizens who do not bend the knee to Sargos' rulership.

While the frost giant clans were building their

keeps, goblinoid tribes were slowly being pushed northwards by the expansion of human tribes across northern Ambria. The southern civilizations had no room for the large populations and crude societies of bugbear, goblin and hobgoblin. Finding themselves defeated again and again by the highly organized, populous, and well-equipped humans, all three races of goblinoids banded together under tribal leaders and began an exodus northwards. Though unused to cooperation, the three races quickly learned during the journey that their survival hinged on blending their unique strengths. Eventually these tribes found themselves able to go no further—the forbidding peaks of the Icehammer Front became the promise of a new homeland.

Adjusting to the arctic conditions that exist in the Front was difficult for the goblinoids, who were used to more temperate climes. This period of adjustment made them weak, vulnerable to the elements and the native creatures unwilling to share territory. The fiendish beings of the north craved influence and power over others, however, and found an opportunity with the goblinoids in the Front. Before long, demonic beings contacted each tribe, offering assistance and prosperity in return for servitude. Many of the tribes acquiesced, having little choice. The few tribes that refused were slaughtered mercilessly as an example to encourage the rest. It was not long before all the tribes had fallen under the sway of their infernal masters. Barghests, demons that appear as both wolf and goblin, took control of each tribe and now struggle for dominance among the peaks.

The most recent development in the Icehammer Front is the rise of Anlar Icefang. The half-dragon, half-frost giant warlord has extended his reach across the mountains, and the ancient Sargos the White has sworn fealty to the winter wolf banner. Many of the younger frost giants have eagerly traveled many leagues to join Anlar's forces, and the goblinoid tribes have tithed some of their finest warriors to the cause as well—although some tribes are far more reluctant than others to contribute to any force not their own.

PEOPLE

The two most prominent races in the Icehammer Front are the frost giant clans and the goblinoid tribes. Both cultures have learned to coexist more or less peacefully, although small conflicts do break out from time to time. The frost giant clans and the goblinoid tribes are both possessed of a strong territorial nature and each believes the Icehammer Front to be their home. The giants and goblinoids may disagree with each other, but they have no difficulty uniting against any others who dare to intrude within their mountains.

THE FROST GIANTS

The frost giants live in family units known as clans, identified by distinctive tattoos inked upon their



faces or bodies. Examples of such tattoos include the blue teardrop, the sign of the Garthaj clan, while the red crescent moon designates members of the Skagin clan. A patriarch leads each clan and some feature other positions such as warleader (known by a distinctive braid in the hair worn at the right temple) or shaman (who shave themselves bald).

Warleaders function as the general in charge of a clan's military forces, planning both defense and conquest. The shaman serves in the role of advisor, normally filled by the wisest or most learned giant of the clan. Usually, a frost giant shaman has levels in the class of the same name or another spellcasting class, the better to serve his purpose within the clan.

The frost giant clans are very insular and unused to working together. An unspoken competition exists between the clans to see who can curry the most favor with the Kargain clan or with Anlar Icefang. Those who can produce the greatest surplus of food or trade usually win such contests, but those with the strongest or most numerous warriors are also valued highly. Those who can craft well are generally considered worthy of respect, and those who know the ways of *frostforging* are never cast aside: These skills are often vital to the survival of a clan.

Many of the clans keep other creatures as thralls, pets, or servants. Winter wolves are found in almost every clanhall, serving as trackers and hunt leaders for

the giants. Ogres are also extremely common as laborers or soldiers under the command of a frost giant overseer. The Skagin clan has begun a new practice, installing one of their younger giants into the station of beast-tamer. This development has led to many Clan Skagin giants riding trained mastodons into battle and harnessing the mighty strength of the shaggy creatures towards great feats of engineering. Many beast-tamers also keep dire bears that are fearsome opponents in battle.

No frost giant is truly considered an adult until he has carried out a successful raid. A raid, by the frost giant definition, includes the acquisition of any real, solid trade goods or livestock that the giant has gained through violence, stealth, or trickery. While trade does exist among the clans and even between the giants and the goblinoid tribes, raiding is considered a test of strength and wit that no giant should ignore. Occasionally, more organized raids made by groups of frost giants working together are carried out along the borders of Sildanyr or northern Anderland. Brides are also "stolen" in this manner from other clans, although usually the guarding of marriage-age females and pursuit of the suitors is a matter of tradition rather than actual theft. Sometimes this practice continues a feud between clans, but occasionally the marriage will bring peace and alliance for a time.

The Kargains rule as the Great Clan and inhabit a

THE ICEHAMMER

Sargos the White is well known for his iron-fisted rule of the frost giant clans and for the rime of frost that coats him head to toe, leaving him with icicles in place of hair. He is perhaps even better known, however, for the mighty weapon he carries: the Icehammer.

The Icehammer is a gargantuan warhammer that can freeze a foe solid with one blow. In the hands of Sargos, the Icehammer has smashed apart solid stone walls and iron shields alike, leaving behind broken, frozen corpses and fortresses rent asunder.

An artifact of great power, the Icehammer has a malign intelligence and, unknown even to Sargos, it has plans of its own. The hammer is trying to manipulate Sargos's strong will, but finds doing so extremely difficult. So far, Sargos remains unaware that his favorite weapon possesses a mind. Should he ever discover this fact, it remains to be seen whether he will cooperate with the hammer or bend it to his control. The hammer is also keeping the ancient frost giant alive, though Sargos believes it is his magic and the favor of Anlar Icefang, and this may well prove a powerful bargaining chip.

vast hall known as Valagia. In this hall lies the massive ice throne of Sargos the White where he renders judgment and accepts tribute from the other clans. The frost giants of the Kargain clan are becoming used to their role in the Icehammer Front and are beginning to adopt an aristocratic bearing that many of the other clans secretly mock. Sargos has yet to take any official notice, but he also worries that his clan may be moving further away from the true frost giant ideal. A delegate from each of the other clans resides at Valagia, where they speak to Sargos on local matters. Frost giant politics are blunt and unrefined, but that may be changing as the value of a silver tongue and quick wit are becoming more important in Sargos's court. Valagia is also where shamans and patriarchs from the other clans journey when they wish to learn the secrets of *frostforging*. Traditionally a valuable gift is required before a request to learn is granted, and even then there are strict oaths of secrecy that must first be sworn.

Among the clans, none possess a darker reputation than the Garthaj. The clan's patriarch is known to

deal with dark magics and spirits of the dead. In fact, he is a necromancer named Ilgaron and is usually spoken of only in whispers. Stories persist that the patriarch keeps a legion of corpses perfectly preserved in an icy tomb, ready to be awakened by his power at the right time. Some say that the patriarch has discovered a method to capture a creature's soul in this icy prison as well, and fear there may be spectral armies of undead gathering in caverns under the ice even now. The Garthaj clan is mostly made up of craftsmen and laborers, with even the children learning at an early age how to work in the mines. A prophecy is whispered among the Garthaj clan, speaking of a place deep under the ice where the flows of magic have pooled in one place and grown powerful, a tool awaiting only a skilled hand. If the prophecy is true, it would mean a shift in the balance of power among the frost giants, and possibly the chance for the Garthaj to become the Great Clan. The patriarch has begun many excavations in the hopes of discovering this secret source of magic, and he has made overtures to the Fangfury tribe of goblinoids for assistance.

The most warlike and aggressive of the clans by far are the frost giant berserkers of the Skagin clan. Their patriarch recently slain in battle, the Skagin are currently led by a mighty warleader. Under the warleader's direction, the Skagin have become fanatical supporters of Anlar Icefang's crusade and are eagerly anticipating his call to arms. Clan Skagin possesses many berserk warriors and has also trained mastodons to serve as mounts for their cavalry. In addition, the prayers and exultations of many shamans who serve the Wyrms of Winter aid in focusing the clan towards war.

The additions of the mastodon cavalry has worked very well, and the warleader has directed his beast-tamer to seek out other creatures of the Front in order to use them as living siege engines and allies when the clan marches under the winter wolf banner of Anlar Icefang. So far, the young beast-tamer has had little success with the local frost worms, but he is continuing to try different methods in hopes of securing the loyalty of these powerful monsters. The black ice keep known as Skladnir serves as the home for the Skagin clan and is located on the easternmost point of the Front. The Skagin clan has raided most often into Sildanyr and Anderland, looting and pillaging as they go.

A jovial and skilled blacksmith named Ulflar is the leader of the Karliag clan, one of the many minor clans that populate the Icehammer Front. This clan is noteworthy because it is the only nomadic frost giant clan, traveling from keep to keep in a group of massive wagons drawn by dire beasts. Ulflar is a rare breed of frost giant, gentle and friendly to a fault—which makes all the other clans suspicious. The Karliag clan wins the axe-throwing competition at every Icemoot, however, and thus is accorded some grudging respect. Those who purchase Ulflar's metalwork are never disappointed, however they may complain behind his back.

THE GOBLINOIDS

There are three dominant tribes of goblinoids and dozens of lesser tribes that make the Icehammer Front their home. The major tribes include all three major races of goblinkind: goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears. This unusual cooperation between the three races is due in large part to the harsh conditions of the Icehammer Front. Working together is often the only way to survive against the elements, and the Front shows no mercy to those who make mistakes. In addition, the barghests that have risen to lead the major tribes have encouraged the three races to coexist. After all, that means more worshippers, warriors, laborers, and occasionally food will then be available for the barghests' command.

Quite a few of the minor tribes are comprised of only one race of goblinoids. This leads to groupings that are much more typical for their kind, such as a tribe of only hobgoblins or a tribe made up completely of bugbears. The minor tribes are tolerated by the larger tribes and are occasionally used as tools or allies by the barghests. If a minor tribe becomes too weak or foolish, they either perish or become absorbed into another tribe. The three major tribes are always in conflict with each other, as the barghest rulers struggle to see who is the strongest. So far, no major tribe has been able to defeat both of its rivals.

A barghest named Turzak rules the Bloodshield tribe, which is structured militaristically with a detailed chain of command and iron discipline. Turzak enforces his orders harshly, and his tribe is somewhat smaller than it might otherwise have been due to the frequent examples made of rebels and troublemakers. The Bloodshields are known to be dour and humorless warriors for the most part, disdaining anything that does not strengthen their ability to fight.

The only other central element of tribal life in the Bloodshields is religion, as Turzak is encouraging a spiritual awakening in his goblinoids—with himself as the focus of their devotion. Turzak has already had his tribe raise idols and shrines to celebrate his own greatness and plans to someday ascend to divinity through the power of worship. To do so, however, he will need more than one tribe under his heel—so his dreams of conquest are just beginning.

Most Bloodshield tribe goblinoids have at least one level of fighter, and Turzak has an elite retinue of bugbear blackguards who serve him with complete loyalty. These well-trained shock troops have turned the tide in battle for the Bloodshields many times and Turzak relies on them so that he may direct the tides of combat without distraction. The Bloodshields primarily reside in their fortified town of Warlord's Fist. Smaller forts are in the process of construction throughout the region, a grouping named Turzak's Teeth by the Bloodshields.

The Darkspawn tribe lurks in the high valleys between the peaks of the Front. They have chosen to

FROSTFORGING

Taught by Sargos to the other frost giants, *frostforging* has quickly spread to each clan inhabiting the Front. Generally, only the patriarch or shaman of the clan knows the methods and chants required, for *frostforging* draws upon the frost giants' inherent link to the forces of ice and snow. Some of the most talented frost giants can create items out of the winter winds themselves, drawing an icy sword directly out of a glacier wall or raising a shelter on a frozen lake by the power of their will alone.

FROSTFORGING

You can make items from ice and snow that are as tough as iron.

Prerequisite: Must be a frost giant

With this feat, any Craft skill can be used to create items, tools, and even buildings from ice that are as sturdy and resilient as iron. Any such items are equivalent to the normal versions, but their hardness is increased by 5, they are immune to cold damage, and they take twice the normal damage from fire.

Creating an frostforged item takes just as much time as a normal item, and any special tools that are required for making the item normally (such as a smithy) are still needed. In addition, frozen water (in the form of ice or snow) is needed in the amount of one gallon per pound that the item weighs.

IMPROVED FROSTFORGING

You can form items from the ice even without tools.

Prerequisites: Frostforging, must be a frost giant

You can create items from ice and snow without needing any tools. Only a Craft check is required with standard DCs for the types of items you create.

live at that altitude because many of their members have a greater tolerance for cold as well as the ability to fly, characteristics they have inherited from their barghest father, Voshgar. A large number of Darkspawn goblinoids bear evidence of their half-fiend heritage, which includes wings, black scaly skin, and sulfurous breath. These progeny are the result of Voshgar's breeding practices with the members of his tribe. Not all of the Darkspawn are half-fiend, but that number is near to one-third of the population and slowly growing.

Voshgar has not limited his attention to interbreeding with the goblinoids. In fact, he has been choos-

FIRESTONES

Keeping warm in the Icehammer Front requires special effort or magical assistance. Inventions of a now-dead barghest, firestones are one such method that has become popular among the goblinoid tribes to avoid a freezing doom.

A minor spirit of the plane of fire is bound into a melon-size chunk of stone colored charcoal gray. The result is a portable source of heat that gives off the same comfort found in a medium-size campfire without the drawbacks of open flame. Firestones are often carried in backpacks and brought out whenever resting, swaddled in blankets to keep dry. The heat of a firestone endures for the lifetime of the elemental spirit trapped within, which means that they do not burn out for several years.

A firestone typically costs 200 gold pieces and weighs eight pounds.

ing mates for the Darkspawn tribe for several generations now and the goblins and hobgoblins of his tribe are significantly larger, stronger, and smarter than the average. However, his attempts to breed a better bugbear have not yet succeeded. Many misshapen and insane results of this project are kept in iron cages as suicide troops for when the Darkspawn tribe goes to war. Voshgar continues to seek new ways to increase the strength of his children, and he is currently considering using his ability to transform into a wolf to begin breeding with the worgs and dire wolves as well, although he knows doing so would greatly anger the Fangfury tribe. The Darkspawn tribe is considered all one large family, revering Voshgar as the trusted father and leader to whom they all owe undying allegiance. This arrangement has led to near fanatical loyalty and no one dares question Voshgar's leadership lest they be torn apart by his devoted sons and daughters.

Unlike the others, the Fangfury tribe is led by a pack of five barghests. These five, calling themselves the Black Council, took control of the tribe in order to accomplish as a group what they could not individually. Each member of the council desires rank such as that of Voshgar and Turzak, the powers and abilities of a greater barghest. To attain their goal, the Black Council has considered numerous plans of cunning and guile. One of these plans includes a kidnapping scheme to find and consume beings of great power. The council believes that feeding upon particularly strong creatures

will make them correspondingly stronger, and when they reach their apotheosis, they will be more than a match for Voshgar and Turzak.

Food is a great concern for the Fangfury tribe; they hunger for flesh as well as greatness and number many rapacious predators among them. Often taking wolf form, the Black Council has adopted many allies into their tribal structure. Subservient packs of worgs and dire wolves obey the council's every whim, and their goblinoid cavalry forces ride into battle on the backs of vicious winter wolves. Constant exposure to the foul nature of the barghests and close contact with the many wolves in the tribe has cursed a few of the goblinoids with lycanthropy. Some see the curse as a burden, others as an opportunity, but so far they have kept their condition a secret. Currently the council is discussing a potential alliance with the Garthaj clan. The barghests can sense something unusual about the frost giants' excavation and wish to claim a portion of what lies within for themselves.

Some of the more notable minor tribes include the Greenseekers, the Slystalkers, and the Snowcreepers.

The Greenseeker tribe is mostly regarded by their peers as misguided, idealistic fools destined for failure. Led by the shaman Zogarth, the Greenseekers are made up entirely of bugbears. Zogarth intends to create an oasis within the Icehammer Front, a warm place where the trees and fertile hills that goblinoids are more used to can exist. The first step in his journey, he believes, is to locate a series of mineral hot springs that he is convinced exist underneath the frozen earth. Zogarth's tribe contains many skilled barbarians who fend off attacks by other tribes and any monsters the Greenseekers encounter, but Zogarth worries that force of arms may not be enough to achieve his dream.

The Slystalkers are a brotherhood of hobgoblin rangers who skulk about the fringes of the Front and live off the meager bounty of the land. The other goblinoid tribes and even the frost giant clans deal with the Slystalkers on occasion, purchasing their services as scouts or guides. It is well known that the Slystalker tribe is perhaps the best acquainted with every peak and valley in the Front. Winter wolf pelts and white furs to blend into the snow and ice are the badge of the Slystalkers, and they can be found in nearly every clan-hall or goblin town within the mountains.

Dwelling in a vast network of snow tunnels dug throughout the region, the Snowcreepers strive to remain out of sight as much as possible. Containing only goblins, the Snowcreeper tribe practices the art of thievery and stealth. Caravans, storehouses, and treasure vaults alike have all felt the touch of the Snowcreepers. Thus far, they have not been discovered by any of the major tribes, although the Slystalkers are aware of their existence. Much more accustomed to flight than combat, the Snowcreeper tribe is little more than a nuisance at present, but if their numbers continue to grow they could become a more influential force in the near future.



SETTLEMENTS

VALAGIA

Although the frost giant nation of the Icehammer Front has no true capital, Valagia comes closest to that ideal. A small city populated mostly by frost giants of the Kargain clan, it also serves as the seat of power for the entire region. Sargos the White has his throne and court, such as it is, in Valagia.

As befits the home of *frostforging*, the entire city seems to be built of ice. Unlike the Skagin clan, the Kargains have used different colors of ice for a more attractive appearance to their buildings and walls. Mostly, they have used red, blue, and green dyes that have been mixed with the snow, but the poorer sections of the city make do with browns and greys. Of course, the presence of all this ice makes the city oppressively cold to anyone not immune to such things, so visitors or outsiders are extremely rare. Banners are hung in any official buildings, bearing the sign of the icehammer-and-throne, Sargos's personal emblem. There is little rhyme or reason to the construction of the city, other than a defensive wall that encircles the majority of the buildings. Inside the wall, streets meander seemingly without end, and often so narrow that giants have diffi-

culty carrying large loads through the city. Of course, for any creature smaller than the frost giants, the city seems immense and there is plenty of room to spare for nearly any purpose.

Those who wish to learn the secrets of *frostforging* and prove themselves worthy of the honor find themselves directed to a mysterious black chapel within the Kargain clanhall. Inside, the aspirant is taught by Sargos himself in a ceremony that involves the power of the Icehammer and a powerful lore of the frost giant people. None who enter the chapel are allowed to speak of what they discovered inside.

SKLADNIR

Home to the Skagin clan, Skladnir is another large town built primarily from ice by those who possess the knowledge of *frostforging*. In Skladnir, there are no bright colors, no banners, and little laughter. Instead, the black walls of the clanhall ring with the sound of weapons clashing, shamans chanting a prayer to Gethesan, or a skald telling stories of battle and bravery. The Skagin clan rules Skladnir, but they share their home with many ogre and goblinoid thralls, as well as other creatures taken as spoils from their many raids. Such servants require a measure of heat, so Skladnir is considered uncomfortably hot for most frost giants—bonfires and brick hearths scattered throughout the town

provide the necessary warmth.

There are massive staging areas for warriors to gather, a meadhall for the giants of the clan to drink and tell stories, and a smithy where weapons and armor are forged and repaired to keep the Skagin clan forces strong and well equipped. Skladnir, despite its fearsome appearance, is actually among the most welcoming towns in the Icehammer Front for outsiders. As long as a visitor can tell a rousing tale to an audience, he is allowed to enter and do business. A long stay requires a gift of some sort to the warleader, usually in the form of gold or slaves. An inn of sorts has been created from the ruins of a former barracks building, where giants and non-giants alike can find a bed for the night.

Perhaps the most impressive feature of the town is the beast pens, where strange creatures from all across the Front are kept and trained to serve the Skagin warriors. Mastodons are ridden openly in the streets, and it is not uncommon to see other monsters such as ogre mages or dire bears.

WARLORD'S FIST

Home to the Bloodshield tribe of goblinoids, Warlord's Fist serves as their primary military outpost in the Icehammer Front. More like a fort than the small town it really is, Warlord's Fist is constructed entirely of wood. Fire-hardened stakes form the exterior walls, while steel-reinforced oak makes up the massive outer doors. Scattered both outside and inside the wall are carved totems bearing the face of Turzak. Devout tribe members, seeking to appease their ruler by satisfying his hunger, leave offerings in the form of gold, jewels, and the ears of enemies inside the mouth of each totem's face. Dark altars also exist in numerous places inside the town, with nearly every home possessing some form of shrine to Turzak.

The barghest himself lives in a massive longhouse in the center of the city, next to a towering idol in his image, permanently stained a rusty brown from the blood of countless sacrifices. True to their name, the Bloodshield tribe warriors daub their shields with the blood of their enemies and hang grisly trophies on the exterior of each warrior's home. The warriors keep their weapons within easy reach, ready to march at a moment's notice for the glory of their infernal master. Turzak's elite retinue have their own, grander homes near to his own, where the tribe gifts them with all the luxuries they can afford: food, drink, and females for companionship.

TURZAK'S TEETH

A series of wooden forts have sprung up at the base of the Icehammer Front as the Bloodshields seek to expand their territory. These forts have gained the name Turzak's Teeth from the warriors who garrison in them, and this name has pleased their barghest ruler. A typical

fort contains three elite bugbear blackguards as commanders, up to 10 hobgoblin cavalymen and dire wolf mounts, and as many as 50 goblin archers and skirmishers. Some forward-thinking commanders have begun raiding from their forts to bring back slaves to do the cleaning and cooking. Each fort in the Teeth is built simply, with a high exterior wooden wall and one wooden gate barred by an oaken log. A balcony along the interior wall provides a platform for the archers, and a den (rather than a stable) is excavated for the cavalry mounts. In the center of each fort the garrison is responsible for maintaining an idol of Turzak, normally a wooden totem or stone altar. Sometimes, the inhabitants of the forts amuse themselves by making more totems and seeding them throughout the local area to use as range markers for archer fire or to designate safe passages through the icy wastes.

DARKROOST

An abandoned frost giant keep now bears the name Darkroost. Settled high upon a peak known as Fiendsmount, the town of Darkroost squats like a malignant tumor upon the snowy surface of the Icehammer Front. One of the black ice keeps raised by *frostforging* during the frost giants' expansion, Darkroost now rests in the hands of the Darkspawn tribe. Originally, the construction of the keep was simple but strong. During its occupation, Darkroost has changed, warping slightly to match the twisted hearts of its denizens. Now, twisted faces and stand watch like gargoyles from the rooftops, and the black walls seemingly stain the snow and ice all around with filthy gray flakes that seem to grow further out every passing year. Bonfires blaze around the clock for the benefit of the tribe members who still feel the cold's full bite, and elaborate balconies have been built to accommodate the half-fiends who perch there when not in flight.

LANGUAGE

Giant is the tongue most commonly spoken in the Icehammer Front, although the local dialect (which is heavy on consonants) is known as Frigian. The goblinoids of course speak Goblin, although Infernal is becoming more common due to the influence of the barghests.

GOVERNANCE

The frost giant clans are each ruled by their patriarch, the oldest or strongest male of the clan. In some special cases, a shaman or warleader may instead take the patriarch's place. Only a few of the minor clans allow females to hold these positions, as frost giants as a whole are very chauvinistic when it comes to their women. One minor clan has become very controversial by electing a female shaman to lead them, which is the

heart of much scandalous gossip among Sargos's court.

Anlar Icefang holds the ultimate authority among the giants of both the Icehammer Front and the Frostfells. Even Sargos the White has bent the knee to the draconic-giant warrior and so his word is law for the frost giant clans. The Skagin clan is Icefang's most vocal advocate, and the clan warleader constantly pushes the other clans to lend more support for the winter wolf banner. Anlar's influence is somewhat less among the goblinoid tribes, especially for the minor tribes who tend to pay his judgments little heed. The major goblinoid tribes defer to Anlar, but secretly they wish to be free of his yoke and seek to find ways to wriggle out of any agreements or responsibilities.

Once every year during the winter solstice, a great gathering is held at Valagia known as the Icemoot. Frost giants from all clans travel to Valagia to take part in great feasts, tell stories, and compete in tests of skill, cunning, and strength. The leaders of each clan meet with Sargos during the Icemoot to discuss any concerns and to renew their pledge of fealty for another year. All disagreements are suspended for the week of the Icemoot, and no feud may be continued during that time. All who disobey are thoroughly punished, first by their clan leader and then by Sargos himself, who brooks no foolishness during the period of celebration. At the most recent Icemoot, a frost giant smith named Crothlar distinguished himself by *frostforging* an anvil from the falling snow and hurling it like a boulder during the rock-throwing contest.

Barghests rule the major goblinoid tribes, enjoying absolute power and authority over nearly every aspect of the tribes' lives. The minor tribes generally are led by the strongest or most cunning goblin, hobgoblin, or bugbear that can prove himself worthy. The goblinoid tribes believe in survival of the strong, so a leader who consistently makes mistakes or leads the tribe into a serious decline can expect to be quickly challenged and overthrown.

RELIGION

Wooden idols dot the landscape around many goblinoid forts of the Icehammer Front. These forts, known as Turzak's Teeth, are military outposts manned by goblinoids of the Bloodshield tribe. The idols depict a fierce goblin face, often crudely carved into the wood by devout, if not skilled, followers. This face is meant to echo the face of Turzak, a barghest and ruler of the Bloodshields. Turzak's disciples praise his virtues: conquering the weak, spreading the influence of evil and selfishness, and the waging of war for war's sake. Altars in Turzak's name also exist within every fort and numerous shrines can be found all over the largest Bloodshield settlement, known as Warlord's Fist. Turzak's infernal nature makes the ceremonies in his name take on a dark and grim tone, usually involving the sacrifice of a living thing. Turzak's priests like nothing better than the ears

of an enemy to drape over the altar stone but dedicating a military victory to him is also very acceptable. The lunar eclipse is the most holy day for the worship of Turzak. It is a time for the drinking of blood and the swearing of oaths. It is said that Turzak hears all oaths sworn in his name on this night and punishes oath-breakers by consuming their souls in the afterlife.

Thorngul, the ancient spirit of the winter, is often paid homage by the frost giant clans of the Icehammer Front. Thorngul is a personification of bitter cold, snow, and ice, a living embodiment of the harsh conditions in the Front. Followers of Thorngul wear a silver pendant in the shape of a triad of icicles and sacrifice precious gemstones to him by casting them into the heart of a blizzard. Those who are truly anxious to gain Thorngul's favor (and who are not frost giants or otherwise immune to cold) expose themselves to extremes of cold temperatures, such as by jumping naked into a river or lying down in the midst of hail falling from the sky. Thorngul's largest shrine is in Skladnir, where the Skagin clan sings praises to the spirit of winter. On the first day of summer, it is common for giants to exclaim "remember Thorngul, know that he waits for you!"

Goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears alike give great honor and respect to a spirit of the mountains known as the One Who Endures. Many of the minor goblinoid tribes bless a steel or iron shield in his name, standing long, silent vigils to prove their devotion. The One Who Endures represents survival and a strength that does not overpower others, but allows one to stay true to one's own path. Those who endure a great hardship for their own benefit or the benefit of others gain his favor, and word is quickly spreading amongst the tribes that not all gods in the Icehammer Front demand blood sacrifices. The One Who Endures waits quietly, neither encouraging nor discouraging the efforts made on his behalf. There are those who claim to have seen the One Who Endures, describing his form similar to that of a bugbear made of solid gray stone.

TRADE AND CRAFT

Three main trades dominate the economy of the Icehammer Front. The most prominent of these industries is mining: Both the goblinoid tribes and the frost giant clans are adept at locating veins of rich ore beneath the mountains. Chipping it out of the rock and ice is no easy task, but the giants have strength on their side, while the goblins possess great numbers as well as a talent for working underground in cramped spaces. Precious ores are mined extensively in the Front, and caravans transporting silver and gold regularly cross the icy wastes. Copper and iron veins are even more plentiful, and there seems to be little end to the rich resources lying within the peaks.

Trapping is the second trade that plays a great role in the simple economy of the Front. While beasts and game are not exactly plentiful in such a harsh environ-

ment, there is enough to create a demand for both meat and furs from the more exotic and dangerous creatures that prowl along the mountains. Most often, winter wolf pelts are traded for gold or other valuable goods.

Mercenary bands of warriors make up the dominant trade service to be found within the Icehammer Front. Some of the minor goblinoid tribes, especially those dominated by hobgoblins, survive based exclusively on their income from mercenary contracts. Many of the younger frost giants, particularly those from the Skagin clan, hire out as mercenaries to gain experience and see a bit of the world outside the mountains. It is quickly becoming known across the world that the Icehammer Front is a good place to find and hire mighty soldiers of fortune.

Crafts of the region include carpentry, leather-working, masonry, and all forms of blacksmithing. The strict oaths regarding *frostforging* keep any of those items from being traded on the open market.

WAYS AND TRADITIONS

TAKING TROPHIES

The frost giant clans of the Icehammer Front prefer to take trophies when they carry out a raid against the southlands. Taking a trophy does not occur when raids happen between clans, as doing so may lead to a nastier and longer-lasting feud. Typical trophies include the head or weapons of a particularly impressive enemy, unusual jewelry or works of art, and any magical items they may come across.

SACRED WOLVES

There is no more sacred animal to the goblinoid tribes of the Front than the wolf in all its forms. Goblins commonly wear wooden pendants in the shape of a wolf, and hobgoblins often share every meal and comfort with their worg and dire wolf mounts. Those who seem to have a special favor with wolves, who are able to get along with them and hunt at their side, are considered blessed and very lucky. "As wild as a wolf" is considered a great compliment.

NORTHERN SELLSWORDS

The life of a mercenary is actually quite respectable among both the frost giant and goblinoid cultures. Both highly honor martial skills among their warriors, and it is considered an acknowledgement of those skills to be hired as a mercenary. Goblins and giants alike take pride in fulfilling their contracts as mercenaries, as no one wants to return home to be called

a coward. Neither giants nor goblins like to be cheated, however, and there are many stories of Icehammer Front mercenaries who have broken the deal or switched sides if the payments were ever interrupted.

SNOW BEARS

Valagia tends to set the latest style for the frost giant clans, and the inhabitants of the city have begun a new trend. It is becoming common to see frost giants walking the streets with polar bears as pets, much like a human might walk with his dog. Polar bears exist with some frequency within the Front, so it is not difficult to find and somewhat domesticate such a beast. Not all frost giants are up to the task of maintaining a pet, but those who can are finding the benefits well worth the work.

PERSONALITIES

ILGARON OF GARTHAI

Ilgaron is the name that, when spoken, causes most frost giants and goblinoids to make a warding sign against misfortune. Patriarch of the Garthaj clan, Ilgaron is also a powerful and skilled necromancer who deals with the dark arts of magic on a daily basis. Currently he holds a prophecy made by the Wurm of Winter, a prophecy that describes a great source of magic that lies deep beneath the ice. The prophecy itself is vague, but the potential gain if it speaks true has forced Ilgaron to take action. Secretly, the necromancer has begun to amass an army of the undead in a series of caverns. The undead are immune to the harsh weather of the Front that kills so many other servants, and they represent a pool of laborers that never require food, warmth, or rest. Ilgaron has marshaled the resources of his clan as well to begin other excavations, and he seeks other allies. Should the pool of sorcerous energy exist as the prophecy claims, the Garthaj clan could topple Sargos and the Kargain clan.

KELLIAR THE BEAST-TAMER

A young giant of the Skagin clan, Kelliar has recently been appointed to the position of beast-tamer. No other clan in the Icehammer Front possesses a beast-tamer, which makes Kelliar both proud of his new prestige and nervous that he will make a fool of himself. Lately, Kelliar has succeeded at training a group of mastodons to allow the frost giants as riders. His newest project involves the massive monster known as a frost worm, although its magical abilities and sheer size have wrecked all his attempts to tame one.



WHITE JUDGES

A pack of winter wolves calling themselves the White Judges have been visiting many minor tribes and clans within the Front recently, claiming to have authority from Anlar Icefang. The White Judges seem to be searching for any who speak out against Anlar's crusade against the Storm King and are particularly interested in the Garthaj clan's excavations. Whether the White Judges are merely pretending to have Anlar's favor or they are playing a very dangerous game of politics and position, it seems clear that the Garthaj clan will not put up with these White Judges for long and a confrontation is inevitable.

SITES AND FEATURES

HALL OF THE WINTER WYRM

Long centuries past, great glaciers of ice covered the continent of Ambria. Two godlings, beings of great power, contested for supremacy in these ancient days. Balon Thunderhorn, also called the Storm King, clashed with Thorngul, known as the Wurm of Winter. Dragons and giants made war upon each other for a great, icy span until at last the years grew warmer and the glaciers

began to melt. The Wurm of Winter fell back as the glaciers receded towards the north, but he did not go alone: The frost giants had chosen Thorngul over the Storm King and had sworn themselves to the dragon's service. The Storm King was enraged, for he styled himself monarch over all giantkind; the defiance of the frost giants was unforgivable, in light of the fact that they would rather serve the Storm King's greatest enemy than obey Balon Thunderhorn's commands. Exiled, the frost giants wandered north following Thorngul's path towards the coldest, most remote region known to the world; the mountains that eventually became known as the Frostfells and the Icehammer Front.

In these frozen peaks the frost giants began to carve themselves a home while Thorngul withdrew into extended periods of slumber. While the dragon slept, the frost giants continued to build their civilization. Craving power, an ancient frost giant queen and shaman known as Helgalar sought Thorngul during a brief period of wakefulness and pledged her fortune for the chance to mate with him. While the specifics of the queen's plans were unknown, Helgalar certainly was an ambitious and driven giantess. She bent her every thought on gaining more power for herself, her clan, and her people. The Wurm of Winter consented, and soon there was born a progeny of giant and dragon—a son, whose name was howled as his mother's dying breath upon the day of his birth. Anlar Icefang had arrived, and nothing more would be the same for the frost giants of the far north.

Anlar grew to a towering stature and was possessed of incredible powers of might and cunning. His divine bloodline gave him abilities far beyond any other frost giant, and his draconic heritage only enhanced his innate desires to rule and conquer. Thorngul's dreamy mutterings were invariably linked to his failed bid for power against the Storm King long ago, and many of the frost giant clans still remembered the taste of their frustration and rage upon their exile. In this environment, Anlar rose to his adulthood bearing an unquenchable thirst for revenge in his heart. Hate was Anlar's mother's milk, vengeance his daily meal, and the lust for power formed in his every waking thought. Anlar was consumed with the idea of casting down the Storm King and succeeding where his father had not.

However, even a combination of immortal dragon and frost giant royal parentage did not make Anlar Icefang a match for the Storm King's power. Balon Thunderhorn still commanded the loyalty of nearly all the other giants, and had no small measure of power himself. Anlar sought for years to gain his father's support for his cause, but on and on Thorngul slept. The Wyrms of Winter had lost much power with the waning of the glaciers, and every attempt by Anlar to rouse him had no success. Enraged, Anlar slew his own father and took Thorngul's power for himself. He devoured the dragon's heart, and subsumed the Wyrms of Winter's soul into his own. In a mockery of the Storm King's own throne room, Anlar used the bones of his father to construct a massive hall in the heart of the glacier. From this frozen cairn of his own kin, Anlar Icefang looks towards Skyhold with avaricious eyes and a hate that will not end.

The Hall of the Winter Wyrms, as it came to be known, lurks deep beneath the ice. The Hall is reachable only by a winding, twisting tunnel through the glacier itself. Inside, the Hall's construction is a stunning sight: huge bones, the ribs of Thorngul, rise up along each side to support the massive vaulted ceiling. The great skeletal wings arch above the walls, defining the structure's slight dome shape. Massive icy claws, still razor-sharp, line the approach to Anlar's throne, which is crafted from the Wyrms of Winter's skull. Seated upon his father's jaw, Anlar makes plans to invade the southlands with his mighty armies and achieve his destiny at last. Icefang has sent envoys to the Storm King's court with offers of peace, but this is merely a ploy to buy his forces time and the advantage of surprise.

Thorngul's hoard has been somewhat depleted over the centuries, but sparkling blue sapphires still glisten from every corner and the gleam of silver and gold adorn every bone and joint. Some white dragons still linger in the hall, sneering at the frost giants under Anlar's rule and joining their schemes to his. The winter wolf banner, symbol of Anlar's forces, hangs behind and above the throne when he is present in the hall. Only a favored few frost giants ever stay long within the hall of the Winter Wyrms, for Anlar has many plans and

requires instant obedience to his commands. The strongest, toughest, and most ruthless frost giants (many of them high level barbarians, fighters, disciples, or shamans) strive to earn a place in Anlar's Ice Guard, those who protect the hall and the throne from interlopers. The Ice Guard also serves with Anlar in battle, keeping watch for any danger to their liege.

For now, frost giants flock to the winter wolf banner and train relentlessly for war. Anlar seems impatient, but is continuing to gather his armies together. Whether he is waiting for some specific time or event is unknown, but it becomes increasingly clear with each passing season that Anlar's impatience is straining at the breaking point. One thing is clear beyond doubt: Once the fury of the north has been unleashed, all of the southlands will tremble.

Throughout the north, many shamans and disciples still worship the Wyrms of Winter, for they do not know that the ancient dragon has been slain. In truth, while Thorngul often appears to his followers in dreams and visions even still, it is actually Anlar that speaks through his father's guise.

VALAGIA

Valagia (small city): Conventional; AL LE; Population 9,896; 15,000 gp limit; Assets 7,422,000 gp; Isolated (85% frost giant, 10% ogre, 4% goblinoid, 1% other races).

Authority Figures: Sargos the White, Great Clan Chieftain, male frost giant barbarian 5.

Valagia is the closest thing to a capital city that exists within the Icehammer Front. The winding, seemingly random streets are lined with huge buildings formed from ice of multiple colors, hiding secret knowledge and brooding rage inside the frozen walls. Often, younger giants will brawl openly in Valagia, but most of the true conflict goes on within the court of Sargos the White. Political maneuvering is still in its infancy among the frost giant clans, but they are learning quickly how alliances and treachery can advance any one clan above the rest. The Kargain clan founded Valagia and lives luxuriously there, as befits the Great Clan. Such luxury does not come without a price: The Kargain have slowly come to be seen by the other clans as outsiders, for their ways are far more refined and aristocratic than the frost giant norm.

Although Valagia is amongst the coldest regions in the Front, the city sees a great deal of business from those who wish to trade with the Great Clan. A massive bazaar has sprung up near Sargos's great hall, where wood, furs, pottery, and spices from faraway lands are hawked from stalls, while caravans of furs, gems, precious metals, and copper ore flow outwards towards buyers in the southlands and from among the goblinoid tribes. All this commerce has not made Valagia any friendlier to strangers—it is a rare sight to see any other race besides frost giants or ogres within the city walls.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SILDANYR

This chapter presents background and setting details on the great forest of Sildanyr. The text of this chapter is designated as closed content.

THE FOREST KINGDOM

The great primal forests of Sildanyr remain unseen by human eyes. This massive expanse of trees, largely unchanged since the days the great glaciers first receded from the face of the world, stretches for more than a thousand miles, practically a full quarter of Ambria. Those who dwell within are otherworldly—elves and gnomes and fey that, despite their centuries of habitation, are still strangers to the world of Eadar. Within Sildanyr are living things, tree and tree-dweller both, that can still remember the birth of their race in the world.

How sad, then, that for the past century or more, Sildanyr has been wracked by an increasingly brutal civil war between those who knew little violence in their former homes. Not even the graceful fey, it appears, are impervious to the violent urges and emotions of the mortal realm.

