The Candlekeep Compendium

Volume I

VOLUME 1

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The Library of Forgotten Realms Lore

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EDITORIAL

elcome to Volume I of the Candlekeep Compendium, a collection of the finest Realmslore selected from the shelves of Candlekeep.

Herein ye will find lore of the Realms, collated and penned by our master scribes here at the Candlekeep library. Many scholars and scribes have traveled far and wide to bring this to us, in our never-ending quest for knowledge.

It is with great pleasure that I present the works in this tome for the readers and visitors of Candlekeep. A variety of lore can be found within the following pages, including the first-hand accounts of travels across Faerun with our journals on the island of Nimbral, the city of Berdusk, and even Telflamm in the Easting Reach.

For the adventurers amongst ye, read the news brought to us by travelers and bards, or the interviews with the folk of Faerun. Furthermore, our dwarven expert details aspects of the dwarven culture, little of which is known to those outside of these great communities. Heed also the information on the mercenary groups wandering the wilderness, as well as the more civilised organisations of the Realms, in two quite different articles written herein. The laws and ways of Ruathym are also explored; 'ware, for they are a ruthless lot.

So without further delay, I'll leave ye to peruse this tome and hope that ye enjoy what is written on the pages within.

~ Alaundo of Candlekeep

This publication is dedicated to:

Ed Greenwood - for creating the world we love, and for his constant supply of Realmslore to Candlekeep (with thanks to the Hooded One).

* * * *

To the visitors and scribes of Candlekeep, for keeping the library alive.

NIMBRAL

Nimbral, the fable island that raise from the Great Sea, for most of Faerûn is no more than a legend, this leave me with the question; how to make maps of trails to a land that we barely know exist. My work usually begin with a consult on the tomes already found on our library, this gathering of information, references and notes turn a most curious collection of odd results, but nothing will prepare me to what my eyes beheld on last few months.

The following is an unedited journal of my travels;

Pegasi is supose to serve as mount for the knights that protect this lands.

The only material evidence before my travels was a shard of crystal.

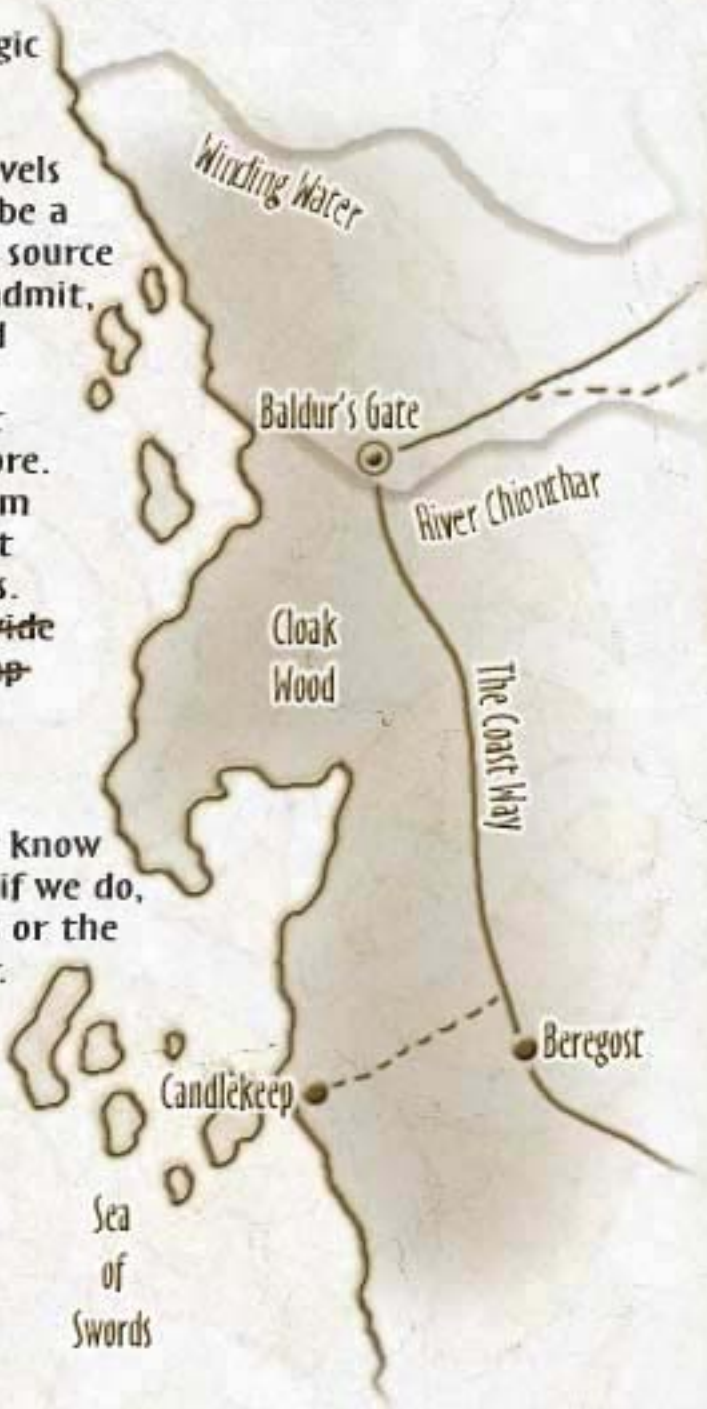
Journal Entry 1

4th Day of Alturiak, 1372 Year of Wild Magic
Candlekeep

The only material evidence before my travels was a shard of crystal, it was presume to be a chip from the armor of a knight, but the source that provide me with it was not, I must admit, the most trusted one, while my old friend Gusto is a great drinking partner, his exaggerations and peculiar vision of what truth is had lead me to fools errands before. Luckily, he's staying (or is hiding, with him that is never clear) in Baldur's Gate, what become, my first destination on this trails. ~~I only wish my superiors on the keep provide better travel expenses, wine is never cheap on the road~~.

The travel from Candlekeep is usually an uneventful one, specially for monks, most know that we either carry nothing of valor, or if we do, is some commission from nations, wizards or the kind of people most do not want to anger.

The 140 miles are cover with well maintain roads and it takes about 5 days with and easy pace on the horse.