Sildanyr itself is an enormous stretch of mostly temperate forest, though the expanse east of the Morningstar Mountains tends toward the tropical and the pine forests along the shore of the Winter Sea are cold and hard. The majority of the trees are towering, broad-leafed deciduous growths. Oak and ash trees are the most common, though Sildanyr also boasts beech, chestnut, and other varieties so ancient and deep in the forest that no human has a name for them. Many of the trees of Sildanyr are mightier than their cousins elsewhere in the world, even as the primal giants of the

Stormfells tower over the dwarves with whom they struggle. The mightiest oaks tower hundreds of feet above the forest floor, their trunks wider around than many city towers. The forest canopy is practically a sky unto itself, and even the lower levels of the underbrush are often tall enough for a full-grown man to step into and disappear. On the eastern coast, the oak and beech are replaced by an unusual mixture of cedar and redwood near the mountains and pines with an underlayer of ferns nearer the sea.

Sildanyr and its inhabitants experience a wide range of weather conditions throughout the year. The western woods are protected from the great sea squalls by the Morningstar Mountains, but the eastern expanse is frequently pounded by oceanic storms during the rainy season. Summers throughout the forest are warm but rarely stifling, save on the hottest days or near the coast, but winters can grow utterly frigid. Rainfall is spread throughout the year, normally coming only in short, light showers, but the skies occasionally open up in deluges that last for days on end. Even on the brightest summer's day, the forest floor is shaded, for the canopy is so thick that light and rain both must trickle down as best they can, taking the most indirect routes to reach the soil.

And that soil is rich indeed. Many a human farmer weeps at the tales and legends of Sildanyr, for to their minds the land has gone to waste. What use the great trees, when rows of crops sufficient to feed entire villages could take their place? Yet the elves, for all their differences with one another, refuse to desecrate the foliage that pre-dates their very existence in this world. They forage what they can, carefully cultivating their own foodstuffs in clearings or among the existing trees. It is, perhaps, the last detail on which the two warring factions of elves can still agree.

HISTORY

Even before the ice faded from the face of the world, men and giants had legends of the fey, strange, alien folk from an unearthly realm called Itheria, who dwell in the wild and unexplored places. As people of many tribes expanded across Ambria, learning more and more of the lands around them, those fey—if they truly existed at all—retreated further still, into regions that no explorer had yet discovered, where no communities yet stood. But these fey were always mysterious, always unknown, and, for the most part, always content to keep to their hidden homes, if their mortal neighbors would let them.

For many a century, one of those hidden places was the vast forest of Sildanyr. Men knew of the great wood, but hunters, woodcutters, and settlers moved only into the very fringes of the green, taking what they needed and hurrying out again. Legends of the fair folk, sightings of woodland beasts, and the weight of ages that clung to the ancient trees were more than enough to keep the human tribes out of the forest depths. Save for a few border towns and trading outposts, Sildanyr remained unoccupied by men. Most of the region's inhabitants believed it would always remain so.

Then, sometime in the eighth century, the gates of Itheria opened wide and the elves first set foot upon the world that would become their new home.

Why they came, abandoning their ancestral homeland for this mortal realm, is a matter of much debate among human scholars, for few elves will say and those who will do not agree. Perhaps they were simply explorers who found a new land to discover. Perhaps they were lost, unable to find their way back home. Or perhaps, as some few who know them believe, the elves are exiles. Perhaps the fey rulers of Itheria sensed the seeds of a conflict that would eventually blossom into war and determined that if the elves could not live in peace, neither could they live in the fey realm.

Whatever the case, the immigrants came, and came in great numbers. Most numerous of all were the dawn elves, those elves that humans have come to know better than all others. Fair skinned and golden haired, prideful perhaps but not unfriendly, the dawn elves looked about them and marveled at the pristine beauty of Sildanyr. For many, it was an echo of the home they had just departed, a near-perfect reflection of the woodland paradise that was Itheria. The dawn elves found themselves drawn to the world around them and developed deep bonds with the trees, the earth, and the beasts of the woods.

With them came the night elves, second-most numerous and not quite so content with their lot. Vastly different in appearance from their brethren, these fey blended easily into the darkness, their skin the hue of shadow, their hair the silver of moonlight. Where the dawn elves were open and garrulous, the night elves were quiet and secretive. Representing two sides of

elven nature, the night and the dawn elves were as different from one another as their names, but for a time they lived in their new home in peace. So, too, came other breeds of elves, elves less well known to mankind even today: the rugged wood elves, who speak with the ancient trees, the moon elves, who even today persist in their desperate attempts to mend bridges between the dawn and the night, and the albino ghost elves, who walk between this world and the next, between the living and the dead.

Nor were elves the only fey to make the passage from Itheria. They were accompanied by gnomes, who found themselves even more drawn to this new world than the dawn elves, and by dryads, sprites, and other fey as well. Except for the elves, all of these races had existed in Eadar since time immemorial, journeying from Itheria in small numbers through small and often temporary rings and portals. This great migration, however, made Sildanyr once and for all a fey domain.

For many years, the elves constructed their strange cities in the midst of the forest. The architecture of elven towns and villages was like nothing seen in human lands, with buildings formed of stone and wood and shaped through techniques both magical and mundane. Living trees supported platforms of woven branches, and stone walls, curved in ways no iron tool could manage, enclosed windows of glass so fine it was all but invisible save in brightest light. But even these cities paled in comparison to the grand plans of the elves.

When the elves first came to Eadar, they entered through a portal in the grove of the First Tree. The most ancient of all the forest's children, this mighty titan was easily 10 times larger than the eldest oak. Through its roots flowed a primal power, the spirit of the forest itself and the magic of Itheria, and the elves revered it almost as a deity. Beneath the shadow of the First Tree, the dawn elves would build the greatest elven city, which they called Ersevor, which they would make their court and capital. They recruited the night elves to aid them, for the night elves had always been skilled craftsmen and magically powerful, and work began in earnest. It would be the last time the dawn elves and the night elves cooperated on anything of such scale.

The dawn elves had always fiercely protected their culture and traditions. They believed that their people's strength and unity were built on the foundation of a shared culture. All the elves of Sildanyr must share their traditional animistic religion and revere the ancient spirits of the wood. All must tell their children the same stories of their people, about their creation and their rise to greatness. They must share a single culture so they would always have a common understanding of themselves and their place in the world.

Of course, these traditional values sustained and legitimated the existing social structure in the elven kingdom, safeguarding the dawn elves' lofty station among their fellows. Elven society was in many ways

open and tolerant, but the fact remained that the dawn elves ruled and the other elven subraces—including the night elves—were ruled. Over time, the night elves grew resentful and began to demand a greater say in their own fate.

Sometime in the middle years of the ninth century, a voice began to whisper from the depths of the Morningstar Mountains. At first only a select few of the night elves could hear, but soon the words spread throughout their community, as ever greater numbers of night elves formed cabals and flocked to this new power who promised them independence, freedom, and even dominion over the forests. This was the voice of Lathail, a goddess of the creatures of the night and the underworld, who assured the night elves that she favored them over all others, that she had shaped Sildanyr for them, that the dawn elves had corrupted her plans and her intent.

More and more of the night elves abandoned their traditional beliefs in the animistic spirits of nature who had guided their forebears in exchange for the honeyed words of Lathail. They tried, at first, to discuss their concerns and grievances with the dawn elves, but the dawn elf lords would hear none of it, convinced that any dissent represented defiance of their rule. As the cabals grew, the dawn elves became more and more concerned, afraid both for their night elf brethren, who were losing their way, and for themselves, should the night elves' betrayal anger the spirits of the wood. The dawn elves cracked down, scattering cults of Lathail where they found them and declaring worship of this new goddess illegal within their realm.

The night elves responded by moving their worship into secret places. They gathered in dark clearings away from the dawn elves' eyes. They built churches, and even entire communities, in the caves of the Morningstar Mountains, where few other elves would go. And they listened as the new disciples of Lathail preached to them that their new goddess did not love bloodshed, but neither did she shrink from it. As the wolf and the owl and the spider all kill to live, so too might the night elves, if that should be required of them.

Frustrated as they were, it was not a message that came swiftly or easily to the night elves. Kill their brethren? Let elf lift blade against elf? It had happened before, but long ago, and never in great numbers. Surely the dawn elves would yet listen to reason. Surely things need not deteriorate so far. While some particularly fanatical followers of Lathail preached violence from the start, and even practiced murder in the dark when they knew they could not be discovered, the majority of the night elves resisted this final, irrevocable step.

It was not until 914, when the dawn elves discovered the location of one of the underground temples to Lathail, that the war began in earnest. What the dawn elves might have done to those practicing in the temple is unclear, for they never had the chance to decide. The night elves, terrified at the discovery of their practices



and what might happen as a result, reacted in panic and slew all those who had stumbled upon them.

From that day to this, the elves of Sildanyr have battled one another fiercely, and the trees have been fertilized with the blood of the fey. The dawn elves dwell within their tree-borne cities, rooting out the cabals of Lathail wherever they find them. The night elves strike from the darkened depths of the woods and the caves of the Morningstar Mountains, slaying their foes and vanishing once more into the night. Between them, the wood, moon, and ghost elves, as well as those few night elves who have yet to turn to Lathail's teachings, try to survive as best they can, keeping their heads down and praying to spirits who seem no longer to hear them that the bloodshed might soon end.

This, then, is the fey legacy to the world—or, perhaps, this violent world's legacy to the fey. The elves are forevermore a people divided, and even should the breach someday be bridged, it can never fully be healed.

PEOPLE

Sildanyr is undeniably the home of the fey races. Others may dwell in small towns on the fringes, or high in the peaks of the Morningstar Mountains, but elves, gnomes, and other creatures of Itheria truly make the forest their domain.

ELVES

The dawn elves are not merely the dominant race of elves in Sildanyr, they are the most numerous and the ones that most humans think of when they picture elvenkind. They have, no matter how much labor they perform or how much time spent in the sun, pale skin, the hue of a noblewoman who has never worked a day in her life. Their hair is fair and normally worn long; dawn elves tend to braid or tie their hair when working or fighting, but let it hang loose at more casual times. The dawn elves dress primarily in earth-tone hues, and men and women tend to dress very much alike. Knee-length tunics belted to form a skirt or kilt are common—sometimes with leggings, sometimes without—and many dawn elves go barefoot. When going to war or meeting with outsiders, however, dawn elves prefer much more ornate and martial garb, including fine armor of treated leathers or even mithral links.

Dawn elves can be found in almost all portions of Sildanyr, but they are most heavily grouped to the west and south of the Morningstar Mountains. They prefer the deep forests, but many of them dwell near enough to the borders to have regular contact with their human neighbors. Over the entire vastness of Sildanyr, the population of dawn elves consists of approximately two to three million.

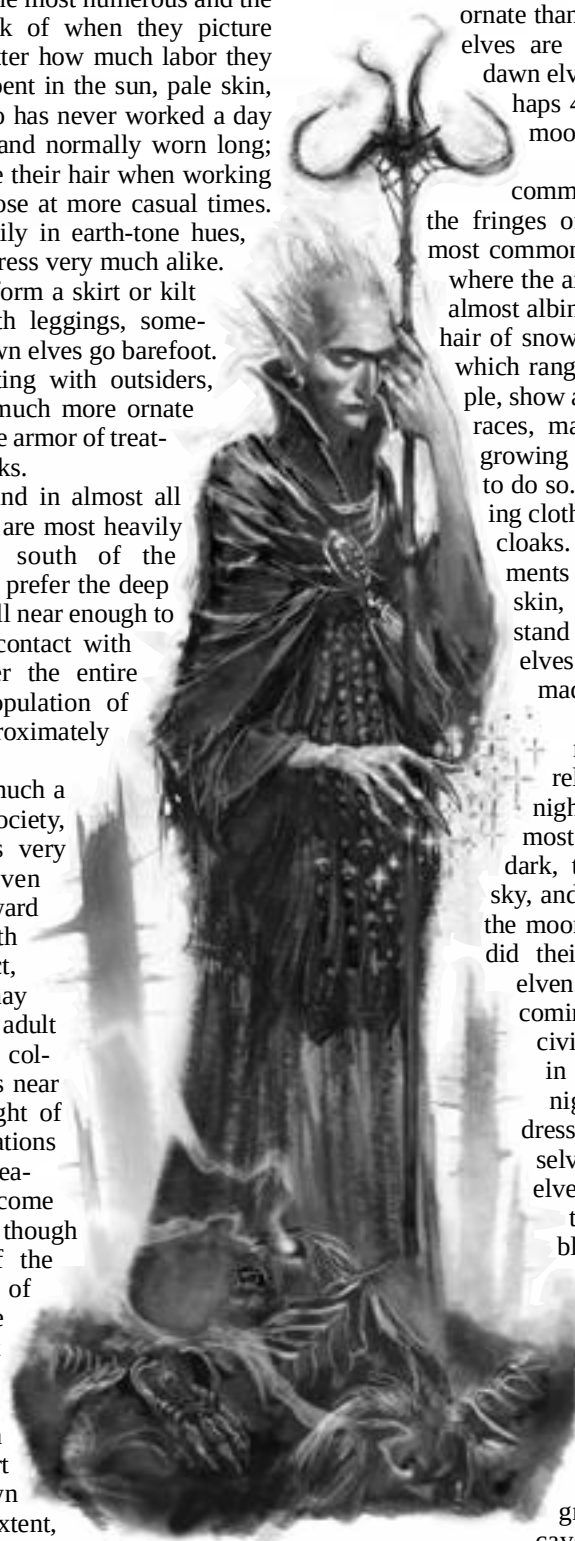
Because they are very much a part of the overall elven society, wood and moon elves dress very much like their dawn elven cousins. Wood elves tend toward brown skin and hair both, with eyes of woodland green. In fact, from a distance, humans may mistake a wood elf for an adult gnome, as they share similar coloration; only when one comes near enough to determine the height of the individual and the variations between elven and gnomish features do the differences become clear. Wood elven clothes, though styled to resemble those of the dawn elves, are often woven of thicker materials, to provide greater protection against casual scratches, bites, or tears. The moon elves are even less distinctive, as though they'd made a deliberate effort to simply vanish into dawn elven culture—which, to an extent, they have. Other than the fact that they tend towards dark hair rather than blond and gray eyes

rather than green, a moon elf is physically indistinguishable from her dawn elven neighbors. Wood elves are found most frequently in the thickest depths of the forest, dwelling in villages smaller but no less alien or ornate than those of the dawn elves. Moon elves are scattered, dwelling amidst the dawn elves. The wood elves number perhaps 400,000 individuals all told, the moon elves about half that number.

The ghost elves are the least common elven variety. They dwell at the fringes of elven society and are found most commonly in the far north of Sildanyr, where the air grows cold. Ghost elves seem almost albino, with skin of palest white and hair of snow or silver hue. Only their eyes, which range from ice blue to deepest purple, show any color. Unlike the other elven races, male ghost elves are capable of growing facial hair, although few choose to do so. Ghost elves prefer loose, flowing clothes, often in the form of robes or cloaks. They prefer either white garments that blend smoothly with their skin, or darker colors to make them stand out. Fewer than 100,000 ghost elves, perhaps no more than 50,000, made the journey from Itheria.

Finally, of course, are the night elves. Even before the religious and political split, the night elves were the strangest and most alien of the elves. Their skin is dark, the ebon hue of the nighttime sky, and their hair is the silver-white of the moon. Though they once dressed as did their dawn elven brethren, night elven styles have changed since the coming of Lathail and the start of the civil war. Unless they are engaged in an activity requiring stealth, night elves prefer more formal dress, as though by making themselves appear higher than the dawn elves they can more swiftly make that vision a reality. They prefer blouses, tunics, coats, and cloaks of fine cloths, black silks, soft cottons, and well-oiled leathers. They are almost always armed, at least with a small blade and perhaps a crossbow, and most go at least lightly armored at all times.

The night elves exist in greatest concentration in the caves of the Morningstar Mountains and the forests immediately surrounding it,



but their encampments, shrines, and hidden villages are found throughout Sildanyr. There are perhaps a million night elves living in the vast forest.

GNOMES

Gnomes have existed in the world since before recorded history, but never in such numbers as when they came with the elves through the gates of Itheria. Most of the Sildanyr gnomes dwell in forest groves, isolated thickets, vales in the Morningstar Mountains—isolated places where the elves have not already built up their cities. This is not out of any dislike for the elves, and in fact some gnomes dwell in or near dawn and wood elven cities; rather, the gnomes simply prefer their own company. They live in extended family units, and their villages are substantially less ornate than those of the elves. They build simple wooden huts, when they build at all, and often simply live in the hollows of trees or in comfortable burrows beneath the soil.

As with other gnomes elsewhere, the Sildanyr gnomes often go unclothed when among their own people, having none of the mortal races' sense of modesty. When traveling among the elves or meeting with humans in the fringes of the wood, the gnomes dress in almost rudimentary clothes, particularly long tunics and leggings or kilts. Most Sildanyr gnomes prefer clothes that closely mimic their own flesh tones, so the hue of the cloth depends largely on the age of the individual. Sildanyr gnomes tend to average just the slightest bit smaller than their cousins elsewhere, perhaps due to their more recent arrival from Itheria. The gnome population of Sildanyr is difficult to determine, but likely hovers around 600,000.

OTHER FEY

While the elves and gnomes are the most numerous of the travelers who came to Sildanyr from Itheria, they are not the only ones. Dryads, sprites, satyrs, and other creatures of even stranger ilk dwell in the depths of this primal forest. They rarely gather in sufficiently large groups to form any sort of community, but they exist nonetheless, and even the elves know not to disturb their homes. Surely the forest is home to less than 100,000 fey, of all myriad varieties, but they dwell all over, and a traveler need not be especially fortunate—or unfortunate—to run into one.

SETTLEMENTS

The dawn elves dwell in cities built from shaped stone and living wood. These structures are formed through magic and fey crafts unknown to mortal hands. No visible nails or spikes attach surface to surface, no mortar fills the hollows between stones because no hollows exist to fill. Each such structure, whether grown

from wood, shaped from stone, or both, appears almost seamless, as though the wood and stone were melded together even as the trees and the mountains grew.

What is not always apparent from the surface is that every structure in a dawn elven city is linked to every other. Two houses formed by the living branches of trees may share a few branches or a bole in common. The stone-walled forge on one side of a village may be formed from the same underlying rock as the floor of an otherwise wooden house on the other. Certainly all the trees used in constructing the city share a system of roots, each entwined with its neighbor. The elves do not think of their cities as things they have built, as humans do. Rather they think of them as an expansion of the trees and the earth and the soil around them, no less natural for all that they required a bit of magical coaxing to form. The disparate structures of dawn elven cities are all interconnected because the elves see them as parts of a whole, branches and roots and offshoots of a single great tree.

The homes of the night elves were once similar, and in fact the night elves built many of the elven cities. Today the night elves dwell in much meaner domiciles. Those who still live in the woods construct simple wooden homes, sometimes on the earth, sometimes in the boughs of the trees. They do not shape, or coax; they cut and hammer and build like humans, not because they have forgotten the old ways, but because this is faster. The night elves know that they may have to move again at any time, should the dawn elves discover them, and are unwilling to put so much effort into so transitory a home.

In the caves of the Morningstar Mountains, however, the night elves have made themselves far more permanent dwellings. They have shaped the caves, even as they once shaped the wood of the trees, forming entire complexes of chambers that hold both an unearthly beauty and a subtle menace. When the night elves altered the trees and the stone under the sky, they did their best to make the alterations seem natural, graceful, an extension of what was. In the deep caves, they seem almost to have gone the opposite direction, choosing shapes and angles clearly caused by no shifting of earth or trickle of water. Ceilings hang either ominously low or extend so high that one might forget one was underground at all. Chambers feature strange shapes, built at angles not quite comfortable to mortal eyes. Most of the great chambers have become shrines to the night elven goddess, holding altars with images of all manner of nighttime and underground predators. And everywhere, radiating tunnels and hidden passages, escape routes for the followers of Lathail should the dawn elves ever win this far.

Unlike the elves, the gnomes of Sildanyr do not seem to believe that they can improve on nature. They either do not build at all, instead choosing to live in the natural shelters and hollows provided by natural growth, or they build simple huts and homes that make no pre-

tense of being anything other than they are. They use only material they know the area can spare, preferring to gather wood rather than cut it, and always build as innocuously as they can. It is actually possible for a traveler to wander right past a gnome's dwelling without ever noticing it, simply because the hut was built in the shadow of some great tree or other magnificent natural phenomenon.

LANGUAGE

The languages of all the creatures of Sildanyr share a common root, called Sylvan, a single unified language used as a "common tongue" within Itheria itself. Each race possesses its own unique variants and dialects on that root, however, and those differences have grown rather dramatically in the few centuries since the elves came to this world.

The tongue of the dawn, moon, wood, and ghost elves is a musical language. Meaning is imparted not merely through sound but intonation and inflection; the same word might mean two very different things when spoken with the emphasis on different syllables. Most mortals who hear Elven spoken aloud liken it to singing, or perhaps to poetry. When written, the language is no less elegant; its script is beautifully curved, forming all manner of intricate patterns. Legend among humans states that every piece of elven literature ever written actually forms a picture of its true meaning, if one lays out the words and pages end to end.

The night elves speak a similar tongue, but it has changed dramatically in recent years—partially due to the night elves' own efforts. They have deliberately altered the curves of the letters, the inflections of the words. This comes partially from a desire to separate themselves further from their former brethren, partially out of a need to keep their secrets from the enemy, and partially as a symbolic gesture of rebirth and renewal to their new goddess. At the moment, the two languages are still similar enough that a speaker of one can understand the speech or writing of the other, but a matter of a single generation could break that tie and split the dialects into two totally distinct tongues.

The language of the gnomes is as different from elven as could be while still descending from the same root. The words are almost totally lacking in inflection, with emphasis determined entirely by mood and context. This doesn't mean that gnomes speak in a monotone, only that their timbre is based entirely on the feeling they want to convey, rather than the meaning of the word itself. The Gnome language is not as capable of communicating fine detail as the Elven language, despite the fact that it actually claims a larger vocabulary. But of course, the gnomes tend to be rather more fundamental in their concerns, and as most gnomes also speak Elven or the Sylvan of the fey of Itheria, they rarely have difficulty communicating with others.

GOVERNANCE

On both the national and local level, the governments of the Sildanyr gnomes and the majority of the elven races function as oligarchies. The dawn elves, and thus the entirety of the elven nation of Sildanyr, are ruled by an assembly called the Council of Dawn. The dawn elves do indeed have traditional monarchs as well—currently King Aelorn and Queen Savraun, who reign from the graceful heights of Ersevor—but they are less absolute rulers and more respected elders. The king and queen are but two voices on the Council of Dawn. Their word carries great weight, and they have the power to break ties and rule on interpretations of the law, but their dictates can be voted down by the other Dawn-speakers.

The royal title passes to the eldest child of the previous monarchs, subject to the confirmation of the Council. It requires a near-unanimous vote for the council to declare an heir unfit for the throne and then another to select a new heir, so only in the most extreme circumstances would the royal line not continue.

Becoming a Dawn-speaker is an easier matter, at least in theory. Should a position in the council become available, any member may nominate any elf to fill that position. Should over half the sitting Dawn-speakers vote to accept the nominee, she may assume her place on the council. The Council of Dawn always consists of 37 members, including the monarch or monarchs. While any elf can technically be nominated as a Dawn-speaker, only dawn elves have been confirmed by the council since well before the elves ever left Itheria. Any elf who wishes may petition for the right to speak before the council, but only members may suggest policy or cast votes.

On a local level, in individual villages or cities, the ruling council operates in much the same way. Numbers and specific policies may differ. Some councils consist only of a handful of elves, while others may be made up of every elf in the city above a certain age. Some elect a single member as a leader, foreman, or reeve, whereas others treat all members as equal. Some are formal, with elected positions, while others are simple gatherings of respected or elder villagers. (This last is the form gnome councils most frequently assume, when the gnomes can be bothered with the process at all.) In all cases, however, the direction of a community is in the hands of a group; the elves do not believe in allowing supreme power to rest in the hands of any one individual, even on a local or limited level.

NIGHT ELVES

The government of the night elves, like so much of their culture, seems a slightly altered variant on the traditions of their dawn elven cousins. The night elves, too, are ruled by a council, but this is a true theocracy, with laws and mandates handed down by the disciples

of Lathail. This council is headed by Lathail's high priestess, currently the elf Baleth, Lathail's first disciple and the mother of the entire sect. Baleth speaks for the goddess, so her word is law—but it is the council of disciples that decides how to interpret and implement those words.

The Children of Lathail, as these ruling disciples are called, are not fixed in number. Any disciple with substantial power is clearly favored of the goddess and may join if she so chooses. The council has actually grown faster than Baleth and her assistants anticipated, and competition and rivalry are beginning to spread through the ranks. Because a larger proportion of male night elves are warriors and many have been lost in the first years of the civil war, most of the ruling disciples at this time are female.

Individual night elven communities do not often have a priestly council, unless the city is of unusual size. In most cases, each community is ruled by a single disciple of Lathail, who receives her dictates and instructions from the Children.

RELIGION

The dawn, ghost, moon, and wood elves all share a reverence for the spirits of the natural world. They do not worship deities in the sense that humans define the term. Rather, they believe that all the elements of nature have souls, a spiritual consciousness that shapes the growth and development of that place or thing. Neither, however, does this quite qualify as an animistic belief. It is not that the elves believe that this specific tree, or that specific waterfall, has a soul; rather, a single spirit represents all trees, or all waterfalls, but manifests differently through each one. When an elven shaman offers supplications or offerings to the spirits of her grove, she is honoring not merely her own grove, but all natural areas like it.

Elven religious ceremonies can be either somber or joyful, depending on the event, but they are rarely especially formal. They are held most frequently in open groves, forest clearings, hilltops, waterfalls—wherever the elves feel their connection to nature most strongly. They celebrate many things: the end of winter, the beginning of harvest, the turning of the seasons, the breaking of a particularly long spell of drought or rain, the birth, marriage, or—all too frequently of late—death of a loved one. Most such ceremonies involve chants and songs to the spirits of nature, perhaps ceremonial dance, and little else. The elves feel no need for the ornate trappings of religion enjoyed by man; they worship the natural world, and nothing made by magic or by hand could possibly serve to accentuate its display.

The gnomes share a similar belief, though theirs is, if anything, even more primal and less codified than the elves'. Where the elves see a single guiding spirit behind each different aspect of nature, the gnomes



revere the aspect itself, absent any notion of a higher power. Gnomes do not revere the tree or the mountain for what it represents, but for what it *is*—an integral, and unique, part of the world. This faith is so strong, and the gnomes' connection with nature so ingrained, that they can draw power from their beliefs just as those races who actually beseech identifiable deities for their spells.

Gnome religious ceremonies tend to be quite short and very personal. They often commemorate even the most significant event with little more than a brief paeon, or perhaps the ritual planting of a tree. Faith is a very personal thing for the gnomes, representing their connection to the world, and no outside power—including other gnomes—should ever tell an individual how best to express that faith.

NIGHT ELVES

The night elves once worshipped the same spirits of nature to whom the other elves grant their devotion, but many have since converted to the worship of Lathail. It was the disciple Baleth who first heard the whispers of the goddess from the caves of the Morningstar Mountains, telling her that the night elves need not accept their poor treatment at the hands of the dawn elves. At first only a few flocked to her banner, but as her powers grew and the treatment of the night elves worsened, more and more of her brethren began to heed her words. Today, few night elves still revere the spirits of nature, and these live as nervous outcasts on the fringes of dawn elven communities, distrusted by their neighbors but unwelcome by their former kin.

Lathail claims to be a truly ancient goddess, one who was present at the forging of the world itself. She tells her followers that it was she who shaped Sildanyr into what it is now, for she foresaw the coming of her favored children despite their otherworldly origin. Lathail is the patron goddess of all predators of the shadow, from the beasts that hunt only at night to the creatures that crawl through the depths of the underground. Thus does she love best those elves who also love the night—and thus would she see them rule over their

brethren, even as the wolf rules over the lamb, or the spider over the fly.

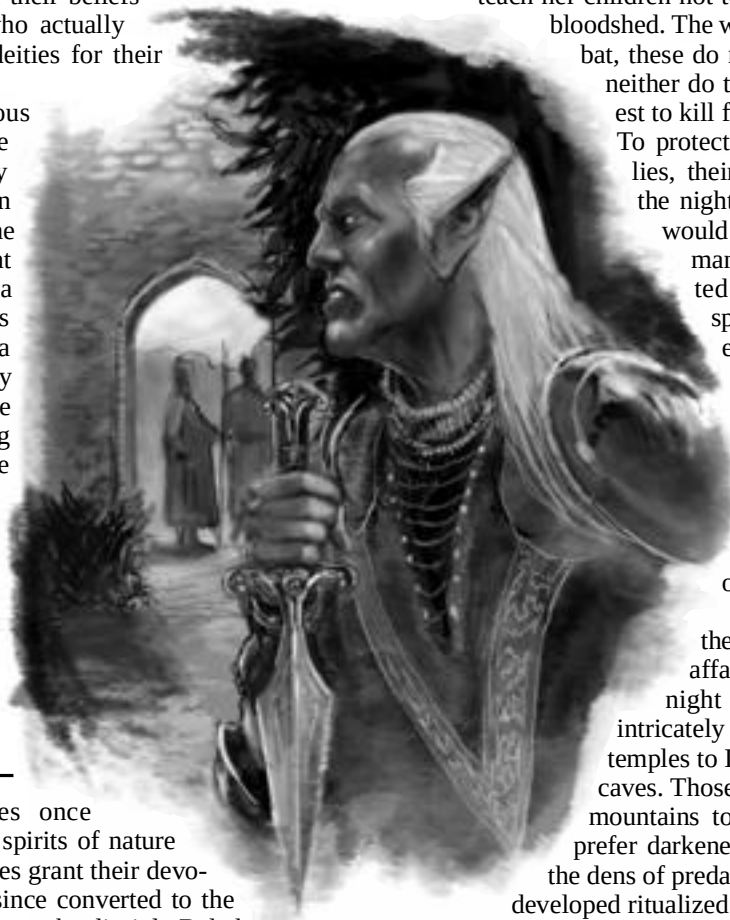
Lathail does not preach cruelty or malice, though many of her followers have both in their hearts, thanks to their race's current predicament. She does, however, teach her children not to shrink from violence or bloodshed. The wolf and the spider and the bat, these do not torture their prey, but neither do they hesitate in the slightest to kill for hunger or self-defense. To protect their homes, their families, their future, and themselves, the night elves must slay all who would oppose them. For a time many of the night elves resisted these teachings, for spilling the blood of other elves was a disturbing thought, but most have now come to believe that they have no other options open to them. Lathail has taught the night elves the value of life—specifically, their own.

The ceremonies of the night elves are ornate affairs. When possible, the night elves conduct them in intricately worked and consecrated temples to Lathail in the Morningstar caves. Those who are too far from the mountains to attend such ceremonies prefer darkened glades, preferably near the dens of predators. The night elves have developed ritualized prayers, chants, and even ceremonial plays—mostly involving the hunting of prey or the slaying of enemies—for their services. As a goddess of predators, Lathail is pleased with the sacrifice of game, and some extremists have begun to claim that the goddess would be most pleased with the sacrifice of dawn elves.

TRADE AND CRAFT

The elven communities of Sildanyr are largely self-sufficient. Most hunt, forage, or grow whatever they need, from food to clothes to wood for tools. Were it simply a matter of survival, the elves would never need to cooperate with anyone outside their forest.

Unfortunately, while not essential, metal and stone goods certainly make life substantially easier. Because the night elves control much of the Morningstar range, the other elven races have found it difficult to mine in recent years. The majority of trade with outsiders, then, is conducted to gain tools and weapons of iron and steel, and raw ores and stone for



constructing their own tools and shaping their homes. Most trade with the humans occurs with the cities and villages of Anderland, though many elven communities in the southern and coastal regions of Sildanyr also trade with Ebernath.

Elven crafts are widely considered the finest and most beautiful of all the world, with the possible exception of those forged by the surprisingly precise hands of the dwarves. The humans are all too happy to trade useful materials, metals, tools, and weapons for jewelry, baubles, and art that, though exquisite indeed, are of no true value to the elves who made it. The elves craft these trinkets from wood, glass, or bits of stone or metal either too small or too weak for more practical use, and consider it effort well spent.

The gnomes and the night elves trade with no one at all, the gnomes because they live so close to nature that they need nothing else, and the night elves because they have neither outside allies nor a reliable means to reach them. Fortunately for them, they have access to the resources the other elves lack, and they still control much of the forest within and around the mountains. The fact that they need not deal with others or sneak past their foes to obtain ores for weapons, or to tend their crops and livestock, is perhaps the only strategic advantage the night elves have in their civil war.

WAYS AND TRADITIONS

THE ENDLESS WATCH

Elven leaders are understandably focused on the worsening civil war, but they are not so foolish as to ignore dangers beyond the borders of the forest. South of Sildanyr, across an uncomfortably short expanse of the Summer Sea, is the island heart of the Valhedrin Dominion. The tieflings' eyes turn often to the north, and it is only the constant vigilance of the elves that has prevented them from landing soldiers on Sildanyr's wooded coast.

Along the entirety of southern Sildanyr, and for miles along the southeast and southwest coast as well, stands the Watching Wall, a line of guard towers erected specifically to guard against a Valhedrin invasion. The towers of the Watching Wall are a special sort of post and they require a special sort of sentinel.

The Endless Watch, as the position is known, is both an honor and a reward for the greatest of elven warriors. Only an elf who has proven both his prowess in battle and his devotion to his people receives such an assignment. Most have great martial skills, such as fighters and rangers, but scouts, wizards, and shamans of the wood also stand post. To even be considered for the Endless Watch, an elf must have many decades of combat experience under his belt; given the recent erup-

tion of civil war with the night elves, sentinels with the proper experience are less rare than they once were.

So the position is an honor, because only the best and most favored fill it—but it is also a reward, for it actually means a break from the constant violence. The sentinels of the Endless Watch must be the best, in case the Dominion comes, but so far the tieflings have not yet launched an attack, and the soldiers of the Watch need not lift a sword or a bow in anger. Many elven warriors consider the Endless Watch a vacation, though they still take their guard duties seriously indeed.

Dawn elves make up the majority of sentinels on the Watching Wall, but moon and wood elves fill such roles as well. Few mist elves are sufficiently known and respected to receive such a post, and no night elf has been set upon the wall since the beginning of hostilities with the dawn elven nation.

THE LONG NIGHT

Sildanyr maintains a close connection to the fey realm of Itheria at all times, but that connection is neither stable nor consistent. In some places, such as the grove of the First Tree, the walls between the mortal world and the fey realm are much thinner than they are elsewhere in the world, with temporary portals and gateways opening and closing all the time. Likewise, the influence of the fey realm on Sildanyr waxes and wanes at certain times, and the greatest of these instances is known as the Long Night.

Once every few years—the period varies, and only the elves have the calendar and the astrological and arcane knowledge to predict it—the barriers between the mortal world and that of Itheria collapse almost entirely. The moon is full, the stars align, and fey energies begin to seep through the walls of reality. It was during one Long Night that the elves first arrived in Sildanyr, emerging through a shimmering portal into the grove of the First Tree. The elves keep careful track of time, so they know well in advance when the Long Night is approaching. They make certain that all non-fey visitors or ambassadors are away from elven lands during this time, for fear of causing them harm.

During the Long Night, as alien magics seep from Itheria into the mortal realm, the fey nature of the elves comes to the fore. Elven spells are more powerful, and last longer, than at other times, but they are also not entirely predictable. An elf may find himself casting the wrong spell, or even casting a spell when he had no intention of doing so, as though his instincts had overruled his conscious mind. The chaotic nature of the fey bubbles up as well, and many elves become wild, unpredictable, and even violent. Elf rarely harms elf or fey, even in this state, but mortals unfortunate enough to wander into Sildanyr during the Long Night often find themselves terrorized by strange forest creatures or simply vanish completely. Strange creatures appear in the forest that do not exist on other nights; whether they

materialize naturally with the fey magics or whether the elves actively summon them in their more primal state is unclear. Elves born during the Long Night often grow quite powerful in the magic arts, but they also tend to grow up temperamental, unpredictable, or mischievous.

The elves rarely speak of the Long Night, because they know they cannot truly communicate the fey experience to outsiders. It is considered a sacred time in all elven cultures, though the different elven races typically celebrate it in different ways. For dawn elves, the Long Night is an opportunity to immerse themselves in magic, song, dance, and abandon. For the night elves, the Long Night is a time to hunt. The dawn elves consider bloodshed during the Long Night a sacrilege, and this has further driven a wedge between the two elven cultures. During the last Long Night, night elven extremists even launched raids against outlying elven settlements, resulting in some of the bloodiest massacres of the war.

Oddly, elves are not affected equally by the Long Night. Some experience nothing at all, while others feel unusual urges but are capable of controlling them. Location seems to have some bearing on the intensity of the experience. The farther an elf is from the heart of Sildanyr, the grove of the First Tree, the less he feels the tug of the fey realm. Elves outside Sildanyr rarely feel anything at all.

Gnomes, too, seem unaffected by the Long Night, despite their fey nature. The fact is, gnomes are so much closer to Itheria in their daily lives, the Long Night represents little change. Gnomes usually pass the Long Night simply by avoiding elven communities, though some parties of gnomes patrol the woods in search of lost mortals, hoping to lead them to safety before they become lost in the maelstrom of fey magic.

INTIMATIONS OF MORTALITY

It is completely invisible to outsiders, for the elves are careful to hide it, but a great fear is growing in the hearts of many of Sildanyr's inhabitants. When the elves came to Eadar, they gained something more than a new home. They gained mortality.

Certainly elves died in Itheria, of violence and even of emotional malaise; an elf who grew tired of life would slowly fade, drifting off into a sleep from which she would never awaken. In the realm of the fey, however, the elves were ageless, immortal. Here, in the mortal realm, they began to age, though it was a slow process. Elves live for hundreds of years, perhaps thousands—but eventually, they too must die.

When elven wizards and sages first discovered this, after their arrival in Eadar, the majority of them dismissed it. They had a while yet, centuries if not more. Accustomed as they were to timelessness, they had no real sense of time passing.

Now, however, the elves have been in the world

for almost 300 years, and some of their eldest are beginning to fail. For the first time, the elves must fully confront the notion that they are no longer the eternal creatures they once were. Many elves have displayed a remarkable ability to accept this fate; after all, they are already dying in unprecedented numbers in the civil war, so it is not as if the idea of dying was foreign. Others, however, have begun to panic, seeking solace in prayer, magic arts, and alchemy. If these seekers of immortality cannot find a means of restoring to themselves the agelessness they once possessed, the elven culture of Sildanyr may soon face a cultural crisis as a small but significant proportion of its population succumbs to terror and despair.

THE WIDOWS OF LATHAIL

There is a small faction of violent zealots hidden among the population and priesthood of the night elves. Their interpretations of Lathail's teachings often differ radically from the mainstream priesthood's. These zealots also fight for their people and their goddess, but their means and ultimate goals are even more extreme.

Calling themselves the Widows of Lathail, the members of this faction engage in acts of violence that shock even their most jaded neighbors. They prefer poison in the dark and devastating spells from a distance to the clash of swords or the thrum of a bowstring. Where most of the night elves target their enemy's soldiers and leaders, the Widows target everyone, including non-combatants and even children. The dawn elves hold military supremacy, they maintain, and so they cannot be defeated using conventional military tactics. The Widows even take prisoners, though whether those who vanish into the deep caves of the Morningstar Mountains serve as slaves, sacrifices, or something worse remains a mystery. To the Widows, equality for the night elves is insufficient; they will not rest until their people and their goddess rule Sildanyr, and the other races of elves are naught but slaves.

To date, the Widows are a distinct minority among the night elves, as only a small fraction of the population are so angry or so despairing that they can stomach the vile practices of the sect. As days pass, however, and the night elves suffer defeat after defeat, more and more of their number begin to drift toward extremism, violence, and cruelty against their enemy. If things continue as they do, the female disciples who command the Widows may soon become a powerful guiding force in night elven government.

Among outsiders, the Widows are often known as the Spider Cult, for they have chosen that particular vermin—the most merciless and efficient killer of all Lathail's predators, or so they maintain—as their symbol. As with other factions of Lathail's clergy, priestesses far outnumber priests, and some among them believe that only women *should* be disciples of the goddess.

PERSONALITIES

GENERAL INDRALEN

Indralen has, for almost a century now, been one of the most skilled and most respected of the dawn elven war leaders. “General” is the closest human translation for her position; her actual title is *daen*, the highest rank attainable to a dawn elven soldier who does not sit on the Council of Dawn.

Daen Indralen was born in Eadar, though both her parents were among those who traveled through the gate from Itheria. Her father was a warrior before her, and Indralen was trained in sword and bow from the day she was old enough to hold them. For many years she protected her community from the dangerous creatures of the wild and considered it time well spent.

Since the outbreak of civil war, however, all her attention has been focused on the war effort against the night elves. Indralen watched as her own brethren died, and as night elves fell to her sword, her bow, and the elves under her command. She grew bitter and callous, as though she no longer believed in the cause for which she was fighting. Her fellow war leaders saw this change in her, and it was King Aelorn himself who assigned Indralen to a decade-long post on the Endless Watch. Ostensibly, this was a reward for her years of service and fighting in the dawn elves’ name, but Aelorn’s primary purpose was to give one of his best generals a break from the constant struggle that seemed to be wearing at her soul.

That decade ended mere months ago, and Indralen has returned to her initial position, as one of the primary leaders and tacticians in the war against the night elves. She seems rested and alert, with little trace of the despair that seemed to eat at her previously, but her fellow commanders and her soldiers all keep a very close eye on her. If she has truly recovered, she may once again become a powerful warrior for the dawn elves and a scourge of Lathail’s followers; if she has not, if her former recklessness resurfaces, she may lead her soldiers into disaster.

Indralen is of average height and build for an elf, though she is far stronger than she appears. She keeps her golden brown hair tied back tightly, and often bound beneath a mithral helm. The left side of her face bears a thick red scar from a night elven blade, and though the stroke missed her eye, the pulling at her flesh draws her eye into a perpetual squint. She customarily wears a suit of mithral chain and carries her father’s sword, an intelligent blade called *Fithreya*, in battle.

LANAS ERDINYR

In the center of the great city of Ersevor, the First Tree stretches upward as though it alone were responsi-

ble for holding the sky separate from the earth. No other trees grow within a dozen yards of its trunk, and the elves have built no structures within that radius. Lush grasses and thick undergrowth surround the tree, and neither winter nor blight ever touch it. This is partly due to the influence of the First Tree itself, but also to the efforts of Lanas Erdinyr, the immortal dryad who dwells within the sacred tree.

She has no name of her own, for as a dryad she has never needed one. Lanas Erdinyr is the name given her by the dawn elves and means Oracle of the Wood. Linked as she is to the First Tree itself, Lanas Erdinyr sees almost all that happens within Sildanyr, and—to a lesser extent—can sense great happenings, past, present, and future, throughout all Eadar. Elven sages believe that the dryad is one of the oldest creatures in the world, and perhaps one of the most powerful. Some speculate that she is a goddess living among them, but Lanas Erdinyr has never asked for the worship of elves or fey.

The dryad rarely answers questions, however, save those that most immediately affect those around her. For instance, she may warn the elves of Ersevor about a coming storm, or a stranger arriving the following week, but she is unlikely to tell them of the night elves’ activities on the other side of the Morningstar Mountains. When pressed, she says simply that others have dwelt near her tree, centuries before the elves arrived, and they grew to rely too heavily upon her council. She will not make such a mistake again, and so she is happy to offer her wisdom and her advice to all who come and ask, but only rarely her gift of vision.

Lanas Erdinyr appears older than most dryads, for she has dwelt in the mortal realm a very long time. She appears very much like a halfbreed, with traits of both fey and gnome. Her hair is a deep auburn, with a few flecks of white. Her skin is chestnut-brown, and she possesses a grace and beauty that transcends her apparent age. She has no personal sense of modesty, but often appears clad in a gown of leaves and vines in order to make her visitors more comfortable.

NAVARTHA

The dawn elf known only as Navartha—Long Shadow, as translated from the Elven—is a living folktale among the people of Sildanyr. Navartha was born mere moments after the elves first arrived from Itheria. In fact, not only was he born during the Long Night—making him rather more unpredictable and prone to mischief than most elves—but it is said he was the first elf born in the mortal realm. This established powerful ties between Navartha and the world around him, and indeed the mysterious Long Shadow is both an exceedingly powerful shaman and a fair practitioner of the sorcerous arts as well.

Navartha dwells outside elven society, appearing to others on an exceedingly rare basis. When he does choose to appear, none can judge his motivations or



likely actions. Navartha has interfered with several battles between dawn and night elves, but his allegiances seem to shift, as he aids one side in one encounter but assists the other in the next. While some believe this is simple evidence of Navartha's chaotic nature, most elves who have heard of him believe that he has his own agenda, and his efforts on behalf of both warring factions are toward a specific end. Navartha rarely appears to outsiders, but he has occasionally stepped from the forest long enough to warn mortal travelers away from hidden dangers.

Navartha is abnormally tall for a dawn elf; were it not for his sharp, clearly fey features, it would be possible to mistake him for a slender human at a distance. His almond-shaped eyes are a deep forest green, and his long golden hair has a single streak of white along the right side of his head. This last feature, extremely rare among the people of the dawn, has led some to speculate that Navartha might claim a bit of ghost elven blood. He prefers simple garb, such as traveling leathers and a light cloak, all in shades of brown selected to blend in with the underbrush around him. At all times he carries with him a staff that is said to be shaped from a branch of the First Tree.

SITES AND FEATURES

SILVERTOP

At the southernmost edge of the Morningstar Mountains, the peaks trail off into forested hills. A dozen miles farther south even than these, a single peak—not quite a mountain, but more than a hill—stands alone amidst a sea of trees and thick growth. This rise is not forested, but instead turns bare rock to the sky. This is Silvertop, and it is a place holy to both the moon and night elves.

A broad stair carved from the rock itself winds its way up Silvertop, beginning on the northern face and making multiple circuits before allowing access to the peak. The top of the rise is broad and slightly concave, creating a natural amphitheater. Multiple shapes are carved from the stone atop the rise, and many stone columns and arches, shaped my magic, rise higher still. Those who remember the ancient arts of astrology and timekeeping can position themselves in the center of those shapes and, by looking through specific constructs at the moon or stars, can read great secrets of the world and the future. Alas, few can use this mystical structure, for the night elves control the region around Silvertop. They refuse to allow the moon elves access, and they themselves have forgotten the art, as Lathail provides her own auguries and calendars.

THE WATCHING WALL

Proof that the elves are not blind to the presence of danger outside their forests, the Watching Wall is a chain of guard towers that extends from the southernmost reaches of the east coast, across the entire south coast of the Summer Sea, and some ways up the Parthian coast on the west. The elves constructed these towers in the days before the civil war, when they realized that even they had reason to be wary of the Valhedar Dominion to the south.

While a few of the towers of the Watching Wall are fortresses built of stone and constructed in the traditional manner, most were literally grown by elven arts. The average Watching Wall guard tower consists of three to six large trees, shaped and molded into a single massive structure far wider and taller than anything in the surrounding area. These tower trees include broad platforms, barriers behind which archers can take cover, and even interior rooms and staircases. While the majority of those standing the Endless Watch are warriors of some sort or another, each such tower has at least one shaman or wizard on duty, in order to repair or expand the fortress as needed.

CHAPTER NINE

VALHEDAR AND ZANGALA

This chapter presents background and setting details on the Valhedar Dominion and the yuan-ti empire of Zangala. The text of this chapter is designated as closed content.

THE VALHEDAR DOMINION

The Valhedar Dominion has spread from its roots in the Summer Sea to claim significant parts of two continents. Both the Emerlyn peninsula of Ambria and the Azran Desert of northern Zangala have fallen to the tiefling lords of this infernally inspired empire.

Long-standing treaties with Ebernath have prevented any progress north or east, but the dominars of Valhedar have sought war against the Kingsmarch in an effort to expand their holdings. The fertile valleys, plentiful rivers, and magical power they might claim from the Kingsmarch make tempting targets for the tiefling lords. Even the lives of the people of the Kingsmarch have their place in the plans of the tiefling lords, who are eager to feed the cravings of their infernal partners.

The climate of the Dominion varies widely throughout its expansive borders. Emerlyn is dominated by coastal wetlands, moors, and marshes. Its sultry, subtropical climate can be stifling during the height of summer, though winters are mild and blessed with warm breezes from the south. The peninsula experiences heavy rainfall and short-lived but fierce storms on an almost daily basis through the rainy seasons.

Northern Zangala includes the Azran Desert as well as regions of highlands, broken hills, and scrub. The Azran Desert is not the worst of its kind, though the oppressive heat and lack of resources make life difficult in the area. Tieflings have an easier time withstanding

the heat of the deep desert than other races, but the lords of the Dominion have little interest in living in a scorched wasteland. The highlands of northeastern Zangala are a haven for criminals, monsters, and bandits that might not be tolerated on the island of Valhedar—and might not survive in the desert. Escapees from the Dominion's prisons and the slave pits in Zangala often make their way to the highlands. Many succumb to the dangers of the region. Those that survive make the area more dangerous for others.

Valhedar itself is cursed by significant volcanic activity. The island was formed by volcanic activity long ago, and those volcanoes continue to be active in modern times. The lava flows have worn channels through which molten rock pours several times a year. Many settlements on the island make use of these “rivers of fire” in summoning, ritual combat, or as part of some gruesome entertainment. The regular flow of lava enriches the soil of Valhedar and makes it a fertile ground for crops and animals, but on the occasions when too much lava flows, the destruction can be immense. Naturally, the commoners who work the land suffer the brunt of such damage. It is not unknown for the unlucky commoners who lose their crops and lands to lava to find themselves in a summoning pit for their lord's entertainment. Most often, the tiefling lord sees it as the only viable alternative. He cannot allow the commoners to become a burden to him.

HISTORY

The area around the island of Valhedar has always suffered a high concentration of infernal activity, and thus of tiefling population. The many volcanoes of the island are now infamous for their easily opened gateways into the lower planes. The tieflings' numbers brought them some measure of acceptance, but their



existence was still a reminder of painful, often tragic, events and influences. The tieflings, it seemed, would never be entirely welcome into normal society.

All this ended with the rise of a tiefling wizard named Leda. Like many of her race, she spent most of her life skulking in shadows and trying to avoid notice. She hid in places uncomfortable for humans and other normal races. The many volcanoes of the island were filled with caves and passages created by lava flows and were an ideal place for tieflings to hide, as the heat bothered them much less than others. Leda also found the gateways to the lower planes. Her travels to the lower planes are a matter of much speculation, but she clearly demonstrated a stunning ability to summon and control fiends.

Leda gathered a horde of followers to herself, principally tieflings but also a few members of other races. She and her followers made war against Seralia, the first kingdom to arise on the island, using demons and devils in battle to overthrow her enemies. Upon the ashes of the old nation she proclaimed herself high dominar and renamed the capital city Valhedar.

Leda's use of infernal powers concerned many neighboring nations, but Valhedar was quiet for a time despite their fears. The Dominion spellcasters continued to summon fiends, but they seemed briefly content to keep to themselves. The human tribes of the Summer Sea took heart at this sign of peace—they waited and

watched. As it happens, the few years of peace were an opportunity slipping past. A decade following Leda's triumph in Valhedar saw a drastic increase in the practice of wizardry. The dominar taught others of her pact with the fiends and the demonic allies of Valhedar grew in number. When the Dominion had gathered sufficient strength to press on, Leda ordered her followers to attack.

Within Dominar Leda's lifetime, the Valhedar Dominion grew to encompass the entire island of Valhedar. When the Dominion passed to Leda's successor, another tiefling wizard named Kelibrex, he seemed content to entertain himself and extend his control over the land. The Dominion would not expand its borders again for many years. During this time of "stability," however, all was not quiet and peaceful. The tieflings kept the power of the fiends to themselves and built their brutal regime based on the fear of their subordinates and the suffering of their rivals and enemies.

Several rebellions erupted in response to the brutal and vengeful acts of the tiefling dominars. The boldest of the rebels were quickly discovered and given to the summoning pits, where tiefling wizards called on devils to destroy the rebels for their own amusement. In an effort to quell further rebellious thoughts, such punishments were made public spectacles. The lords of the Dominion learned to enjoy the sight of fiendish creatures rending their hapless victims, and the practice

grew into a bloody cathartic sport. Even the commoners of the Dominion grew to enjoy the thrill of the spectacle, and gladiatorial battles—both mortal and fiendish—became a popular form of entertainment.

The violent lessons on the nature of the tieflings and the Dominion taught rebels to stay hidden. An era of intrigue in Valhedar began as those who would change society—or rise in it—worked quietly and subtly to achieve their ends. Powerful lords vied with one another for position, seeking the blessing of the dominar as well as the patronage of more powerful devils as a way of demonstrating their superiority. The tieflings of the Dominion began offering worship and sacrifices to fiends to win their blessings—worship and sacrifices both taken from unwilling volunteers. Impromptu political factions sprang up from momentary alliances, and there arose a divide between those who sought chaos and destruction and those who sought dominance.

The tieflings themselves rarely learned to worship the fiends. Most reasoned that they shared the same blood as the demons and devils, and that they were thus like gods themselves. The common citizens of the Dominion learned the same method of intrigue and patronage as their tiefling lords. The lower castes betrayed their peers and offered worship—either to infernal creatures or to the tieflings themselves—in exchange for the protection and patronage of their noble lords. The influence of the lower planes was felt throughout the corrupt, decadent, and violent society of the Dominion.

When the Dominion was only 120 years old, High Dominar Nephis decided that the neighboring lands were too weak to be left in peace. Seeing the other islands of the Summer Sea as easy pickings, he began a series of wars to expand his borders. It is unclear how far he hoped to expand, however, as he was murdered shortly after he began his campaign of conquest. His successor, Raela, continued the expansion only to the other islands of the Summer Sea. She used political intimidation to play upon the fears of the nearby city-states Gedon and Erenak. Suggesting the possibilities of continued war and demonic destruction, she convinced them to offer tribute to the Dominion as an alternative to war.

The Valhedar Dominion moved onto the continent of Zangala slowly and quietly. No wars were fought as the small nations there offered tribute to the Dominion. They allowed the lords of Valhedar to build palaces and establish summoning pits as it seemed a small concession compared to war against the infernal Dominion. The people of northern Zangala continued to give way before the might of the Dominion, creating the pretense of friendship to avoid the realities of war. In the end, the pretense became the reality and the Zangalans learned to crave the bloodthirsty entertainment that the people of Valhedar enjoyed. The nobility of the continental city-states began to ask the opinions and favor of Dominion lords before making their own decisions. When the high

dominar of Valhedar proclaimed that the tributary lands of Zangala were hers, the claws of her summoned fiends quickly silenced the few objections.

Raela's example of how to conquer by intrigue convinced her successors for 90 years to avoid open war and to work from shadow. The bloodlust of both the tiefling lords of the Dominion and their infernal patrons was too much to be borne quietly, however, and a new wave of conquest began. Dominion armies, with infernal support, pushed south into Zangala all the way to the Blackscale Mountains. Though many battles were fought with the yuan-ti of southern Zangala, the Dominion never successfully pushed south of the mountains. Four dominars died trying—one from a yuan-ti assassin, two at the hands of their own lords out of political rivalry, and the last by his patron devil as punishment for his incompetence.

The expansion of the Valhedar Dominion continued in brief but aggressive thrusts. Over time, the dominars consolidated their hold over all of northern Zangala. The tiefling lords gave up on the yuan-ti lands and turned their eyes instead to the north and the Emerlyn peninsula. The Dominion's efforts in Emerlyn mirrored the events of Zangala at first. The people of the northern continent, however, would not appease the Dominion lords. Diplomatic pressure seemed to have no effect on the people of the north. The high dominar at the time, Nellahn, seemed reluctant to engage in any military effort to expand. Perhaps he was concerned about meeting the same fate as his predecessors. Perhaps he simply lacked the drive and ambition that had pushed earlier dominars into war. During his life, the Dominion pursued only diplomatic efforts at expansion, and those efforts met with universal failure.

When Nellahn died at the age of 87—apparently of natural causes—his son Neillos became high dominar. Neillos seemed to have grown impatient with his father's failed efforts and immediately demanded tribute from three city-states along the southern edge of Emerlyn. As before, they all refused. Neillos launched a bloody war against Lanok, the nearest of the three, focusing all of the Dominion's might in a sudden attack. The city was reduced to ashes, and all of its people were given to his victorious army and the fiends under his command as a reward. He ordered the land within 10 leagues of the city put to the torch as a sign of his displeasure. Shortly thereafter, the other two cities relented and offered the tribute he had demanded.

Neillos did not live long enough to expand his borders further, but his acts became the basis for future diplomatic efforts by later dominars. Though the people of Emerlyn fought bravely against the onslaught, one by one the settlements fell. None of the conquered cities were destroyed as Lanok was, as the dominars wanted subjects more than corpse-laden lands. Though the people of the conquered territories were treated somewhat harshly at first, within a few years each of the cities were regarded as just another part of the Dominion and

suffered no special displeasure. It was this strange mercy that allowed a relative peace to exist in Emerlyn even during the Dominion expansion.

With each conquest, the dominars' goals seemed to be the same. They sought to bring more mortal souls under their power. This drive seemed to stem primarily from the desire to please their infernal patrons and partners and their own lust for power and dominance. Most tiefling lords, however, also believe they can claim the mantle of divinity for themselves and ascend to the same power as the fiends from which they descend. This, perhaps, is the true passion and force behind the plots and power of the Valhedar Dominion, even now.

PEOPLE

Over the last few centuries, the culture of the Dominion has evolved into a den of betrayal, intrigue, and corruption marked by common violence in both government and public entertainment. Criminals found guilty of any significant crimes—*theft or murder of "lesser races"*—are not considered particularly significant in this respect—are put to death, generally in the most gruesome manner available. Duels are fought openly in the streets of the cities, and this is acceptable to the dominars so long as riots or street wars do not result. Gladiators are bought and sold, their lives worth only as much as the entertainment they can bring. When a subordinate becomes useless—or dangerous—to his tiefling lord, he often finds himself facing a devil as a permanent sign of displeasure.

Though tiefling lords politically dominate the Valhedar Dominion, its populace includes members of many races. A small number of the lesser races do gain some prestige in the Dominion, though it is an arduous task. Of course, the tiefling lords are not well-loved by the citizens of Valhedar, and those who would gain their favor often do so at the expense of their own people. Gaining power in Valhedar without betrayal is all but impossible.

Only about one-fifth of the people of the Dominion are tieflings, though that number has been gradually increasing in recent centuries. The human population accounts for almost half, with the remainder a mixture of various races—of which halflings are the most numerous. Even some yuan-ti make their homes in Dominion lands, though they are mistrusted more than any others.

Natives of the Dominion, whatever their race, share a common culture. Those who do not at least publicly embrace the tiefling ways are dealt with harshly by their lords. The tieflings punish any sign of rebellion fervently and tend to view disrespect for the traditions of Valhedar as the most basic form of rebellion. Few citizens bother to claim any real loyalty or love for the fiendish gods or their mortal descendants, but all are required to pay homage.

Recent immigrants to the Dominion hold onto

their own culture for a time, as do any diplomatic enclaves of other nations. The dwarves and gnomes, in particular, are known for their preference for their own traditions. Such differences are carefully observed by the tieflings' spies, and the influence of foreign or divergent cultures is noted. If that influence is seen as rebellious or disruptive, its cause may be banished from Valhedar or given to the summoning pits.

SETTLEMENTS

The style, architecture, and nature of the cities within the Valhedar Dominion vary widely, depending on their cultural background and history. Settlements in Emerlyn were treated harshly after their conquest and few elements of their original culture still exist, but the design and construction in the Dominion's northern settlements are different from Valhedar and the cities of northern Zangala.

Erenak is an ancient city that has lost much of its prosperity. Before High Dominar Raela claimed it, Erenak was a populous trading city that relied on mineral resources and grazing lands in the Zangalan highlands, trading wool, stone, and iron across the Summer Sea. Since the coming of Valhedar, however, much of the highlands have been inaccessible. Criminals and malcontents fled the cities and coastal regions and claimed the rough highland terrain as their own. Now, the area is no longer safe to travel and its resources are hoarded by bandits and monsters that have no interest in foreign trade or the well being of Erenak.

Erenak was once resplendent with jade and marble. Now, those facades have been stripped away and the buildings show only granite, brick, or wood. The architecture of the city is simple; the layout of its streets is a haphazard array of rectangular structures. The ostentatious wealth of old Erenak is visible only in the old temples and manors, which have all been claimed by tiefling lords. The homes of the Dominion nobility are the only buildings of the city that still show signs of wealth and prosperity. The greatest temple of old Erenak, the shrine to the pearl god of the harbor, was cleansed of all signs of its former faith and used by tiefling wizards as a summoning pit for their fiends. It is now blackened with the fire and ash of untold years.

Gedon has changed little in centuries. Its location makes it a valuable trading port for the entire Dominion and beyond. Its original architecture, with multilevel granite buildings watched by carved gargoyles, survived the arrival of the tieflings. Those statuesque guardians are said to now represent the watchful eyes of Valhedar over the city. Gedon is a rival for Valhedar in size and wealth, but the infernal corruption is less obvious in Gedon. Massive summoning pits were dug around the outskirts of the city and mark the boundary where the city's diabolists summon their fiends in defense of the city if necessary. The temples of Gedon have been converted to reflect the worship of the Dominion's infernal

masters. Otherwise, the city is much as it always was. The people of Gedon are unique in their freedom to carry on as they had before becoming a vassal-state of Valhedar, due in large part to the fact that Gedon was the first city of Zangala to offer tribute to the Dominion.

Kor suffered significantly when it finally fell to the Dominion, though less so than other cities on the Emerlyn peninsula. The city was originally built around a design of elaborate stone towers, but the significance of these structures has been lost to war and time. Now, the towers are used as homes for the wealthy and powerful. The city is not much larger than it was before the Dominion attacked, but more of its buildings now reach into the sky, imitating the spires around which the city is built. In the Dominion, Kor is known as the City of Towers because of this tendency.

Saredrin is unique among the major cities of Valhedar. At the time the Dominion came to the area, Saredrin did not exist as more than a place of temporary shelter and a makeshift market. The site was claimed by the dominars as the home for a new fortress that would be the staging point for an army to march across all of Zangala. Of course, this effort failed spectacularly, but significant wealth and effort was poured into Saredrin in an effort to create a fortress impervious to attack and large enough to garrison thousands of living troops—as well as space to summon untold numbers of fiends.

Saredrin, true to the dominars' intent, is a plain and unappealing city, where function, defense, and the appearance of power are more important than comfort or elegance. The walls of the city are quite sturdy, and every original building inside the outer walls is built like a small fortress unto itself. More recent construction generally consists of wooden buildings constructed atop the wide, solid roofs of the original stonework or outside the walls. While the newer buildings mar the otherwise uniform appearance of the city, they tend to be far more comfortable to live in. Saredrin is alternatively known as the Stone of World's End—because it is the southernmost “civilized” settlement—or the City of Ghosts—because so much of its original construction now lies empty and abandoned.

Valhedar is the capital of the Dominion and the ancient gem of the Summer Sea. At least, that is what the dominars claim of it. In truth, the city is a twisted mass of winding streets, narrow canals, and strange architectures that resembles a mass of writhing worms. The current twisted and corrupt form of the city is due to the variety of influences that have existed over it for centuries. The dominars have historically left immediate control of the city to subordinate lords, who spent their time vying with one another for power and favor. The lack of any overarching design in the city has left it a confused maze. Sections of the city hold to their own internal styles and architecture, but no underlying theme brings the city as a whole together.



LANGUAGE

The official language of the Dominion is Valhedrin. It is based heavily on Seralii, the ancient human tongue spoken in Valhedar before the founding of the Dominion. Valhedrin has undergone changes in the intervening centuries, in large part due to the influence of the Infernal language preferred by the lords of the Dominion—and those who seek to solicit their favor. Valhedrin is a complex language, a trait inherited from Seralii.

The people of Old Seralia were great philosophers and had an extensive knowledge of spirits. Their language reflected this and included the flexibility and vocabulary to discuss esoteric subjects in detail. Much of that grace has been lost in modern Valhedrin, though Valhedrin still seems ponderous and obscure in comparison to other modern languages. The continued popularity of Valhedrin persists only because the tiefling lords prefer their own language to any others. Many also enjoy the connection with the Dominion's origins and history.

Sothren is also spoken commonly in the Dominion, particularly in the Azran Desert. The nomadic humans of Zangala have used this language for many centuries. It is still used more than Valhedrin on the southern continent, despite the Dominion control of that area. It serves well as a trade language for Zangala,



as not everyone is fluent in Valhedrin. Sothren is also a more practical language, with simpler grammar and less subtlety than the tiefling language.

In the Emerlyn peninsula, Valhedrin is the primary language. In this region, however, the Common trading tongue is also used frequently. The original languages of Emerlyn were effectively destroyed along with its people's independence and culture. Some natives of the peninsula study the old languages out of a sense of history, but it is not wise to be seen speaking them in public. Attempts to maintain a sense of cultural identity in Emerlyn are looked on with disfavor, and have caused thousands of deaths over the years.

Some non-human languages are also used in Valhedar. Infernal is spoken regularly by the nobility, though even they do not try to use it for everyday purposes. A number of humans and tieflings in the Dominion have studied Dwarven, Elven, or Halfling, whether out of diplomacy or curiosity. Of course, non-human races in the Dominion still speak their own languages in private, but they routinely use Valhedrin in public.

GOVERNANCE

The government of the Valhedar Dominion is completely monopolized by the tiefling lords. Chief among these, of course, is the high dominar—currently a sorcerer and fighter named Abannus. One or more lords also govern each city or region, the most powerful of which are given the title of dominar. In theory, all lordships derive from the high dominar, though in practice smaller lordships owe fealty to a dominar, and only the more powerful lords deal directly with the high dominar. The current system developed as it was discovered that the expanding Dominion was simply too large for the high dominar to rule directly. The title of lord makes no distinction between males or females, just as a dominar might be male or female.

By custom, a lord expects his subordinates to obey absolutely, generally without question. In practice, the extent of subservience demanded differs among lords, as some are fonder of rigid control than others. Regardless of the freedom of thought or initiative a given lord desires from his servants, direct disobedience or disloyalty is never acceptable. Intrigue and manipulation are common, but no one speaks out directly against a lord without risking his or her life.

Any lord may grant the title to another, though a new lord's status is significantly less than that of his patron. Thus, a lordship granted by the master of a small village is not particularly impressive, whereas a lordship gifted by the high dominar himself is a matter of great prestige and honor. Though almost all lords of the Dominion are tieflings, this is only a matter of custom. Nothing prevents a member of another race from ascending to such a lofty title. On the rare occasion when a non-tiefling gains the title of lord, his peers often

refer him to as a lordling, though there is no official distinction of rank.

Most tieflings of the Dominion are not lords. A typical lord directly rules an area with a population of at least 500 to 1,000 citizens, some of which are commoner tieflings, as well as the other races. Like most people, however, the tieflings prefer to deal with their own kind. As a result, the wealthiest merchants and most prestigious artisans and craftsmen are tieflings recognized and rewarded by their lords. Among the common population, however, tieflings are a minority and often face isolation from other races. They are mistrusted and often assumed to be spies in the employ of the lords. Most often, of course, the spies are actually members of other races paid to report on any secret goings-on.

All races have some role in the governance and maintenance of the Dominion, despite the dominant role of tieflings. Though a tiefling lord prefers to have a tiefling subordinate charged with tax collection, there will also be any number of individuals who work for the master of taxes to do the actual work. Tiefling lords also make a habit of employing other races as direct retainers, often for the role of intermediary with the servant's own race. Thus, a tiefling lord might hire a human diplomat or spy to deal with the human population—depending on whether the lord wished to negotiate with or spy on the people. Occasionally, non-tiefling minions of tiefling lords face social stigma among their own race, but the tiefling lords usually pay well enough to compensate for any such hindrances.

Each lord in the Dominion is charged with maintaining all necessary functions of government in his or her region. Any work the lord does not wish to do herself, of course, is passed off to servants and subordinates. Because of this personal dispersal of duties, the design and function of governance varies between regions of the Dominion. The particulars of how the required tasks are accomplished are not important to the high dominar—though other lords or dominars might take a keen interest. If a lord fails to keep some minimal order, however, or the governance of his region breaks down, the high dominar will take a personal interest. In such cases, the high dominar's personal interest is usually brief and painfully fatal.

One lord might establish distinct ministries for every conceivable aspect of government and step back, only intervening to arbitrate disputes between servants as they arise. Another lord might prefer to keep a careful eye on all happenings in his lands and maintain a personal network of spies, while keeping his subordinates paranoid of one another and confused about overlapping or vague responsibilities. The latter system might sound wasteful—and it is—but it also serves the lord's purpose of preventing any subordinate from gaining any real power or becoming a threat.

Other than the lords of the Dominion, the temple authorities hold significant sway over Valhedar, as do known summoners. In some areas, the temple holds as

much power as the regional lord does. Often, to consolidate their power, like-minded summoners will join a guild, cult, or similar organization. The membership cannot trust each other any more than anyone else, but they usually at least have similar goals and motivations.

RELIGION

The Dominion recognizes only the worship of its infernal patrons. Tiefling lords demand the worship of devils as part of their pact with the fiends. It is unclear what benefit the fiends or the tieflings gain from this homage, though many suspect that they hope to ascend to the status of true gods by gathering fearful followers in this manner.

For their part, most tiefling lords do not worship their infernal partners, despite their insistence that others do so. The temples built to honor the fiends are attended by tiefling summoners who oversee the rituals and punishments of the "faith," but do not take part in it personally. They may cast the unworthy into a summoning pit and call on fiends to destroy the victim, but they make no pretense of personally worshipping the creatures they summon.

Lords or other powerful tieflings usually have their own patron fiends that they call on for special services. Typically, the lord's patron fiend becomes the patron of the region as well, and the official summonings all call on fiends subservient to that patron. Individuals, families, or other groups within the area may also have their own patrons, whom they may or may not worship as divine. As a result, each region of the Dominion effectively has its own small god. Much as other cultures might recognize a patron god of the city, or of specific locales or households, so too does the Dominion have patron fiends worshipped as gods.

The archfiends of Valhedar are not well loved by the people. As immortals, they offer few blessings and many punishments. Most of these fiends are placated constantly but called upon only during times of war or other crises.

Typical worship in the Dominion is marked by sacrifice—condemning criminals or simply hapless bystanders to face infernal forces in a show of fiendish strength. The cheering and the bloodlust of the worshipers greet such displays. The bodies of these victims are often devoured by the summoned fiend. Any remains, however, are burned in a large bonfire to honor the fiend. While the remains burn, the summoner calls on the worship and prayers of the people. Symbols of worship, small items made of wax, wood, and paper, are tossed into the bonfire as well. The flames, the summoners claim, form a link to the home of the infernal gods.

Less formal worship occurs more regularly, which may involve simply invoking the name of a fiend in order to gain its favor (or avoid its wrath). Other times, a grand gladiatorial bout is given religious significance

by offering prayers and introducing summoned fiends into the arena. Such a spectacle is more commonly used for entertainment than religious festival, but it includes elements of both. Private ceremonies may revolve around carving messages into wax or wood, or simply writing on paper. The object is then burned in silence.

The religious traditions of other lands and races are tolerated within the Dominion, but only barely. Those not partaking in the fiendish worship of Valhedar are suspect and are not allowed to hold their own ceremonies publicly. The Dominion lords do not allow any other faith to lead their people astray.

TRADE AND CRAFT

The Dominion has the ominous reputation for being a place where anything can be had for the right price. Though this is partly simple rumor and fanciful imagination, it is also based on fact. There are few laws that are universally enforced in the Dominion and some areas where anything done quietly is acceptable. These facts of life in Valhedar have had significant impact on trade. A significant part of the Dominion economy is dedicated to providing goods and services that are normally illegal in other lands. Such illicit trade carries a considerable risk, even if it is not strictly illegal in Valhedar. Despite the risks, however, smugglers and other would-be criminals thrive around Valhedar.

The Dominion has more normal trade and craft as well. The island of Valhedar is blessed and cursed with significant volcanic activity. The flow of lava causes some problems for the people of the land, but it also ensures rich, fertile soil that gives the Dominion a strong foundation of natural resources. Crops and herd animals are plentiful, as well as cloth, wool, wood, and stone. The mountains of Valhedar also contain plentiful minerals, ores, and some precious metals and gems, particularly diamonds. These resources are used in Valhedar and shipped to other parts of the Dominion, as well as other nations.

The plentiful resources of Valhedar were the foundation of the Dominion's success, despite the dominars' claims that infernal power will drive the Dominion to eternal victory. These resources, along with a pool of skilled craftsmen to make use of them, have blessed the Dominion with a strong economy from its founding. The resources and economy of Valhedar have promised opportunities and attracted immigrants despite the Dominion's otherwise dark reputation.

Metalworkers are common in Valhedar. The mineral resources provide good ore for forging steel, and Dominion weapons and armor are known to be strong and reliable. The bulk of the arms of Valhedar are sold to the lords and their armies—or simply confiscated by them. With the current state of almost constant fighting in Ambria, the steady supply of equipment to keep Dominion soldiers in fighting form are vital to the tiefling lords.

The armor of Valhedar is traditionally fashioned into gruesome visages with spikes and blades protruding from any part of the armor that could conceivably be used as a weapon. Their weapons are similarly constructed, featuring the grim faces of devils on the hilts and crossguards. Though all varieties of weapons and armors are produced in the Dominion, dueling blades such as rapiers are especially popular in the cities.

The Emerlyn peninsula and northern Zangala do not have the plentiful resources of Valhedar itself. Emerlyn has plentiful wetlands that provide game, birds, and lumber but make typical farming practices problematic. Similarly, the Azran Desert has adequate grazing ground for animals and a solid fishing industry but too little rainfall for most crops or large herds of animals. Each of these areas has sufficient resources to support itself but not enough to provide any significant export or surplus. The dominars have been dissatisfied with the rewards reaped from both regions for many years. This desire for richer, healthier lands may be part of the driving force behind Valhedar's aggressive expansionism.

The two subordinate states of the Dominion do have their own unique resources, of course. The Emerlyn peninsula provides a variety of wetland grains and unique breads, cakes, and alcohol. Though these products are much favored by the natives of the peninsula, however, they have provided no real opportunities for trade. Northern Zangala has its own collection of native fauna, including both birds and herd animals, upon which the local populace survives. Some of these animals are exported to other lands, where they are considered exotic meats or delicacies.

Throughout the Dominion, the economy is dependent far more on internal trade than on foreign trade. Furthermore, the lax laws and corrupted nature of both government and people have led to considerable corruption in the markets of Valhedar. It is considered a common practice to lie or mislead customers, and traditional that a person needs to determine the worth of something on his own before buying. This not only extends the mistrustful attitude that is already dominant, it also makes Dominion markets a dangerous place for foreigners.

WAYS AND TRADITIONS

The traditions and culture of the Dominion are a mixture of elements deriving from ancient Seralia as well as infernal influences, independent development, and the influence of neighboring societies. Each of these influences is felt most strongly in different aspects of life in Valhedar, but all have had noticeable effects on Dominion society.

THE SUMMONING PITS

The summoning pits of Valhedar are, perhaps, the most obvious form of unique culture in the Dominion. No city of the Dominion is without the pits, which generally take the form of wide channels or holes cut into the ground around and throughout the city. These pits are up to 60 feet deep, often lined with worked stone and sealed to prevent water from leaking in, and marked with arcane symbols. They serve to allow the summoning of fiends more safely, including the ability to bind the fiends as necessary so they cannot escape the pit without the summoner's permission. Summoning fiends in Valhedar is relatively safe and such precautions are rarely necessary. The tiefling summoners, however, are loath to perform a summoning without such precautions. Perhaps, since they know the fiends the best, they are fully aware of the real danger of even a relatively safe summoning.

In most places in the Dominion, the summoning pits serve different roles. Primarily they are the gathering points for infernal allies in times of battle. Fiends are summoned into the pits, given instructions or information about the summoner's enemies, and released. Summoning pits can also provide a place for religious services if a more formal temple is not available. In some places in the Dominion—particularly in the far south and north—there are no temples and summoning pits serving this function exclusively. In this case, services are performed at the edge of the summoning pit as a display of authority, but fiends are rarely summoned unless something special is required.

Summoning pits also provide a practical method of removing criminals. When an enemy or prisoner is to be executed, the tieflings give the unfortunate to the summoning pit. Some do not survive the fall into the pit—they are accounted lucky. Others lie at the bottom of the pit waiting the arrival of the fiends. In a few rare places, most notably the city of Valhedar itself, a summoning pit can be used to make an actual gateway to the infernal realms, and victims thrown within simply pass into the lower planes. Such gateways are created only rarely, as they allow fiends to cross freely into the world and even most dominars are loath to take such risks.

DUELING

Violence in cities is generally somewhat more pronounced than other places, simply by virtue of the density of population. In Dominion cities, however, one particular form of violence has become fashionable. Duels are used by the young and old, the rich and poor alike to resolve differences. Ideally, duels are used only when other methods have failed, but an increasing number of braggarts and cutthroats enjoy dueling as a way of demonstrating their prowess.

Dueling became commonplace in the Dominion because laws were typically enforced—or not—arbitrar-





ily and at the whim of the ruling lord or dominar. In such an environment, it was often wisest to use force to resolve disputes, press claims, and enforce one's will. For a long time, gangs of ruffians and urban bandits in Valhedar survived by taking what they wanted from those around them. As long as they stayed away from fights—and neighborhoods—that would draw the ire of their lords, they had few problems exercising their freedoms. These battles escalated until the city was nearly in a state of riot with constant violence and fear. This changed when High Dominar Narran, called the Reclaimer, seized power 80 years ago. He was significantly more interested in order than his predecessors and set about massacring the bravos and gangs that lined the streets.

It quickly became clear that even on the level of street violence, subtlety was preferable. Gangs took to traveling in smaller numbers and using daggers as favored weapons. Smaller, shorter swords were developed to allow them to practice their preferred social art form without attracting the notice of the dominars' soldiers. The Reclaimer eventually died, of course, but even after his passing the violence did not approach the level it had seen previously. The bravos on the streets of Valhedar had learned to use the rapier—more commonly called the small sword—as an effective and more sophisticated method of brutality. As the sword gained popularity, it came to the attention of tiefling lords as

well. Most found they enjoyed using the smaller blades, as it enabled them to use their superior reflexes more effectively.