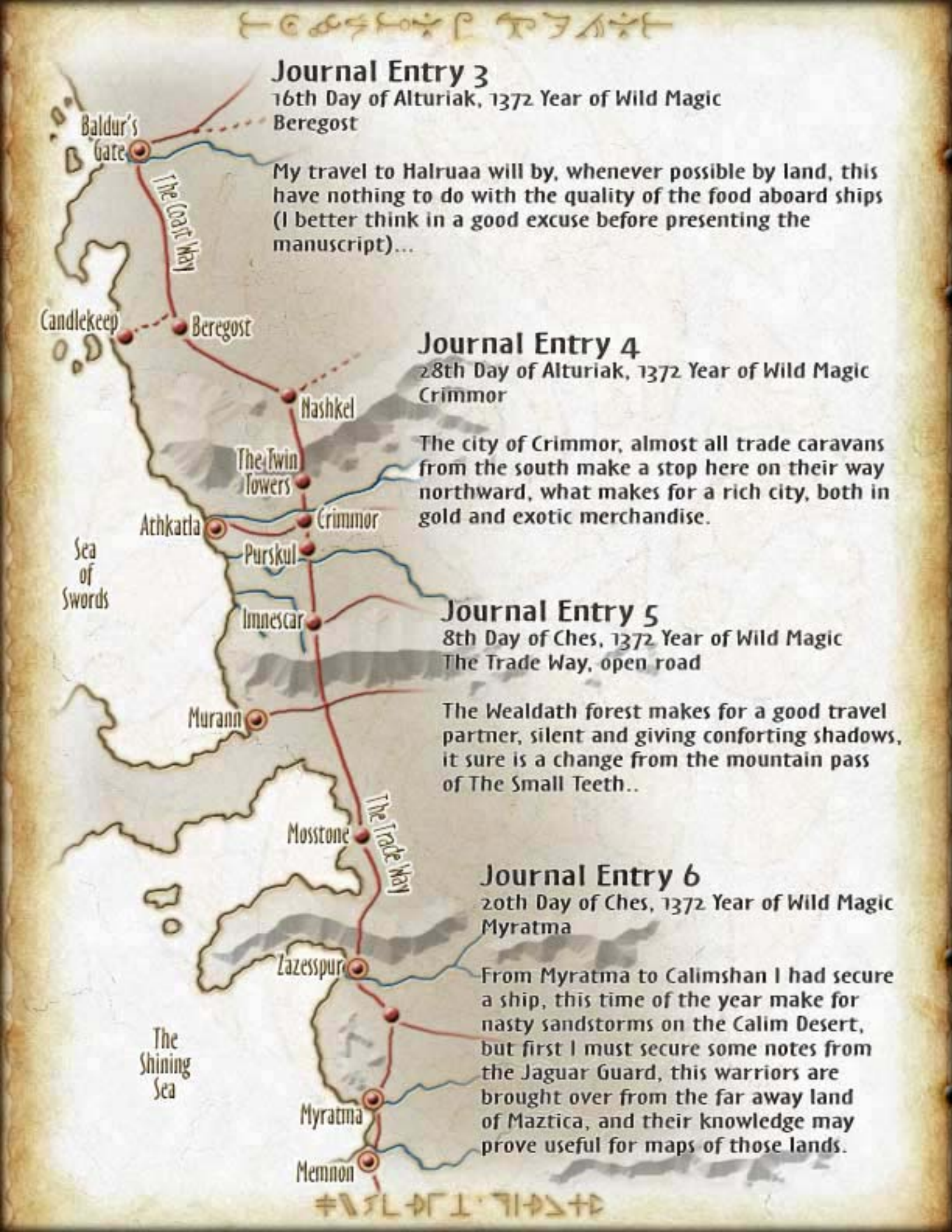
Gusto Rowels

Gusto Rowels, was the person that help me the most on the Nelanther Isles maps, on his youth he serve aboard some of the better know pirate ships of the time, what make for the knowledge and contacts that keep me alive on my days in those islands.

Journal Entry 2

11th Day of Alturiak, 1372 Year of Wild Magic
Baldur's Gate

This time my suspicious was prove wrong, Gusto own background dealing with pirates on the Nelanther Isles was the link to my next clue, he told me the story of a raid against the pirates, on the Year of the Shield, only 5 years ago, an attack lead by flying pegasi steeds with riders of glass armored knights, and how the Halruaa flying ships later retaliate against this attackers, later I will learn about the misinterpretations of his version of the tale, but for now, I have a new direction to follow, the mage land of Halruaa.



Journal Entry 3

16th Day of Alturiak, 1372 Year of Wild Magic
Beregost

My travel to Halruaa will by, whenever possible by land, this have nothing to do with the quality of the food aboard ships (I better think in a good excuse before presenting the manuscript)...

Journal Entry 4

28th Day of Alturiak, 1372 Year of Wild Magic
Crimmor

The city of Crimmor, almost all trade caravans from the south make a stop here on their way northward, what makes for a rich city, both in gold and exotic merchandise.

Journal Entry 5

8th Day of Ches, 1372 Year of Wild Magic
The Trade Way, open road

The Wealdath forest makes for a good travel partner, silent and giving conforting shadows, it sure is a change from the mountain pass of The Small Teeth..

Journal Entry 6

20th Day of Ches, 1372 Year of Wild Magic
Myratma

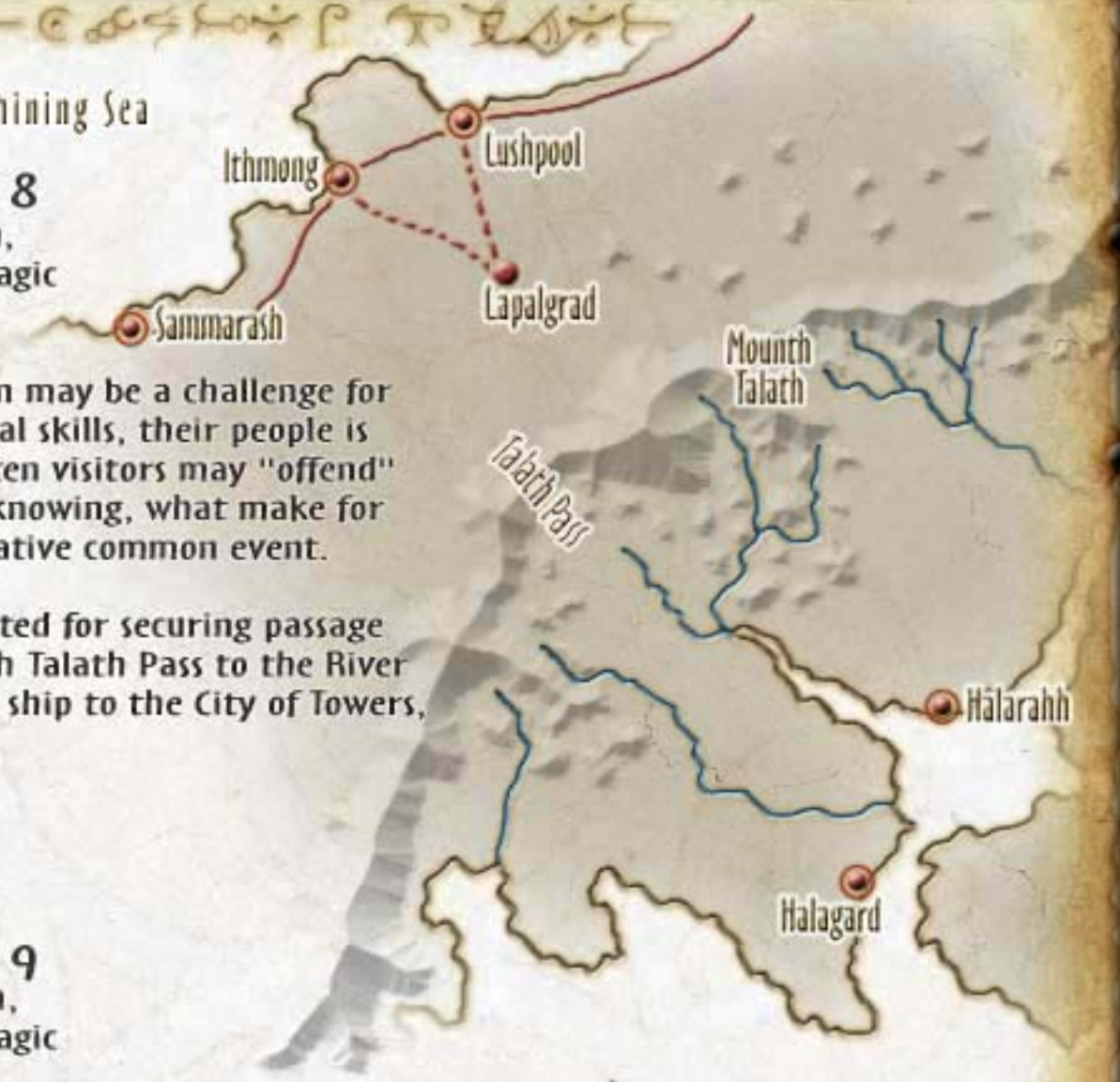
From Myratma to Calimshan I had secure a ship, this time of the year make for nasty sandstorms on the Calim Desert, but first I must secure some notes from the Jaguar Guard, this warriors are brought over from the far away land of Maztica, and their knowledge may prove useful for maps of those lands.

Journal Entry 7

28th Day of Ches, 1372 Year of Wild Magic
Calimport

Captain Amond ship will take me to the city of Ithmong, the old sailor gave me a good cabin at no cost, a good friend, he still uses the charts I made for him 8 years ago, I should update them someday, the sand beds must have change after all this time.

While on board two things will fill my time, first, make the preparations for my visit on Halruaa, as my only contact on that realm is a good hearted but utterly crazy wizard, for him I must prepare with all my wits. The second thing is that plump cook lady aboard the ship, with a hot seasoning that make even Pashas of Calimport water their mouths, and her cooking is not bad either.



Journal Entry 8

12th Day of Tarsakh,
1372 Year of Wild Magic
Ithmong

The Lapaliiya region may be a challenge for those that lack social skills, their people is very proud, and often visitors may "offend" the locals without knowing, what make for sighting duels a relative common event.

My stay will be limited for securing passage on a caravan trough Talath Pass to the River Halar, from there a ship to the City of Towers, Halarahh.