In modern times, duels are almost always fought with small swords. Duels to the death are uncommon, as a duel to first blood or three strikes is just as effective in proving superiority without risking the attention of angry relatives or taking a chance on dying oneself. Duels ending in death are an accepted fact of life, though they are not the norm. When a lord engages in a duel against another lord—they wouldn't bother against someone they consider beneath them—he brings plenty of witnesses. While strictly speaking there aren't any rules to break, having witnesses ensures that everyone knows the duel is not a murder, even if someone dies as a result. Killing a tiefling lord, even if the killer is a lord himself, risks the displeasure of the high dominar, and it is best to make it as official and acceptable as possible.

VALHEDRIN POETRY

One artistic tradition that has survived since the days of Seralia is poetry. Some consider it odd that the violent and corrupt society of the tieflings should also be poetic, but the writing and recitation of poetry is considered a worthwhile art and a pastime appropriate to lords, on a level with intrigue. Many lords hire performers or poets to entertain themselves and their guests. These retainers usually have a surprisingly stable income and long life expectancy. For many middle-class or poor citizens of the Dominion, poetry and art seem a reasonable and safe escape from the other possibilities in their lives.

Poems are most often sung in Valhedrin, but they may also be recited in Seralii or even Infernal, depending on the tastes of the poet and her audience. Though ancient Seralii was profoundly effective for discussions of philosophy or other esoteric subjects, the poems of Valhedar do not maintain that level of idealism. Instead, most Dominion poems are histories—real or imagined—that tell epic tales of deeds done and foes vanquished. The best of such poems manage to catch the spirit of old Seralii and can make even modern Valhedrin seem almost musical.

Of course, the wealthy are not the only citizens of Valhedar to enjoy the benefit of poetry. Street poets with courage and wit are sometimes the most daring rebels, braving to speak a less savory or flattering history of their nation. The dominars do not afford such rebellious lyricists much importance unless they start gathering crowds. Naturally, most people know it is not safe to be seen listening to rebellious street poets too often, so these poets do not typically gather crowds even if they are quite popular. A handful of poets pursue the art only in their spare time while they support themselves another way. Such people are rare—or simply bad poets. If they can support themselves through their words, they generally do so.

GAMES OF CHANCE

The people of Valhedar also favor games of chance. Bones and dice are common, but the most popular games are played with cards. While all such games rely on luck, the card games of the Dominion also rely on the cunning and prevarication of the players. Card games have thus gained popularity as a handy distraction that also teaches the useful skills of lying, misdirection, calculation, and savvy. It is not unknown for business associates, criminals, or even dominars to meet casually and play a game of cards while discussing matters of interest to them. This becomes an opportunity to test one another through the game while distracting an opponent with otherwise important talk. Losing the card game in these meetings is of minor importance. What is important is that the players do not lose the real game being played—the game of words and lies where each player tries to read the other.

THE SKYGUARD

The tieflings have been breeding fiendish wyverns for centuries and their elite warriors have learned to ride the beasts in battle. The Valhedrin Skyguard is charged both with protecting the imperial city and with leading the tiefling legions on the battlefield. One Skyguard company is garrisoned in Emerlyn and has honed its strength in the battles with the Kingsmarch. Another is garrisoned in Saredrin and the largest unit is based in Valhedar.

PERSONALITIES

HIGH DOMINAR ABANNUS

The most prominent figure in the Valhedar Dominion is High Dominar Abannus himself. Abannus was the nephew of the previous high dominar, Tallar. He spent his youth playing games of chance and competing with his peers at Tallar's court. Naturally, they also competed for the favor of their lord, in the hope of being named his heir. The young tiefling lords commonly fought with blades, read histories, and had games of wit. Abannus excelled at none of these things and seemed unlikely to win his uncle's favor.

As Abannus matured, however, it became clear that he had a knack for intrigue. He could read people's intentions while hiding his own. While this gave him a slight advantage in swordplay and wit, his real gift was in spotting lies and tricking others into doing as he pleased. It was this trait that won his uncle's attention, as the young Abannus fooled his cousins into fighting one another over make-believe accusations and rumors. He played one off against the other and watched from the shadows. Tallar approved of Abannus's games and

saw his potential as a great leader of the Dominion.

It is said of Abannus that he is a great swordsman and a skilled sorcerer. He is not, though it amuses him to make others believe it. His own subordinates can outfight and out-cast him. Many of those subordinates are his own cousins he knew as children, and each is well aware of the others' abilities. But Abannus's ability to read attitudes and control situations sets him clearly above his peers, and none have yet questioned his ability or his right to rule the Dominion.

The common people of Valhedar think they know quite a bit about the high dominar, though much of it is false rumor. When he appears, he remains an enigmatic figure, generally feared and mistrusted by those he rules. There have been several attempts on his life—no ruler of the Dominion has been free of assassination plots—and a few have even come close to succeeding. No one knows the truth, of course. The misinformation spread about previous attempts, as well as the public fate of those who have tried, convinces most to abandon such schemes before they hatch.

DOMINAR ARALIN

Arguably the most powerful person on the Emerlyn peninsula is Dominar Aralin. She has been tasked with the control and direction of the Dominion military presence on the Emerlyn peninsula. Though she theoretically has command of all troops on the peninsula, in reality she is only in control of those forces engaged in the war against the Kingsmarch. She has made it her personal mission to succeed in the push onto the mainland. When fighting in personal combat, Aralin favors the rapier, using her speed and defensive fighting to strike the enemy when and where he is weakest. She prefers these same tactics in war. In the war against the Kingsmarch, she has been somewhat frustrated by the need to push into enemy territory and has been having difficulty adapting her own preferences to these conditions. Abannus does not seem to have recognized any difficulty.

THE BANDIT KING

Northern Zangala is an unusual province of the Dominion in that there are more influential people of other races than those of tiefling blood. The northern highlands, for example, appear to be dominated by a charismatic human bandit named Nikolus. While he does not control much of the highlands in truth, he has influence that extends into the wilderness in all directions, as well as into Erenak. Years ago, a tiefling lord accused Nikolus of theft. He proclaimed his innocence and, when he quickly realized that his innocence didn't matter in the least, fled into the highlands to seek refuge.

It is said that Nikolus is a good man, somewhat unusual in the Dominion in general and the highlands in specific. He has made a habit of robbing only tieflings

and has quite a following among the “lesser races” eager to see their lords brought low. His real power is not particularly great, but he has generated quite a bit of fear in nearby settlements and has gained the loyalty of some well-placed human allies throughout the land. No one is entirely sure if Nikolus has a plan or goal in mind, whether he is simply out to make himself rich or has hopes of actually making a difference in the Dominion. He has, at least, shown many that a good person can be successful—even if he has to break the rules and make a few enemies to do it.

THE WOULD-BE GOD

Lord Kalibe is a tiefling wizard who has specialized in summoning. In this, he is not unusual. What marks him as different from his peers is his utter lack of interest in wealth and comfort. He does what he does out of a sense of destiny—he is seeking something more elusive than simple power or riches. Lord Kalibe has established himself as a presence in the Summoners Conclave, the temples of Valhedar, and even the Panthic Order. He is one of the few who has the ability and the courage to open gateways into the infernal realms, and he has ventured there more than once.

Lord Kalibe hopes to make himself an immortal and in that way bypass the temporal power of the high dominar and every other mortal nation. He seeks the immortality and worship that define true authority in his mind. In his personal quest, he has sought the aid and power of several major fiends. He has no expectations that his infernal connections will grant him the power he seeks. In fact, he knows that they cannot, as they are not gods themselves. He seeks what even they cannot have, and has studied the fiends in an effort to discern where they fall short. His aims and methods are not only sacrilegious to the Dominion temples: He also risks angering his peers in Valhedar if discovered.

Though he does not care about temporal power, Lord Kalibe has gathered it as a consequence of his other actions. His magical power and the confidence with which he bears himself are testimony to his abilities, and many other lords fear him. He rarely makes suggestions about the direction of policy or governance, but much of the high dominar’s court pays close heed to Lord Kalibe’s suggestions and will follow them, out of both fear and respect.

SITES AND FEATURES

There are a number of locations in Dominion lands that offer adventure and danger, and a few that offer sights and wonders that cannot be seen anywhere else. The cities of the Dominion are wonders to behold, but the land is also dotted with arcane forces and carefully concealed secrets.

GEDON

The city of Gedon proudly displays its ancient architecture and elaborate stonework. The gargoyles of the city and intricately designed and etched stonework are an impressive, even awe-inspiring sight. The intrigue of Gedon is more bearable than any other part of the Dominion, as its simple politics are considered quaint and naive by the lords of Valhedar—as opposed to bloodthirsty and overtly dangerous.

THE FREE CITY

Kor, the City of Towers, is another oft-appreciated sight in Valhedar. Aside from the purely aesthetic beauty of the city’s towers, rumors abound that strange magical secrets can be found and unlocked in the oldest towers. Of course, the oldest towers are now inhabited by tiefling lords and present a credible challenge to even the worthiest adventurers. The city is also said to be haunted by the ghosts of those slain by devils when Valhedar attacked. Some believe that the ghosts serve to protect the city’s secrets from intruders—including the tieflings—and that the city is the home of several gateways to other planes, and to other parts of the world. Kor is administered by a council of tiefling lords, but no dominar claims the city and it is one of the most open and cosmopolitan cities in the Dominion as a result.

VALHEDAR

Valhedar (metropolis): Conventional; AL LE; Population 48,000 adults; 100,000 gp limit; Assets 240,000,000 gp; Mixed (48% human, 20% tiefling, 15% halfling, 8% elf, 5% dwarf, 3% gnome, 1% other races).

Authority Figures: High Dominar Abannus, male tiefling wizard 18.

Important Characters: Lord Kalibe, tiefling wizard 20; Dominar Achess, tiefling disciple 15 (high priestess of the Temple of Infernal Flame); Dominar Menem, tiefling wizard 16, master of the Summoners Conclave.

Valhedar itself is, of course, the greatest and most powerful city in the Dominion. Its twisting streets, winding canals, and ancient buildings are home to old mysteries and even older corruption. Bravos fight in the streets for pride and revenge, favoring the quick and silent stroke of a rapier. The High Dominar Abannus lives in the city but leaves its day-to-day governance in the hands of subordinate lords. They, in turn, ignore what happens in the city unless it disturbs their personal interests or threatens the prosperity and profit of the land. The lords of Valhedar only punish crimes against the wealthy. The poor, the lesser races, and those out of favor for their beliefs or actions must seek their own justice, if any is to be had.

Valhedar is also said to be home to the Dominar’s



Writ. This document was said to be carved in volcanic stone with infernal fire and was the original agreement between the first high dominar, Leda, and her patron fiend. It is commonly believed that this tablet, if it exists, is kept carefully sealed within the high dominar's palace, and that whoever has the Writ can control the fate of the Dominion. A few have tried to explore the palace to search for the Dominar's Writ, but none have returned.

THE CRYSTAL CITY

The Azran Desert of northern Zangala is nearly uninhabited, though it is easier for tieflings to manage the heat than most other races. The few who live there survive as nomadic hunter-gatherer bands, traveling from one oasis to the next. Few outsiders understand why anyone would willingly stay in that place, but stories have been told of a great crystal city in the middle of the desert where everything the inhabitants want is provided by magic.

It is said that this crystal city is protected by the dragons of the desert, enchanted so that the weather is cool and pleasant, and hidden so that only three paths lead in or out of the great city. Of course, the only stories about the city revolve around a traveler, wandering lost through the deep desert, stumbling on the magnificent sight. It is said they treat guests well, but do not

allow them to leave. In the stories, the guest manages to escape and returns to the civilized world to tell of his experience. Of course, most people telling this story ask for drinks as the purchase price of their tale, which leads most to discount what they say.

THE KEY GATE

A place somewhere on the island of Valhedar is said to control or influence the opening of infernal gates. This place, called the Key Gate, can be used to create gateways through lava flows into the infernal realms. The mountains of Valhedar cover a wide area, and it is uncertain where the Key Gate, if it exists, would lie. High Dominar Abannus, however, may believe in its existence as he has focused his attention on the infernal gates of the volcanic isle. He has dispatched soldiers and wizards on secret quests throughout Valhedar. Though these missions have had no visible results yet, the high dominar clearly hopes to see some result from this effort.

Some who venture after the Key Gate hope to close the infernal gates to weaken Valhedar and deprive the summoners of their power. Others seek to bond with a patron infernal themselves and gain great personal power. A few are not interested in the Key Gate for itself. They believe that the blood of a powerful, immortal archfiend was used to create the Key Gate and con-



tinues to provide potent magical forces that allow the Key Gate to work. They hope to claim that power and bend it to their own uses—destroying the Key Gate in the process but gaining nearly limitless power of creation and destruction.

THE SEA OF GRAVES

The people of the Emerlyn peninsula have long held burial rites designed to preserve the bodies and spirits of their dead. The dead were either wrapped or burned, and special crystals were used to house the spirits after death. Burial sites were established in the wetlands of the peninsula, and this watery region was called the Sea of Graves. This practice was used to ensure the safety of the land from invaders, though it failed spectacularly against Valhedar's invasion. Since the Dominion's arrival, belief in the protection of the dead has waned. The tiefling lords do not tolerate religious practices in Emerlyn other than their own. As a result, most people no longer even remember how the dead were prepared or preserved and none have expected any defenders to appear from beyond the grave. This belief has begun to change with a series of recent attacks.

Since the more recent wars with the Kingsmarch began, several supply trains traveling near the wetlands have suffered inexplicable attacks. People have disappeared, crates or wagons have burst into flame, and ani-

mals have gone berserk and attacked anyone nearby. At first it was assumed to be the activity of enemy soldiers or agents, but the attacks have all occurred near the wetlands, and generally far from the Kingsmarch border. No witnesses have been able to describe the appearance of the undead attackers—if that's what they are. The lords of Emerlyn have sent squads of soldiers and wizards to investigate the Sea of Graves and destroy any undead, but they have not yet reported any success.

THE HIGHLANDS

The Zangan highlands are a region of high hills and broken lands south of Erenak. Though the region's grazing lands and small farms once supported Erenak, it has become increasingly hostile since Valhedar gained control. Initially, criminals and dissidents fleeing Dominion authority moved into the highlands to hide. This denied Erenak the use of the highland resources and the city began to wane. As the city grew weaker, its control on the surrounding areas became insignificant, and monsters that might have been controllable previously were allowed to flourish.

The people of the highlands have become bandits to survive and routinely attack merchants traveling to and from Erenak. The Dominion has sent in troops to try to regain control of the highlands, but the creatures and bandits fought a successful hit-and-run campaign

against the soldiers until they were forced to withdraw. The Zangalan highlands have been considered wilderness for many years. Natives of Erenak are convinced that a bandit king has set himself up to rule the highlands and is gaining power and wealth even as they decline. The local Dominion lords do not believe the tale and have made no effort to investigate, fearing a repeat of the last disastrous attempt to combat the inhabitants of the hills.

ZANGALA

To the people of Ambria, Zangala is a mysterious realm of danger and deadly secrets. The tieflings of Valhedar have tamed the barren Azran Desert, but the lands south of the Blackscale Mountains are known only to the bravest explorers—and few of them have lived to tell what they’ve seen.

Just south of the Blackscale Mountains, the desert foothills turn to grasslands, where tall gray-green hill grass sways in the ever-present wind. For more than a century, the Valhedar Dominion has tried to claim these lands, but without success. Settlers trying to farm the rich soil have had to face constant attacks from the yuan-ti, who strike without warning from the shelter of the grass. Valhedrin soldiers venturing into the grasslands usually return either empty-handed or not at all. There are also reports of “wind madness,” during which settlers claim to hear voices or otherwise be driven to distraction by the constant sound of wind and rustling grass.

South of the grasslands lies a vast, lush savanna that the Valhedrin have not even attempted to tame. The savanna is dotted with wide, shallow lakes and slow-moving rivers that support herds of antelope, elephants, and dire oxen. These herds are hunted not only by the yuan-ti, but by tigers, worgs, and giant snakes as well.

The most dangerous predator of the savanna, however, is not an animal but a plant. Sincarsis, also known as “murder grass,” looks like a patch of normal savanna grass, though a bit taller than a man. But the edges of the grass blades are razor-sharp. When its victim is well within its reach, the sincarsis moves its blades, slicing the prey into bite-size chunks. The meat is absorbed into the soil, where it nourishes the plant’s roots. Yuan-ti savanna settlements are often surrounded by sincarsis, so anyone who approaches by the wrong path runs a serious risk of ending up as fertilizer.

The savanna gradually gives way to dense jungle and thick marshlands—and every last acre of this land is full of life. Primates, colorful birds, and lean jungle cats make the towering trees their homes and hunting grounds. Enormous insects nest in the jungle caves, and swarms of swamp bats burst out of the bogs at sunset. Beyond the near-infinite variety of predators, explorers face more danger still in the form of sinkholes, wide stretches of quicksand, and yuan-ti traps designed to capture food and enemies alike.

HISTORY

In the days before days, when water and ice still covered much of the world, the almighty serpent Zalaph brought his children, the yuan-ti, to conquer the world in his name. The ancient texts say little of where the yuan-ti came from, but speak only of the “black lake” and the “unseen moon.”

Zalaph gave his children the secrets of fire, agriculture, architecture, potions, and magic. In return for this knowledge, he demanded blood sacrifice. At first, the yuan-ti offered their dark god their own blood, and countless yuan-ti lost their lives on gore-encrusted altars. But as they grew in population and power, so did Zalaph’s hunger. So the yuan-ti invaded the lands of those around them, capturing thousands of prisoners for sacrifice.

As millennia passed, the yuan-ti were caught in an ever-expanding cycle of conquest. As they spread their empire in search of sacrifice, they required more power. Zalaph gladly gave them the power they needed, but in return demanded more sacrifice.

Two thousand years ago, when Ambria was still locked in ice and ruled by giants and dragons, the cycle was finally broken. Zalaph first grew complacent in both his demands and his blessings, and then went silent. Zalaph had fallen into a dreaming slumber.

Without Zalaph’s demands to push them further outward or the god’s power to fuel their conquests, the yuan-ti abandoned their empire’s northern outposts and fell back to their homeland. The empire became decadent. Its priests looked to other gods in the shadowed corners of the universe. Worship of these *talazur* (literally, “black gods”) became common. A new, weaker breed of yuan-ti was spawned, and then rejected.

Now Zalaph is stirring once more. The yuan-ti are preparing to strike out northward again, not only to reclaim their former glory, but to claim all of Ambria as an offering to their dark lords.

PEOPLE

Zangala is dominated by the yuan-ti, which are divided into four bloodlines. A yuan-ti’s bloodline determines his caste and role in society.

The azir (called “abominations” by outsiders) are the rulers and chief priests of the yuan-ti. Because of their snakelike bodies, they are considered closest to Zalaph and speak for him in all things.

The elzir (called “halfbloods” by outsiders) are the administrators and generals of the empire. Their brilliance makes them natural leaders, but their caste ensures they can never usurp their masters, the azir.

The onozir (called “purebloods” by outsiders) make up the rank and file of the yuan-ti armies and workforce. They are the merchants, craftsmen, and scholars of the empire. While they are locked into their caste, there is a great deal of vertical mobility within the

onozir, and they can be quite wealthy and powerful.

Finally, the lozo (also known as “thinbloods”) are the lowest, most despised caste. They are the most human-looking breed, the misshapen result of degenerate acts so blasphemous, they offend even the yuan-ti. Many would argue that the lozo are not even technically part of the caste system. They are counted amongst the unholy masses, the impure races that exist solely to serve the yuan-ti as slaves and sacrifices.

Unlike the other slave races—and unlike even the other yuan-ti—the lozo are often not willing to accept their lot. They are quick to revolt, and some of the least-deformed have even passed themselves off as onozir to live as normal a yuan-ti existence as they can. Other rebellious lozo have set out northward, looking to make new lives for themselves outside the yuan-ti empire.

Because of their near-human appearance, a few lozo have been trained as ambassadors and spies and sent north to deal with the men of Ambria. The chief priests believe that the rulers of Valhedar and Anderland will respond better to emissaries who don’t look so much like snakes.

There are countless other races in Zangala, but the vast majority of them are all kept by the yuan-ti as slaves. Lizardfolk, troglodytes, and halflings are the most common slave races. Humans used to be kept as pets, but most were killed during an ill-fated uprising during the last century. The few who remain are bred for slavery in the plantations, far from the yuan-ti cities.

SETTLEMENTS

The yuan-ti are an intensely urban people. Their settlements are vast, cosmopolitan cities sprawling for miles through the jungles and savannas of Zangala. The stone-paved streets form ritual patterns that can only be seen from above. Intersections of three or more streets are marked with wide plazas occupied by towering idols and lined with vine-covered temples to Zalaph or the talazur.

Temples are everywhere in yuan-ti cities, and no two look alike. Some are cathedrals topped with twisting black spires; others are squat, blood-stained ziggy-rats; still others are smooth, towering pyramids crawling with ancient runes that seem to move when studied. Some talazur have designed their own temples: strange, bulbous structures with angles that unsettle the nerves, and frescoes that have no solid shape, yet fill the mind with unspeakable dread.

Beyond the temples, yuan-ti cities commonly have hundreds of shops, restaurants, and pleasure dens where opiates and other pleasures of the flesh await those who can afford them. Other common sights include schools where the young learn the trades of their castes, hatcheries where the young are raised from egg to adulthood, and the pits where slaves are kept and bred.

Slaves are essential to the yuan-ti way of life. For

each city, there are hundreds of plantations, quarries, and mines—all manned by slaves—dedicated to keeping that city supplied with food and raw materials.

LANGUAGE

The Yuan-ti tongue is a soft, hissing language unsuitable for shouting. Even in the midst of a marketplace crowded with a thousand haggling yuan-ti, one could hear a dog barking.

Part of the reason for the quietness of the yuan-ti language is that they communicate much by visual cues. The same words may mean five different things depending on the position of the speaker’s head, eyes, tongue, or tail. One implication of this linguistic trait, combined with the divergent physiology of the yuan-ti castes, is that some castes simply cannot express certain words or concepts. For example, many expressions of dominance and superiority require specific positioning and movement of the speaker’s tail, so few purebloods and no thinbloods are capable of using these expressions.

The disciples of the talazur must learn the hard, alien tongue of the black gods in order to communicate with them. Knowledge of this language is precious, and is never learned without a price—sometimes gold, but more often blood or time spent in apprenticeship to an elder priest. It is believed that this language is a form of Abyssal.

Yuan-ti about to visit the outside world as ambassadors, spies, and assassins learn all the languages of the region they will be visiting. Languages come easily to them, though many have trouble eliminating their hissing accent.

GOVERNANCE

The yuan-ti empire is a theocracy. It was ruled by the disciples of Zalaph in the past, and will be again. It is currently ruled by the disciples of the talazur, for they have been blessed with supernatural power and gifts that allow them to blackmail, curse, kill, or otherwise remove those who oppose them. Rivalries are common between the various talazur priesthoods, for they cannot stand to share power.

There is no central government of the yuan-ti empire. Each city is its own independent state, ruled by one or more high priests. Traditionally, a single high priest of Zalaph ruled each city, and in that way Zalaph himself was the emperor of the yuan-ti. When Zalaph fell to slumber, however, his high priests lost much of their power to the disciples of the talazur. Now that he is awakening, the cities are ripening for power struggles.

The yuan-ti are divided into castes based on bloodline. The azir are the ruling caste that gives commands, the elzir pass the commands along, and the onozir actually carry out the commands. The much-despised lozo thinbloods are not officially part of any caste. At best, they are ignored by the other yuan-ti.



More commonly, they are thrown in with the other races to serve as slaves or sacrifices.

RELIGION

Yuan-ti religion is based on sacrifice in exchange for power. Zalaph remains the empire's chief god, and most yuan-ti offer him at least lip service and a blood sacrifice twice a year on the high holy days. But Zalaph sleeps; he seems not to acknowledge the offerings he receives, and very rarely offers anything in return. And so the people turn to the talazur.

The talazur exist in the shadowy, chaotic realms the yuan-ti call the "shattered planes." Yuan-ti mystics and cultists reach these planes and make contact with their dark gods through meditation, hallucinogens, and ancient, blood-soaked rituals. Some visit the realms through planar travel, while others send only their consciousness across the gulfs of space and time.

Each of the talazur gives the best of its blessings to the first one to contact it. Knowing this, the yuan-ti priests are always seeking new talazur to worship.

The talazur demand sacrifices of worship, blood, and suffering in return for their gifts. Some wish to manifest in the physical realm in order to feast on these sacrifices directly, but wise priests are careful to keep their gods at bay. Foolish disciples who unleash a talazur are usually devoured—or worse.

Each talazur customarily has a single high priest who rules over a circle of 10 to 100 other disciples. Each disciple is assisted by any number of acolytes, and is responsible for a cabal of 20 to 200 cultists, who worship the talazur and offer sacrifice, but rely on the disciple to speak on their behalf. It is not unusual for common yuan-ti to serve multiple talazur, but disciples may only follow one dark god.

ROTOQUA THE GIVING

Rotoqua the Giving is a talazur of the harvest. She provides her followers with bountiful crops, healthy livestock, and strong slaves. She is the most popular of the talazur; her temples are found in most yuan-ti cities, and every plantation has at least a shrine in her honor.

For her sacrifice, Rotoqua demands the lives of the first nine slaves and livestock animals born each year, and the first nine bushels of each crop harvested must be burned on her altar.

Rotoqua's shattered plane is a realm of thick, rich soil—and nothing else. The souls of the creatures sacrificed in her honor writhe blindly in the dirt: trying to breathe, trying to see, trying to dig their way to a surface that doesn't exist. This is their existence for eternity. Rotoqua often takes the shape of an earthworm, wriggling her way through the plane, nibbling at the souls of her sacrifices and replenishing the soil with her waste.

MROGUL OF THE MIND'S EYE

Mrogul gives his servants powers of the mind: they can read thoughts, control others' minds, and even possess their enemies for a short time. Mrogul commonly counts spies, assassins, and high-ranking administrators among his cultists.

For his sacrifice, Mrogul demands the brains and eyes of his enemies as burnt offerings. As one rises in Mrogul's favor, the talazur's demands become more personal. He may take a cultist's eye, a treasured memory, or even his free will. Mrogul is known to possess his servants and use their bodies to luxuriate in the pleasures of the flesh for days at a time. These "holy vessels" are revered among the talazur's worshipers, but often burn out, dying of exhaustion after only a few years of service.

The shattered plane of Mrogul is a flat, dusty wasteland littered with the bones of cities that have been dead for eons. Vaguely humanoid creatures inhabit the cities. They are neither living nor truly dead, but forever wander mindlessly through barren streets.

GLARUP THE BLISSFUL

Glarup's shattered plane is a paradise. The days are warm and sunny, the nights cool and refreshing. Trees droop with ripe fruit and fresh water bubbles merrily from underground. For those who want them, there are civilized delights as well: the libraries are bursting with art, literature, and scholarly works, and the pleasure dens are always stocked with the most euphoric drugs and spirits.

This paradise is Glarup's reward to those who offer him one simple sacrifice: their own lives.

While many yuan-ti are skeptical of the so-called "suicide god," he has gathered a surprising number of followers. Glarup's disciples who have seen the talazur's home assure their followers that their loved ones are happier there than they ever were in life.

TRADE AND CRAFT

Each of the yuan-ti cities is self-sufficient, but trade is common between them. Luxury items are popular, and the azir are subject to fads and fashion. Yuan-ti rarely trade with those outside the empire—which makes the few goods that do reach Ambria incredibly valuable.

COINS OF THE REALM

At the height of the yuan-ti empire, there was a standard imperial gold coin, called "the serpent's fang," common throughout Zangala. Since then, the fang's value has decreased to its weight in gold. Each yuan-ti

city now mints its own coins of gold, silver, and copper. These coins are usually accepted in other cities, though their exchange value fluctuates depending on the quality of the metal.

Many of the talazur have their own currency as well. Small idols, icons, and other trinkets symbolically linked to a specific talazur may be "cashed in" with the priest in exchange for that black god's blessing. Outside the temple districts of many cities, there are shops and markets dedicated to selling this religious coin.

MASTER OF SLAVES

Slavery is the backbone of the yuan-ti empire. Slaves are everywhere: in the fields, in the foundries, in the kitchens, and even in the administrative palaces. Because they are so common, slaves are cheap. Some slaves can command higher prices than others due to their training and skills, but even skilled slaves are common enough that their masters are willing to kill them for the smallest infractions.

When a slave is purchased, it is branded with a magical sigil denoting its current owner. The brand is enchanted so that if the owner's "slave word" is spoken within 50 feet of the slave, the brand lashes the slave with crippling pain—usually more than enough to stop a rebellious slave in his tracks.

Each slave owner has his own slave word, which is usually a set of nonsense syllables that won't come up in normal conversation. If a slave changes hands, his original brand remains in place, and his new owner's brand is simply added to his flesh. As a result, if a slave goes through four masters, he has four different brands and four different slave words that can bring him to his knees.

Slaves are an incredibly diverse lot. They come from every race and can trace their ancestry across the world. But by far the most common slaves are lizardfolk, halflings, and troglodytes.

Lizardfolk are literally the work horses of the empire. They are bred for strength and obedience—and not intelligence. Lizardfolk slaves are found in quarries, on construction sites, on ships, on docks, and anywhere else a strong back is needed. They make good slaves. Their pre-slavery culture (which has been dead in Zangala for almost 2,000 years) was one in which the strong ruled the weak, so it was an easy transition for them to slavery. Today, lizardfolk have a culture that still celebrates strength, but acknowledges the yuan-ti as stronger than any of them.

Halflings are a soft, nimble race unsuited for the harsh life of a field slave, so their value is in the cities, where their quick minds and fingers can best serve the yuan-ti. Halflings are found working in shops, homes, and offices. They read, write, and even help with shopping, bookkeeping, and watching over yuan-ti hatchlings. While their lives are much easier physically than those of most slaves, halflings live in constant isolation

and fear of death. The yuan-ti have a healthy respect for the halflings' wily intelligence. Halflings are forbidden to speak to each other, except as their work demands, and are rarely allowed to sleep in the same building. Any sign of insubordination in a halfling is grounds for execution. The yuan-ti do not take any risks of a halfling rebellion.

Troglodytes are rarely seen in the cities. They are surly, uncooperative slaves who, even after a thousand years in captivity, have never fully submitted to the yuan-ti. Nevertheless, they can work the fields for days at a time—their darkvision means they don't have to stop when the sun goes down—and reproduce at an astounding rate. As long as they remain properly motivated by food and pain, troglodytes make excellent plantation workers. On the plantation, troglodytes are kept in large barn-like pens, where they are chained down each night. Newborn troglodytes have their musk glands surgically removed at birth. About a third of them don't survive the process; their yuan-ti masters are satisfied with the death rate, as it keeps the population down to an acceptable level.

The top slave exporter in the empire is the city of Karaxis, where the smell of the slave pens hangs over the city like an oppressive cloud.

SILENT SERVICE

If the yuan-ti actively export anything to Ambria, it is their service as spies and assassins. Pureblood and thinblood yuan-ti are renowned for their stealth, and a few have become quite infamous in Ambria for their ability to complete their missions, then vanish.

The truth is that nearly all yuan-ti working outside the empire are actually imperial agents. They are excellent spies and assassins, but every move they make is calculated to weaken the rest of the world in preparation for inevitable yuan-ti conquest.

The best imperial agents are trained in the Black Maze, a secret subterranean academy far beneath the streets of Marazan. The Black Maze was founded millennia ago by the high priests of Zalaph. Graduates of the Maze were sent as the front line of any invasion; if they did their jobs right, the invading army would face almost no resistance at all. When the old empire faded from glory, the Black Maze did as well. Today, the Maze has only a handful of students. They are all personally taught by Roxitis, an ancient azir who claims to remember the height of Zalaph's glory and is passing on his wisdom in an effort to help regain that glory. He says that Zalaph himself is keeping him alive for this purpose, and no one can prove otherwise.

WAYS AND TRADITIONS

POTIONS FOR THE MIND

The yuan-ti have a tradition of making and using powerful mind-altering drugs. Their mystics use hallucinogens to achieve higher states of being; their warriors use stimulants to keep them going in battle; even the onozir like to relax with depressants after a hard day's work.

Currently, the most popular drug is stook, a potent narcotic distilled from lizardfolk cerebral-spinal fluid. Stook can be smoked, injected, or even swallowed—though that's a good way to overdose. Yuan-ti who take stook experience a mild euphoria, a general sluggishness, and random sensory hallucinations. When the drug was first developed, it was thought that the hallucinations were the users' perceptions of the shattered planes. But now the theory is that they are random memories drifting like smoke from the distilled lizardfolk brain.

EDUCATION

Education is very important to the yuan-ti. Each city sponsors a number of schools, at least one for each caste. Onozir schools teach yuan-ti children basic literacy, mathematics, and history, then send them back to their families to learn the crafts and skills they will be using for the rest of their lives. Elzir schools last until the youngster is 20, and teach additional literature, art, and religion. Azir never actually graduate from their schools. Most stop attending school at around 25 years of age (after learning politics, military strategy, and administration in addition to everything the other castes learn), but often return every few years to stay current in changing fields, learn new subjects, or delve deeper into arcane topics.

Other, specialized academies abound. Dedicated to astrology, magic, administration, meditation, and other subjects, these temples to learning are privately owned and operated. Anyone wanting to train in these fields must pay the tuition. Most academies will accept any yuan-ti able to pay. A few accept only the top one or two castes. A handful of disreputable academies will accept even slaves and lozo, but they are usually driven out of business as quickly as they are discovered.

Teaching is a highly honored profession. Though most teachers are onozir, they come from every caste. Slaves cannot teach, though some halflings assist their teacher masters so much, they could easily run the classes themselves.

CELESTIAL SCHOLARS

Yuan-ti priests commonly study the stars for portents of the future. Over millennia, they have mapped the heavens and tracked the shifting of the fates. They can also use the stars to tell when the shattered planes are best aligned for contacting the talazur. Few yuan-ti are willing to make an important decision without first consulting the stars.

DECADENCE AND EVIL

As the ruling caste, the azir are free to do as they please and have few responsibilities. As a result, most azir have fallen into lifestyles of decadence and depravity. They seek pleasure in any form, and think nothing of others' suffering if it gives them even a few moments of joy.

Once a year, the azir of each city come together for a week-long celebration of food, torture, and debauchery. It is a contest of sorts as the azir try to shock each other with outrageous acts of evil. The dark gods of the yuan-ti are inundated with sacrifices during the celebration. Slaves sent to serve at the bloody feast can only hope they die quickly during the first days.

PERSONALITIES

SARAXIS

As a young elzir, Saraxis was trained in the art and science of hallucinogens. While testing an experimental new drug, he discovered a talazur in a shattered plane formed of bones. The talazur called itself Yarugg, and it offered Saraxis eternal life in exchange for his eternal service.

More than 200 years later, Saraxis is now the leader of a wide-spread cult that worships Yarugg. Saraxis died long ago, but Yarugg has kept his body and soul together in a twisted form of unlife. The talazur has instructed Saraxis to pass this gift of unlife to others, who have since moved into positions of power across the empire. Saraxis suspects that Yarugg is preparing to somehow manifest in the physical realm through its undead followers, and rejoices in the thought of finally worshipping his master face to face.

GLAZORA

Glazora is a thinblood yuan-ti who has made a name for herself as a charming, sophisticated ambassador to Ambria. She speaks for the city of Marazan, and is allegedly looking for trading partners. In truth, she is looking for a military ally.

The chief priests of Marazan recognize that if the yuan-ti are to expand into Ambria once more, they must first retake the Azran Desert from the Valhedrin invaders. Frontal military assaults over the mountains have met with little success, so they have sent Glazora in search of an alternative.

Glazora is in Ambria looking for a common enemy of Valhedar. She is to offer such an ally the support of the yuan-ti in exchange for its assistance in removing the invaders from northern Zangala. She hasn't found an ally yet, but Valhedar has few friends, so she is confident that her mission will be a success.

Glazora looks like an attractive human female with hairless, slightly green skin and a tongue too long to be human. She tries to downplay her yuan-ti heritage, and suggests that the yuan-ti of Zangala mostly look like her and are more misunderstood than evil.



SITES AND FEATURES

RUINS OF ZARN

A few centuries after Zalaph fell into slumber, the high priest of the city of Zarn contacted the talazur called Gtrok the Devourer. The talazur was generous with its gifts: The high priest was given power over wind, rain, and lightning, and could heal the sick with a touch. In exchange, Gtrok had one small request—to spend one day in Zarn, so it could see and hear the city's marvelous beauty for itself. The high priest agreed.

As the sun rose over Zarn, the high priest and his acolytes performed the ritual that would summon Gtrok to the physical realm. The writhing, shapeless talazur appeared and promptly devoured the awe-struck clergy, then proceeded to do the same to the rest of Zarn. By the time the sun set, Gtrok was the only living creature left in Zarn. Bloated and content, the talazur fell into a deep

slumber, and has been sleeping there ever since.

In the centuries since Zarn fell, there have been innumerable attempts to retake the city. But while Gtrok is no longer physically active in Zarn, there is no doubt his influence is still strong. Any who have spent the night there have either gone insane or fled in terror after a sleep drenched in nightmares. No one has gone near the dread city for decades, but now travelers passing by the region are reporting strange things moving through the jungle. These creatures sound like smaller versions of Gtrok, suggesting that the talazur has somehow spawned its young into the world. What this means to the area no one knows—and no one is volunteering to visit Zarn and find out for sure.

MARAZAN

Marazan may very well be the oldest city in the world. It is the oldest yuan-ti city, and for more than two millennia was the heart of the yuan-ti empire. Marazan's temple to Zalaph was always favored of that god, for he would speak to its disciples more often than any others and bless them with his great visions and gifts.

When Zalaph went silent, Marazan lost much of its importance to the rest of the empire, but the city never lost faith. While the other cities turned to the talazur, Marazan remained true to Zalaph. The priests kept the old ways and never forgot why the yuan-ti were brought into the world: to conquer it for Zalaph.

Now that Zalaph is stirring below the city, Marazan is rising in influence once more. Its ambassadors are spreading through the empire, announcing the return of Zalaph and the necessity of conquest. From across the empire, faithful servants and soldiers loyal to Zalaph are making their way to Marazan in preparation for a new assault on Valhedar and Ambria.

BLACKSCALE MOUNTAINS

The mountains are an old, worn-down range that sees little rain. The rocky surface is riddled with caverns, tunnels, and crevices that serve as bases for the yuan-ti soldiers who call themselves *za-zalaph*, or Zalaph's Children.

When the Valhedrin first invaded the Azran Desert, there were few yuan-ti there to oppose them. When it became clear the invaders were going to win, the remaining yuan-ti fled south to the mountains. They made new homes for themselves in the peaks and crags, and began raiding the Valhedrin to the north in an effort to drive them out.

Over the years, more yuan-ti have come to the mountains to join the crusade of the *za-zalaph*. Now that Zalaph is stirring once more, his disciples are sending soldiers north to help his children. For they know that if the snake god is to be appeased, the empire must grow again—and to do that, the yuan-ti must retake the Azran Desert.



CHAPTER TEN

LANDS OF THE
SUNSET REACH

This chapter presents background and setting details of the Dreaming Isles and Tamerland. The text of this chapter is designated as closed content. Text describing game rules and mechanics are designated as Open Game Content.

THE DREAMING
ISLES

It is said that the Dreaming Isles were so named for the way they rose from the all-too-common banks of fog to greet the first seafarers from Ebernath to arrive at their shores. These rocky islands enjoy a warm, humid climate that gives rise to thick banks of fog in all seasons, though the mists are notably shorter-lived in the summer and almost constant during winter. The fog of the Dreaming Isles is made more treacherous by the rocky sea floor. In several places within and around the archipelago, rocks jut dangerously close to the surface and can tear the bottom from a ship and drag it under the sea.