Journal Entry 9

23th Day of Tarsakh,
1372 Year of Wild Magic
Halarahh

My arrival to the city of Halarahh comes with the night, within the streets is easy to imagine how the legendary Netheril was, magic is everywhere, the illumination of the streets, doors vanish to let you enter as you approach, and every local have the appearance of a wizard. I can not but chuckle at the though of a nation of Elminster's and Khelben's and Simbul's, but that have more to do with the old exaggerations about the lands of the shining south than reality.

Once I find a comfy room I send a courier to the tower of Nazzle'tor, asking for an audience. When having meetings with wizards, specially if you are to ask a favor, it is good to be able to keep their interest, and unless your quest prove worthy of a bard's tale or you have some powerful artifact that capture the magic users interest, you better have some other menial but effective way to capture his attention, for this reason while on the road I gather a very peculiar mix of pipeweed, from Amn the Dervish, from the Jaguar Guards the exotic Maztica, and for flavor the Al-Sidran of Calimshan, a mix I learn from mister Volo, and as he say "it raise an Elminster eyebrow almost as high as my writings".

Journal Entry 10

24th Day of Tarsakh,
1372 Year of Wild Magic
Halarahh

Breakfast had come today with an invitation to Nazzle'tor tower, the note come with a small amulet and instruction to rub it as soon as my plate was empty, I can not stress enough how much teleport spells distress me, it is an embarrassment to count every limb after.

After some rubbing and counting I find myself on a big circular room, strange artifacts on overload shelves cover the walls and the ceiling have painted a star map which mirror the northern sky while the floor had the south heavens on it, its was while making some memory notes about some astral bodies that never notice on any star chart before when the brightest point on the constellation of Sashelas become a foot, or rather a foot cover it, she introduce herself as Lady Varizza, it was I must say, another heavenly body on the star map, a human with some elven blood on her ancestors.

Following the introductions she confirm my theory about wizards, you will never be prepare enough, Nazzle'tor was on the middle of a research on Mount Talath (the Temple of Mystra carved into the mountain contains magical knowledge that rival anything that may be found on the Realms), and his studies will prevent him from joining me, but he instruct Lady Varizza to assist me whenever possible.

The final blow to my preparations come when she graciously refuse joining me with a pipeweed, that pretty much leave with my charms and tease, things that most times just lead me to get kick out of taverns. Ruling out those, I ask her about the very detailed star chart on the room, as it was not there on my last visit, after her answer I must have giggle like a child for her face draw a condescend smile.

Lady Varizza

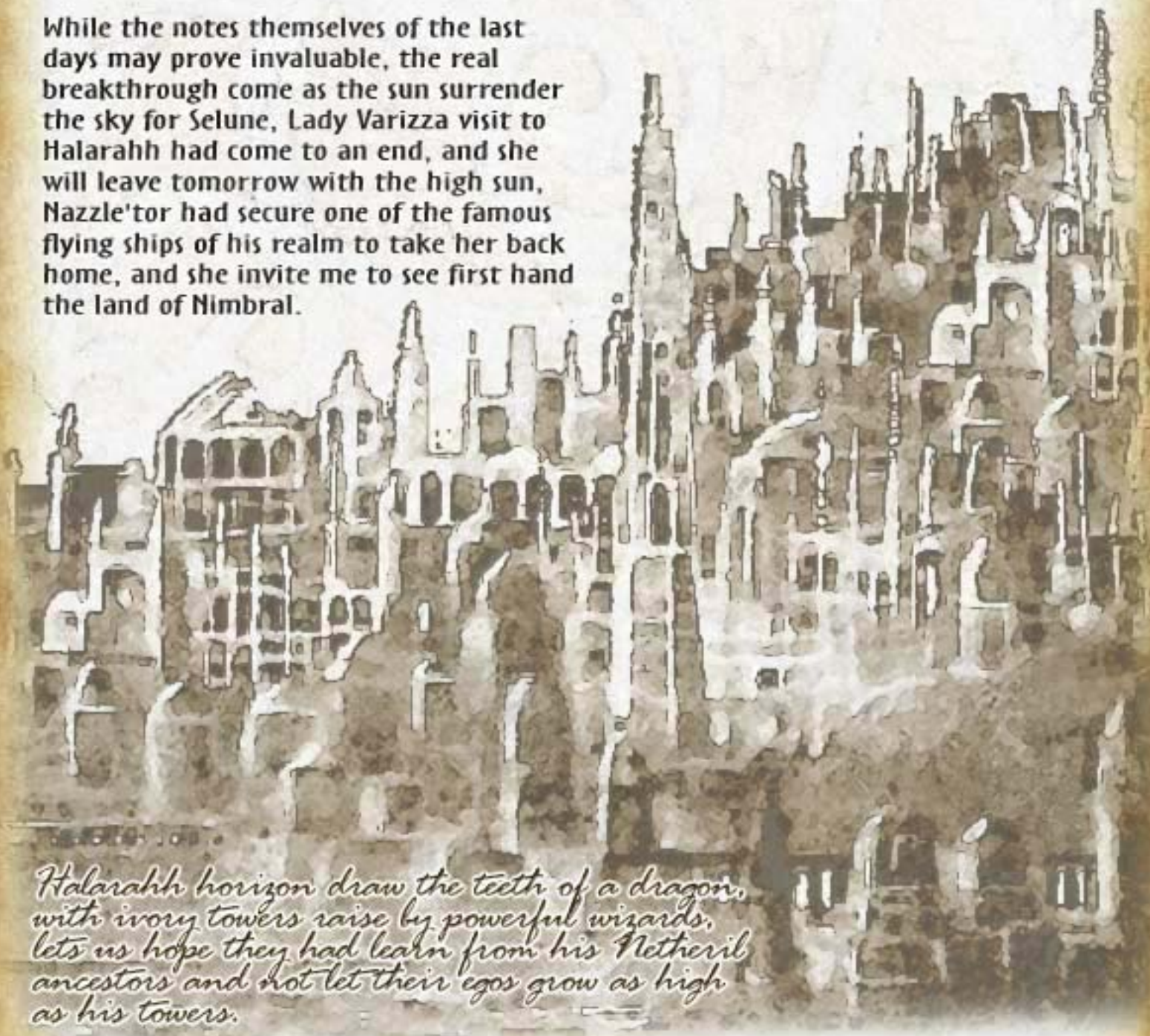
The map was copy of the charts use by the Nimbran Knights of the Flying Hunt to travel at night, and following that first answer she reveal herself as the one making the last revision of the map, as she was not just an astronomer, but a *Nimbrese*.

Journal Entry 11

26th Day of Tarsakh,
1372 Year of Wild Magic
Halarahh

The last couple of days had been entertaining as informative, Lady Varizza share the impressions of her birth place without apparent reserves while I share some information about my mission and Candlekeep itself, of course some details remain untold, as the secret ritual of smuggling wine into the abbey or episodes like when some nameless monk try a new herb on the stew that made all work to stop for a couple of days.

While the notes themselves of the last days may prove invaluable, the real breakthrough come as the sun surrender the sky for Selune, Lady Varizza visit to Halarahh had come to an end, and she will leave tomorrow with the high sun, Nazzle'tor had secure one of the famous flying ships of his realm to take her back home, and she invite me to see first hand the land of Nimbral.



Halarahh horizon draw the teeth of a dragon, with ivory towers raise by powerful wizards, lets us hope they had learn from his Netheril ancestors and not let their egos grow as high as his towers.

The Hammer's Stroke

By Kevin Liss

"Male dwarves of any type take pride in their beards, the most remarkable of any race."
- From the Forgotten Realms Campaign Sourcebook, p. 10.

With age comes long beards - Dwarven proverb

* * * *

he Bearded-Folk. That one phrase immediately identifies one specific race in the Realms - dwarves. Dwarves revere a pantheon of gods, called the Mordinsamman, they wear a dour expression and stoic demeanor, and they all have wonderous beards!

Beards for dwarves are a status symbol, a means of expression, and a source of pride. No human can match the luxurious manes of chin hair that a dwarf can produce. Humans try and elven folk cannot even grow facial hair! The dwarven people take great care in grooming their beards, and battles have been fought over affronts to a dwarf's facial hair.

Beards within dwarven society are a symbol of status and prestige. Most dwarves equate the length of a beard with the age of the beard's owner, and as with most races age equals wisdom. Age also is important when it comes to gauging experience, so the older the dwarf, the more experienced leader and fighter they are. Someone meeting a dwarf with a long beard, well groomed and ornately braided, automatically knows that that dwarf is important. As a dwarf ages his beard also ages, filling out and becoming full bodied. In battle, many of the enemies of the dwarves have learned to identify the leaders of the stout folk by the length of their beards since they are usually heavily armored and otherwise unidentifiable. Within dwarven society, more with shield dwarves than the gold dwarves, the individual is as important as family in defining status. Therefore, a fine tuft of facial hair makes the individual dwarf a revered member of their community. Gold dwarves also place importance in the length and style of their beards, yet this is always a reflection of the status of that dwarf's family within the clan. The sub-races of dwarves are individualistic in their outlook, so most mimic the shield dwarf values of a long beard. Wild dwarves identify long beards with great hunters, arctic dwarves using the length of one's beard to help define when an individual has earned their "retirement", and the others following a similar pattern of reverence.

Using beards as status symbols has a flip side, however. The loss of a beard can have detrimental effects on a dwarf, and with their rough life, opportunity abounds for the stunting or loss of a beard. A dwarf careless enough to lose part of a beard, or even the entirety of one, is not due the respect or status for being so frivolous with it. Many ointments, oils, and greases are used in making the hair on a dwarf flame retardant. In battle dwarves display their beards prominently, and it is not unusual to have damage occur to them. When this happens, however, it is a source of pride as long as the dwarf in question proves their mettle in the loss. Finally, punishing unruly dwarves by shearing short their beard, or, in rare occasions such as treason, shaving a beard off is a cruel social punishment for any dwarf.

No matter the length or cut, dwarven beards are a means of expression. Each generation of dwarf men and women develop their own style. Some dwarves adopt an exotic look by wearing short sideburns with full length moustache's and goatee cuts. Others like the respectable look of a full grown facial beard. A few even wear most of the facial

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hair short with long braids that hang from the ears and chin, with the "horned" moustache drooping down. Beyond this, each dwarf is able to braid, weave, and grease their facial hair to any style. Braids are most common for the mature dwarf. Once the beard reaches a certain length it is possible, and eventually necessary, to braid the hair in various styles. Weaving is often left to dwarven women who have "weaving" days at least once a month. This is a social opportunity for the matriarchs of the family to share information (read gossip) with each other as they weave intricate patterns in their often short beards. Greasing the hair of a beard is an old blacksmith technique shared by many dwarves to keep it from singeing in the forges.

Current fashion for dwarven women is to either have short beards, goatees, or no beard at all. This follows the standards of beauty established by the other humanoid races that do not grow beards. It is rare to find a dwarven woman with a full beard outside of a dwarf hold. Even then, it is normally due to the female dwarf's desire to anonymously hide their gender and pass as a male of the race. Short beards are acceptable, as are goatees, in almost every dwarf home, with only a few traditional hardliners refusing to accept anything less than a flowing beard on their women. Bare faces are a bit harder for most dwarves to accept. Many of the young have taken a liking to wearing, or accepting those who wear, no beards. This is a cultural by-product of the Thunder Blessing and can often be a factor in a female dwarf's decision to leave home to make it on their own. Many adventurers soon adopt the customs of humans to go without beards as they travel to avoid confusion among the other races as to their gender.

Dwarves take great pride in their beards and do not take lightly to someone making fun of, or, most grievously, harming their facial hair. Clans of noble descent among the gold dwarves go so far as to setting socially acceptable standards for the less noble dwarven groups. Those gold dwarves who do not follow these standards are shunned and even cast out of the family group to avoid the dishonor it brings to their relatives. Gold dwarves look down upon members of the other dwarven races who grow their beards out when they are not sociably entitled to do so. Shield dwarves have learned to accept their golden cousins based upon their status and beard length rather than just their beards since it is not always a fair way to judge the individuals worth.

Dwarves, being the industrious beings they are, have developed a few items of interest relating to their beards, and the protection of them. These are by no means all of the items dwarves employ in protecting, enhancing, and using their beards. It is just a sample.

Weapons

Barbed Beard Wire: Barbed beard wire is woven into the beard of the wearer to either hold the beard in a certain style, or to prevent opponents from grabbing the wearer's hair. Dwarven Monks favor stringing either their loose or fashioned beards with barbed wire to deter opponents from making a grab on their beards. It causes damage as well as giving the person grabbing the beard a -2 penalty to all rolls requiring the use of the offending hand.

Table 1-1: Weapons

Simple Weapons	Cost	Dmg(S)	Dmg(M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Barbed Beard Wire	*5 sp*	*1d2*	*1d3*	*x2*	-	*0 lb.*	*Piercing*

Potions

Dwarves, especially smiths, covet potions and oils that confer protection against fire to keep their beards from catching flame while working or in certain combat situations.

Wondrous Items

Periapt of Proof Against Fire: This ruby hangs from a gold chain and offers fire resistance 20. Dwarves often intertwine the gold chain into their braided beards.

Moderate abjuration; CL 2nd; Craft Wondrous Item, *Resist Energy*; Price 8,000 gp.

Silverbeard Clasp: This silver clasp pinches the trailing end of a beard. The shape of the clasp can be a ball, a cone, or any other shape, with the clasp located in a hollow area at the base. When worn it causes the wearer's beard to turn to pure and magically hardened silver. It is worn on the beard and offers a +2 armor bonus to your armor. Regular clothing counts as armor with this item. In addition, you get a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks against dwarves.

Faint transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *Silverbeard*, creator's caster level must be at least two times the clasps bonus; Price 4,400 gp.

Tongues Tie: This cloth ribbon or tie is worn in the beard (usually a dwarven woman) usually below the chin or neck and confers *tongues* on the wearer. They are able to understand and speak any intelligent creatures speech.

Faint divination; CL 4th; Craft Wondrous Item, *tongues*; Price 8,000 gp.

Dwarves create many items that they braid or tie into their beards which duplicate the effects of these magic items:

- Amulet of Health
- Circlet of Persuasion
- Periapt of Health
- Periapt of Proof against Poison
- Periapt of Wisdom
- Periapt of Wound Closure
- Any magic amulet, brooch medallion, necklace, periapt, or scarab normally worn around the neck

These items count against the one item that can be worn around the neck.

Folk of Faerun

Fallon uth Pendemyr

By Jaime McLeod

Fallon uth Pendemyr (female half-elf, age 23, AL CG, Ranger 5)

ppearance:

I am not an unattractive woman. In fact, I inherited my mother's elvish beauty and grace, if not her charm and airy nature. Had I remained in my father's house, I would have grown to become a coveted bride among the sons of Goliad's nobility. Instead, years sent in the wilderness have given my face a weathered look and turned my curves into lean, efficient sinew. I am average in terms of height and weight and have long, auburn hair and sparkling green eyes.

Personality:

Mistrustful- My early brushes with misfortune have left me with a grim view of the world and made me perhaps overly-cautious. My thoughts are heavily guarded and I have no problem lying if I think it will help my survival. I am not a compulsive liar, though, and generally view silence as the wisest course.

Tactless-I speak very little. Years in the forest with my taciturn companions taught me economy of words. When I do speak my mind, however, I do so bluntly, regardless of who I may offend. Making friends and influencing people are not high on my list of priorities.

Good- Despite my wariness of people, I believe in defending the weak and powerless and giving to those in need. Though I'll seldom needlessly risk my life, I do what is in my means to do.

Religion: No zealot, I nonetheless have a deep reverence for the gods of the natural world, particularly my patron, Meilikki, and Gwaeron Windstrom, patron of my adopted family, the rangers of Gwaeron's Gallants. Meilikki's symbol, a unicorn head surrounded by a field of green, is emblazoned on my shield. I respect the followers of any gods of good alignment and many neutral ones, too, though clerics of lawful alignment tend to grate on my nerves. I am especially at odds with what I view as the life-quenching beliefs of the land's dominant religion, the Church of Ilmater, though I recognize the value of the church's charitable works.

Authority:

I dislike all forms of authority and any that wield it. I may tolerate, or even help, an occasional benevolent duke or baron if I believe their cause would further the common good. For the most part, however, I prefer to steer clear of others' plays for political power. Laws mean nothing to me, though I don't break major ones if there is a serious threat of being caught.

Background:

Born the only child of Sir Arun uth Pendemyr, a Knight of the Cup, and his elivish wife Illiaine, who, having nearly died in childbirth, was thereafter rendered barren.