There are only three primary islands in the archipelago, but innumerable smaller islands dot the area. The largest of the Dreaming Isles, Matria, lies about 250 miles west of the coast of the Kingsmarch region of Ambria. The shores of the Dreaming Isles are jagged cliffs that drop hundreds of feet into the sea in places. Only a few beaches and small bays provide a landing point for ships from other islands or the mainland.

All of the Dreaming Isles are covered with low mountains and rich soil that gives rise to thick forests. The trees have been cleared away in all of the urban areas, but most of the islands are still covered with the native vegetation. These rich natural resources were a blessing to the original settlers of the Dreaming Isles,

many of whom also saw the isolated nature of the islands and many foreboding cliffs as a blessing.

HISTORY

Most residents of the Dreaming Isles claim their history began five centuries ago when their islands were first settled by seamen from Ebernath. Often ignored is the fact that when those settlers arrived, there was a tribal population of shamanic humans already living on the islands, the Madoc. The Dreaming Isles were not conquered by the settlers. The settlers were changed as much by the “primitives” as the Madoc were, and the people of the Dreaming Isles are descended from both.

The first ship to land on the Dreaming Isles came for exploration. Reports of the “unsettled” wilderness brought other vessels, but the trip was dangerous and the rewards uncertain. Instead of a flood of humanity seeking new lives and prosperity, the Dreaming Isles experienced only a trickle of the curious and adventurous. The merchants hoped to build new enterprises on the islands, building a fortune for themselves in a way that was no longer possible at home. Others sought the isolation offered by the Dreaming Isles as a shield against discovery and hoped to prey on the ships of other lands. The Madoc wanted to ensure the safety of their homeland.

Madoc shamans were powerful spellcasters in their own right and had used their magic to gain visions of other lands and peoples. Some contend that the Dreaming Isles are named for the prophetic visions through which the Madoc shamans learned of other places. When it became clear that the people of other lands knew of the Dreaming Isles, the Madoc decided they could rely on simple anonymity no more. They offered hospitality and sanctuary to the settlers, merchants, and freebooters that came to live on the

Dreaming Isles. In return, the Madoc learned the crafts of their guests. In the exchange, both the Madoc and the settlers changed. The children of this cultural union are known as dreamers, islanders, seafolk, or more commonly as saltbloods.

The people of the Dreaming Isles wanted wealth and prosperity, some for their own enjoyment, others for the security of their homes. The forests of the Dreaming Isles were used to build ships, and the stones pulled from the ground to construct fortress-like cities where the ships could dock. New industries were built on the islands, and trade with foreign powers grew. At the same time, however, other saltbloods used fortresses and isolation to support piracy as a way of amassing wealth at the expense of others. The sea-craft of the privateers and merchant seamen, combined with the magical might of the shamans' descendants, gave the Dreaming Isles significant sea power and the opportunity to grow and prosper for a time without fear of reprisal.

In the end, it was success that curbed the people's hunger for wealth. As both the merchants and the privateers of the Dreaming Isles grew wealthy, they preferred to retire in seclusion and peace to their own islands. The strong economy and plentiful natural resources of the islands left little reason to continue to seek abroad—or on the sea—for wealth, and the Dreaming Isles settled into their Golden Summer. The success and mercantile power of the islands attracted others to trade, and the saltbloods relied on trade that came to them. This freed the adventurous spirit of the seafolk to focus on other forms of adventure and exploration.

Exploration and learning became important aspects of success in the Dreaming Isles. The wealthy and powerful found themselves losing respect in favor of those bold enough to explore new places and learn of faraway lands. In an effort to expand their reach, the lords of Seagarden—the oldest and largest city-state of the Dreaming Isles—constructed the first deep-draft vessel. They claimed that this ship could survive any sea, no matter how hostile. These new vessels began to make forays farther and farther from the Isles, and fared especially well in the dangerous waters of the Sunset Reach. Maruphel, a legendary captain and powerful wizard of Seagarden, made the first mundane voyage from the Dreaming Isles to Tamerland.

With the opening of Tamerland, the adventurous spirit of the Dreaming Isles has moved many of its people to explore and colonize the new continent. Many claim a personal responsibility to gain control of the new land, as it was one of their own who first reached the far shores.

PEOPLE

The dominant race of the Dreaming Isles is human, specifically saltbloods. A handful of other races live in the cities of the islands, usually in districts or areas populated by their own kind. The humans of the

Dreaming Isles are dark haired with olive skin and dark eyes. Tattooing is also popular among the saltbloods, and their faces and bodies are often decorated with many intricate designs.

In the centuries since they were first settled, the Dreaming Isles have developed a culture all their own, independent of Ebernath or the nations of mainland Ambria. The people of the islands have rejected the notion of nobility or inherited lordship. Their culture is based solely on the accomplishments of the individual, or so they claim. Wealth and adventure bring status in the society of the Dreaming Isles, but their culture does not favor simply amassing fortunes. It is not only the wealth of the individual, but also how he or she uses it, that determines respect. Style and spirit are favored over severity and selfishness. Ostentatious displays of ability, success, and accomplishments are common, particularly among the young who hope to make names for themselves.

SETTLEMENTS

The cities of the Dreaming Isles are largely built of stone. The plentiful supply of wood on the islands is used primarily for the construction of ships. Even the docks of the cities are commonly constructed of stone—originally to prevent the docks from being burned out by any attackers. Granite and limestone blocks make up all of the walls and docks, as well as most of the buildings. The heat of summer in the Dreaming Isles can be stifling, but the engineering used to build the great fortress-cities enables the homes and public spaces to catch the wind, making them quite comfortable despite the heat. In addition, many of the great manors use enchantments to curb the worst of the area's weather.

Wealthier households also use marble and other precious materials. Doors and columns are often lined in gold, silver, or even gemstones. All of these decorations are designed to catch the light of the stars at night. Clever design and careful placement lend the wealthy households and public edifices a soft glow. A few special locations—such as the homes of proud wizards or monuments of religious significance—use magic to augment the effect. A well-designed and magically enhanced manor is a thing of splendor and beauty that lights the city nearby, sometimes for hundreds of feet. In the largest cities, these lights are bright enough to help guide ships to port even during dark, foggy nights.

The cities of the islands are situated wherever the shores offer easy access to the sea. They are laid out in arcs, curves, and crescents. Since ancient times, the people of the islands have favored such designs in their households. This preference dates to the shamanic Madoc, who believed in the divinity of sea and moon and used the curves and crescents to represent either or both of these forces. The defensive walls guarding the cities of the Dreaming Isles are built in crescent segments anchored by round towers at each end. It is well



known that these walls are weakest where they join the towers, but attacking so close to the towers would expose the attackers to a ruinous hail of arrows and stones. Though the fortress-cities of the Dreaming Isles have rarely needed to defend themselves against a full attack, the adventurous privateers common on the islands have a way of making persistent enemies. The folk of the Dreaming Isles believe it is safest to be prepared.

Seagarden is the largest of the city-states of the Dreaming Isles. Though it has spread over more land than other cities and has a larger population, its design and construction are typical of the islands' city-states. Seagarden commands a view of a wide, open bay that faces east towards the mainland and Avennar. It was built as a trading port and used as a first line of defense against any possible attack from the mainland. A fleet of trading ships makes its home at Seagarden, though over half of those ships are at sea at any given time. Seagarden's outer wall faces only toward the bay. It is open to the center of the island, because it was never intended to protect the city from an inland attack. Stone docks and piers extend from the shore for hundreds of feet into the sea, providing ample room to dock the many trading ships of the city, as well as foreign visitors. The docks are built on granite pilings driven deep into the soft mud beneath the water, which grant significant stability and support.

LANGUAGE

The native language of the Dreaming Isles is Dorlian, and is also called the Salt Speech. It uses its own alphabet, derived from the language of Anderland. Influences from the runic markings of the ancient folk of the Dreaming Isles can be found in the written language, but the influence of the old Madoc tongue is more significant in the form and phrasing of the language than its alphabet.

Dorlian is given to clipped consonantal sounds, which roll off the tongues of native speakers with an elegant flow. Native speakers of the language tend to use long sentences in which the word order can vary considerably. This makes Dorlian difficult to learn and slow to translate. Poetic and artistic works use traditional forms that are more easily understood, and the common use of Dorlian in homes and cities can be similarly straightforward. Legal documents and the jargon of mercantile trades, however, are complex and obscure.

Other human languages, as well as the languages of non-human residents, are also in use on the Dreaming Isles. Such languages are not commonly used outside of the appropriate households. The Common trade tongue is extremely useful in markets and aboard merchant ships, and most saltbloods can speak it as well as Dorlian.

GOVERNANCE

The Dreaming Isles are dotted with independent city-states. Though each city-state governs itself, a loose alliance of the wealthy and powerful across the Dreaming Isles attempts to reach a common agreement on any decision that affects them all. Within each city-state, individuals are generally left to their own devices. Those who have earned or inherited respect dictate their own laws over the areas they influence. While the nature of those laws is generally congenial, the enforcement of law from one city-state to the next can vary significantly.

Typical laws against harm, theft, and murder can be found in all of the city-states. The mercantile nature of the islands' inhabitants, however, had some influence on the writing of those laws. The land and possessions of a household are considered the property of the head of that household, to be disposed of as he or she wishes. In addition, all the members of that household, including family, retainers, and servants, are also considered the personal property of the head of household by law. This does not reflect any inclination toward slavery. Kidnapping, assault, and murder are simply described as theft, harm, and destruction of property, respectively. Crimes against people are punished more severely than crimes involving real property, but the law makes little distinction between them.

Crimes involving only one household, such as one brother robbing another, are normally left to the head of household to resolve. While this system leaves significant room for abuse by the heads of households, few abuses take place in practice. Competition between households can be fierce, and most households band together against common outside threats rather than turning in on themselves.

A person's wealth, power, and education measure status in the Dreaming Isles. While wealth may be inherited, thus creating an aristocratic class, there are enough clever merchants, privateers, and adventurers who make their fortune to continually introduce new blood into the ruling class of the Dreaming Isles. The true rulers of the islands are those who have all three, but anyone who finds success, power, or wisdom will gain the respect of the people.

The people of the Dreaming Isles prefer to be left alone, not only as a nation, but also—and most particularly—as individuals. The islands make up a small nation with no official ruling body, so laws are often lax where they exist at all. As a result, it can be a dangerous business to interfere in the affairs of others. It is customary to offer hospitality to any visitors, and the people of the islands are hospitable to a fault. Asking questions of a host, however, is considered rude. A curious guest may find himself driven from the home—or he might simply never be found again.

RELIGION

As with many of the other civilizations of Eadar, the saltbloods pay homage to many small gods and spirits, but no established or well-defined pantheon of deities has yet established itself. There are many gods in the Dreaming Isles, but none have gained dominion over the others.

The original shamanic beliefs of the Madoc had significant influence on the religious beliefs of the Dreaming Isles. Most saltbloods pay homage to gods of sea and sky, particularly the moon-spirit, who is called Yarra in Seagarden. The lord of the waves is her husband and the two are said to dance together. The stars are all named and have their own gods, and the people of Seagarden believe they are all members of Yarra's court. Constellations are also named. They tell stories, generally stories about the distant gods that dwell within, but sometimes about mortals or the history of the world.

The god of the Sunset Reach is Soresen, called the Leviathan, a great immortal whale that represents death on the Dreaming Isles. The dead are usually given to Soresen in a burial at sea and taken to his realm under the waves. His wife is Tolria, a goddess who walks the islands' sea shores. Her children are the gods of the islands. The islands have their own patron immortals and typically derive their names from these local deities. The goddess of the largest island is named Matria. Her sisters, Lera and Ponra, are the goddesses of the next two largest islands to the southwest and southeast, respectively.

The island gods and goddesses are accompanied by lesser gods or spirits that reside on their islands. Seagarden recognizes Shenoc, god of the cliffs just north of the city, Nolin, god of the wall who protects the city, and Rama, goddess of the orchard who provides bounty to the land in Seagarden and is known to be generous with her gifts.

Traditional worship of the gods is a donation of effort or labor in the god's name. Just as the government of the Dreaming Isles is loose and disorganized, so are its religions. There are no organized temples, but obelisks, shrines, and symbols are common throughout the Dreaming Isles. As a demonstration of good will and faith, a person might make improvements to a shrine, donate money to a cause or project favored by that god, or simply mark the symbols of preferred immortals within his or her own household. The many spellcasters of the Dreaming Isles show their reverence by creating enchantments dedicated to the power of the gods, granting the otherwise normal stone religious structures magical enhancements to beautify or empower.

A new religious cult, the Cult of Mysteries, has begun appearing in the Dreaming Isles. It is common only in the cities but rites may be carried out in the deep woods, as well. This obscure religion claims to focus on awareness and gaining magical power, but their prac-

tices are kept secret. A newly appointed member may join the first ring but must prove himself and demonstrate clarity and spiritual power before advancing in the cult. The highest-ranking followers of such faiths are extremely confident and have had great success in turning situations to their own benefit. This is most clear in matters of trade, where some of the most successful merchants are known members of this mystery cult. Membership in the cult does not prevent a person from paying homage to the more traditional gods of the Dreaming Isles, but some people are suspicious of a cult that hides its practices and agenda—or one that claims to have no agenda at all.

TRADE AND CRAFT

The Dreaming Isles specialize in foreign trade. Though the islands are self-sufficient, the people have prospered through trade with other nations. There is some demand for rare wood, stone, gems, and pearls from the Dreaming Isles. More significant than these, however, are the export of finished goods and the work of expert craftsmen. The builders and engineers of the Dreaming Isles constructed the deep-draft ships, and are similarly clever in the construction of buildings, as well as smaller stonework and woodcraft. Furniture, decorative stone, statuettes, and some arms and armor—in particular bows and wooden shields—are commonly sold to other lands. The people of the Dreaming Isles are also known to travel to other lands on commission to oversee the construction of buildings or other projects, if they are offered sufficient compensation.

On the Dreaming Isles, the goods produced by one household tend to be sold to another household—one specializing in mercantilism, which carries those products to foreign markets to sell. This specialization allows two or more households to share profit from commercial ventures, while each focuses only on the aspects of trade it chooses. Mercantile specialization of this sort is the norm on the Dreaming Isles due to the sheer number of tradesmen of the islands. The competition among merchant ships if every major household supported its own fleet would be insurmountable. As it is, even a young household with few resources can manage to stock a single ship and send it to other lands to trade, even if it could not afford to produce the goods itself.

Though the exports and products offered by the Dreaming Isles are valued, they have little real impact on the economy of the islands. Their strength of trade comes from merchant ships. The merchants of the Dreaming Isles travel abroad, buying goods from one port and transporting them to another. The islands have the most capable and reliable sea transportation and experience few losses at sea. Furthermore, the pirates that operate along the coasts near the Dreaming Isles do not attack their vessels. The few privateers that have ships as capable and quick as the merchant vessels are

generally also of the Dreaming Isles and prefer to attack the merchants of other lands, either out of simple patriotism or because they possess charters from the merchant houses of the Dreaming Isles. Farther from home, of course, the merchants of the isles have no special protection against pirates. Voyages planned far afield are manned with armed sailors and marines to repel attacks, though they are not always successful.

WAYS AND TRADITIONS

The folk of the Dreaming Isles like to think of themselves as practical, but most are too adventurous to be reliable. This practicality drives them to find ways to reach their goals, but their ways are not always simple and their goals are not always wise. Some are driven to learn and gather wisdom, others to trade with others and make their way in the world as easy as possible. A persistent few are driven to take what they want and live the “good life” at any cost. These three types are commonly known as explorers, merchants, and privateers.

Explorers seek adventure for its own right, gaining status by what they know of the world, what they have seen, and what they have experienced and done. Many explorers are also wizards, and use their personal power to further their interests. These are the curious minds of the Dreaming Isles. The first person ever to reach Tamerland by mundane means was a wizard and explorer of the Dreaming Isles named Maruphel. Not all explorers seek their adventure and learning in the wide world. Those who try new things and survive will always find a ready audience for their tales. A significant number of explorers never really travel anywhere, but spend their time spinning stories and making friends anyway.

Merchants of the Dreaming Isles are rarely motivated by greed, and tend to enjoy the process of trade more than the wealth it brings. Wealth grants the merchants status, but their interest is not always in making the best deals for themselves—using what they have wisely and enjoying themselves is considered more important. Merchants may make their own goods to sell or they may focus entirely on dealing with others, buying from one and selling to another. In the Dreaming Isles, those who survive simply by buying, traveling, and selling are accorded significant respect.

The privateers of the Dreaming Isles are a blessing and a curse as old as the settlements themselves. Privateers from the isles have long raided the merchant vessels of other lands, and particularly bold pirates have even attacked military vessels on occasion. In this role, Dreaming Isle privateers serve as an effective navy. Unfortunately, their actions are uncoordinated and often uncontrollable. Some privateers have been known to hire themselves as mercenaries to other nations, using their superior ships and skilled crews to wreak havoc.



Most simply prey on any easy targets they can reach. A few are true adventurers, choosing to seek out monstrous foes and claim their booty from more dangerous opponents than cargo holds.

Another tradition of the Dreaming Isles dates back to the days of the Madoc. Magical traditions on the islands inherited a great deal from the ancient shamans. Respect for the spirits of the land and sea, reverence of the moon and stars, and a firm belief in the real power to be gathered from natural places are all part of this tradition. Many of the wizard-explorers of the isles seek out new places in an effort to increase their magical power or to learn more of how to influence the world. Specific motivations and goals vary, but the idea that magic and power are waiting to be discovered by the intrepid and the persistent is shared by all.

PERSONALITIES

The most influential people on the Dreaming Isles are those with significant followings and respect, or those who have accomplished something worthy of note that sets them above their peers. Perhaps the most famous is Maruphel, the wizard and captain who first sailed across the Sunset Reach to land on the shores of Tamerland. Others, however, have earned the respect of the Dreaming Isles in their own ways.

MARUPHEL

The wizard Maruphel is famous for his first voyage to the far shores of Tamerland. In doing so, he faced the dangers of the Sunset Reach with only his ship, his crew, and his magic at hand. The Sunset Reach had long been considered an evil place that would destroy any vessels foolhardy enough to brave the voyage. Maruphel knew of Tamerland and where it lay as he, and other skilled wizards, had already visited the new world by magical means. Reaching it by sea, however, sparked a wave of colonization and exploration for which he is greatly admired. On the Dreaming Isles, he is particularly well regarded for having experienced the worst the Sunset Reach had to offer, and having survived. Even his crew on the voyage, should any choose to retire from his service, can be certain of considerable respect in their own right.

BALME OF SEAGARDEN

Balme of Seagarden is, perhaps, one of the most powerful and wealthiest men on the Dreaming Isles. The leaders of his family have been successful merchants for several generations, and his fleet easily accounts for a quarter of all the ships of Seagarden. His wealth alone would be enough to hold respect, and he could have left



it at that as his parents and grandparents did. Instead, Balme has sponsored adventurers across the Dreaming Isles on their personal quests, as well as undertaking several voyages on his own inspiration to parts both near and far. His phenomenal irreverence for his own wealth has earned him the respect as well as the envy of the lesser households, and his popularity and cleverness have impressed even other great houses.

PHELIBEN

The bard of Matria, Pheliben, is an anomaly on the Dreaming Isles. It is commonly believed that he has made no great voyages, holds no significant lands, owns no wealth, and has no followers. Nevertheless, he tells wondrous tales of distant places and recites fanciful poems about feats of daring. There are many such storytellers on the Dreaming Isles, but Pheliben's tales have, so far, turned out to be true. It is unknown whether Pheliben travels in disguise or by magic, or whether he uses other means to discern events in far away places, but many have tried to follow him to discover his secret. He seems to wander from city to city, telling his stories and moving on. Rumors persist that he has, in fact, told several tales before they even happened, only to have events unfold as he had already described.

SITES AND FEATURES

There are several points of interest within and around the Dreaming Isles. The most commonly known is the city-state of Seagarden itself. More dangerous areas around the Dreaming Isles include the Teeth of Tolri, the Blood Sea, and Pirate's Grave.

SEAGARDEN

Seagarden (large city): Conventional; AL N; Population 16,000 adults; 40,000 gp limit; Assets 40,000,000 gp; Isolated (92% human, 4% halfling, 2% elf, 1% dwarf, 1% other races).

Authority Figures: Lord Keris, male saltblood aristocrat 6/wizard 9 (leader of the Grand Council)

Important Characters: Lord Balme, male saltblood expert 4/rogue 12 (merchant prince).

Seagarden was built around Matria's largest bay facing east, towards the mainland and Avennar. Its long wall stretches from one cliff to another, placed so as to control access to the island's interior completely. The main streets of the city curve away from the wall, creating a space just west of the wall where Seagarden's loose government is based. A network of granite and marble buildings, known as the Council Home, serve as meeting places for the city's wealthy and wise elite.

From this common forum the rulers of Seagarden make decisions on law, hold court as necessary, collect taxes, and attend to any other matters of government that arise. Generally, of course, they appoint others to do the work for them and gather together at the Council Home only during emergencies or the semiannual ceremonies of state.

A grand orchard and vineyard surrounds the Council Home. According to law, the fruits of the orchards and vintages produced there are reserved for the members of Seagarden's Grand Council. In practice, no one seems to care if citizens "borrow" from the orchard when they are in the area, so long as they draw no notice to themselves. The grounds around the orchards house other government structures, built as afterthoughts as the Council decided they were necessary. Also in this area is the Honor Quarters, where the elite guards and marines of Seagarden make their home, and from which they can see to the defense of the city.

The area north of the wall hosts the mercantile district, including warehouses, offices, and an open market where anyone is free to trade. The various households that make up Seagarden's population dominate the remainder of the city. Most households are lesser or minor and include only one or two buildings at most, with living quarters and space for business and trade as necessary. A handful of estates are considered major or great households. These estates include several buildings, at least, and usually have gardens and orchards of their own. Larger households are somewhat self-sufficient, and often include blacksmiths, cobblers, artisans, drinking halls, and any other businesses or public spaces the head of household desires.

TEETH OF TOLRI

The Teeth of Tolri is the name of a region of small islands and submerged rocks north of Matria. These treacherous waters have torn the bottoms out of ships daring enough to venture there. The danger prevents most from ever reaching the islands, and many of them are largely unexplored.

It is commonly believed that pirates use these rocky islands and dangerous waterways to hide and avoid capture. There are, however, other rumors that claim a secret nest of horrific beasts is hidden there. These monsters are said to hunt the waters near the Teeth and feed on the unlucky and unwise who sail too near. Still others claim that the area is being used by one of the mainland nations as a base for soldiers, or as a cache of dangerous or valuable materials and magical objects.

BLOOD SEA

The Blood Sea is a large area of water in the open ocean roughly 150 miles northwest of the Dreaming Isles. The water of the Blood Sea is bright red and

smells of death. Small bubbles are constantly rippling toward the surface, and the water of the Blood Sea is always very warm.

Most people of the Dreaming Isles believe the Blood Sea is the lair of a sea monster of some kind. Its breath is said to cause the flow of bubbles. The nature of a beast that could turn miles of ocean water crimson and hot has been the subject of speculation since the area was first discovered. Few ships travel to this area on purpose, but some seek out the Blood Sea to learn the truth of its mystery. Those brave individuals who seek beneath the waves have all returned empty handed with no explanation, or they have not returned at all. The failed efforts have convinced many that any who see the creature will not survive its wrath.

PIRATE'S GRAVE

Most sensible people do not believe the Pirate's Grave exists. Nevertheless, rumors about it persist. The Pirate's Grave is, according to legend, an island cursed by the death of a powerful privateer named Salameir centuries ago. According to the story, his ship and crew were lost at sea long ago while he was trying to return to his hidden cache of treasure. Since his disappearance, others have reported encounters with spirits or magical forces surrounding an unknown island. Survivors of such encounters have never been able to precisely identify where the island was located. Detractors point out that most of these "survivors" were also drunk when they first reported their encounters, and that their accounts do not even agree on a direction in which this mysterious island might lie.

Despite the doubts that many have, the Pirate's Grave is not forgotten. Every few years, another ship goes in search of the wealth lost at sea—both by Salameir and by the ships since sunk by his vengeful curse. A handful of these eager adventurers have become convinced that the island itself must hold some primal magical power that drives the old privateer's curse.

TAMERLAND

Wild and largely uncharted, Tamerland lies westward across the vast, deep Sunset Reach. Tamerland's rugged interior rises steadily from the coastal lowlands of its eastern shores toward a vast plateau. To the south, steep cliffs face off across the dangerous Fogshroud Bay. Two great mountain ranges, the Wildermarks and Windspurs, frame the northern and southernmost reaches of Tamerland. Most important of all is the Caracasa River. Born in the interior highland, the Caracasa plunges through a wide river basin, rushing toward Maruphel's Delta and the bustling, anarchic port of Landsgate.

At some time in the distant past, it is believed that Tamerland was a single continent whose eastern coast

was guarded by hundreds of miles of rugged mountains. Sages suggest that some ancient cataclysm rent the land asunder. The inland rose, forming the great escarpment that today marks the beginning of the interior highlands. Other parts of the land fell toward the sea, forming Fogshroud Bay, the Caracasa Valley, and the Major and Lesser Barrier Islands.

Skill Check: Before running an overland wilderness adventure, review the effects of the following skills: Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (local), and Survival. The latter skill is especially important to avoid getting lost. The Wilderness, Weather, & Environment section of the DMG is must reading.

THE COASTAL LOWLANDS

A stretch of coastland between 50 and 250 miles wide runs from the northern reaches of the eastern coast down to Maruphel's Delta. The region along the eastern edge of the forbidding Wildermark Mountains is called the Windward March. Level, dry land is in short supply. Rainfall occurs almost daily over much of the Windward March as humid sea air blows in from the Sunset Reach and climbs the eastern face of the Wildermark. The resultant downpours carve hundreds of channels from the mountains to the salt marshes of the coast. Rivers in this region tend to be narrow, fast moving, and prone to flooding. Frequent sinkholes accumulate water, dotting the land with swamp and small lakes, as well as providing ingress to an intricate system of submerged caverns, many of which open to the Sunset Reach. Travel through the March is slow and perilous. River crossings are unavoidable, and the currents do not forgive the foolhardy. Some of these currents, especially close to the coast, suck the unwary into subterranean airless, lightless caverns.

River Hazards: Large, placid rivers move at only a few miles per hour, so they function as still water for most purposes. Some rivers and streams are swifter. Anything floating in them moves downstream between 10 and 40 feet per round. The fastest rapids send swimmers bobbing downstream at 60 to 90 feet per round. Fast rivers are always at least rough water (Swim DC 15), and whitewater rapids are stormy water (Swim DC 20). Characters swept away by a river moving 60 or more feet per round must make Swim checks every round to avoid going under. If a character gets a check result of 5 or more over the minimum necessary, he arrests his motion by catching a rock, tree limb, or bottom snag. He is no longer being carried along by the flow of the water. Escaping the rapids by reaching the bank requires three successful Swim checks in a row. Characters arrested by a rock, limb, or snag can't escape under their own power unless they strike out into the water to swim their way clear.

There is little in the way of arable land or wildlife in the Windward March. The frequent rains and floods carry most of the topsoil to the sea. The remaining land

is rocky and sharp-edged. Some places are rough enough to ruin even the stoutest leather boots after only a few days travel. Vegetation is scarce, limited largely to hardy shrubs and brightly colored lichens. The many lakes and swamps boast more varied plant life, including huge banyan trees, beautiful water lilies, and thick stands of bamboo. Wildlife is limited almost entirely to gulls and cranes, monitor lizards, several varieties of small monkeys, a motley assortment of fish—mostly bottom-feeders—and a noxious host of biting and stinging insects. Poisonous serpents dwell in and around the swamps and lakes, preying on birds, monkeys, and each other.

The Windward March has no inhabitants to speak of, although tales speak of an aquatic race of sightless, flesh-eating humanoids lairing in the submerged caverns. There are intelligent monsters encountered infrequently, but the March is almost entirely a no-man's land. Few incentives for exploration exist in the region as well.

Diseases of Tamerland: Disease and infection are a constant danger in Tamerland. Tainted water, parasites, and disease-carrying animals and vermin can be found just about everywhere. The following diseases, all detailed in the DMG, are appropriate hazards: blinding sickness, cackle fever, filth fever, mindfire, red ache, the shakes, and slimy doom.

Maruphel's Delta, in contrast, possesses fertile alluvial soil, and abundant plant and animal life. The Delta is a relatively small section of Tamerland, comprised of the fan of the Caracasa's branches and floodplains around present-day Landsgate. Precipitation occurs frequently in the Delta region, but the rains are usually light and brief. The Barrier Islands to the southeast protect the Delta from the full force of the vernal and autumnal storms that rage across the southern Sunset Reach. Inclement weather blowing in from the north most often spends its force against the Wildermark Mountains.

Tall grasses and lush water plants dominate the vegetation of the Delta and the lower half of the Caracasa Valley. Copses of sweet gum and sweet cherry grow in the Delta, as do fields of wild clover, wheat, cotton, rice, and millet. Herds of antelopes, gazelles, and water buffalo travel up and down the Caracasa, hunted by cheetah, lions, and crocodiles. All manner of brilliantly plumed birds nest in the region. Of particular note are the grotesque, crimson-headed dire vultures that scavenge far and wide. Tamerland natives hold these avians sacred.

Travel through the Delta occurs largely by small river barge or catamaran. The currents of the Caracasa are mild enough, except during flood season, to permit river travel both up and downstream. Barges are typically poled or oared, although domesticated buffalo are sometimes used to haul barges along the banks of the more aggressive portions of the river. Travelers find overland movement easy enough as well. While there



are no actual roads, several routes have been trod often enough to form serviceable trails wide enough for small caravans.

The Caracasa Valley starts about 300 miles west of Landsgate near where Desedete Falls flows into the Caracasa River. The eastern third of the valley is a broad, generally level flood plain cut through the land by the Caracasa River. The sides of the valley, heavily wooded with a wide variety of fragrant hardwood trees, slope gently upward to the northern and southern highlands. The valley flood plain is largely covered by thick grasses. Wider, slower areas of the Caracasa include swampy mangroves and floating meadows, which are islands composed of intertwined land and water plants. Passage along the Caracasa by canoe is possible, although it is easy to get lost without a competent guide.

Near the Tongue, where the Dauntless Cataract crashes into the Caracasa, the valley's walls become rocky, steep, and press more closely toward each other. The river here rages and surges, frequently plunging roughly downward over huge boulders, making water travel impossible. The rugged terrain makes movement further to the west increasingly difficult for land-goers. The vegetation changes as well. The perfumed hardwoods give way to rubber trees, palms, and vine-covered giant silk-cotton trees that form most of the dense jungle canopy. The valley along this stretch is dark. Little sunlight pierces the canopy. As a result, ground

vegetation is sparse, limited to a mosaic of small shrubs, ferns, and giant shield-cap mushrooms.

Forests: Don't forget all the terrain effects imposed by forests. A creature standing in the same square as a tree gains a +2 bonus to AC and a +1 bonus on Reflex saves, but these bonuses do not stack with cover bonuses from other sources. Vines, roots, and short bushes cover much of the ground. Light undergrowth costs 2 squares of movement to move into, and it provides concealment. Undergrowth increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 2 because the leaves and branches get in the way. Heavy undergrowth costs 4 squares of movement to move into, and it provides concealment with a 30% miss chance (instead of the usual 20%). It increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 5, but grants a +5 circumstance bonus to Hide checks. Running and charging is impossible in heavy undergrowth. The background noise in the forest makes Listen checks difficult, increasing the DC of the check by 2 per 10 feet, not 1 per 10 feet as normal.

Animals in the valley include thousands of species of insects and spiders, including many disease-carrying mosquitoes and flies. Columns of leaf-cutter ants march through the forest. Other bugs include fireflies of various colors, stinging bees, hornets, wasps, beetles, cockroaches, cicadas, centipedes, scorpions, ticks, and butterflies. Monstrous versions of these vermin are not



uncommon. The river itself is home to thousands of fish, serpents, turtles, crocodiles, and river otters. Some of the more dangerous aquatic creatures include electric eels and dire catfish. Freshwater dolphins, caimans, ironshell snapping turtles, and monstrous constrictor snakes can also be encountered.

Among the most poisonous but least aggressive of the valley's denizens are its frogs, toads, and other amphibians. Often quite small and always fantastically colored, the skin of these animals exudes potent contact poison that can induce painful swelling, numbness, and even death in rare cases. Monkeys, jaguars, ocelots, and dire weasels share the top of the food chain with the caimans and monstrous vermin. Rats and bats in the valley certainly number into the millions. The westernmost reaches of the valley are also home to dire apes. The silverbacks that lead dire ape families possess legendary ferocity. It is not just the animals that prove dangerous. Explorers must be alert for plant creatures such as assassin vines and shambling mounds, as well as mischievous gangs of jungle fey.

Legendary Ferocity (Ex): Certain creatures, such as the dire silverback apes of the Caracasa Valley, possess legendary ferocity. When a creature with legendary ferocity is wounded, it gains a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution, and 2 temporary hit points per Hit Die. When reduced to less than 25% of its normal hit point total, the creature gains another +2 bonus

to Strength and Constitution, and 1 temporary hit point per Hit Die.

THE INTERIOR HIGHLANDS

South, west, and north of the Caracasa Valley are the interior highlands of Tamerland. The Leeward Plateau stretches from the Wildermark Mountains in a wide crescent around the Caracasa Valley's northern and western sides. To the south of the valley grows the strange Misty Plains, covering the lower latitudes of Tamerland from the Caracasa to the precipices of the Fogshroud Bay's northern coast.

The Leeward Plateau, with an average elevation of nearly one mile, is a vast plain of yellow-green grasses and various types of cactus atop gently rolling hills. During the late autumn and early winter, cool winds blow across the region from the northwest, bringing with them frequent precipitation in the form of rain, sleet, and the occasional hailstorm. Run-off from this precipitation flows southwest into the Caracasa Valley and Wildermark Basin, a deep canyon between the Wildermark Mountains and the Leeward Plateau that is the source of the Dauntless Cataract. The plateau's rainy season often causes flooding in the Caracasa Valley and Maruphel's Delta.

Compared to the Caracasa Valley, the Leeward Plateau is a pleasant enough place. There are few large predators hunting the grassland. Most notable are the packs of dire wolves that prey on the region's large population of herbivores such as deer, wild sheep, and buffalo. Given the dearth of trees, few species of birds live atop the plateau. The flightless spitting ostrich, found nowhere else in the world, and much the smaller grouse are common. The pestilential clouds of insects that choke the forests below are also largely absent, although monstrous wasps do dig nests in the hard soil of the plateau. Grotesquely shaped termite mounds, some towering as high as nine feet, can also be seen. The pony-size anteaters of the plateau, despite their size and powerful claws, are largely harmless.

On the southern side of the Caracasa Valley sit the eerie Misty Plains and Mournwood. Ostensibly part of the Leeward Plateau, the grasses of the Misty Plains are shorter and tougher, the cactuses more numerous, and the ground noticeably rockier. Indeed there are many enormous piles of wind-smoothed boulders scattered across the Misty Plains. Local legends say that these piles are cairns erected by ancient giants, but tomb robbers have reported little success in the region. The so-called cairns are especially common near the Mournwood, the needleleaf forest that covers the western portion of the region.

The Misty Plains gains its name from the ubiquitous clouds of gray-white fog that cling to the ground. Visibility in the region is always restricted, often to a great degree. Only during high winds and rain do the mists vanish, but they return quickly after the inclement

weather passes. It is widely believed that the mists have an unnatural origin, although they do not themselves detect as magic.

The Mists of the Misty Plains: The mists of the Misty Plains usually limit visibility to 2d8 x 10 feet during daylight hours. The mists thicken as darkness falls, reducing visibility (including darkvision) to 2d6 x 10 feet. Any time visibility is 60 or fewer feet, it becomes possible to get lost. Fog banks are also common in the Misty Plains. These areas of dense mist obscure all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Attacks directed against creatures more than 5 feet away in fog suffer a 20% miss chance. These conditions also apply to the Fogshroud Bay.

Due to its somewhat lower elevation than the Leeward Plateau and general decline toward Fogshroud Bay, there are many streams, ponds, and two major rivers flowing through the Misty Plains to plunge hundreds of feet into the Strait. The easternmost river, the Sinuous, churns blackly over its rocky bottom. The rapids and large number of boulders make the Sinuous unnavigable but relatively easy to cross on foot. Farther west, originating somewhere beyond the Mournwood, flows the Brine River, so named because its waters are slightly salty. Most of the Brine is navigable by canoe, but the currents become dangerous close to the falls that drop into the Fogshroud Straits.

In the Misty Plains and Mournwood, there is a noticeable lack of diurnal wildlife. Hyenas and jackals hunt during the night, preying on rodents. Hundreds of thousands of insectivorous bats live in the Mournful Wood, taking wing after sunset to feast on thick clouds of moths, gnats, and fireflies. Near the rivers, vipers slither after frogs and other small animals that come to drink at the water's edge. Giant owls float silently through the dark skies, making meals out of even the largest hyenas.

Stories of haunting spirits, including malevolent incorporeal undead such as wraiths and spectres, commonly include the Misty Plains and the Mournwood as their setting. Those few explorers who have ventured into these regions confirm that there is a haunted aura to the land, and some claim to have encountered ghostly undead. It is also believed that a race of fog giants lurk in the Mournwood, jealously guarding their territory against intruders.

WILDERMARK MOUNTAINS

Bounded on the west by the Wildermark Basin and on the east by the Windward March, the majestic Wildermark Mountains tower over Tamerland. The tallest peaks gleam whitely under permanent icecaps, and few of the mountains in this range rise less than one and a half miles above sea level. Along its western edge, the range does include a dozen or so smaller volcanoes, all of them intermittently active. Large eruptions are rare, but do occur every several years. When such erup-

tions happen, prevailing winds can carry ash and smoke all the way to the Barrier Islands. Landsgate has suffered through a handful of these natural disasters.

The low pass elevations of the Wildermarks are rugged but passable. Forests grow thickly, and there are frequent streams and pools. Higher up, the forests grow less dense and more alpine. Winds can be fierce, sometimes so violent that travel becomes impossible. These low peak, high pass elevations also include a great deal of scree, loose rock and soil. Falling rocks and even avalanches are commonplace. Also, non-acclimated creatures risk high altitude fatigue. The high peak elevations of the mountains are all but uninhabitable. The air is too thin and cold to support any but the hardiest of creatures, most notably dragons. Frostbite, high altitude fatigue, and altitude sickness are a danger in this zone.

Mountains: Cliffs, chasms, avalanches, and fields of scree provide appropriate obstacles for mountaineers. The DMG describes the game effects of each of these. Also remember that in mountains the DC of Listen checks increases by 1 per 20 feet between the listener and the source, not per 10 feet as normal.

In the foothills and low pass elevations of the Wildermark Mountains, animal and plant life are abundant, being somewhat comparable to the upper Caracasa Valley, although without the overwhelming variety of insects and other vermin. Even still, stinging flies and mosquitoes are common, and monstrous hunting spiders of all sizes prowl the forest floor and the canopy as well. Herds of rugged goats and llamas roam the area, and the numbers of wild guinea pigs seem limitless. Low peak, high pass altitudes are occupied by little more than goats and nesting raptors. Most noteworthy are the giant eagles and dire hawks.