A paladin of Ilmater, my father was a just and kind man, though his faith made him somewhat severe and humorless. His ascetic devotion to his god was matched only by his love of my mother. An avowed libertine in the true spirit of her people, the Ulvynn elves of the Grey Forest, my mother's love of wine, song and nature had a softening effect on her husband over time.

She and my father had met when he was still only a squire in his order. The knights had sent him as part of a convoy to escort Sir

Argan ilth Borduin, one of the highest members of their order, on a diplomatic mission to the elven city Ulvynnia.

My mother was a servant in the palace of the Ilmirth, king of Ulvynnia, at the time of the knights' visit. As Illiaine filled the men's cups and cleared their plates, my father was unable to extract his eyes from her. Her delicate elvish features surpassed the beauty and grace of any human woman the young Arun had ever encountered.

Naïve to the racial difficulties and intrigues that generally prevent elves and humankind from engaging in romantic affairs, my father set about trying to woo the seemingly young elvish maid, who was actually more than two human lifetimes older than him.

My mother, having been sheltered from humans for her entire life before the knights' visit, was equally taken with my father. His chivalrous demeanor and relentless doting easily won her over. She was, after all, a simple servant girl –not much to look at by Ulvynn standards-and was therefore quite unaccustomed to such attentions.

Their initial romance was brief but intense. Though my father was too chaste to have consummated anything before the pair could be properly joined in wedlock, the two were inseparable during the few hours when neither his duties to his lord nor hers to her king prevented their being together.

The knights soon left Ulvynnia, but in the following months Arun's thoughts turned constantly to his beloved elfmaid. He soon sent for her, and, though she was reluctant to leave the world she had always known, my mother was soon persuaded to set out from Ulvynnia with a small company of knights, each like a brother to my father, to join him in Goliad. The two were married and, many years later, after my father had earned his place among the higher ranks of his order, had me on the 22nd day of Marpenoth, DR 1336.

Despite the beauty and size of Pendemyr Manor, our home in the city of Goliad, my childhood was not one steeped in the trappings of wealth. My father's piety demanded he give all he could in offering to the church or as alms to the poor.

A stable of some of the region's finest horses-one of my father's other passions—and a handful of faithful servants were our family's only luxuries. Still, I wanted for nothing and my early years were spent pleasantly, riding in the countryside with my mother and listening to her recount the beautiful songs and epics of her people.

Those idyllic days ended, however, when I was only eleven years old. That was thirteen years ago, when the minions of Zhengyi the Witch-King poured out of Vaasa into Damara. My father and the other Knights of the Cup in the Duchy of Brandiar were among the first to resist the imposing menace. Their efforts, though valiant, came to nothing. Too principled to retreat in the face of such an undeniable evil, nearly every member of the order, including my father, was cut down in the fierce battle.

When, one morning, a servant found my father's squire, Halar, collapsed at the gate of our manor, clutching the bloodstained hilt of my father's sword Lucent, the Light-Bringer, my mother fell into an abyss of grief from which there was no reprieve. Not only had she lost her husband, but she was now alone, an outsider in the world of men—a world that was quickly being overtaken by destruction and despair.

Though her love for my father was unwavering, my mother had long missed the beauty of her lands and the company of her own people. In the wake of our family's tragedy, she resolved the time had come to return to Ulvynnia, half-breed child in tow. We packed a few belongings of sentimental value and joined a caravan of refugees headed for the south, where Zhengyi's forces were not yet at full-strength. She planned to pay for safe escort to her lands once we had reached Damara's southern border.

We never reached Damara's southern border, however. As our caravan passed along the western edge of Rawlinswood, we were attacked by a horde of orcs. My mother was among the first killed as their arrows rained down on us from out of the forest.

The warrior escorts with our group tried to fight the beasts off, but were quickly outnumbered. We would have all been slaughtered had it not been for the sudden unexpected aid of a band of woodsfolk, rangers from an encampment deep within the forest. Between the rangers and what was left of our warriors, the orcs were soon routed.

The rangers stayed with our group long enough to help the refugees bury the dead. One of them, Ulric Ashenbough, caught sight of my forlorn expression as they buried my mother.

Realizing I had been orphaned and that a knot of half-starved nomads might be unlikely to look after the needs of a half-breed girl set adrift among their ranks, Ulric decided to take me into the forest with him and raise me as his own. Though the other members of Ulric's encampment were circumspect about my living among them a first, they soon warmed to my presence and welcomed me as just another member of their motley, ever-growing family.

The group, which usually numbered just under two score, had built a lodge deep within Rawlinswood, though the nights when its walls held the entire band were few. Mostly, each of the rangers set out on his or her own for weeks at a stretch, sleeping in caves and other makeshift shelters, and returning to their home base only for brief periods of respite from the lonely life their wilderness home demanded. Whenever possible, I stayed with Ulric, though it was not unusual for him to leave me in the care of others at the lodge when he went to camp or scout in some of the forest's more dangerous environs.

Gwaeron's Gallants, as the band called itself, was comprised mostly of society's misfits—many were petty criminals or army deserters in their former lives—backward men and women who were uncomfortable with the idea of polite company. They did their best, however, to amuse me and to provide me with as close to a carefree childhood as possible. They whittled toys for me and sang me their human songs nursery rhymes, which were a far cry from my mother' elvish lullabies. Though their attentions did much to lighten my spirits from time to time, my deeply felt losses had shaped me into a sullen and introspective child. If the rangers noticed my murky demeanor, they said nothing to dissuade it. Most of them were equally withdrawn, and so saw nothing unusual in my manner.

Under their care, I grew up self-sufficient and entuned to the rhythms of the natural world. I was trained in tracking and woods lore, as well as in the use of a longbow. By the time I was 15, I had learned their art for moving silently and blending in with my surroundings. In fact, my elvish blood made me as adept at those skills as some rangers who had spent decades in the wilderness. My knack for stealth earned me the nickname "Windstalker." By the time I was 16, Ulric had begun to teach me how to wield my father's sword, which I had carried away from the scene of my mother's

slaughter and had seldom been parted from since.

Last summer, once I had passed my 18th year, Ulric agreed to allow me to come along with Gwaeron's Gallants as they traveled to the edge of the Galenas to help some friends in the dwarven clan Ironspur disperse a particularly brutal tribe of orcs. I was more than eager for the chance to lay my sword into some of the foul creatures that had been responsible for my mother's death, and I was not disappointed. Though my headcount numbered well under that of most of our group, Ulric assured me my battle prowess was right in line with what is expected from one of my tender age and limited experience.

The summer had nearly passed away and our group was preparing for its trip back to the south when tragedy struck my life once again. Ulric, with a handful of the other rangers and dwarves, had planned a night raid on the orcs' lair, hoping to overpower the few dozen remaining beasts before the deep freeze of winter arrived. Without even saying goodbye, Ulric left me sleeping in my bedroll that night as he prepared for a battle he had purposely hidden from my knowledge.

Somehow, the orcs had received word of the planned attack and were ready for the small army, ambushing them before they had time to react. Though the stronger and larger group of humans and dwarves did eventually quash the orcish attackers, the cost was immense. More than half of the rangers and many of the dwarves were slain. Among them was Ulric.

When the surviving rangers returned to our cave the following morning with the news, I was rendered speechless for days. As the group readied the provisions for our return journey to Rawlinswood, I determined to take a different course. I needed space to grieve, which was something the cramped winter quarters of our forest lodge, and its proximity to Ulric in my mind, could not offer me. Part of me also longed to revisit the urban world of my youth, though the thought of returning to Goliad sat uneasily with me.

The remaining Gallants planned to stop briefly in Trailsend before turning east toward Rawlinswood. Their heavy losses left them ill prepared for the hardships of winter in the wilds, and provisions would be needed if their continued survival was to be assured. I waited until we had almost reached the city gate to inform my companions of my decision to winter in the city. Though they advised me against it, the group understood my position and, a few days after our arrival, took their leave of me, only after extracting from me a promise to return to them once I had cleared my head.

Shortly after their departure, I found work as a stable hand. Using my uncanny empathy toward animals and my skill at handling them, I made quite the impression on my employer, who offered me lodging in a hayloft above the stalls. The accommodations were spartan, but seemed luxurious in comparison to the caves and tents to which I was accustomed. As the chill began to set in, I celebrated the turning of my 19th year, alone, with a flagon of the warm mulled wine served in the pub at Feldrin's Rest. The solitude suited me perfectly.

Associates and allies:

I was raised from early childhood by the band of rangers known as Gwaeron's Gallants, and I still maintain close ties with that organization. I am also known to the Tellerth druid coven in Rawlinswood, which works closely with the Gallants. Recently, I have been seen in the company of adventurers wandering through the Duchy of Soravia and the free city of Heliogabalus. Our band was recently responsible for the liberation of the Soravian town of Hinterford from the remnants of Zhengyi's armies, and also responsible for the riddance of a troublesome group of orcs and orcus worshippers plaguing the small Soravian town of Fairhill. My companions have not named our fellowship, as is the custom in other parts of the realms, but included in our number are a half-orc barbarian from the Var tribe of Narfell, a human rogue, a Tyrran Lawkeeper, a Rawlinswood druid, a human fighter from Hinterford, and a Moonshae Ranger, far from his home.

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Enemies:

My mother's death at the hands of the band of orcs has left me with an all-consuming hatred of them. Years of watching their wanton disrespect for the forest and its creatures have only served to feed that flame. I'll generally kill them first and ask questions later.

Statistics:

Fallon uth Pemdemyr: Female half-elf Ranger 5; CR 5; Medium humanoid; HD 5d8+10; hp 38; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19-20, +1 longsword 'Lucent') or +6 melee (1d4+1/19-20, dagger), or +6 (1d8+2/x2, heavy mace) or +8(+9 within 30 ft) ranged (1d8/x3, composite longbow); EX: Favored enemies (orcs, magical beasts), wild empathy, combat style (archery), animal companion (wolf, Erreth); SQ Low –light vision, immunity to sleep spells, +2 racial bonus on enchantment spells and effects; AL CG; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Character Generation Method: 4d6 drop lowest.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Handle Animal +8, Heal +5, Hide +5, Jump +3, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Ride +4, Search +1, Spot +5, Survival +5, Swim +5; Diehard, Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Track.

Spells per day: 1; save DC 12 + spell level

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, buckler, +1 Ring of Protection, +1 longsword (Lucent), heavy mace, composite longbow, 2 daggers, 3 potions of Cure Light Wounds, 3 vials of holy water wooden holy symbol of Mielikki, 9 pp, 35 gp, 14 sp, 18 cp

Erreth: Male wolf; CR 1; Medium animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 14; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Trip; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Character Generation Method: 4d6 drop lowest.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Handle Animal +8, Heal +5, Hide +5, Jump +3, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Ride +4, Search +1, Spot +5, Survival +5, Swim +5; Diehard, Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Track.

Spells per day: 1; save DC 12 + spell level

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, buckler, +1 Ring of Protection, +1 longsword (Lucent), heavy mace, composite longbow, 2 daggers, 3 potions of Cure Light Wounds, 3 vials of holy water wooden holy symbol of Mielikki, 9 pp, 35 gp, 14 sp, 18 cp

Erreth: Male wolf; CR 1; Medium animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 14; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, bite); Space/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Trip; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

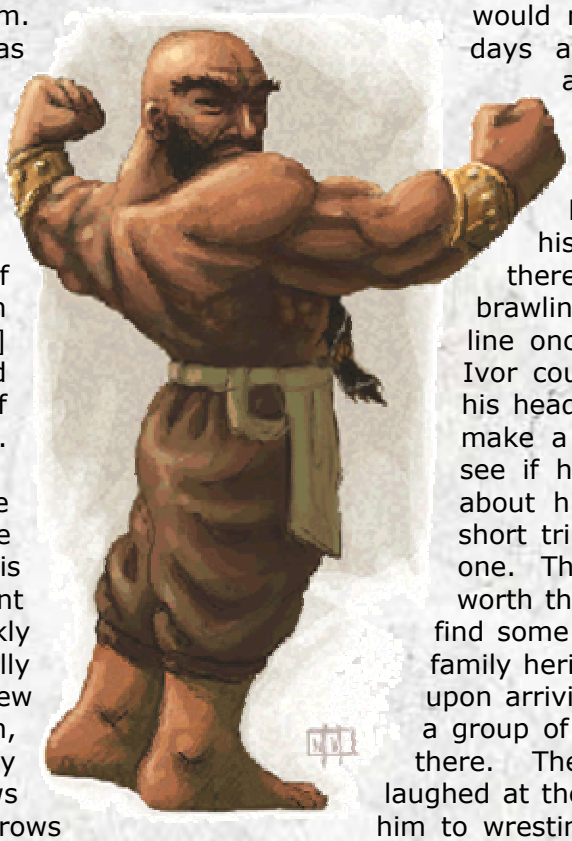
Folk of Faerun

Ivor Stonefists

By Lee J Nelson

Ivor Stonefists (male, shield dwarf, 122, LN, Candlekeep, Fighter2/Monk10)

Ivor is about medium size for a dwarf. He is very sturdy, stout, and barrel-chested. His head is shaved bald but he has a very long beard and mustache that are as dark brown as his eyes. His beard is braided in one long tail with very thin pieces of barbed wire to discourage anyone from grappling with him. He never wears a shirt and has very brown tanned skin from training and blacksmithing outside all the time. Ivor travels barefoot and wears loose-fitting trousers, a blacksmith's tool belt, a pair of iron bracers he made himself (they have the Stonefist clan symbol [a fisted hammer] stylized into them then Ivor had them enchanted by one of Candlekeep's Clerics).



Ivor is gruff and most people may think he is being impolite until they get to know him. He is very focused and gets to the point quickly. He can move very quickly but seldom does unless he really has to. He likes to read, learn new things, make new things, teach, debate, drink, and especially brawl. When angry he narrows his eyes and his bushy eyebrows stick out even more. He loves to challenge people looking for lore to wrestling matches and has devised a test of strength he is particularly fond of. (remove all magical items, set up as arm wrestling, roll 2d6 + Str, losers hand is shoved into cage with poisonous monster [usually scorpion], winner gets the lore. As Candlekeep does not allow drinking in the library, Ivor would be very grateful to anyone who smuggled in some good dwarven mead.

Ivor grew up in Waterdeep as an apprentice blacksmith. Ivor's clan, the Stonefists, were once part of the Dardath clanhold but had become very small and were dwindling fast. Ivor loved his job of blacksmithing, but he would much rather spend his days at the tavern drinking and brawling. He became known for his brawling and fighting skills. One night while he was drinking with his uncle he let it slip that there used to be some brawling monks in the family line once long ago. After that Ivor could not get that out of his head and finally decided to make a trip to Candlekeep to see if he could find out more about his ancestors. It was a short trip but still a dangerous one. The rewards were well worth the trip though as he did find some obscure lore about his family heritage. He was surprised upon arriving at the 'keep to find a group of human monks already there. These monks at first laughed at the dwarf and challenged him to wresting matches to find the books he wanted. After a short while they became impressed with Ivor and tried to help him more as he became a regular Seeker. He set up a blacksmiths shop in the trades sector to supply himself with an income and because its what he does. Secretly he also

set up a small tavern in the basement of his workshop as well. Ivor learned about his history and even found a book written by his great great grandfather's uncle on some dwarven monk fighting styles. He learned these and even shared them with the human monks as they shared their styles with him. He was soon invited to become a Scribe and accepted feeling the need to repay the monks for their help plus that way he could have his own Seekers study under him. Eventually his family heard of his success and after the Thunder Blessing, which renewed the dying clan, his twin nephews came to study under him. Currently still at Candlekeep, Ivor has expanded his search to include all reference to dwarven monks, not just his ancestors. He will offer a great price or impart any of his knowledge on those who bring him relevant tomes. He will also do the same for anyone who can find him a dwarven runecaster that can scribe magical runic tattoos on his body.

Ivor still keeps in touch with his family in Waterdeep and will come running if anything happens to any of them. He is in good standings with the other monks of Candlekeep and will help them out if in need. Currently he has four Seekers studying under him; his troublesome twin nephews, Kling and Klang; a rather hardy gnome, Stonebasher; and two humans, Gregory and Yesi. (If you want to wrestle a monk for lore but Ivor is too powerful you may substitute one of these lesser monks).