High peak altitudes both inspire the most fear and spark the keenest interest. The Wildermark's peaks are home to dragons. Some two or three hundred years ago, before Landsgate's founding, many dragons laired throughout Tamerland, and some of these creatures are worshipped as gods by the native lizardfolk.

FOGSHROUD BAY

From the Lesser Barrier Island running west by southwest, the perilous passage of sea known as Fogshroud Bay evokes dread even in the stoutest sailor's heart. The currents between the rocky cliffs of Upper and Lower Tamerland are strong, fast, and treacherous. Whirlpools form without warning. Jagged rocks lurk just below the waterline. The perpetual, chill fog that gives the bay its name limits visibility and distorts sound in the same manner as the mists of the Misty Plains and Mournwood. Undersea caves hide sea devils, and the sahuagins' pet sharks hunt continuously. Harpies nest on the cliffs and delight in luring ships to their doom.

With all of these perils, no one has successfully navigated Fogshroud Bay to reach the western shore by



sea. Along the southern coast of the bay, the rain shadow desert called the Xanara Waste holds little appeal to explorers and the grasslands and rain forest north of the bay can be more easily reached by traveling up the Brine River.

WINDSPUR MOUNTAINS

The Windspur Mountains are the Wildermark's smaller cousin. The mountains of this range are less steep, lack ice-capped peaks, and are more heavily forested, at least on the windward slopes. In terms of elevation, the Windspurs are almost entirely limited to low pass and low peak, high pass altitudes. Several ogre tribes live throughout the Windspurs, each claiming as much territory as they can hold by force against the other tribes. Other than the ogres, the Windspurs are populated by an assortment of flora and fauna that greatly resembles the high valley cliffs of the upper Caracasa. Cinnamon trees are especially prevalent, and this gives the region a distinctive aroma.

Strong winds channeled into Fogshroud Bay push their way up the shorter cliffs of Lower Tamerland, bringing frequent rains to the lands north and east of the Windspurs. Other currents inundate the terrain east of the Windspurs, turning the land into a grim stretch of bubbling, snake- and insect-infested swamps that grow progressively more salty the closer they get to the coast.

The Windspur's ogre tribes avoid the swamps, for they are populated by many trolls who are rumored to serve the oldest black dragon in Tamerland.

THE BARRIER ISLANDS

Comprised of two large volcanic islands, these heavily forested rocks rise abruptly from the sea. Their black cliffs contain mazes of coves, caves, and inlets, many large enough to accommodate ocean-going vessels. Nut and fruit-bearing trees and shrubs grow thick in the interior jungles, providing homes to legions of colorful birds and gregarious monkeys. The terrain is extremely rugged, with deep valleys, high ridges, and thousands of caves. Frequent rains run in rivulets into the valleys, collecting in pools and streams that often flow through caves and into cul-de-sacs.

On the northeastern coasts of the Barrier Islands, volcanoes smolder. The larger island is home to Neapmue, the greater but less violent volcano. Neapmue continually oozes an orange river of magma that flows a meandering path from the volcano before plunging into the Sunset Reach as a hissing lavafall. Dull tremors frequently rumble through the earth around Neapmue, some strong enough to be felt a hundred miles away. Neapmue's sister is Daulan, and she has a temper. Where Neapmue continually oozes, Daulan erupts. Magma, ash, and gases vent continually from fissures on Daulan's northern face. As a result, the landscape is hellish. There is no vegetation. Pools of ash collect everywhere. Clouds of sulfur and other noxious gases blanket the scene and choke the air.

In recent years, the Barrier Islands have become home to the privateers of the Sunset Reach, who operate under official charter from the many secluded harbors and hidden coves of the Dreaming Isles. Stories say that untold riches are hidden on the Barrier Islands, guarded by clever traps and potent pirate curses.

HISTORY

Almost nothing is known of Tamerland from the time before Maruphel's ship landed in the Caracasa delta. What little is known comes from the wizards and other spellcasters who traveled to Tamerland by magic and from the oral tradition of the lizardfolk. It is known that the Caracasa river valley was free of the glacier ice long before most of Ambria, and that the civilization of the lizardfolk—while not as sophisticated—is much older than the civilizations of the east. It is believed that while dragons battled giants for supremacy in Ambria in elder days, the dragons' dominion was never challenged in Tamerland. The lizardfolk claim that dragons ruled the land as gods in ancient days, and do so still in the more remote interior of Tamerland.

Maruphel landed on the shores of Tamerland in the year 967. A small fort was built on the delta where the Caracasa River emptied into the Sunset Reach, and

Landsgate became the main port for arriving vessels from the east and the primary staging point for expeditions into the interior. Tamerland's riches and mystery became a powerful lure, and Landsgate was soon occupied by envoys, explorers, and agents from all of the major powers of Ambria and Zangala. Landsgate is claimed by the Dreaming Isles and ruled, in principle, by a saltblood governor appointed in Seagarden. In truth, though, Landsgate is an often lawless boomtown where gold is saluted more enthusiastically than national flags.

PEOPLE

The lizardfolk are the major indigenous people of Tamerland and they live in small tribal groups all along the Caracasa Valley and into the delta. Most of these tribal groups are relatively small: no more than 60 or so adults who live in huts of woven bamboo near the water's edge. Lizardfolk society is generally patriarchal. A hereditary tribal chief rules in matters of war and subsistence. This chief usually has a handful of wives, and these female lizardfolk and their progeny enjoy high status within the tribe. Along with his wives, the chief acts as judge in intratribal disputes. Since most lizardfolk leaders are shamans or disciples, chiefs often oversee the tribe's religious life as well. In those few villages where the chief is not a shaman, religious leadership falls to his wives. It is a rare lizardfolk chief that permits priestly power to be consolidated outside of his family.

Daily life in a lizardfolk village is principally concerned with survival. Since most lizardfolk subsist by hunting and foraging, a great deal of time is spent gathering food. Diet consists of shellfish, crustaceans, and fish from the Caracasa, game animals such as wild pigs, gazelle, and monkeys, and an assortment of roots, grubs, and fruit. A handful of lizardfolk villages closer to the delta have recently become involved in agriculture, especially the growing of rice and squash. As these few villages take on the initial trappings of civilization, they grow in size and political complexity.

As mentioned, most lizardfolk religious leaders are shamans or disciples. Lizardfolk religion retains vestiges of dragon and elemental worship, but now emphasizes animal spirits. Animals held especially sacred by lizardfolk include crocodiles, giant snakes, and dire vultures. Hunting and offering sacrifices to crocodiles and giant snakes is central to many important lizardfolk rituals, including rites of passage and offerings to secure victory in battle. The dire vultures of the Caracasa are considered holy. Killing one is punishable by death, and more than one explorer from foreign shores has run afoul of this taboo.

Relationships between lizardfolk villages can be tumultuous. Skirmishes over hunting grounds are common in areas where competing tribes are nearly equal to each other in strength. Larger tribes, most especially the tribe ruled by Hazhal Sleenzh, also known as Furious

Blackfang, a half-black dragon ranger of considerable personal power, dominate close-by smaller tribes. This domination is not always benign, but serious oppression or widespread intertribal warfare is rare. Tribal chiefs have been known to unite against common threats or to show over-ambitious tribes the error of their ways.

It is very nearly impossible to travel along the Caracasa without passing through territories claimed by lizardfolk tribes. Wise explorers bring tribute with them in order to purchase safe passage from tribal chiefs as well as a competent translator of Draconic. Of course, presenting tribute is not often a simple affair. Lizardfolk chiefs may be primitive compared the potentates of eastern lands, but they are neither stupid nor unaware of the value of a gold piece. As a result, passing through a chief's territory usually entails a formal presentation of gifts to the chief followed by an obligatory feast during which the chief can impress his villagers with the respect afforded him by the foreigners.

THE COLONIALS

Landsgate is as racially diverse as the eastern world. All peoples from nearly all nations have representatives, agents, and colonists in Landsgate. As a result, Landsgate has become a chaotic, international port. Representatives and agents purchased sections of Landsgate from the governor, and then set about transforming these sections into homes away from home. Landsgate currently has boroughs populated respectively by people from the Valhedar Dominion, Anderland, the Kingsmarch, the Three Kingdoms of Aradath, Ebernath, and, of course, the Dreaming Isles. There are even a few dawn elves and night elves of Sildanyr living among the Anderlar.

Each borough strives for self-sufficiency, but Landsgate is not yet large enough for this to be a reality. The residents of the various boroughs in Landsgate brought with them their own national festivals, customs, and religions. It seems like not a week goes by that there is some sort of festival, tourney, or holy day occurring somewhere in Landsgate. Inter-borough trade is robust and often violent. Merchant houses control the boroughs, both via aggressive trade as well as through their private militias. Given the lackluster leadership skills of Khalzundar, Landsgate's current colonial governor, there is very little in the way of real law and order found in the port. Disputes in matters of justice are often resolved by the mob or a merchant house militia, which amount to basically the same thing.

As mentioned above, there are two main classes of people in Landsgate. First are the bona fide colonials, most of whom hail from the Dreaming Isles. Colonials come to Tamerland, facing the great risks of living on the frontier, in exchange for a chance to reap the great rewards. Farmland in the delta is fertile and abundant, and the colonial government gives preferential treatment in land grants to colonists from the Dreaming



Isles. In this way, while foreign merchant houses do have significant influence in the region, Seagarden keeps at least a tenuous grip on the reins of leadership by controlling a sizable percentage of the food supply.

The second class in Landsgate is made up of outlanders: explorers, adventurers, prospectors, and speculators who use Landsgate as a staging area for forays into the interior. Many merchant houses are heavily invested in outlander activity, and they actively recruit adventurers to explore Tamerland. The natural resources of the region are largely untapped, and the potential to earn enormous sums of money by cornering some new market cannot be easily overestimated.

SETTLEMENTS

The tribal villages of the lizardfolk are scattered across the Caracasa river valley, but Landsgate is the only major settlement in Tamerland. Despite its prominent role in the exploration of the new continent, Landsgate remains a small but bustling town.

LANDSGATE

Landsgate (Small Town): Nonstandard; AL CN; 800 gp limit; Assets 58,000 gp; Population 1,450; 64% human, 9% halfling, 5% elf, 5% dwarf, 3% half-elf, 2% gnome, 3% lizardfolk, 3% tiefling, 2% thinblood yuan-

ti*, 2% giantkind, 1% doppelganger*.

Authority Figures: Khalzundar of Seagarden, male saltblood expert 5/disciple 5.

Important Characters: Blake Aldread, male troll fighter 4/wizard 8; Korbok Flinteye, male dwarf fighter 8/rogue 12; Steel Claw of the Valhedar Dominion, male tiefling fighter 12; Tori Invictor of the Knights Adamant, female trueborn paladin 8; Valsov the Odiferous of the Panthic Order, male human wizard 11; Uany of the Knights Adamant, male young adult silver dragon.

* Demographics for thinblood yuan-ti and doppelgangers are difficult if not impossible to accurately assess. The agents of Zangala and the Black Circle do not advertise their presence.

Landsgate's growth has been phenomenal. Maruphel quickly grew weary of the increasingly complicated politicking required to administer what quickly became an international port hundreds of miles away from any central authority, and he vacated his position of governor. Since Maruphel's administration, there has been one colonial governor after another, all hailing from Seagarden and all largely indifferent or incapable of effective rule. Thus, Landsgate, the only major settlement in Tamerland, has become a wild and woolly free-for-all.

There are three distinct classes of people in Landsgate. First, there are the bona fide colonials, most

of them from the Dreaming Isles and Ebernath. The colonials include the minimal administration of Landsgate as well as a growing number of gentleman farmers and craftsmen, and a pool of immigrant laborers. Colonials view Landsgate as their home, and many are fiercely proud of the civilization they are carving from Tamerland's wilderness. The second major population of Landsgate is comprised of the native lizardfolk of the Caracasa. Few make permanent residence in Landsgate, but many lizardfolk traders come and go daily. Other lizardfolk come to Landsgate during planting and harvest times to earn pay in the form of food and crafted goods. The final group consists of explorers, prospectors, and adventurers that use Landsgate as a staging area for forays into the interior. These folk have been dubbed "outlanders" by the colonials and natives.

Landsgate itself is a bustling port town. Built on a rocky outcropping in Maruphel's Delta, the eastern sections of Landsgate face the open sea. Atop a rocky ridge that bisects the docks and waterfront warehouses and businesses stands a majestic lighthouse surrounded by Landsgate's few governmental buildings. The governor's mansion is in this area as well. Moving inland are the residences and facilities of various merchant houses. Each merchant house maintains at least a small cadre of professional soldiers. These soldiers, firstly loyal to their employers, form Landsgate's militia and police force.

The western, inland outskirts of Landsgate open to the farmlands of the delta. Farmers live in small clusters of houses known as the Combines. Each Combine includes several extended families who work a portion of the land. They keep a portion of each harvest for themselves. The remainder is bartered to the merchant houses and businesses for necessary goods and protection. Only a few Combines can afford their own soldiers. Most must rely on the merchant houses for soldiers to keep watch in the fields against the predators of the region.

LANGUAGE

Languages from across Ambria and Zangala are spoken in Landsgate, but the dominant tongue is the Common trade language.

GOVERNANCE

Organized government is rare in Tamerland, both in Landsgate and the wild interior. Landsgate is ostensibly ruled by Seagarden, and the city-state's official voice in Landsgate is the colonial governor, Khalzundar. In truth, however, the governor demonstrates little interest in governing, and most of the city is ruled by gangs, guilds, and the militia of the local merchant princes.

The government of the lizardfolk tribes centers around the chiefs, supported in many cases by shapers and shamans in their immediate families. While the

lizardfolk share a common history and culture, the tribes are not unified and laws and customs rarely extend beyond the territories of individual tribes. Within these borders, the chief's word is law and violence between the tribes is relatively common.

RELIGION

Long before the arrival of explorers and colonists from eastern lands, there lived in Tamerland a vibrant, strange culture dominated by lizardfolk living under the rule of great dragons. Each dragon was master of its own domain. The most powerful dragon in a given region would rise to dominance and fiercely protect its territory. In return for their reverence, the dragon would also protect the lizardfolk tribes that lived within its domain. A hierarchy of disciples and warriors enforced a dragon's will and ensured that devotees regularly paid appropriate homage. The chromatic dragons sought to exploit their worshippers for their own fell ends, whereas the metallic dragons played as benevolent rulers.

Though the reasons for it are unclear, the easternmost lizardfolk tribes lost their dragon godlings in the recent past. The lizardfolk themselves claim that they displeased their gods and were abandoned in punishment for their transgressions. Ambrian sages have speculated that the dragons, long-lived though they are, may simply have died. There is some evidence of prolonged warfare between tribes, likely between those ruled by dragons of opposing alignment. In any event, the absence of dragon patrons in the region surrounding Maruphel's Delta allowed the colonials to move in and settle the region. Stories abound, however, of lizardfolk tribes deeper in the interior than have not lost their draconic immortals.

The actual divinity of these dragons is held in question by eastern sages. Most believe that these are mortal dragons that, powerful as they no doubt are, lack the ability to grant that power to their worshippers. The lizardfolk themselves, however, claim that the shamans and shapers of the delta are replaced in the interior by draconic disciples that wield the power of their immortals. Based on these legends, some scholars speculate that particularly ancient and powerful dragons could attain the status of small gods, much like the local deities honored throughout Ambria. These sages believe that Tamerland is dotted with eldritch wells of elemental magic and that these remnants of the magic of creation might grant the dragons elemental power unlike that wielded by their kind elsewhere on Eadar. They also believe that the birthplace of dragons is located somewhere in Tamerland, most likely somewhere in the dragon-infested Wildermarks.

TRADE AND CRAFT

The business of Landsgate is business. Anything that can be bought is sold in Landsgate, although some purchases require the buyer to deal with reprehensible people. It is not just goods that are available. Brisk trade in all manner of services takes place in Landsgate as well. Unfortunately, many purchases cannot be readily made. Uncommon goods, such as heavy armor or exotic weapons, usually have to be made to order because there is not a sufficient market in Landsgate to justify keeping such items in stock. Uncommon services, including assassinations, thefts, and slavery, can be acquired, but the risks are noteworthy. Never forget the mob or the unpleasant ways in which it expresses its displeasure of those who push too far the bounds of acceptability.

Mercantilism has taken hold of Landsgate. The competing boroughs gather raw goods such as lumber, surplus foodstuffs, exotic spices, and other materials for shipment to the various mother countries represented in the town. Craftsmen also transform local raw materials into luxury items that are increasingly popular among the wealthy back home. Given the trade deficit resulting from more goods leaving Landsgate than entering, prices for goods and services are inflated, albeit inconsistently so.

Boomtown Economics: Durable goods are pricey in Landsgate, and market fluctuations make long-range financial planning difficult. Every 1d6+4 weeks, the DM should roll d% to determine the current mark-up for durable goods.

WAYS AND TRADITIONS

BLOOD ON THE SUNSET REACH

As competition for access to Tamerland's resources increased with the arrival of representatives from more and more nations, the merchant-princes of Seagarden grew fearful that their economic advantage in the region would be lost. Since Seagarden lacks the military and political power to bar other nations from exploiting Tamerland's riches, the merchant-princes have devised another means of reaping profits from the flourishing trade between Ambria and Tamerland.

The privateers of the Sunset Reach operate under official charters issued from the Dreaming Isles. While their public purpose is to protect the merchant shipping of Seagarden and the other city-states from foreign pirates and other threats, the privateers' true charge is to prey upon the ships of Valhedar, Ebernath, and other

rival powers that sail the Sunset Reach in ever-increasing numbers. Hiding in the many secluded harbors and coves of the Dreaming Isles and Barrier Islands, the privateers have proved enormously successful. This is a mixed blessing. The privateers' activities indeed fill the coffers of the merchant-princes, but also provoke the ire of the nations upon which they prey. As a result, victimized nations retaliate, and piracy has grown rampant across the Sunset Reach and the coastal waters of Tamerland.

THE BLACK CIRCLE

The enigmatic Black Circle is a secret society of evil phasms and doppelgangers committed to throwing down the pillars of civilization and plunging the world into never-ending night. Devoted to an ancient mystery cult that glorifies entropy, chaos, and decay, there seems to be no limit to the Black Circle's destructive goals. It has long been believed that the Black Circle originated in Tamerland. If this is true, it is also likely true that Tamerland is the birthplace of the shapechangers.

Those who are both observant and paranoid detect the touch of the Black Circle at work in Tamerland today. With Landsgate as it is focal point, civilization once again is making headway on the continent. Little by little, the chaos of Tamerland's wilderness becomes subject to organized exploitation by the nations of Ambria. Surely this enrages the Black Circle, and it is foolish to not believe that there is already a cell operating in the shadows of the jungle or even within Landsgate itself.

DRAGONS OF TAMERLAND

While not numerous anywhere, Tamerlander dragons are not limited to the Wildermarks. Black dragons hunt the marshier stretches of the Caracasa and the Windward March. Tamerland's thick forests are home to green dragons. The foothills of the Wildermarks and Windspurs provide ample hunting grounds for bronze and copper dragons. Red and silver dragons live in the mountains proper, and the icy high peak elevations are the stomping grounds of white dragons. Stories even tell of rare, noble gold dragons living on the plains of the Leeward Plateau. Everywhere a dragon lives, it occupies the position of supreme predator. Many tribes of Tamerlander lizardfolk still pay homage to dragons. Some even enjoy a dragon's protection.

DRAGON HUNTERS

The tiefling lords of the Valhedar Dominion have learned many dark secrets from the ancient and evil beings with which they commune. Persistent rumors speak in hushed tones of powerful binding rituals that can subvert the will of an unhatched dragon, binding it

to the ritual's performer. In recent months, explorers from the Dominion have passed through Landsgate heading toward the Wildermarks. These explorers reportedly venture into the mountains on a most dangerous mission: to steal the eggs of dragons. If the Valhedar Dominion has in fact learned how to control dragons from the time of their hatching, the tiefling dominars, after the passage of several decades, will augment their armies with a truly terrifying force.

PERSONALITIES

MARUPHEL OF SEAGARDEN

The course of Tamerlander history changed with the arrival of Maruphel of Seagarden. A powerful wizard in his own right, Maruphel had long known of the existence of this great continent. He was just one of many to have used magic to visit Tamerland. Maruphel's great accomplishment is that he was the first person to sail across the Sunset Reach in order to set foot on the shores of Tamerland. This impressive nautical feat secured his lasting reputation as a legendary captain, and his historic voyage marked the beginning of a new age of exploration and colonization.

Maruphel had long recognized the enormous potential awaiting exploitation in Tamerland. He claimed the entire continent for his city-state and became the first and last effective governor of the region. He ably administered the first groups of colonials to make the sea voyage and personally oversaw the building of Landsgate. He aggressively negotiated compacts with merchant houses from the Dreaming Isles, giving preferential treatment to Seagarden of course. He also established a series of treaties with lizardfolk tribes of the delta, purchasing vast tracts of land for what amounted to little more than petty cash. As news of Tamerland's valuable natural resources spread, merchants and princes from other lands traveled to Landsgate.

FURIOUS BLACKFANG

Born in the marshy middle stretches of the Caracasa Valley, the son of a black dragon and a lizardfolk warrior-queen, Hazhal Sleenzh is the mightiest lizardfolk chieftan in Tamerland, both in terms of personal power and the prowess of his tribe. Known in Landsgate as Furious Blackfang, Hazhal is a half-black dragon, half-lizardfolk ranger. His three wives—Sturn, Vyonda, and Migenes—are all powerful shamans. These four together dominate a lizardfolk tribe that boasts more than 100 adult members. Blackfang cultivates alliances with other notable tribes not only through his own marriages, for each of his wives hails from the ruling family of a different tribe, but also by arranged mar-



riages with his chief warriors and advisors.

Although evil and plagued by unpredictable fits of passion, Blackfang is both honorable and shrewd. He visits Landsgate at least annually, meeting with Khal and the heads of the rich merchant houses. His dislike of the agents of Valhedar also wins him a begrudged acceptance from many. After all, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Blackfang seeks a religious reformation among his kind and would like nothing better than to reestablish the dragon cults. His reverence toward dragonkind puts him sharply at odds with Valhedrin dragon-egg hunters as well as the fiendish rites of the Dominion.

Travelers who venture into Blackfang's territory do so under his protection so long as they behave themselves. Proper behavior includes obligatory tribute to Blackfang and his wives, for Blackfang holds Sturn, Vyonda, and Migenes out as queens and high priestesses. He also views himself as the only legitimate royalty in all of Tamerland and therefore of the same social standing as nobles from any nation. Visitors to the court of Blackfang are advised to pay their tribute and secure promises for safe passage and other desired favors as quickly as possible. Once Blackfang's word is given, it is law, but more than one explorer has waited until banquet time before entering into diplomatic matters. Unfortunately, once Blackfang is in his cups, his draconic nature comes to the fore, and those things that he

has not specifically promised to do or not to do may be inflicted upon his guests.

KHALZUNDAR

The current governor of Landsgate is a disinterested, uninspiring saltblood weaponsmith named Khalzundar who immigrated to Landsgate years ago. His keen business acumen made him a valuable commodity, and Khalzundar rose quickly through the ranks of the White Pelican Guild, one of Seagarden's richest merchant houses specializing in arms and armors.

Khalzundar's craft specialty is the manufacture of magic weapons, almost always custom orders for rich adventurers and merchant princes. The smith commands high prices for his work not only because of the magic that he forges into the steel but also because of the exquisite artistry of his pieces. While he crafts only a half dozen or so magic weapons each year, his coffers swell with coins from several realms.

Khalzundar became colonial governor after his predecessor, the Lady Angelina, vacated her position after surviving one too many assassination attempts from foreign factions who resented her efforts to actually govern. Khalzundar, in contrast, fears little from assassins because he is not interested in ruling Landsgate. Instead, he leaves well enough alone. Instead of governing, Khalzundar skims considerable profits from innumerable business ventures and outright bribes that purchase his blind eye. He makes his quota to his masters in Seagarden, pockets a tidy sum for his troubles, and industriously trades on his entirely justified reputation as a weaponsmith of uncanny talent.

A small, efficient staff of colonial officials from the Dreaming Isles assists the governor in his day-to-day duties. Even with Khalzundar's hands-off, minimalist form of governance, there are still letters to write, bills of sale to draft and chronicle, explorers to be hired for various ventures, and so forth. The intricate web of favors and payoffs spun by the governor requires maintenance from many spiders, and Khalzundar's staff scurry about ensuring the viability of the myriad strands of their governor's efforts.

VALSOV THE ODIFEROUS

The Panthic Order of Ebernath sent Landsgate a human wizard named Valsov, dubbed the Odiferous because of his odious personal habits. Despite his slovenly appearance and odor, Valsov is not to be underestimated. He wields arcane magic with great skill and wisdom. When he puts his mind to a question, there are few answers he cannot find.

Valsov hails originally from war-torn Emerlyn where he learned to dislike the soldiers of both the Kingsmarch and Valhedar. When he was old and able enough, he left his village behind for a life of adventure.

As an adventurer, Valsov enjoyed considerable success and deservedly earned

a reputation as a man of action. He has worked as a partisan, a military advisor, a detective, and even a thief.

Although he puts on airs of moral indifference, Valsov is a deeply principled man. His word, seldom given, is an unbreakable bond, and Valsov always repays his debts, both of obligation and of blood. Of course, given his intelligence and wisdom, Valsov does not act quickly or rashly. He is quite capable of committing years to vengeance against a wrongdoer.

Eventually, Valsov sought and was granted admission to the Panthic Order. The high council, concerned with the chaotic factionalism of Landsgate, dispatched Valsov as their ambassador to Tamerland. There are wondrous secrets hidden in Tamerland's vast interior, and the Panthic Order seeks to inject some order into the region to better uncover those secrets. Valsov does not aggressively push the Panthic Order's agenda. He realizes that Khalzundar is not made of stern enough stuff to truly govern. He quite sensibly mistrusts and fears the Steel Claw, and Valsov does not wish to give the impression that the Panthic Order seeks control of Landsgate.

More than anything, however, Valsov worries about the Black Circle. He knows there is a cell in Landsgate, but his divinations cannot reveal its members or their present activities. Through a small but dedicated network of spies and informants, Valsov tries to thwart the Black Circle in Landsgate. Valsov believes it is the Black Circle, rather than Valhedar or the yuan-ti of Zangala, that represents the greatest threat to civilization across Eadar.



KNIGHTS ADAMANT

The Knights Adamant are represented in Landsgate by Tori Invictor and her lover, the young adult silver dragon known simply as Uany. Tori's origins are humble enough. She is the only child of the town headman in Ranave, a fishing village near Avennar. Even as a youth, her bravery and penchant for knocking the heads of town bullies was quite evident. On her 13th birthday, Tori claimed that a voice from the lake near her village spoke to her. This voice, which claimed to be the goddess Alharra, said that Tori's destiny was to take up arms in the service of law and good. Controversy gripped Ranave. Most of the villagers were convinced that Tori was either lying or insane. Even many members of her own family tried to dissuade the young woman from having further conversations with the voice or from acting upon the voice's words. Most elders, however, fervently believed in the celestial that dwelled in the lake and argued that Tori must heed her call or she would be roused to anger.

Eventually, pressures in Ranave grew too great for Aloysius, Tori's father, to ignore. His daughter's religious zeal had turned her into a busybody, and too many people were weary of Tori pontificating about their sins and the need for repentance. In an effort to restore the peace and to silence his daughter, Aloysius sent Tori to Avennar for presentation before the Knights Adamant. Aloysius hoped the Knights would convince Tori to give up her stories of heavenly voices and great destiny.

Some weeks later, Tori stood before a tribunal of the Knights Adamant. She told her story, and the tribunes were shocked. It is one thing for a person to claim a special religious calling, but for that calling to be accompanied by an actual voice purporting to represent Alharra was almost unheard of. A vigorous inquiry ensued. One by one, the minds of the tribunes changed. Tori's zeal was obvious. Her apparently instinctive knowledge of the paladin's code could not be ignored. Word was sent to Ranave: Tori would not return for she would take the oaths of the Knights Adamant.

Taking the surname Invictor, Tori's training as a soldier began in earnest. She accompanied the Knights Adamant on military missions across the Shield against Valhedar's legions. In the Stormfells, she was once part of an embassy to the court of the dwarven high king to settle disputes over mining rights in the mountains. After five years of active service and training in the Kingsmarch, Tori earned the privilege of becoming a knight errant. She left Avennar and traveled the land, seeking injustice and evil ripe for the smiting.

During the half decade before becoming a knight errant, the voice of the celestial immortal had been silent. Now it returned, urging Tori to travel east to the Morningstar Mountains. Along the way, Tori had many adventures, making friends and destroying enemies. In the woods of Sildanyr, she earned the respect of the dawn elves by joining them in retaliating against a par-

ticularly brutal night elf massacre. During a foray into the Morningstar Mountains to smash a night elf outpost, Tori met Uany, a young adult silver dragon who would become her lover and constant companion.

The noble and mighty Uany, in many ways, is Tori's opposite. Where Tori is brash, headstrong, and aggressively righteous, Uany is dignified, reserved, and compassionate. He is the head while Tori is the heart. Together they are a formidable force on the side of law and good. Uany, filled with wanderlust, was in the Morningstar Mountains, heading south to the coast and then across the Parthian Sea to Emerlyn. After one last mission against the night elves, Tori left Sildanyr with Uany.

The pair eventually winged their way from Emerlyn to the Dreaming Isles and then across the Sunset Reach to Tamerland. Dragons were nearly hunted to extinction by the giants of Ambria, and Uany is fascinated by stories of Tamerland's dragons. Both he and Tori dislike the presence of the Valhedrin in Landsgate, especially given persistent rumors about the dragon egg hunters, but direct action against the Steel Claw seems imprudent for the time being. Fortunately, even ignoring the Valhedrin, there is plenty for a knight errant to do in Tamerland.

SITES AND FEATURES

There is much to do and visit in Tamerland. Ruins of ancient settlements lie hidden beneath the canopy of the Caracasa valley. Pirate treasure lures adventurers to the Barrier Islands. Tomb robbers brave the dangers of the Misty Plains and Mournwood. Those interested in intrigue can try to ferret out the agents of Zangala or the Black Circle in Landsgate. Merchant house agents always need adventurers for missions to the interior.

THE DIRE VULTURE

Of particular note in Landsgate is the Dire Vulture, a sprawling, three-story complex of buildings near the docks. The Dire Vulture is a tavern, inn, gambling hall, and black market all rolled into one. A magnet for Landsgate's less reputable denizens, there is always something illegal, immoral, or dangerous going on in the Dire Vulture. The Dire Vulture's proprietors are a pair of adventurers from Ambria: Korbok Flinteye, a dwarven fighter/rogue, and Blake Aldread, once an elf fighter/wizard who was *reincarnated* as a troll. Korbok and Blake are fast friends and together control Landsgate's growing thieves' guild. They rule the Dire Vulture as if it were a fief, and both love to play the role of landed gentry within the walls of their den of iniquity.

Korbok, born in the northwestern reaches of the Stormfells, was captured by orc raiders as a youth. Taken as a slave, he lived for years under the harsh rule of Grizgnaw, an orc war-chief. Rivalries between orc

tribes are intense and violent. When Grizgnaw's tribe was attacked by a rival while encamped near the Pale Forest, Korbok was left in Grizgnaw's tent to guard the war-chief's women and children. Seeing opportunity, Korbok discharged this duty with great savagery, slaying a half dozen enemy orcs. Grizgnaw, impressed by his slave's ferocity, granted Korbok his freedom. Instead of returning home, Korbok became a wandering mercenary. A consummate opportunist unhampered by deep moral convictions, Korbok had no trouble finding one contract after another. He wandered across Ambria and found himself near Sildanyr where he met Blake Aldread.

Blake is a sharp contrast to Korbok. The elf is tactless, crude, cunning like a predator, and fond of using violence to solve problems. Blake is genteel, witty, foppish, and fond of using deceit to solve problems. Tired of the ceaseless conflicts between dawn elves and night elves in his native Sildanyr, Blake too embarked on a career as a wandering mercenary. His skill with the longsword and arcane magics commanded good prices. He had for months been moving up and down east Ambria, taking work whenever he could.

Despite their polar opposite personalities, Korbok and Blake became friends after only one night of strong wine and bawdy song. The duo has traveled the world for the past four decades, making and spending a fortune along the way. Six years ago, while in the employ of a shaman near the Frostfells, Blake fell in battle against frost giant raiders. Distraught at losing his other half, Korbok carried Blake's body back to the shaman and foreswore monies due them in exchange for Blake being restored to life. The shaman obliged, and Blake was reincarnated as a troll. While his body changed, Blake's mind and personality remained.

After Blake crafted a pair of *hats of disguise*, the duo decided to venture to Tamerland. Landsgate sounded like their kind of place, and so far this sound has rung true. The Dire Vulture pulls in piles of coin every month. Korbok and Blake's thieves' guild has its fingers in many pies. The adventurers also enjoy the advantages that come from nearly a half century of experience as wandering mercenaries.

ENEMIES WITHIN

There are three destructive presences in Landsgate. The most visible is the embassy from the Valhedar Dominion led by a tiefling fighter of considerable prowess known as the Steel Claw. In daily magical communication with his dark masters in Valhedar, the Steel Claw's primary mission in Tamerland is the acquisition of dragon eggs from the Wildermarks. He maintains a cadre of elite hunters, and reinforcements from Valhedar are never more than a *teleport* spell away.

While the Steel Claw fronts himself as the Valhedar Dominion's most obvious choice to oversee its efforts to acquire dragon eggs, the truth is that he has

fallen out of favor with the dominars. The Steel Claw's mission in Tamerland is his last chance to redeem himself. Failure in Landsgate will be met with punishments too terrible to contemplate, and the Steel Claw spends many fearful nights prowling his fortified home, lanterns burning brightly to dispel darkness from every corner.

With the pressures on him, the Steel Claw is like a cornered, wounded beast of prey. He keeps to himself, refusing visitors except those he explicitly summons to his presence. If he feels threatened, he is quick to strike, usually through hired muscle. His position in Landsgate is too precarious to risk direct action except in the most critical circumstances. He is merciless with his subordinates for he is eager that his superiors do not perceive their failures as his. Since the arrival of Tori Invictor and Uany, both Knights Adamant, the Steel Claw has become even more uneasy. If he finds means and opportunity to slay the pair of Knights Adamant, the Steel Claw will surely move against Tori and Uany.

The trueblood yuan-ti of Zangala have also set their sights on Tamerland. Governor Khalzundar's spies believe that as many as 30 thinblood yuan-ti from Zangala have infiltrated Landsgate. The reasons for this infiltration are not known but rise from undoubtedly horrifying motives. Rumors have it that the wicked dreaming sorcerers of Marazan seek the elemental wellsprings of Tamerland. Should this be true, unimaginable destruction could again be unleashed on the world.

Finally, there are the agents of the Black Circle. There is a cell at work in Tamerland, which means that there are not only doppelgangers in Landsgate but also a powerful phasm somewhere in the region. With their natural shapechanging powers, the agents of the Black Circle cannot easily be unmasked. This fact is worrisome to many in Landsgate. It is feared that literally anyone met in and around Landsgate is not who he or she claims to be.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

MONSTERS OF DAWNFORGE

The young world of DAWNFORGE is home to many monsters. Like the many races of the known lands, the monsters of the world are still trying to carve out their place. Some are mindless hunters that search the deserts and mountains for food, while others are progenitors destined to spawn a new species of enemy for the inhabitants of the world and their ancestors after them.

Many of the following creatures are unique in the world of DAWNFORGE, even if they are common on other worlds. The statistics given are for the individual creature, and its habits, home territory, and personality are described in detail. These creatures will one day spawn an entire race, but for now they are the only known specimen of their type. These “first” creatures are all much stronger, more intelligent, and more powerful than the common specimens found in the core rules.

The names and game statistics of the creatures are designated as Open Game Content.

TRADITIONAL MONSTERS IN DAWNFORGE

Most of the monsters found in the core rules can be found in DAWNFORGE, and the world is in such a nascent state that it is possible to find almost any creature haunting its caverns and plains. The regular influx of extraplanar creatures opens gateways through which monsters and explorers may come to the world. A few of the more common types of creatures and their place in the world can be found below.

Angels, Demons, and Devils: Outsiders of all kinds are common in DAWNFORGE, as the young world presents a multitude of opportunities for mayhem and

chaos. Lords from both the Abyss and the Nine Hells come here in search of mortals to corrupt, and angels come to protect the fledgling races and nations from the depredations of their eternal enemies. Demons and devils are most prominent within the Valhedar Dominion, where they walk the streets side by side with its everyday citizens and form dark pacts with its leaders to secure their allegiance.

Dragons: Dragons are relatively unknown on the continent of Ambria and are only rarely encountered amidst the isolated peaks of the Stormfells, Frostfells, and Icehammer Front. The Storm King had hunted down and slain most of the dragons in the Stormfells by 413, and those in the other mountain ranges are far from the developing civilizations. There are also a few dragons living in Sildanyr, on the island of Valhedar, and in the Azran Desert, but by far the greatest dragon populations are found in Tamerland. Sages believe that Tamerland is the birthplace of the dragons, and this legendary place is much sought after by adventurers and treasure seekers.

Fey: Fey are everywhere in the young world of DAWNFORGE. River spirits swim the Imilbar, the Horn, and the Hound; forest nymphs flit through the trees of Sildanyr; and even the frigid Icehammer Front boasts frost sprites that aid travelers in need. While the force of nature is still dominant in the world, the fey will be found throughout it. As civilization begins to creep in and archmages and would-be gods tamper with the balance of nature, the Wohm, and the magilines, the fey will likely retreat back to their comfortable home in Itheria.

Undead: These unliving monstrosities are all too common in the known lands, and it is a generally accepted rumor that the yuan-ti animate the dead bodies of captured enemies to act as slaves and spies. The practice of animating the dead is looked down upon by every

other culture, even the demon-worshipping tieflings. There is still a sense among the races of the world that the natural order must not be disturbed. The only exception to this is the Pale Forest, which seems to animate the dead within it to act as guardians of its borders. This strange phenomenon is feared by all and studied by those who wish to learn more of the world.

UNIQUE CREATURES OF DAWNFORGE

The following monsters are presented as the first, archetypal creatures of their species to emerge in the world of Eadar. In your campaign, one or more of these creatures may have already spawned lesser children, and you can use the standard d20 System rules for their game statistics.

THE BASILISK

Huge Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 18d10+90 (189 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 30 ft.

AC: 21 (–2 size, +13 natural) touch 8, flat-footed 21

Base Attack/Grapple: +18/+32

Attack: Bite +23 melee (2d8+6)

Full Attack: Bite +23 melee (2d8+6) and 2 claws +18 melee (1d8+3)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Petrifying gaze

Special Qualities: Can't be tripped, darkvision 60 feet, *entropic shield*, low-light vision, spikes

Saves: Fort +18, Ref +13, Will +9

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 15

Skills: Hide +7*, Listen +8, Spot +8,

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (bite)

Environment: Azran Desert

Organization: Unique

Challenge Rating: 12

Treasure: Double normal

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

HISTORY

When the tieflings first explored the Azran Desert, they found it to be a dangerous and inhospitable place. Monstrous scorpions with venom dripping from their

tails, elementals of air and earth that whipped the desert into a fury, and the nomadic sand creatures known as Atzaran (from which the desert got its name) met the tieflings and served to keep them from exploring too far into the hot sands.