Stats: (based on 32 point buy) HP: 47 + 1d10 + 10d8; Init +4; Speed 50ft; AC 14; BAB +9/+2; Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8. Height 4'2", weight 150lbs. Languages Dwarven, Common, Chondathan.
Skills and feats: Appraise +5, Concentration +14, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (history) +11, Profession (blacksmith) +8, Sense Motive +12, Tumble +12, Thug, Weapon Focus (unarmed), Dirty Fighting, Improved Unarmed Strike, Close-Quarters Fighting, Stunning Fist, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Improved Trip, Improved Grapple, Fists of Iron.
Special Abilities: Shield Dwarf Racial Traits, Flurry of Blows, Evasion, Still Mind, Ki Strike, Slow Fall, Purity of Body, Wholeness of Body, Improved Evasion.
Items: Masterwork blacksmith's toolbelt (includes all blacksmith tools), Barbed braid wires (deals 1d4 damage when opponent makes a successful grapple check), Iron Blacksmith's Bracer's of Strength (Profession (blacksmith) +4, Strength +2)

Cities of the Easting Reach

A Tour of Telflamm

By George Krashos

arge City:
Conventional/non-standard/non-standard;
AL: LE/NE/N;
40,000 gp limit;
Assets: 46,722,000 gp;

Who Rules: Prince Wendren Balindre (LE male Damaran rogue 4/aristocrat 4) a foppish, pretentious, jaded man of little humor and selfish disposition.

Who Really Rules: The Shadowmasters of Telflamm, the city's thieves guild, controls trade and commerce throughout the city and influences nearly all the members of the city's Merchant Council and trade guilds.

Population: 23,361; Mixed (human 84%, orc 5%, half-elf 4%, half-orc 3%, dwarf 1%, elf 1%, gnome 1%, halfling 1%).

Major Products: Ships, wagons, hardware of all sorts, fish, lamp oil (rendered from fish and whales) and 'exotic' goods from the Hordelands and Kara-Tur.

Armed Forces: The Royal Watch patrols the city proper and is a six-hundred-strong group of mostly 2nd to 3rd level Fighters clad in chainmail and wielding spears, short swords and daggers. The Watch also has several wizards and priests of Tempus within its ranks, and these individuals are usually officers or grouped into special squads to deal with major outbreaks of violence or unrest in the city. The leader of the Royal Watch is Captain Fen Haldryon (CG male Damaran fighter 11).

The environs around Telflamm are ostensibly policed by the Royal Militia, which is a ragtag group of some five hundred troops, half of which is comprised of poorly trained citizens. In reality, the security of Telflamm rests with mercenary groups paid for and run by the city. The current mercenary group benefiting from Telflamm's ample coffers is the Black Eagle Company out of Impiltur. This well-trained force of two-thousand fighter2s to fighter4s is divided into a group of heavy infantry clad in plate mail and armed with halberds, maces and daggers and a force of crossbowmen clad in chainmail and wielding heavy crossbows and shortswords. The Militia and the Black Eagle Company are housed in barracks situated outside the city walls and act to quell fighting among rival merchants as well as patrolling Telflamm's "territory" (encompassing the lands around the towns of Nyth and Culmaster also), fighting brigands and humanoid raiders. There is considerable conflict and friction between the 'amateurs' and the 'professionals' and not a tenday goes by without some sort of camp brawl between the veterans of the Black Eagle Company and the members of the Royal Militia.

Since the attack of the Sharkjaws Flotilla in 1364 DR, there has been talk of raising a Royal Navy in Telflamm. However, the defeat of the pirates by the Shadowmasters proved to the city that it had little to fear from corsairs and so Telflamm remains 'defenseless' in terms of a naval presence on the waters of the Reach.

Notable Mages: Telflamm is home to many mages of note given its strategic position between the lands of Aglarond and Thay, and its reputation as a tolerant, free city, which does not regulate or attempt to control practitioners of the Art. Below, are some of the more well known mages:

- *Aldreth Fireshar* (CN female Damaran sorceror 12/incantatrix 3) is an ambitious youngster rumored to have ties with the pirates of the Sea of Fallen Stars and who has fallen afoul of the Zhentarim, the Red Wizards and the Harpers, all within the last

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decade! Her abode, known to have at least six gargoyle guardians, can often be found in Teflamm's harbor;
- *Catanarla the Crimson Cloaked* (NG female Chondathan wizard 16) is a fearless adventurer famous throughout the Inner Sea lands for her bold forays into ruined Myth Drannor and her tales of the wonders and ever-present dangers to be found there;
- *Duara Therendil* (CG female Chondathan female wizard 9/Harper agent 3) is a Harper wizardess and friend of Elminster of Shadowdale. She is often away from the city on Harper business but is known to use a *rogue stone* as a swift, infallible means of returning to Telflamm when needed;
- *Nathlaeris* (NE male Mulan wizard 10/red wizard 2) is a reclusive mage known to maintain a regular *sending* service with the mage Anothaer of distant Sossal. Nathlaeris is secretly an agent of Thay, reporting directly to the Zulkir of Divination;
- *Raestheena* (CG female Damaran female wizard 13) is a retired member of the Valiant Warriors adventuring group and now a respected 'lady' of Telflamm. She is a shrewd worker of magic who knows an impressive array of rare and strange battle spells;
- *Rilathor "Runestar" Beldriss* (LN male Chondathan wizard 6) provides training for low-level mages and deals in rare and hard to get spell components at his business 'Runestar's Rummage".

Notable Churches: Despite its status as a free city and trading hub of the East, the city of Telflamm has surprisingly few temples, although there are numerous shrines to various deities such as Chauntea, Selune, Ilmater and Valkur located within the city walls. Religion in Telflamm is dominated by the faiths of Tempus and Mask as well as worship of gods with a more mercantile bent. There is also a hidden group of Cyric worshippers whose attempts to establish a temple or shrine have been thwarted time and again by the followers of Mask and the Shadowmasters.

- *The House of the Master's Shadow*, temple to Mask; Lord Master Most Hidden Jalaunther Ithbreeiur (NE male Damaran rogue 9/cleric 9 of Mask); 30 priests, 350 followers. Jalaunther is an ambitious man of wide-reaching plans. He is known to have agents in every major Faerûnian city collecting information and spreading rumors. Currently focusing on Telflamm, Jalaunther seeks to expand the influence of Mask throughout the lands of the Easting Reach and become the power behind not just a city but entire kingdoms.
- *The Wayfarer's Rest*, temple to Shaundakul; Rider of the East Wind Norlith Derund (CG male Damaran cleric 7 of Shaundakul/windwalker 4); 8 priests and 100 followers. Whilst the second choice of worship behind Waukeen for most people of a mercantilistic bent, this faith is growing in strength and popularity, especially among the long haul caravan guards and drovers who brave the Endless Waste and Tuigan lands to trade with fabled Kara Tur.
- *The Tower of Tempus*, temple to the Lord of Battles; Champion Rampant Taeron Norntar (LN male Chondathan fighter 4/cleric 11 of Tempus); 20 priests, 250 followers. Long a thorn in the side of Mask's clergy, the many mercenaries and adventurers who reside or travel through Telflamm make this a faith that the Shadowmasters and the temple of Mask dare not openly challenge. The demise of Volludan, the previous guild head of the Shadowmasters, was a clear indication of the strength of Tempus in the city.
- *The Spires of Fortune*, temple to Tymora; High Atalara Verrandra Dithshimmer (CG female Damaran cleric 14 of Tymora); 14 priests, 160 followers. After the Time of Troubles, the priest Daramos Lauthyr attempted to make Tymora's temple in Arabel the center of her faith, with himself at its head. Verrandra was the most vocal and strident critic of Lauthyr's zealous efforts. She was successful,

due in part to her sometimes overpowering personality, and because of Tymora's brief possession of her body at the Midsummer Festival of Tymora in the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR).

- *The Hall of the Avenging Hammer*, temple to Tyr; Lady Justicar Vala Destrayal (LG female Damaran cleric 13 of Tyr); 6 priests, 50 followers. This temple has grown more prominent with the recent appointment of Lady Vala, who is determined to put an end to the Shadowmasters' ruthless domination of the city. To date, she has survived at least three attempts on her life by agents of the Shadowmasters, but she refuses to bow down before such threats and coercion.
- *The Gold Pillars*, temple to Waukeen; Shining Overgold Janeesa Hillgauntlet (LN Damaran female cleric 6 of Waukeen/Goldeye 6); 15 priests, 200 worshippers. This successful temple to the Merchant's Friend has gone from strength to strength in recent years having come to an 'accomodation' with the Shadowmasters in respect of trade in and out of the city. Business is good and Waukeen smiles upon them.