Some of these early explorers thought to establish a fort atop a steep plateau that overlooked a barren, cracked land called the Forgotten Sea. The plateau itself rose more than 200 feet off the desert floor and was surrounded by dozens of other, smaller rock formations that stood like spines around it. But they soon discovered that the plateau had already been claimed by a creature so deadly that only a single tiefling from the initial settlement party would carry the tale of its horror back to Valhedar. That creature was the Basilisk.

Other hunters have tried to capture or kill the Basilisk, but it is too strong and too knowledgeable of its territory to be captured. It uses the cracks and spires of its home to hide from attackers until it can get close enough to petrify them. Only some of the Basilisk's victims remain statues on the plateau; the others have been used for food by the Basilisk or worn away in the frequent sandstorms that scour the region.

DESCRIPTION

The Basilisk is a huge, reptilian creature that measures more than 18 feet long from teeth to tail. It has eight powerful legs that can cling to rock and allow it to move up and down the walls of the mesa it calls home. Its tough hide is a dusky tan color that blends well with the sand and earth of its desert home. The creature's gaping maw is nearly as wide as its head, and it has sharp teeth that can tear a man's flesh or grind down the stone remains of its petrified enemies. Bony spines cover its neck and back, growing smaller as they reach its tail.

COMBAT

The Basilisk relies on its gaze attack primarily, only biting opponents that come within its reach. It prefers to remain in the area of its lair, and will not pursue creatures outside the spires that surround its home. It will stalk those who enter, however, relying on its natural coloration and ability to stand perfectly still even while climbing to lure them within range of its gaze. It knows that sometimes hunters seek it out, and it particularly enjoys killing and eating these overconfident creatures.

Entropic Shield (Sp): Once per day the Basilisk can cast *entropic shield* (caster level 11th).

Petrifying Gaze (Su): Turn to stone permanently, range 60 feet; Fortitude DC 21 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spikes (Ex): Any creature that strikes the Basilisk in melee combat (unless striking with a reach weapon) must make a Reflex save (DC 14) or be struck for 2d4



points of damage by one of the bony spikes that covers the creature.

Skills: The Basilisk's dull coloration and its ability to remain motionless for long periods of time grant it a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks in natural settings.

THE CHIMERA

Huge Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 20d10+100 (210 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 70 ft. (poor)

AC: 24 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +15 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 23

Base Attack/Grapple: +20/+34

Attack: Bite +24 (2d6+6)

Full Attack: Bite +24 (2d6+6), 2 claws +22 (1d6+3), tail slash +22 (2d6+3/19–20/x3)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Augmented critical, breath weapon, deafening roar, powerful charge

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/magic and good, darkvision 60 ft., resistance to acid 10, cold 10, fire 10, and electricity 10, low-light vision, scent

Saves: Fort +17, Ref +13, Will +10

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 12

Skills: Hide +3*, Listen +10, Spot +11

Feats: Alertness, Flyby Attack, Hover, Iron Will, Multiattack, Snatch, Wingover

Environment: Eastern Stormfells

Organization: Unique

Challenge Rating: 14

Treasure: Double standard

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

HISTORY

As the Storm King rose to prominence among the giants of the Stormfell Mountains, he gained renown and respect for his dragon-hunting prowess. He cleared the mountains so thoroughly that dragons are largely unknown in central Ambria today. One creature eluded him for decades, however—the Chimera. This creature was part dragon, part lion, part ram, with an intelligence and mastery of the terrain that allowed it to foil the Storm King's many attempts to hunt it to extinction. Although the Storm King wished nothing more than to drape the Chimera's hide over his dragon throne, his greater and greater responsibilities among the giants forced him to abandon his hunts. He continued to send out hunting parties in his stead, however. He sent most-

ly ogre thralls, who were more expendable than giants, and they continued to fail. Now the Storm King has given up on his hunt, convincing himself that the creature is either dead or has left the mountains altogether. If a hunter were to bring him the Chimera's hide, he would certainly reward him well.

The Chimera still lives in the Stormfells, and it has many lairs ranging from the northern edge of the mountains to the headwaters of the Shield River. It spends most of its time hunting on the eastern plains and has been spotted carrying off large herd animals from the lands around the Goldspring Sea. The Chimera tends to avoid populated areas, so killing it has not been a priority for the Anderlar or the Kingsmarch trueborn. The tieflings have sent several parties to capture the beast, hoping to tame and breed it for their armies, but none have ever returned. Once every five years or so the beast rampages, stealing gold and treasures from giant, dwarf, and human communities close to the mountain range. The reasons for this cyclic treasure lust are unknown, but it is tolerated since the beast mostly keeps to itself.

DESCRIPTION

The Chimera is a bizarre creature whose body resembles a lion with the fore claws of a great cat and the hind hooves of a massive goat. It stands about 9 feet tall at the shoulder, 18 feet long, and has a wingspan of 22 feet. Dragon's wings sprout from the creature's back, just behind its great black mane. It has a barbed tail that measures twice the length of its body and two great horns sprout from its head. The creature is not as intelligent as a dragon, but its instincts serve it well and have allowed it to survive alone for centuries.

The Chimera speaks Draconic and Giant, though it rarely has the opportunity to speak with others.

COMBAT

The Chimera prefers to surprise its opponents, swooping in from the sky to deliver a powerful blow with its horns. It then keeps to the air, using its breath weapon and flyby attacks to dismantle foes one by one. When possible, it uses its snatch ability and flies off in order to separate its attackers.

Augmented Critical (Ex): The Chimera's tail slash threatens a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 19–20, dealing triple damage on a successful critical hit.

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-foot cone of fire or 60-foot line of lightning or 30-foot cone of cold or 60-foot line of acid, damage 8d8, Reflex DC 25 half. The save DC is Constitution-based. The Chimera's breath weapon is as chaotic as the creature itself. Each time it uses this attack, the results are random (although the creature knows which breath weapon to expect each time).

Deafening Roar (Ex): Once per minute the Chimera can release a deafening roar that affects all creatures in a 30-foot radius spread. Any creature that

fails a Will save (DC 21) is permanently deafened and stunned for 1d4 rounds. Even creatures that succeed at their save are stunned for 1 round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Powerful Charge (Ex): The Chimera typically begins combat by delivering a mighty blow to an opponent with its horns. It hunts in this way as well, preferring to disable its prey rather than risk destroying it with its deadly breath weapons. In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge, this allows the Chimera to make a single gore attack with a total attack bonus of +26 (this includes the bonus for charging) that deals 4d6+9 points of damage.

Skills: The Chimera gains a +2 bonus on all Listen and Spot checks.

*In areas of scrubland or brush, the Chimera gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.

THE HYDRA

Huge Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 27d10+216 (373 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 20 ft.

AC: 25 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +16 natural) touch 9, flat-footed 24

Base Attack/Grapple: +27/+45

Attack: 9 bites +36 melee (2d8+10)

Full Attack: 9 bites +36 melee (2d8+10)

Space/Reach: 20 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: —

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 19, low-light vision, scent, spell resistance 28

Saves: Fort +25, Ref +18, Will +12

Abilities: Str 31, Dex 12, Con 26, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Listen +19, Spot +19, Swim +20

Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness (3), Weapon Focus (bite)

Environment: Vale of Nine Heads

Organization: Unique

Challenge Rating: 17

Treasure: Double standard

Alignment: Neutral

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

HISTORY

The Hydra lives in the Vale of Nine Heads, a secluded valley that lies between the Frostflow and the Torvun. The valley is a deep depression surrounded by stony formations that arch out over the valley. Viewed from the sky, several of the rock formations appear to be faces in the stone, which gave the valley its name long before its dangerous inhabitant was discovered.

The first group to do so was an exploratory mission of minotaurs seeking a new home away from the giants who mistreated them. The minotaurs believed they had found a new paradise until they stumbled across the lair of the Hydra, whose fearsome attacks made short work of the group. None of the minotaurs escaped and it was not until decades later that their remains were found and the mystery behind their disappearance was solved.

The Hydra is the undisputed king of the vale, and no challengers have yet been able to defeat it. An arrogant wizard attempted to build a tower in the vale in the year 752, but his efforts were in vain as the Hydra waited until he was finished and then attacked the tower. The creature rammed its body against the structure and used its heads to tear the upper levels apart. The wizard was never seen again. Most of the world's inhabitants are happy to leave the Hydra alone, but it has been rumored that the vale radiates magic on a level unknown in the world above. The source of this emanation is thus far unknown, and what connection it might have to the Hydra is a mystery that has never been solved.

DESCRIPTION

The Hydra is a reptilian behemoth with nine heads that rest on long, thin necks. At one time it had eleven heads, but two visible stumps are evidence of past battles with dangerous enemies. Its remaining heads are quite formidable, however, and have been the death of many an adventuring wizard or would-be martial champion. The creature has a dark green body with a tan underbelly. Its nine pairs of eyes are a red-speckled yellow color, glowing slightly in the early morning and early evening. The creature is approximately 25 feet in length and weighs thousands of pounds. Despite its massive size, the creature is able to swim well thanks to the motion of its many heads.

COMBAT

The Hydra can attack with all its heads at no penalty, even if it moves or charges in a round. It follows all other rules for hydras as presented in the *MM*.

Skills: The Hydra gains a +8 bonus on all Listen and Spot checks thanks to its nine heads.

The Hydra has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some 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, provided it swims in a straight line.

Feats: The Hydra's Combat Reflexes feat allows it to use all its heads for attacks of opportunity.

THE MEDUSA

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 8d8+16 (52 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

AC: 22 (+4 Dex, +4 natural, +4 *leather armor of shadow* +2) touch 14, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+8

Attack: +1 *shortbow* +13 (1d6+1/x3) or dagger +12 (1d4/19–20) or snakes +8 melee (1d4 plus poison)

Full Attack: +1 *shortbow* +13/+8 (1d6+1/x3); or dagger +12/+7 (1d4/19–20) and snakes +7 melee (1d4 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Petrifying gaze, poison, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., poison blood, viper companion

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 18

Skills: Bluff +9, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +9 (+11 acting), Intimidate +4, Move Silently +8, Spot +8

Feats: Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Isle of Statues

Organization: Unique

Challenge Rating: 9

Treasure: Double standard

Alignment: Lawful evil

Advancement: —

Level Adjustment: —

HISTORY

The Vandorn River spills into the Sunset Reach in three massive waterfalls. These falls create a mist that reaches nearly 100 feet into the air and enshrouds the area for a half-mile into the sea. In the midst of these treacherous waters lies the Isle of Statues, a stony green island that holds clues to the dwarven civilization lost beneath the waves during an ancient earthquake. The island is unknown to most; sailors avoid the mist-shrouded waters and adventurers have yet to find a way to access the sunken empire. Little do they know that such a portal exists on the Isle of Statues, but its guardian is a terrible creature whose contempt for life rivals that of the most bitter undead.

The Medusa is a strange and deadly creature whose origins are tied to a cataclysm that once wracked the western coast of Ambria. As the Varasians, humans who sages believe were the ancestors of the highlanders, watched their civilization slip under the sea, they attempted a last gasp of magic that they hoped could save them. Unfortunately, their idea was folly. Rather than turning the very sea itself into stone, they animated



a creature that petrified all who gazed upon her. The wizards who cast the ritual spell were her first victims, and all around her the ocean swallowed the others.

The ritual had worked to some degree, however. The Varasians' homes were sunken but intact, and there was enough air trapped within them to last for decades. This was good news for the Varasians, who believed that they had no way of reaching the surface again. The only portal from the surface was now guarded by this wretched creature known as the Medusa, and the Varasians have not yet found their way back to her island lair.

DESCRIPTION

At first glance the Medusa appears to be a human female with odd features and thick, flowing hair. She is 5 feet 6 inches tall and wears a shimmering gown that accents her well-proportioned body. She appears almost priestly as she emerges from her temple home to greet visitors. Once she has lured her victims closer, she presents her true self—a scaly humanoid with a deadly gaze and a nest of writhing serpents instead of hair.

COMBAT

The Medusa attempts to lure victims toward her by appearing as a benevolent priestess. She always tries to prepare by casting *disguise self* and *spider climb* on herself before emerging from her temple. Once combat is joined, she climbs a column to avoid melee attacks, using her gaze and bow to harry foes while her viper companion distracts spellcasters and ranged attackers.

Petrifying Gaze (Su): Turn to stone permanently, 60 feet, Fortitude save DC 18 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 18 negates, initial damage 1d6 Str, secondary damage 2d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Poison Blood (Ex): Any creature striking the Medusa in melee combat with a slashing or piercing weapon has a 10% chance of touching her poisonous blood, with effects exactly like that of her poison attack.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*disguise self*, *spider climb*, *true strike*; 3/day—*summon swarm* (viper swarm only); 1/day—*blur*, *ray of enfeeblement*

Viper Companion: The Medusa has a viper companion named Vissk that obeys her commands fully.

Vissk: CR 5; Huge animal; HD 10d8+30; hp 82; Init +6; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 19 (touch 10, flat-footed 17); Space/Reach 15 ft./10

ft.; Base Atk +7; Grapple +20; Atk +11 melee (1d6+7 plus poison, bite); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+7 plus poison, bite); SA poison; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +11, Hide +5, Listen +8, Spot +8, Swim +11. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Run, Weapon Focus (bite).

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 18 negates, initial damage 1d6 Con, secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Vissk has a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. She can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Vissk has a +8 racial bonus on all Swim checks to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. She can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. Vissk can use the run action while swimming, provided she swims in a straight line.

NEW CREATURES

ATZARAN

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 1d8+2 (6 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

AC: 14 (+1 natural, +3 hide armor) touch 10, flat-footed 14)

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+2

Attack: Claw +2 melee (1d4+1)

Full Attack: 2 claws +2 melee (1d4+1) and bite –3 melee (1d6+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Churning sand

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., heat protection

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 10

Skills: Hide +2, Listen +3, Spot +3, Survival +0*

Feats: Alertness

Environment: Azran Desert

Organization: Solitary, pair, group (5–12), or tribe (40–100 + 50% noncombatants + 1 3rd-level ranger per 20 adults and 1 leader of 4th–6th level).

Challenge Rating: 1/2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Neutral

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +1



Atzarans are hunched, dark-skinned humanoids whose coarse, yellow skin is covered with prickly hairs. They wear hooded cloaks that cover nearly their entire bodies, even during the hottest part of the day. Long, black talons extend from an atzaran's hands, which they use in combat and to puncture desert plants whose fleshy bulbs hold precious water.

Atzarans generally roam the Azran Desert in large tribes, constantly searching for food, water, and what comfort can be gleaned from the harsh terrain. The atzarans are both hunters and scavengers, although they prefer the latter role. They are sometimes referred to as "sand trackers" because they follow groups of travelers through the desert, hoping to scavenge their bodies when they die. Atzarans will not normally attack or interact with such travelers, though they fight with deadly ferocity if they are provoked. Atzaran traders can sometimes be found in Gedon or Erenak, but they stay away from Saredrin, fearing the military forces inside. Like the tiefling warriors of the Skyguard, some atzarans have learned to tame and ride the wyverns that infest the Blackscale Mountains, and the few engagements between tiefling and atzaran wyvern riders have become legendary.

COMBAT

Atzarans prefer to avoid confrontation, but if forced to fight they attack with their long claws and sharp teeth. Groups of atzarans use their churning sand ability to disorient and divide their enemies.

Churning Sand (Su): Two or more atzarans can

cause the sand in their area to churn violently, trapping and possibly drowning those within it. All atzarans involved must take a standard action to induce the effect, and then a move action to continue it in subsequent rounds. The ability affects a 20-foot-radius area, plus 5 feet for each additional atzaran involved.

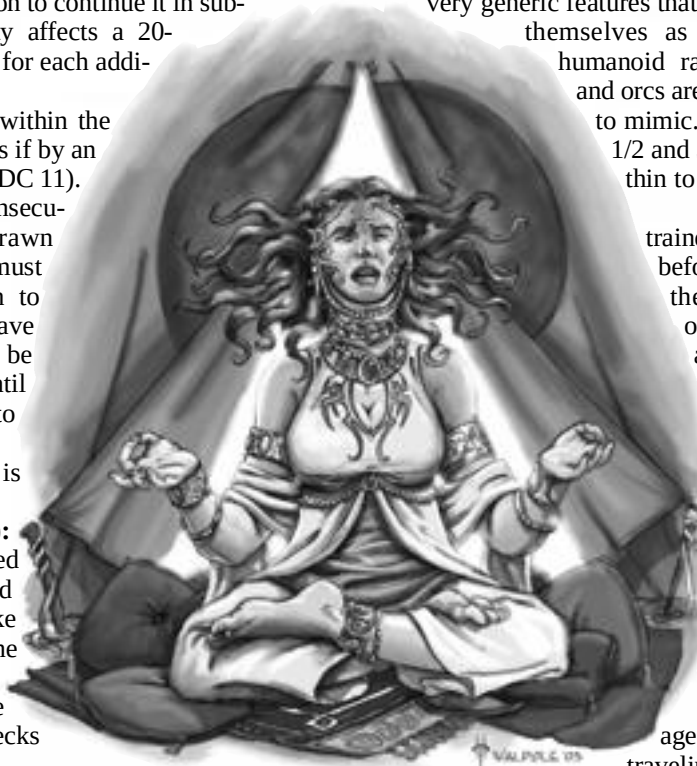
Any creature caught within the churning sands is affected as if by an *entangle* spell (Reflex save DC 11). Creatures that fail two consecutive Reflex saves are drawn underneath the sands and must hold their breath or begin to drown. Characters that have fallen under the sand must be rescued by allies or wait until the sand stops churning to escape.

The Reflex save DC is Constitution-based.

Heat Protection (Ex):

Atzarans are never affected by hot temperatures, and thus do not need to make Fortitude saves against the effects of extreme heat.

Skills: Atzarans have a +8 bonus on Survival checks in the desert.



Genshoks are intelligent undead whose creators, the yuan-ti, use them to gather information about the lands and peoples outside the jungles. Genshoks have very generic features that allow them to disguise themselves as almost any Medium humanoid race, although dwarves and orcs are very difficult for them to mimic. They stand between 4 1/2 and 5 1/2 feet tall, and have thin to average frames.

Most genshoks are trained for several months before being sent out on their missions of espionage. They learn the arts of disguise, subterfuge, and diplomacy from their masters. They are given enough coin to make a new life in any region of the world, and usually set to specific missions.

Trusted and experienced genshoks are given the freedom to become independent agents after a few years, traveling and gathering information wherever they can find it. Genshoks have become mortal enemies of the spies of the Black Circle, and sometimes their mutual hatred and competition exposes their plots.

GENSHOK

Medium Undead

Hit Dice: 1d12 (6 hp)

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

AC: 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural) touch 12, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +0/+1

Attack: Slam +1 (1d6+1)

Full Attack: Slam +1 (1d6+1)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Commune with creator, mimic life, undead traits

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 15, Con —, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +9, Hide +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Spot +10

Feats: Alertness

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Lawful evil

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: —

COMBAT

Genshoks learn to use weapons along with their more subtle tactics, and each develops its own preferences.

Commune with Creator (Su): Once per day, a genshok goes catatonic for a period of 10 minutes. During this time, the creature communicates telepathically with its creator, passing along gathered information or receiving new orders. Genshoks commune at the same time each day, and most have a secret place in which it is safe for them to become helpless. A genshok can commune with its creator at any range, so long as they are on the same plane.

Mimic Life (Ex): Genshoks were created to blend in with the living races of the world. As such, they have no features that would identify them as undead, they can walk in sunlight without penalty, and they are considered to have SR 20 versus abilities and spells that detect the presence of or identify undead.

GENSHOK OPERATIVE, 5TH-LEVEL ROGUE

Medium Undead

Hit Dice: 1d12+5d6 (23 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

AC: 18 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +3 studded leather armor) touch 13, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+4

Attack: Short sword +4 melee (1d6+1) or shortbow +6 ranged (1d6)

Full Attack: Short sword +4 melee (1d6+1) or shortbow +6 ranged (1d6)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Sneak attack +3d6

Special Qualities: Commune with creator, evasion, mimic life, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, undead traits

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +4

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff +12, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +10, Gather Information +9, Hide +11, Listen +13, Move Silently +11, Search +8, Sense Motive +7, Spot +15

Feats: Alertness, Dodge

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Lawful evil

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: —

Genshok operatives are trained to move throughout the world unnoticed, gathering information for their yuan-ti masters.

COMBAT

Genshok operatives do not excel at combat, but can strike from the shadows when necessary.

LAVORISS

Large Undead

Hit Dice: 7d12 (45 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

AC: 15 (–1 size, +6 natural) touch 9, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+13

Attack: Slam +8 (1d8+6)

Full Attack: 2 slams +8 (1d8+6)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 11, Con —, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills: Hide +2, Move Silently +4

Feats: —

Environment: Jungles of Zangala

Organization: Solitary or group (5–12)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Neutral

Advancement: 8–12 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: —

Lavoriss are large, humanoid undead that look like zombies at first glance. Closer interaction reveals an intelligence and quickness not possessed by those lesser undead, however. When a lavoriss is created, its body twists and grows until it is a larger, contorted version of itself. The skin on its face stretches so that it always appears sad and forlorn.

The yuan-ti of Zangala use lavoriss for manual labor, forcing them to build the strange temples that can be found deep in the jungles, as well as roads, bridges, and other structures. They are not considered worthy combatants, however, and the yuan-ti rarely call them into service in such a capacity. The same cannot be said for those who have discovered the process for animating lavoriss outside Zangala.

COMBAT

When forced to fight, lavoriss pound their opponents with their huge fists.

STONE TROLL

Large Giant
Hit Dice: 8d8+48 (84)
Initiative: +2 (Dex)
Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares)
AC: 21 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 19
Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+16
Attack: Claw +11 (1d6+6)
Full Attack: 2 Claws +11 (1d6+6) and bite +9 (1d6+3)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Rend 2d6+9, *meld into stone*
Special Qualities: Darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration 5
Saves: Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +3
Abilities: Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23 Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 6
Skills: Hide +2*, Listen +6, Spot +7
Feats: Alertness, Iron Will, Multiattack
Environment: Stormfell Mountains
Organization: Solitary or gang (2–4)
Challenge Rating: 8
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually neutral evil
Advancement: 9–14 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment: +7

Stone trolls resemble their softer cousins, except that their hide is stony and gray with rock-hard protrusions covering their bodies.

COMBAT

Stone trolls are extremely territorial and have a hatred for any creature that seeks to share their caves or mountain homes. They have a particular hatred for dwarves, who they will attack on sight.

Rend (Ex): If a stone troll hits with both claw attacks, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+9 points of damage.

Regeneration (Ex): Acid deals normal damage to a stone troll. If a stone troll loses a limb or body part, the lost portion re-grows in 3d6 minutes. The creature can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it to the stump.

Meld into Stone (Su): Stone trolls can enter stone walls and floors at will as if they had cast *meld into stone*. The troll is under the normal limitations of the spell, including being unable to move and having vulnerability to certain spells while melded.

Skills: Stone trolls gain a +4 bonus on Hide checks in stony or underground areas.

VIPER SWARM

Tiny Animal (Swarm)
Hit Dice: 3d8 (13 hp)
Initiative: +3
Speed: 15 ft. (3 squares), climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.
AC: 17 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural) touch 15, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple: +2/—
Attack: Swarm (1d6 plus poison)
Full Attack: Swarm (1d6 plus poison)
Space/Reach: 10 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks: Poison
Special Qualities: Immune to weapon damage, scent, swarm traits
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +2
Abilities: Str 6, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2
Skills: Balance +12, Climb +7, Hide +8, Listen +8, Spot +8, Swim +7
Feats: Alertness, Lightning Reflexes
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary, tangle (2–4 swarms), or colony (7–12 swarms)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: None
Level Adjustment: —

A viper swarm is a terrifying tangle of tiny snakes, all writhing and slithering over one another to get where they are going.

COMBAT

Viper swarms slither over their prey, delivering a number of poisonous bites to each foe.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a viper swarm in its space must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 11) or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 11 negates, initial damage 1d6 Con, secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills: Viper swarms have a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks and a +8 racial bonus on Balance and Climb checks. They can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened. Viper swarms have a +8 racial bonus on all Swim checks to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. They can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. Viper swarms can use the run action while swimming, provided they swim in a straight line.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SAGA OF THE
GIANT KINGS

LEGEND QUEST

Legend quests are a unique aspect of the DAWNFORGE setting. They represent normal adventures that have an impact on the world of DAWNFORGE beyond the norm. The rewards for these legend quests are similar to those of normal adventures, with one significant difference—legend points. Characters who successfully undertake a legend quest gain a legend point, which grants them a level in a legendary path and brings them closer to true legendary status. Only the most incredible legend quests should ever grant more than one legend point to the characters involved, and even then such opportunities do not come about during every hero's lifetime. The following legend quest is worth one legend point for every character who takes part in it.

This legend quest is appropriate for four 13th-level characters. The party will benefit greatly from the presence of a rogue that can aid them in both stealth and the disarming of traps. A wizard or sorcerer with access to teleportation and invisibility magic will also allow the characters to travel more easily, avoiding some of the more deadly encounters. Characters able to withstand the harsh northern climate of the Icehammer Front will be much more comfortable during the second part of the adventure.

ADVENTURE
BACKGROUND

Two great giant leaders have emerged to threaten the peoples of Ambria: the Storm King reigns in the Stormfell Mountains, and in the north the half-dragon immortal Anlar Icefang gathers an army of fanatical followers from the Frostfells and the Icehammer Front.

These giant leaders have different methods and goals, to be sure, but they both believe that giants were meant to rule the land. The current truce between the giants and dwarves of the Stormfells has prompted Icefang to send a diplomatic foray into the southern mountains. The Storm King, for his part, is showing a willingness to listen to these overtures, even as his kingdom is threatened from below by the fire giants. In truth, Icefang's diplomatic gestures are little more than a ruse: He desires nothing more than to tear down the walls of Skyhold and exact his vengeance on his father's ancient enemy.

King Odvar Ironforge of the dwarves has learned of a planned meeting between the two giant kings, Anlar Icefang and the Storm King. A possible alliance between the two must be disrupted at all costs, so Odvar and the other clan leaders have decided upon a solution. They seek a group of adventurers that can pull off one of the most daring plans ever hatched in the known lands. Failure could mean a new war between the dwarves and a united giant force, while success could ensure that such a pact never forms.

The dwarves believe that part of the terms of the meeting between the giant lords is that each leaves his signature weapon—both artifacts of great power—in their respective homes. While both weapons will certainly be heavily guarded, this represents the best chance the dwarves have of disrupting the new alliance. They will task their champions to sneak into the Storm King's abode and steal his hammer, *Abustril*, which is the only weapon in the world powerful enough to destroy Anlar Icefang's frozen greatsword, *Icebite*. Once the heroes have acquired *Abustril*, they must transport it to Anlar's frozen fortress in the Icehammer Front and use it to destroy *Icebite*. Finally, they must return the Storm King's hammer to his fortress and leave without being caught. All witnesses to this act must be killed, lest the ruse be discovered. It is the hope of King Odvar

and his advisors that this act will sow discord among the giants such that they will never become allies. Such a bold plan will require extraordinary heroes, however.

GETTING STARTED

The characters will be approached by an agent representing the dwarves. Perhaps the characters have served the dwarves in the past—one or more might even be personal acquaintances of the high king. They may hold titles or offices of importance in their own lands, or simply be heroes of some renown. No matter where they are, an agent of an appropriate race will contact them and offer them 1,000 gp just to listen to his offer. He demands that they pledge not to reveal what he is about to tell them whether or not they accept the mission. Once he is satisfied that they can be trusted, he hands over the gold and leads them to a private meeting area where he can be certain they will not be overheard.

“Thank you for hearing me out. I bring grave tidings from the Stormfells, and the fate of Ambria may be in our hands. High King Odvar of the Three Kingdoms has received word that a meeting will soon take place that could imperil not only Aradath but all the peoples of Ambria.

“As you may know, a half-dragon, half-frost giant immortal known as Anlar Icefang has been gathering an army. We believe that Anlar has gathered a force large enough that he would like to test it in battle. In order to ensure that his actions will not be seen as hostile, he has requested a conference with the Storm King in two weeks.

“We never believed such an alliance would be possible, but with the fire giants threatening the Storm King’s territory, we believe he may be open to negotiate with Icefang. What we need is a band of daring adventurers to infiltrate the Storm King’s castle in the peaks, steal his hammer, *Abustril*, and take it to Anlar Icefang’s secret temple. There it must be used to destroy Icefang’s most prized artifact, his greatsword *Icebite*. The Storm King’s hammer must then be returned to its home.

“I know this sounds nearly impossible, but it only gets worse. The point of this plan is to sow discord and distrust between the two parties, so the mission must be accomplished with great stealth. No witnesses to any of these acts must be left alive, so that Anlar Icefang believes he has been tricked. This is crucial, as failure will almost ensure that the two giants will ally with one another, representing an unprecedented threat.

“Are you willing to risk everything you have to save Ambria?”

The characters will certainly have questions for the envoy, who will answer them as best he can.

Can we expect any help in this endeavor? Why aren’t the dwarves doing this themselves? The dwarves are financing the expedition because they believe it to be of paramount importance to their survival. That said, they are not willing to risk the current truce by getting caught in such a bold maneuver. If you are caught or discovered during your quest, it will be bad. If King Odvar’s warriors were caught instead, it would be disastrous. That is why the dwarves prefer to work through independent agents.

As far as aid, the dwarves are willing to give you three *teleport* scrolls, a bounty of 5,000 gp each, and a place of honor among the Three Kingdoms of Aradath. The 1,000 gp already given should adequately cover your expenses, and the rest of the gold is payable upon completion of the quest. I can have the *teleport* scrolls immediately.

DM’s Note: If the characters are far from the Stormfells, such as in Tamerland or Valhedar, the emissary offers another *scroll of teleport* and a description of a hidden destination point that is close to the secret entrance of the Storm King’s castle. The DM should tailor the place of honor among the dwarves to his campaign, with rewards that could range from a parcel of land (albeit in war-torn territory) to magical aid, to a safe place to store goods and recover from future adventures.

Why are these two giant lords leaving their most prized possessions behind? One of the stipulations of the meeting is that both leave their symbolic weapons at home. We believe it is a show of faith by the two leaders.

How are we supposed to break into a heavily guarded giant fortress, no, make that two heavily guarded giant fortresses, without being seen or caught? The Storm King’s hammer is in a remote part of his castle, guarded by only his most trusted lieutenants. There is a secret passage into the castle through a series of caverns defended by the giants’ grotesque allies, the stone trolls. You can access this passage through a cave lower on the peak that houses the structure. It will require some stealth to avoid the patrols and a lot of climbing once you are in, but it should take you almost straight to the armory where *Abustril* is being held.

Abustril’s vault is locked by a special key that hangs around the Storm King’s neck at all times. We are unsure how you can bypass this lock, but a century-old legend tells of the Storm King’s former advisor, a giant who took up a life of peace and meditation rather than continue what he saw as a fruitless war against the dwarves. This advisor, Anglor, is rumored to hold a second key to the vault. He currently lives in a cave near the head of the Shield River, where he trades with some of the Kingsmarch nations on occasion.

As for Anlar’s ice temple, that is another difficult

RESEARCHING THE STORM KING

Gather Information DC	Bardic Knowledge DC	Information Gained
20	15	The Storm King's keep is heavily guarded by ogres, trolls, and giants of all kinds.
25	20	Regular patrols of roc-mounted stone giants circle the Storm King's keep.
—	25	The Storm King favors electrical traps.

tale. The power of his temple prevents direct access via teleportation or planar travel, which means that traversing the glacier is your only hope. Doing so without knowledge of the area, however, is nigh impossible. Your best hope is to make contact with and befriend the legendary creature known as Arga. None know of Arga's true form, but he is said to hate the frost giants with an unrivaled passion. As he is no friend to man either, it would behoove you to present him with a tribute suitable to his legendary stature. I can provide you with a map that shows Arga's lair; *scrying* should allow you to get close enough to it via teleportation.

Why not just attack the giants at their meeting place, killing two huge birds with one stone? The force required to even have a chance to destroy these two great powers cannot be marshaled, and the peace between giants and dwarves cannot be risked.

Once the characters have accepted the offer, the emissary bids them godspeed and disappears. The characters might want to have some time to find appropriate magic items for their mission, rest and heal up, or just do a little tactical planning and reconnaissance. If the characters do research on the Storm King's abode and the mountain peak on which it rests, they can gather the information listed in the above table.

FINDING THE KEY

The characters can teleport near or travel to the reported area in the Kingsmarch at the base of the Stormfell Mountains. It should not take them long (Gather Information check DC 15) to find out that the legends are true and the cloud giant does indeed live in a nearby cave. Any of the local Kingsmarch realms can verify the information and give the PCs directions to the cave of the benevolent, but isolated, giant.

Anglor's cave is at the foot of a mountain that abuts a light forest and rolling plain. A brook that runs off the Shield feeds water into a large pool on the edge of the forest, where the giant and local animals go to drink. The cave is not too far off a well-traveled trail that runs north-south along the mountains, and his tracks can

easily be spotted (Survival check DC 10) within a mile of the cave. As characters approach the cave, have them make a Listen check (DC 15). Those who are successful can hear the sounds of music coming from the direction of the cave. Anglor is busy playing his harp after a day spent tending his nearby garden and hunting for game in the mountains. A recently skinned catch can be seen hanging from a post just outside the cave.

The giant is amiable to most visitors, being well acquainted with the surrounding realms of the Kingsmarch. Groups that contain one or more dwarves or minotaurs may experience a bit of hesitation on the part of Anglor, imposing a –2 penalty on social skill checks when dealing with the giant. The characters can go about getting the key from Anglor in one of two ways, either with violence or by trying diplomacy. If they attack the giant, they will find themselves facing quite a challenge, as Anglor is an old and crafty foe. His meditations have afforded him many insights into the nature of the world, and he will not hesitate to use them on aggressors.

Diplomacy is met with interest on the part of the giant, who continually prods the characters for more information on their mission. He admits that he is hesitant to help a bunch of adventurers rob his king, but after some testing he believes them if they assure him they mean to return *Abustril* to its home once they have finished their task. Anglor's attitude when the PCs first encounter him is indifferent. If they can adjust his attitude to friendly, he says that he will give up the key to any character that can beat him in a game of skill (see below). If the PCs can adjust his attitude to helpful, he will offer them the key but insists that they leave something of value with him as collateral (any item or treasure worth 2,000 gp or more is sufficient).

If the PCs win the game of skill, Anglor hands over the medallion and asks that it be returned safely and that the PCs try to carry out their mission with as little bloodshed as possible. He wishes them success in their journey and says that he hopes that a new war can be averted. He offers them a place to stay for the evening, and fixes a good stew if they take him up on

ANGLOR'S GAME OF SKILL

Anglor's game of skill can be anything you like, from a game of chess or checkers to something more exotic. He will play against one character at a time, and each PC has one chance to defeat him at the game. A good default is to have the giant draw three circles in the ground and place seven, five, and three rocks in each circle. Each player in turn may remove any number of rocks from one of the circles. Whoever is forced to take the last rock loses the game. This game can be simulated with candy, toothpicks, or even dice.

If you want to play it out with your players, then one of them must win against you before the giant agrees to give them the medallion. Otherwise the characters can simply make three opposed Intelligence checks against the giant. The winner of two of these checks is the winner of the game.

the offer. If the PCs return the key, Anglor can become a reliable contact and friend to them.

Creature: Anglor, male cloud giant spirit adept 6; CR 17; Huge Giant (Air); HD 17d8+6d10+138; hp 250; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 50 ft. (10 squares); AC 26, touch 10, flat-footed 24; Face/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +16/+36; Atk +27 melee (4d6+19, gargantuan masterwork morningstar) or +26 melee (1d6+12, slam) or +17 ranged (2d8+12, rock); Full Atk +27/+22/+17 melee (4d6+18 gargantuan masterwork morningstar) or +26 melee (1d6+12, 2 slams) or +17 ranged (2d8+12, rock); SA Rock throwing, spell-like abilities; SQ Evasion, *feather fall*, low-light vision, oversized weapon, rock catching, scent, siphon powers, Wohm sense II; AL LN; SV Fort +21, Ref +14, Will +15; Str 35, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Balance +8, Climb +21, Craft (woodworking) +12, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +12, Knoweldge (the Wohm) +8, Listen +20, Perform (harp) +9, Sense Motive +16, Spot +20, Tumble +12. Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*levitate* (self plus 2,000 pounds), *obscuring mist*; 1/day—*fog cloud*. Caster level 15th.

Spirit Strength: 15.

Adept Powers: Burst of speed, evasive action, smite enemies, visions of truth.

Possessions: Giant masterwork harp, vault key, bracers of armor +4.

GETTING TO THE STORM KING'S CASTLE (EL 13)

The PCs have several options for getting into the caves near the Storm King's castle in the city of Skyhold. The easiest route is just to *teleport* as close as they can and go the rest of the way on foot. A bit of scrying should allow them to *teleport* to within a mile or so of the Storm King's fortress. That last mile is very dangerous if they do not have a means of approaching the cave, as there are regular patrols of roc-mounted stone giants circling the castle. There is a 15% chance per round that the characters will be spotted by a patrol unless they have a means of hiding themselves. If the characters are actively hiding, grant the giants and rocs Spot checks at their full bonuses thanks to their vantage point and the relatively clear terrain.

Creatures: Stone giants (2); CR 8; Large Giant (Earth); HD 14d8+56; hp 119; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 23; Face/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +10/+22; Atk +17 melee (2d8+12, greatclub) or +17 melee (1d4+8, slam) or +11 ranged (2d8+12, rock); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (2d8+12, greatclub) or +17/+12 melee (1d4+8, 2 slams) or +11 ranged (2d8+12, rock); SA Rock throwing; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, rock catching; AL N; SV Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 27, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Hide +6, Jump +8, Ride +8, Spot +12. Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot.

Rocs (2); CR 9; Gargantuan Animal; HD: 18d8+126; hp 207; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft. (4 squares), fly 80 ft. (average); AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 15; Face/Reach 20 ft./15 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +13/+37; Atk +21 melee (2d6+12, talon); Full Atk +21 melee (2d6+12, 2 talons) and +19 melee (2d8+6, bite); SQ Low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +18, Ref +13, Will +9; Str 34, Dex 15, Con 24, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Hide -3, Listen +10, Spot +14. Alertness, Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover.

Tactics: The stone giants are content to pelt any intruders with rocks unless they are taking serious damage from spells or powerful ranged attacks. Their range increment with thrown boulders is 180 feet, which they use to their advantage. Each stone giant carries 10 boulders in his saddlebags. If the characters appear to be heading for the cave or are seriously damaging the giants and their mounts, the rocs dive and attempt to snatch any spellcasters and archers, carrying them off to the Storm King's castle once captured. When brought below 25% of their full hit point totals, the giants wheel around and fly toward the castle.

Treasure: Each of the stone giants carries 75 pp in a pouch at his belt. One of them has a diamond worth

1,000 gp, and one is wearing a *Type VII necklace of fireballs* on his wrist as a bracelet.

Development: If the giants are allowed to leave, the castle will be on full alert, which makes things more difficult for the PCs once they are inside. In addition, their veil of secrecy has been destroyed, which could mean bad things for the dwarven alliance.

If the characters use flashy and loud spells against the mounted giants, there is a 25% chance per occurrence that another patrol sees the disturbance and flies in to check it out 1d4 rounds later. Such behavior does not alert the castle, but if any giant escapes after seeing the PCs, then the castle will be on alert.

THE CAVERNS OF THE STONE TROLLS

The stone trolls of the northern Stormfells are among the Storm King's most powerful allies. As a token of his commitment to the alliance, he ordered his palace constructed above a network of troll warrens. While this helped secure the loyalty of the various troll kings, it also left a hole in his defenses that should prove helpful to the PCs in their quest.

Unlike normal trolls, the stone trolls are not particularly vulnerable to fire. Only acid deals permanent damage to a stone troll. This information can be had through a successful Knowledge (nature) check (DC 18), Gather Information check (DC 28), or Bardic Knowledge check (DC 28). The stone trolls are very territorial and attack any intruders on sight.

ENTRANCE TUBE (EL 8)

There is a very small hole in the side of the mountain that leads into the troll caverns. It is barely 5 feet in diameter where it descends into the mountain and is quite a steep climb down for the first 100 feet (Climb check DC 10). The earth is soft in the tunnel, and a Survival check (DC 15) reveals that the walls are regularly torn up by very large claws (as the stone trolls move in and out of the caverns). Once the party has descended the tube, it widens into a 7-foot-diameter shaft that remains relatively level. The shaft is filled with moss, and at one point, about 400 feet into the tube, the moss becomes a deadly hazard.

Choke Moss (CR 8): When a patch of choke moss is disturbed, it sends a cloud of microscopic spores into the air in a 30-foot radius. A successful Spot check (DC 30) is required to notice the spores' release, while a Survival check (DC 28) identifies the choke moss for what it is. Nothing happens when a creature first inhales the spores. Ten minutes after first inhaling the spores, a creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or begin violently coughing up blood and suffering 1d6 points of Constitution damage. Characters who fail this initial save are considered fatigued and must make a new save

every hour or suffer an additional 1d6 points of Constitution damage. Choke moss can be identified with a successful Heal or Survival check (DC 15), and can be removed from a character's system with a *remove disease*, *heal*, or *miracle* spell.

STONE TROLL CAVERNS

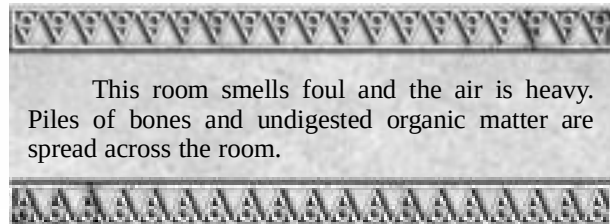
These caverns are essentially a maze to anyone not familiar with their design, and unless the PCs take careful pains to map and mark the caverns they have encountered then they are going to be guessing their way through. It requires a successful Survival check (DC 25) to successfully map a cavern and the area around it. Marking the room in some manner grants a +10 bonus on each check. If a cavern is successfully mapped, the characters will have a better chance of narrowing down the choices of caverns where the secret entrance is located. Until they do so, they are in for some fighting. For every 10 minutes of exploring, the characters will come to another cavern. The contents of a cavern are determined randomly in order to simulate the characters being lost in the maze of tunnels. Each cavern is 1d4x30 feet in diameter and is riddled with boulders and moss-covered stalagmites. If the characters have successfully mapped a cavern, simply make a note by it and disregard it if it is rolled again.

d%	Room Contents
01–20	Empty cavern
21–40	Garbage cavern*
41–65	Two stone trolls
66–90	Troll king's lair**
91–00	Portal cavern

*This room can only be encountered once. After that count it as an empty room result.

**This room can only be encountered once unless the stone troll king escapes, in which case he can regenerate and hunt down the PCs with two more trolls.

GARBAGE ROOM (EL 10)



This room smells foul and the air is heavy. Piles of bones and undigested organic matter are spread across the room.

As soon as any character enters this area, three huge otyughs stir from their slime pits and move toward it, awaiting food. They are used to getting the discards of the stone trolls, and if the characters bring at least three dead stone troll bodies for the otyughs, they will let them pass unmolested as they devour the corpses. If not, they attack immediately.

Creatures: Advanced otyughs (3); CR 7; Huge

Aberration; HD 12d8+39; hp 93; Init -1; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 19, touch 7, flat-footed 19; Face/Reach 15 ft./15 ft. (20 ft. with tentacle); Base Atk/Grapple +9/+21; Atk: +12 melee (1d8+4, tentacle); Full Atk +12 melee (1d8+4, 2 tentacles) and +9 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA Constrict 1d8+4, disease, improved grab; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +9; Str 19, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide -3, Listen +8, Spot +8. Alertness, Improved Natural Armor, Multiattack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacle).

Tactics: One otyugh is near the tunnel where the characters enter, while the other two are some 40 feet away. All of the otyughs wait for one round before attacking, hoping for a meal. If enough food is presented, they simply start eating, otherwise they attack in the second round. The otyughs always defend themselves from attack. The otyughs use their improved grab ability to great effectiveness, attempting to grab as many creatures as possible while squeezing them to death.

Treasure: Characters that search for 10 minutes or make a successful Search check (DC 20) find the following treasure scattered about the room: 1,800 sp, 600 gp, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of poison* (affects drinker), and a discarded *wand of charm monster* (4 charges).

WANDERING STONE TROLLS (EL 10)

You wander into yet another rocky cavern, only this one is inhabited by two gray trolls with stony protrusions jutting out of their bodies.

As soon as any of the stone trolls detects an intruder, it and its fellows scream and launch into an attack.

Creatures: Stone Trolls (2); CR 8; Large Giant; HD 8d8+48; hp 84; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Face/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +6/+16; Atk: +11 melee (1d6+6, claw); Full Atk +11 melee (1d6+6, 2 claws) and +9 melee (1d6+3, bite); SA Rend 2d6+9, *meld into stone*; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration 5 (acid); AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +6, Spot +7. Alertness, Iron Will, Multiattack.

Treasure: Each stone troll carries a variety of coins and gems with a total value of 1,000 gp (DM's choice).

TROLL KING'S LAIR (EL 13)

The rocks in this room have been moved toward the walls, and most of the stalagmites have been broken off at the base. Two trolls stand guard over a third, larger troll, who is wearing a thick necklace comprised of dozens of thin gold chains. The two guard trolls are wielding two of the broken stalagmites as huge stone clubs, while the troll king has a large greatsword at his side.

The stone troll king spends most of his time in this 80-foot-by-80-foot cavern, waiting for the others to bring him food and treasure. Occasionally he uses his sword, which deals normal damage to regenerating creatures, to bring a troll into line and remind the others why they pay him tribute. The troll king has befriended a large half-fiend gargoyle that found its way into the caverns here, and now the two are never far from one another. Currently the gargoyle is hanging 40 feet above the cavern floor on the ceiling, where he is almost impossible to detect (he gains a +8 bonus on Hide checks, and the opponent must then succeed at a Spot check (DC 20) to detect that the gargoyle is alive).

Creatures: Stone trolls (2) hp 84 each. These stone trolls attack with huge stone greatclubs (attack bonus +11/+6, damage 2d8+9) until they drop below 50% of their total hit points, at which time they drop the clubs and proceed to claw, rend, and bite their opponents.

Stone troll king; CR 10; Large Giant; HD 12d8+72; hp 126; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Face/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +9/+20; Atk: +15 melee (1d6+7, claw) or +15 melee (2d6+10, *Trollslayer*); Full Atk +15 melee (1d6+7, 2 claws) and +13 melee (1d6+3, bite) or +16/+11 melee (2d6+10, *Trollslayer*); SA Rend 2d6+10, *meld into stone*; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision, regeneration 5 (acid); AL NE; SV Fort +14, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 25, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Listen +12, Spot +13. Alertness, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Possessions: *Trollslayer**, *potion of protection from elements (acid)*.

* *Trollslayer* is a +1 wounding greatsword that has an additional magic property—any damage dealt by *Trollslayer* cannot be regenerated by creatures with that special quality.

Half-fiend advanced gargoyle; CR 9; Large Outsider (Earth); HD 8d8+59; hp 95; Init +3; Spd 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 60 ft. (average); AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Face/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple

+8/+20; Atk: +15 melee (1d6+8, claw); Full Atk +15 melee (1d6+8, 2 claws) and +13 melee (1d8+4, bite) and +13 melee (1d8+4, gore); SA Smite good, spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., freeze, immunity to poison, resistance to acid, cold, electricity, and fire 10, spell resistance 18; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +6; Str 27, Dex 16, Con 24, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Hide +8, Listen +12, Move Silently +9, Search +4, Spot +12. Alertness, Multiattack, Toughness.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*darkness*, *poison* (DC 14); 1/day—*desecrate*, *unholy blight* (DC 14).

Tactics: If any of the trolls spot the characters, they all scream and leap to attack. The troll king allows his guards to wade into combat first so they take the brunt of the first attacks before he seeks out spellcasters and powerful melee opponents. During this round, he drinks his *potion of protection from elements* to protect him from possible acid attacks (the potion protects the troll king from up to 60 points of acid damage).

The gargoyle waits for combat to begin before swooping down, even if he spots the PCs. He will only give his position away if the troll king is about to be ambushed and does not see his attackers. In either case, he begins combat with his *unholy blight* ability. He then uses *darkness* if it is possible to divide the battlefield, otherwise he charges down at any obvious spellcasters and attempts to disrupt their spells.

Treasure: The troll king keeps his treasure in a sack underneath a pile of wolf furs (Search check DC 24). His stash includes the following treasure: 320 pp, 1,020 gp, four finely cut emeralds worth 250 gp each, and two *potions of levitation*.

PORTAL CAVERN (EL 8)



The hair on the back of your neck rises as you enter this cavern, although no enemies are evident. A wall near the back of the cavern has been carefully scraped flat and is a lighter color of stone than the rest of the area. Carved into the stone are dozens of rust-colored runes arranged in three concentric circles. The cavern is otherwise empty.



This is the portal into the Storm King's castle. Any character who knows the Giant language, or uses magic such as *comprehend languages*, recognizes the runes as Giant. They depict a variety of hellish fates for those who would pass through the circles. It is clear to anyone looking at the rune circles that six of the runes must be pressed in the correct order in order to open the portal. It requires a successful Decipher Script check (DC 20)

in order to discern the correct order of the runes. Pressing the runes in the wrong order triggers the **Trap**, although it will only trigger once per day so characters are free to explore all possible combinations once it has gone off.

Acid Arrow Trap: CR 8; magic device; visual trigger (*true seeing*); automatic reset; multiple traps (two simultaneous *acid arrow* traps); Atk +9 ranged touch and +9 ranged touch; spell effect (*acid arrow*, 18th-level wizard, 2d4 acid damage for 7 rounds); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

Development: Once the characters have bypassed the trap they can open the portal, which slides back with a loud scraping sound and then rolls to the right. It resets via a level on the other side. The characters have now entered the citadel of the Storm King.

CITADEL OF THE STORM KING

The characters are in a remote lower section of the Storm King's citadel, which means that they are relatively cut off from the rest of the castle. Should they choose to ascend the stairs into the citadel itself, they have gone beyond the bounds of this legend quest (not to mention they are in a great deal of trouble!).

CITADEL FEATURES

Unless stated otherwise, the walls and floor of the citadel are made of giant, well-fitted flagstones. Walls are all 2-foot-thick superior masonry (hardness 8, 180 hp, Climb DC 20, break DC 35). All ceilings are 25 feet high.

All of the internal doors in the citadel are made of solid oak (hardness 5, hp 120, break DC 33).

CITADEL ROOM 1: TORTURE CHAMBER



The bloody walls and painful-looking devices mark this as the playground for a very experienced torturer. Most of the equipment is oversized, as if it were made for giants and other large creatures, but some of the most wicked devices are sized for smaller creatures. A dwarf-size iron maiden has a beard carved into its metal door.



There is not much of interest in this room other than the torture implements themselves. The Storm King, despite the giants' bloody past, frowns on torture and these chambers rarely see use. There is a book of torture techniques that would be worth 500 gp to the

right buyer, although attempting to sell it in some nations might raise an eyebrow or two. A character that looks through this book can make a Spot check (DC 15) to notice certain torture runes that will decipher the wheel lock to **Room 3**.

CITADEL ROOM 2: FALSE BEDROOM (EL 7)

This room appears to be the abode of a single giant. A huge bed nearly splits the room in half, and a dresser sits along the far wall. A chest sits at the foot of the bed, the lock hanging unhooked from its panel. The bed is disheveled and the sheets appear stained and crusty.

This entire room is a ruse used by the giant torturer to psychologically toy with prisoners. Tortured beings who think they are being sent here for a respite are in for a surprise, as the bed, chest, and dresser are all mimics that are trained to pound any non-giant into submission. The mimics lie in wait until at least two characters are within range, then they spring to attack.

Creatures: Mimics (3); CR 4; Large Aberration; HD 7d8+21; hp 52; Init +1; Spd 10 ft. (2 squares); AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Face/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +5/+13; Atk: +9 melee (1d8+4, slam); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+4, 2 slams); SA Adhesive, crush; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to acid, mimic shape; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +9, Disguise +13, Listen +8, Spot +8. Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (slam).

Adhesive (Ex): A mimic exudes a thick slime that acts as a powerful adhesive, holding fast any creatures or items that touch it. An adhesive-covered mimic automatically grapples any creature it hits with its slam attack. Opponents so grappled cannot get free while the mimic is alive without removing the adhesive first.

A weapon that strikes an adhesive-coated mimic is stuck fast unless the wielder succeeds on a DC 16 Reflex save. A successful DC 16 Strength check is needed to pry it off.

Strong alcohol dissolves the adhesive, but the mimic still can grapple normally. A mimic can dissolve its adhesive at will, and the substance breaks down 5 rounds after the creature dies.

Crush (Ex): A mimic deals 1d8+4 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Mimic Shape (Ex): A mimic can assume the general shape of any object that fills roughly 150 cubic feet (5 feet by 5 feet by 6 feet), such as a massive chest, a stout bed, or a wide door frame. The creature cannot

substantially alter its size, though. A mimic's body is hard and has a rough texture, no matter what appearance it might present. Anyone who examines the mimic can detect the ruse with a successful Spot check opposed by the mimic's Disguise check. Of course, by this time it is generally far too late.

Tactics: These mimics have been trained to beat their victims into submission rather than killing them for a meal. As a result, the mimics will attack to subdue (taking a –4 penalty on their attack rolls) until they are reduced to less than 50% of their original hit points, at which point all bets are off and they try to kill the person dealing them the most damage.

CITADEL ROOM 3: ARMORY (EL 12)

Inside this door is an armory that looks like it alone could equip the nations of the Kingsmarch. Giant-size versions of any weapon imaginable adorn the walls, tables, and weapon racks around the room.

This is a minor armory of the Storm King's citadel, and the walls, floor, and even ceiling are packed with giant-size weapons of all kinds. The Storm King has decided to keep his legendary hammer, *Abustril*, here during the historic meeting between he and Anlar Icefang. The door to the room is locked by three concentric circles made of stone blocks that can be spun like a combination lock. The rings have sigils inscribed upon them that describe in Giant various torture techniques. Anyone that can read Giant can make an Intelligence check (DC 10) in order to recognize some of the runes. There are three particular runes that comprise a trio of tortures that, when performed in order, cause a most excruciating pain. These runes must be lined up in order from the outside circle in before the central pivot stone can be turned and the door opened. If the pivot stone is turned without first lining up the runes, the **Trap** is activated. The hammer is protected by an illusion of an empty weapon rack in the northeast corner of the room. Any character that interacts with the weapon rack can make a Will save (DC 18) to see through the illusion. The entire room has been covered by a permanent *magic aura*, so attempts to detect magic will only show certain areas, including the illusion-covered hammer, to have a stronger aura.

Also present in the room is Aulifar Axegrinder, the cloud giant weaponmaster of the citadel. Unless the PCs have taken pains to conceal their movements and have not fought the mimics in **Room 2**, Aulifar knows that they are coming and has prepared himself (see **Tactics** below). He will do everything he can to protect the hammer, including fighting to the death. He has an



invisible stalker companion that will fight as well.

Creatures: Aulifar Axegrinder; CR 11; Huge Giant (Air); HD 17d8+102; hp 178; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 50 ft. (10 squares); AC 26, touch 9, flat-footed 25; Face/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +12/+32; Atk +23 melee (4d6+19, *gargantuan morningstar* +1) or +22 melee (1d6+12, slam) or +13 ranged (2d10+12, masterwork throwing blade); Full Atk +23/+18/+13 melee (4d6+19 *gargantuan morningstar* +1) or +22 melee (1d6+12, 2 slams) or +13 ranged (2d10+12, masterwork throwing blade); SA Rock throwing, spell-like abilities; SQ Low-light vision, oversized weapon, rock catching, scent; AL LN; SV Fort +16, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 35, Dex 13, Con 23, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +19, Craft (weapon-smithing) +11, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +11, Listen +15, Perform (harp) +2, Sense Motive +9, Spot +15. Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Iron Will, Power Attack.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*levitate* (self plus 2,000 pounds), *obscuring mist*; 1/day—*fog cloud*. Caster level 15th.

Possessions: *Gargantuan morningstar* +1, *chain shirt* +1, 6 masterwork throwing blades, *potion of mirror image*, *potion of cure serious wounds* x2.

Invisible Stalker; CR 7; Large Elemental (Air, Extraplanar); HD 8d8+16; hp 52; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 30 ft.

(perfect); AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Face/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +6/+14; Atk +10 melee (2d6+4, slam); Full Atk +10 melee (2d6+4, 2 slams); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, natural invisibility, improved tracking; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +13, Move Silently +15, Search +13, Spot +13, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks). Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (slam)

Natural Invisibility (Su): This ability is constant, allowing a stalker to remain invisible even when attacking. This ability is inherent and not subject to the *invisibility purge* spell.

Tactics: If Aulifar knows the PCs are coming, he levitates himself up to an alcove 30 feet above the floor of the room in which he keeps his throwing blades. These blades look like oversized greataxe heads with a special throwing grip in the center, and he hurls them with deadly accuracy at any creature that enters the room. He drinks his *potion of mirror image* as soon as he hears the door's locking mechanism click open. Aulifar will stay in the alcove hurling blades until he has thrown all six of them, or he determines that he is taking the worst of a ranged exchange. At this point he jumps down from the alcove and wades into melee with his morningstar. If any enemies are within 15 feet of the alcove, he attempts to jump on them, which acts as an

overrun attempt. Aulifar fights to the death to protect his master's favored weapon.

Aulifar's invisible stalker stays near the floor, attempting to distract his enemies while the giant shreds them with his blades. When the PCs first enter, it positions itself 10 feet in the air just in front of the door, where it uses its Combat Reflexes to take attacks of opportunity on up to five creatures moving through it. If the invisible stalker can identify any spellcasters in the ranks, it waits invisibly near them until they attempt to cast a spell, at which point it attacks with a slam in an attempt to disrupt the spell. Its 10-foot reach means that unless enemies know what they are fighting they will often retaliate at empty air adjacent to their position.

Empowered Chain Lightning Trap: CR 8; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*empowered chain lightning*, 12th-level wizard, 18d6 electricity to target nearest center of trigger area plus 9d6 electricity to each of up to eleven secondary targets, DC 19 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Treasure: The armor and weapons in this room are too large for Medium PCs to wield, but Large PCs will be able to find masterwork versions of any weapon or piece of armor they could want, including shields and ranged weapons. Hidden in a locked chest (Open Lock check DC 23) underneath *Abustril* is the following treasure: three arcane scrolls with one spell each (determine randomly, 2 medium and one major), one divine scroll with two spells (determine randomly, major), 600 gp, four giant-size rings studded in precious gems (worth 400 gp each, or 2,000 gp as a set), 50 normal-sized bolts +1.

Development: Once the PCs have defeated Aulifar and his companion, they can search the room and find *Abustril*. This weapon is a gargantuan greathammer that weighs 120 pounds and is over 10 feet long. Any non-giant carrying the weapon suffers one negative level for as long as he carries the weapon. A *legend lore* or successful Bardic Knowledge check (DC 26) reveals this information. The negative level is never permanent, and is removed as soon as the creature stops carrying the weapon. It is now time for the characters to begin phase two of their mission—the destruction of *Icebite*.

PART TWO: INTO THE ICEHAMMER FRONT

Once the characters have retrieved *Abustril* from the Storm King's citadel, they must carry it quickly to a glacial temple north of Anlar Icefang's hall and destroy the wicked greatsword *Icebite*. The characters are able to *teleport* to the foot of the glacier, leaving hordes of goblinoids, orcs, ogres, and giants between them and the safe lands to the south. Since no one expects a direct assault on the temple and Anlar's most trusted spiritual

advisors are either with him or in the Hall of the Winter Wurm, the temple itself is only lightly guarded. Getting to the temple is another matter entirely, however, and the characters must strike a bargain with a legend of the north before they are able to win passage across the blizzard-ridden area.

Environmental Hazards: If the characters did not bring protection against the elements, they are going to start feeling the effects of the extreme northern climate almost immediately. There is always a moderate wind blowing near the glacier, and when the PCs arrive there is a 20% chance that sleet will be falling. Snow and ice cover the ground everywhere, including within the temple itself. Finally, the characters must contend with the severe cold (see DMG) if they wish to succeed. Consult the DMG for specific rules for these hazards.

TRACKING ARDA

The map the PCs acquired from their initial contact does indeed show the correct location of the legendary creature known as Arda. She is a massive creature that resembles a huge frost worm with cobra-like fans and huge horns. Her face is more mammalian than that of a typical frost worm as well. When she speaks, her mandibles clack together as her voice booms through her lair. She lives in a tunnel complex beneath a huge sinkhole at the edge of a great glacier. Characters must traverse the smooth, slick approach to the sinkhole with care. The Climb check DC is 25, and any failure sends a character tumbling down into the central hole, suffering 10d6 points of falling damage in the process. Once they have climbed down into the hole, they will meet Arda in the large, icy entry cavern of her lair.

As with Anglor, the PCs have two options for negotiating with the creature. Arda speaks Giant and Infernal, and is willing to hear the PCs out if they approach in a peaceful manner. Unlike Anglor, though, Arda will not negotiate with the PCs unless they present her with some unbelievable treasure or tribute (a minor artifact, epic-level weapon, or some other grand offering). Like most creatures of the frozen north, Arda respects survivability and strength. Therefore, once the PCs have finished talking and made their offer, Arda attacks them furiously. Remember to apply icy conditions to all characters' actions in combat while in her lair. If the PCs can drop her to less than 25% of her starting hit points or otherwise subdue her, then she pleads for them to stop and tells them that they have passed her test.

Creature: Arda; CR 14; Huge Magical Beast (Cold); HD 18d10+90; hp 189; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), burrow 10 ft.; AC 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20; Face/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +18/+34; Atk/Full Atk +25 melee (2d8+12 plus 1d8 cold, bite); SA Trill, cold, breath weapon; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., death throes, immunity to cold, low-light vision, vulnerability to fire; AL N; SV Fort +16,

Ref +11, Will +8; Str 26, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Hide +13, Intimidate +5, Listen +10, Spot +10. Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor x2, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Weapon Focus (bite).

Trill (Su): Arda can emit a noise that forces her prey to stand motionless. This sonic mind-affecting compulsion affects all creatures other than frost worms within a 100-foot radius. Creatures must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or be stunned for as long as the worm trills and for 1d4 rounds thereafter, even if they are attacked. However, if attacked or violently shaken (a full-round action), a victim is allowed another saving throw. Once a creature has resisted or broken the effect, it cannot be affected again by that same frost worm's trill for 24 hours. The effect's caster level is 14th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Cold (Ex): Arda's body emanates cold, causing opponents to suffer an additional 1d8 points of cold damage every time she succeeds on a bite attack. Creatures attacking Arda with natural weapons take this same amount of damage each time one of their attacks hits.

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-foot cone, once per hour, damage 15d6 cold, Reflex DC 24 half. Opponent's held motionless by Arda's trill get no saving throw. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Death Throes (Ex): If Arda is killed, her body will turn to ice and shatter in an explosion that deals 12d6 points of piercing damage to everything within 100 feet (Reflex half DC 24). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Tactics: Arda begins combat with her trill. After one round, she uses her breath weapon on as many frozen opponents as possible. After that, she uses her bite attack, concentrating on unfrozen opponents first. Once she is brought below 50% of her normal hit points, she attempts to use her trill again if it did not affect at least half of her opponents the first time. Otherwise she continues to fight until she begs off the combat at 25% of her hit points, burrowing into the ice to retreat if the PCs do not break off the attack.

Development: Once the PCs have subdued the great frost worm, she agrees to take them across the glacier to the ice temple. They can ride on her back, using grappling hooks and rope to tie themselves down as she slides across the ice at great speed. Traveling to the ice temple take approximately two hours, and Arda agrees to await the PCs' return. If they do not return within 24 hours, Arda burrows into the ice and returns to her lair.

ICE TEMPLE AREA 1: ENTRANCE (EL 10)



The blue-white ice of the glacier rises above you on two sides, funneling you down toward a carved hole in the ice. Giant mounds of snow and ice stand on either side of the entrance, which glitters with the faint sunlight that reaches this far north in the world.



This is the entrance to Anlar Icefang's temple, where he is currently keeping *Icebite*. The temple's sole remaining guard stands immobile underneath the mound of snow to the left of the entrance. This frost giant watches and waits as the PCs approach, hoping to take them by surprise. If he is not detected (Spot check DC 23), he triggers the *wall of ice* trap and attacks as soon as half the party has made its way inside the temple. His winter wolf lies in wait underneath another drift of snow nearby (Spot check DC 26).

Creatures: Frost giant; CR 9; Large Giant; HD 14d8+70; hp 133; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft. (8 squares); AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21; Face/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +10/+23; Atk +18 melee (3d6+13/x3, huge greataxe) or +18 melee (1d4+9, slam) or +9 ranged (2d6+9, rock); Full Atk +18/+13 melee (3d6+13/x3, huge greataxe) or +18 melee (1d4+9, 2 slams) or +9 ranged (2d6+9, rock); SA Rock throwing; SQ Immunity to cold, low-light vision, rock catching, vulnerability to fire; AL NE; SV Fort +14, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 29, Dex 9, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Craft (woodworking) +6, Intimidate +6, Jump +17, Spot +12. Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

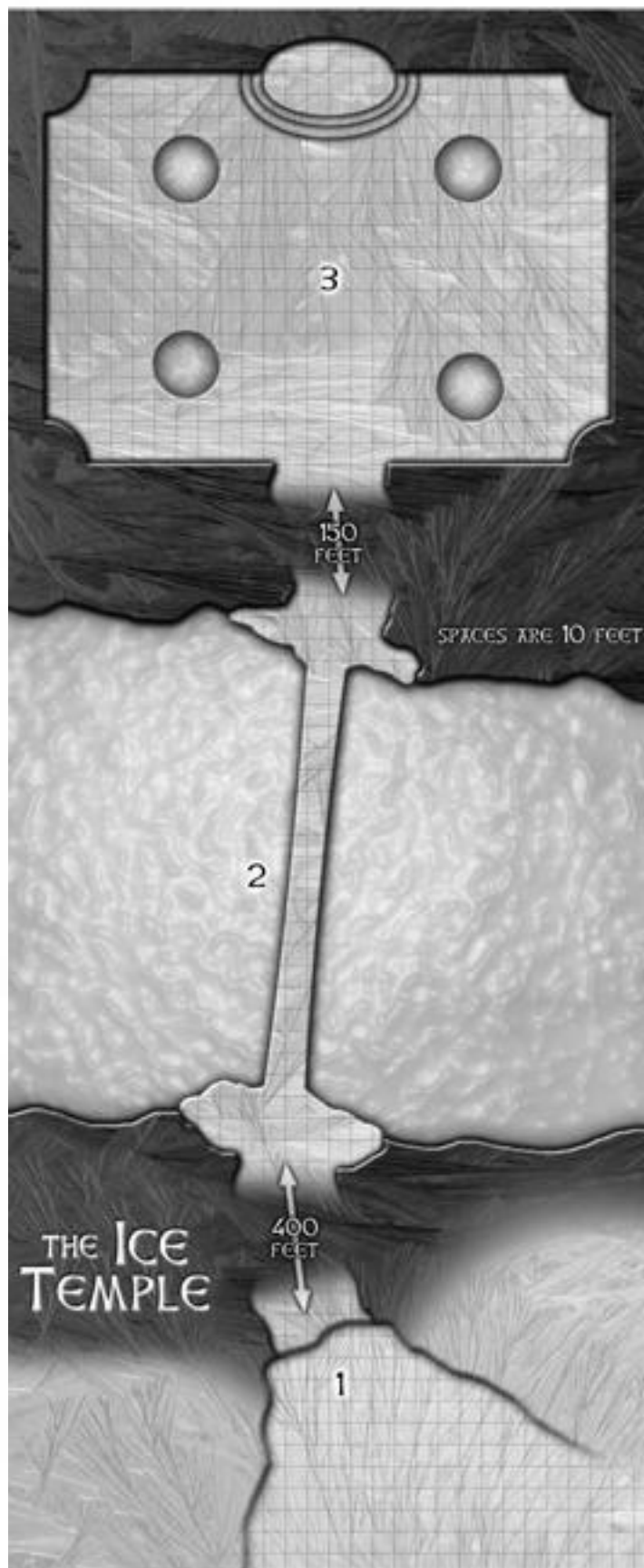
Winter wolf; CR 5; Large Magical Beast (Cold); HD 6d10+18; hp 51; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft. (10 squares); AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Face/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +6/+14; Atk/Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+6 and 1d6 cold, bite); SA Breath weapon, freezing bite, trip; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, low-light vision, scent, vulnerability to fire; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Spot +6, Survival +1. Alertness, Improved Initiative, Track.

Breath Weapon (Su): 15-foot cone, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 4d6 cold, Reflex DC 16 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Freezing Bite (Su): A winter wolf deals an extra 1d6 points of cold damage every time it bites an opponent, as if its bite were a frost weapon.

Trip (Ex): A winter wolf that hits with a bite attack



can attempt to trip the opponent (+8 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the winter wolf.

Wall of ice Trap: CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*wall of ice*), 10th-level wizard, ice plane 20 feet wide by 20 feet tall over temple entrance; Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29. Every 5-foot section of the ice wall is 10 inches thick, has 30 hp, and a Break DC of 25. Creatures walking through the area of the ice wall, even after it has been broken, suffer 1d6+10 points of cold damage (no save).

Treasure: The giant carries a pouch with the following treasure: 230 gp, +1 *light steel shield of blinding*, *potion of protection from elements (cold)*, *potion of cure serious wounds* x2.

ICE TEMPLE AREA 2: ICE BRIDGE (EL 8)

This cavern is the home of the remorhaz guarding *Icebite* in Area 3. Its hot dorsal scales keep the ice melted at the bottom, forming a treacherous lake of snow and freezing water. Anyone falling in the water suffers 2d3 points of nonlethal damage and 6d6 points of lethal damage. For every round spent in the freezing water, the character suffers the effects of extreme cold (see DMG).

Characters can cross the bridge safely as long as they take only 5-ft. steps each round. A character moving at 1/4 speed must make a successful Balance check (DC 5) or slip. Characters moving at 1/2 speed suffer a -2 penalty to this check, while those moving at full speed suffer a -4 penalty. (Remember that characters are already moving at 1/2 movement because of the icy conditions.) Fighting characters must make a successful Balance check each round at a -4 penalty or slip. Characters that slip have one last chance to grab the edge of the bridge with a successful Reflex save (DC 15), otherwise they plummet into the icy waters below.

To make the way even more dangerous, six ice mephits have taken up residence in this cavern. The mephits attempt to bull rush characters off the bridge, which is made much easier by the icy conditions. Unless a character has some method of sticking to the ice, any time a mephit makes a successful bull rush the character must make a Balance check (DC 10) or slip. Only one mephit will bull rush any character in a round, with the others swooping in and using their breath weapon on as many targets as possible (or *chill metal* on any heavily armored foes).

Creatures: Ice mephits (6); CR 3; Small

Outsider (Air, Cold, Extraplanar); HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Face/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +3/-1; Atk +4 melee (1d3 and 1d4 cold, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3 and 1d4 cold, 2 claws); SA Breath weapon, spell-like abilities, *summon mephit*; SQ Damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, immunity to cold, vulnerability to fire; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Escape Artist +9, Hide +13, Listen +6, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Move Silently +9, Spot +6, Use Rope +3 (+5 with bindings). Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Breath Weapon (Su): 10-foot cone of ice shards, damage 1d4 cold, Reflex DC 12 half. Living creatures that fail their saves are tormented by frostbitten skin and frozen eyes unless they have immunity to cold or are otherwise protected. This effect imposes a -4 penalty to AC and a -2 penalty on attack rolls for 3 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/hour—*magic missile* (caster level 3rd); 1/day—*chill metal* (DC 14, caster level 6th). The save DC is Charisma-based.

ICE TEMPLE AREA 3: MAIN TEMPLE (EL 13)

The tunnel finally widens out into a large temple. There is a dais near the back of the room, with giant-size steps carved from the ice leading up to a huge, blue ice throne. The floor of the cavern is smooth except for four large holes filled with churning slush. A huge greatsword made entirely of ice rests across the throne.

This is the temple where high-ranking disciples are brought before Anlar Icefang to offer their fealty and commune with the immortal. The holes in the floor are slushy tubes made a gargantuan remorhaz that is Anlar's favored pet. The remorhaz is hiding in one of these tubes, and will burst forth as soon as an intruder passes nearby. A Spot check (DC 15) alerts a character to movement in the slush just before the remorhaz attacks.

Creature: Advanced remorhaz; CR 13; Gargantuan magical beast; HD 16d10+112; hp 200; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), burrow 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 7, flat-footed 21; Face/Reach 20 ft./15 ft.; Base Atk/Grapple +14/+38; Atk/Full Atk +25 melee (3d8+18, bite); SA Improved grab, swallow whole; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., heat, low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +17, Ref +13, Will +8; Str 34, Dex 13, Con 25, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +13, Spot +12. Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite).

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a remorhaz must hit an opponent least one size category smaller than itself with its 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 attempt to swallow the opponent the following round.

Swallow Whole (Ex): When a remorhaz begins its turn with a grappled opponent in its mouth, it can swallow that opponent with a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 3d8+18 points of bludgeoning damage plus 8d6 points of fire damage per round from the remorhaz's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 15). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A Gargantuan remorhaz's interior can hold 4 Large, 8 Medium, 16 Small, 64 Tiny, 256 Diminutive, or 1,028 Fine or smaller opponents.

Heat (Ex): An enraged remorhaz generates heat so intense that anything touching its body takes 8d6 points of fire damage. Creatures striking a remorhaz with natural attacks or unarmed attacks are subject to this damage, but creatures striking with melee weapons do not take damage from the remorhaz's heat. This heat can melt or char weapons; any weapon that strikes a remorhaz is allowed a DC 25 Fortitude save to avoid destruction. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Tactics: If the remorhaz is suffering at the hands of a particular character, it can dive into any of the slush tubes and reemerge from any of the others in two rounds.

Treasure: Hidden in a hollow patch of ice behind the throne (Search check DC 18) is the following treasure: 2,800 gp, *boots of the winterlands*, *bag of tricks (tan)*, *bottle of air*, three divine scrolls with one spell each (randomly determine, 2 medium and one major), *potion of cure serious wounds x2*, *oil of darkness*.

Development: *Icebite* must only be struck once with *Abustril* to shatter into thousands of shards of ice. Anyone within 15 feet of this explosion suffers 4d6 points of damage and 4d6 points of cold damage, with a Reflex save (DC 20) allowed for half damage.

The PCs should be able to *teleport* back to the Storm King's citadel and return *Abustril* to its hiding place. This might be a good time to remind them to dispose of the cloud giant's body if they did not remember. News of their actions spreads across Ambria, reaching the dwarves even if the characters do not go there immediately to claim their reward. If they do not, the same agent that contacted them originally appears before them within a week's time, gives them their reward, and invites them to an audience before King Odvar. Each character should be awarded one legend point.

RACE TABLES

RACES: RANDOM HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Dwarf, male	3'10"	+2d4	140 lb.	x (2d6) lb.
Dwarf, female	3'8"	+2d4	110 lb.	x (2d6) lb.
Dawn elf, male	4'6"	+2d6	85 lb.	x (1d6) lb.
Dawn elf, female	4'4"	+2d6	80 lb.	x (1d6) lb.
Doppelganger, male	4'7"	+2d6	85 lb.	x (1d4) lb.
Doppelganger, female	4'9"	+2d6	95 lb.	x (1d4) lb.
Night elf, male	4'0"	+2d6	75 lb.	x (1d6) lb.
Night elf, female	3'10"	+2d6	70 lb.	x (1d6) lb.
Gnome, male	3'0"	+2d4	40 lb.	x 1 lb.
Gnome, female	2'10"	+2d4	35 lb.	x 1 lb.
Halfling, male	2'6"	+2d4	30 lb.	x 1 lb.
Halfling, female	2'4"	+2d4	25 lb.	x 1 lb.
Highlander, male	5'0"	+2d10	130 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Highlander, female	4'10"	+2d10	95 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Lowlander, male	5'6"	+2d10	140 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Lowlander, female	5'4"	+2d10	105 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Ogre, male	6'5"	+2d12	300 lb.	x (2d8) lb.
Ogre, female	6'3"	+2d12	270 lb.	x (2d8) lb.
Orc, male	5'10"	+2d8	250 lb.	x (2d6) lb.
Orc, female	5'8"	+2d8	220 lb.	x (2d6) lb.
Lizardfolk, male	5'4"	+2d10	145 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Lizardfolk, female	5'2"	+2d10	115 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Minotaur, male	6'2"	+2d12	265 lb.	x (2d8) lb.
Minotaur, female	6'0"	+2d12	235 lb.	x (2d8) lb.
Saltblood, male	4'10"	+2d10	120 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Saltblood, female	4'8"	+2d10	85 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Trueborn, male	5'6"	+2d8	140 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Trueborn, female	5'4"	+2d8	105 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Tiefling, male	5'0"	+2d8	130 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Tiefling, female	4'10"	+2d8	95 lb.	x (2d4) lb.
Thinblood, male	5'2"	+2d6	130 lb.	x (1d6) lb.
Thinblood, female	5'0"	+2d6	95 lb.	x (1d6) lb.

RANDOM STARTING AGE

Race	Adulthood	Barbarian Rogue Shaper Sorcerer	Bard Paladin Fighter Ranger	Disciple Shaman Spirit Adept Wizard
Human	15	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Doppelganger	50	+4d6	+6d6	+8d6
Dwarf	40	+4d6	+5d6	+7d6
Elf	110	+4d6	+6d6	+10d6
Gnome	60	+4d6	+6d6	+10d6
Halfling	40	+3d6	+5d6	+7d6
Ogre	12	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Orc	14	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Lizardfolk	20	+2d4	+3d6	+4d6
Minotaur	18	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6
Tiefling	50	+4d6	+6d6	+8d6
Thinblood	30	+2d6	+4d6	+7d6

AGING EFFECTS

Race	Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age
Human	35 years	53 years	70 years	+2d20 years
Doppelganger	140 years	210 years	280 years	+2d% years
Dwarf	125 years	188 years	250 years	+2d% years
Elf	175 years	263 years	350 years	+4d% years
Gnome	225 years	336 years	450 years	+6d% years
Halfling	100 years	150 years	200 years	+2d% years
Ogre	25 years	38 years	50 years	+2d10 years
Orc	30 years	45 years	60 years	+2d10 years
Lizardfolk	45 years	68 years	90 years	+3d20 years
Minotaur	40 years	60 years	80 years	+3d20 years
Tiefling	35 years	53 years	70 years	+2d20 years
Thinblood	100 years	150 years	200 years	+1d% years

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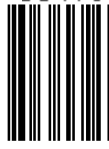
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