Notable Rogues' and Thieves' Guilds: Telflamm is dominated by the Shadowmasters, and individual thieves or rival guilds or organizations have always failed to gain a lasting foothold in the city. Organizations such as the Red Wizards of Thay and the Zhentarim are believed to have secret agents within the city walls, but their activities are extremely low-key and in no way intended to challenge the Shadowmasters' sway over the city. Of late, with the influx of refugees from the Tuigan War and the establishment of Shou Town outside the city walls proper, it is rumored that a rival rogue group has rooted itself among these immigrants, and may in time challenge the Shdowmasters for control of the city.

- *The Shadowmasters* are a group of thieves, smugglers and fences numbering some eighty individuals. They have an excellent relationship with the clergy of Mask at the House of the Master's Shadow, and have gained a measure of subtlety since the unfortunate demise of the previous guildmaster, Volludan. The Shadowmasters are now led by Grand Master of Shadows Keshna Finothleer (NE female Damaran shadow-walker rogue 9/assassin 4/Telflammar shadowlord 9), who seeks to spread the influence of her group throughout the lands of the Easting Reach.
- *The Nine Golden Swords*, or yakuza, as they are known in Kara-Tur, have established a cell in Shou Town, preying on the non-native population that has gathered there following the Horde invasion. Thievery and 'protection' are the Swords' staple trade but they plan to eliminate and take over the operations of the Shadowmasters once they have gathered sufficient strength. The 'outlander' nature of the Nine Golden Swords will prove difficult to infiltrate by the Shadowmasters, and hence a 'daggers by night' confrontation between the two groups looms in the future.

Equipment Shops: Full.

Adventurer's Quarters: Telflamm has many inns and rooming houses, due to the transient nature of much of its population. This fact, coupled with the city's generally tolerant attitude to travelers and 'outlanders', means that they are happy to house anyone who pays well. A selection of the more affordable and welcoming accommodation is detailed here:

- *The Battered Shield Inn* is a famous rooming house used by many adventuring bands of note over the years. Decayed splendor best describes the furnishings, but the staff is quick, discreet and efficient. This establishment accommodates long-term stays and they are also known to provide safe storage of goods and items (backed by spells, it is rumored) for a stiff fee (good/moderate);

- *The Sword and Horn Tavern* is located near Telflamm's docks and is a rough, boisterous drinking hole for the undiscerning. Its ale is legendary for its strength and hangover-inducing properties, and the fare is surprisingly good for such a low-heeled establishment. Patrons should note that tavern-clearing brawls are commonplace here (fair/cheap);
- *The White Lotus Inn* is a new establishment that has sprung up in Shou Town, run by a family that hails from far-off Kozakura in Kara-Tur. It is gaining popularity for its quiet, meticulous service and fabulous hot bath facilities. Of late, more and more citizens of Telflamm have been making the journey from the city to partake of its services. The inn is also rumored to be a front for the Nine Golden Swords, who use it for gathering information and news that only the relaxed and pampered will divulge (excellent/moderate);
- *The Silver Lyre* tavern and inn is renowned for its excellent bards and musicians who perform there on a regular basis (good/moderate);
- *The Dragon's Maw* tavern and inn, old, large and run down (fair/cheap);
- *The Weary Drover* tavern and inn is popular for short stays or for those with little coin (poor/cheap).

Important Characters: Telflamm is home to many individuals of note, ranging from ex-adventurers to fabulously rich merchants. It is a true melting pot of the Realms.

- *Alither Yaerndoum* (CG male Chondathan ranger 2/bard 8/harper agent 3) is a talented bard with ties to the Harpers. He spends much of his time travelling in Thesk and the Great Dale on Harper business;
- *Artlan of the Silver Sword* (NG male Damaran ranger 10/harper agent 4) is regarded as the foremost guide for hunters in the city and is reputed to know the Forest of Lethyr better than any man alive. He is also secretly a Harper.
- *Falrith Deepkeel* (N male Damaran fighter 9) is a ship captain and sea trader famous for outsailing the pirate captain Bolzar the Black in a recent skirmish west of the Wayrock;
- *Ildara of the Plains* (CN female Nar barbarian 5) is a hulking warrior woman who hails from the horse tribes of Narfell. She will not speak of her past but is known throughout the city as an excellent caravan guide or short-term bodyguard;
- *Pren Salgirk* (N male half-elf expert 7) is a Councilor and leader of the city's Merchant Council. Fully under the influence of the Shadowmasters, he seeks a means to escape their domination, but fears for his life and that of his family;
- *Wyrekka Kusell* (N female Chondathan bard 7) is a famed minstrel in the eastern Inner Sea lands, and while she calls Telflamm home, she is just as often found in Thesk, Aglarond, or Impiltur.

Important Features in Town: Believed to be the wealthiest city on the Easting Reach, the citizens of Telflamm are known for their canny business sense and leanings toward independence and self-determination. The city zealously safeguards its unique position in the region as an open city and its power groups, headed by the Shadowmasters, ensure that Telflamm's sphere of influence is not threatened by the ambitions of realms such as Impiltur and Thay.

Telflamm has one of the busiest and largest harbors on the Sea of Fallen Stars, evidenced by the fact that it was used as the disembarkation point for King Azoun of Cormyr's army in his fight against the Tuigan. The dock areas of the city are extensive and many merchant costers have warehouses and private shipping berths along Heskel Cove, south of the river. Two great buildings, the Merchants' Fortress and Castle Balindre, dominate Telflamm. A Thayan enclave lies northeast of Shemszarr Square which hosts thrice-weekly open air markets where goods ranging from foodstuffs to armaments can be purchased. The most feared and avoided structure in Telflamm is the temple to Mask, the House of the Master's Shadow. This nondescript building lies east of Shemszarr Square and is

frequented only by worshippers of Mask or those seeking to do business personally with the Shadowmasters. It should be noted that individuals who go there to seek out the Shadowmasters, should approach with considerable caution unless one is well known to them or has something that they desire greatly.

High, strong walls that have been extended outward on at least two occasions in the city's history surround Telflamm. Currently, only Shou Town lies outside the city walls proper, and it is unlikely that the city walls will be extended to protect them anytime in the near future. The long-established population of Telflamm, despite their open attitudes to other people and places of the Realms, regard the Shou as unwelcome interlopers for the most part and look down on them as inferiors. Many wish that they would just 'move on' and make their home in some other city while others feel that they are a source of cheap, willing labor, prepared to do work that even an orc would frown upon. Few understand the patience and inscrutability of the Shou and the fact that they have long, long memories.

Telflamm remains a busy place with trade as its lifeblood. The Shadowmasters are accepted as a necessary evil given the security they afford the city. As long as everyone makes a living, has a few gold royals to their name, and can entertain the prospect of making more, the citizens of Teflamm are content to let matters remain as they are.

Local Lore: Some four and a half centuries old, the settlement of Telflamm is believed to have been an ancient Nar military encampment before this great empire was brought low by the Great Conflagration. In the fall of Narfell and Raumathar, a massive magical accident saw the cliff upon which the Narfelli citadel sat hurled into the sea, creating the harbor of Telflamm that we know today. The site was subsequently used by Theskan nomads for trade with the forest-dwelling humans of the Great Dale and was occupied year round due to extensive beds of saltwater oysters and the proliferation of other edible shellfish such as the claw crab, blacktongue mussel and the succulent thorncrawler. Over the centuries, much of these marine species have been greatly diminished by over-harvesting and now fisherfolk are forced to go to deeper waters to obtain a reasonable catch.

In the wake of the Great Conflagration, a great hero of Narfelli stock known simply as Eth established a short-lived 'kingdom' at the site. This near mythical figure is known to have given his name to the present-day settlement of Ethdale and the river flowing out of the Forest of Lethyr. Wielding the legendary blade Namarra, "The Sword That Never Sleeps", Eth fought off the gnolls, fiends and other dangers prevalent in the area to forge his own hold, creating a bastion of civilization in the dark times following the destruction of Narfell and Raumathar. He is thought to have ruled for less than a score winters before he and his warriors marched into the forest to hunt down and slay the green dragon Minthalamos, which was terrorizing the surrounding countryside. He was never seen or heard of again, and most sages postulate that he fell beneath the claws of the wyrm or was overcome by the other dark dangers of the forest. His realm fell with his passing, but strangely, his blade Namarra has to this day figured in many tales and other folklore. Though the veracity of these tales is unknown, they do point to either the discovery of Eth's body, or the acquisition of the blade by other means, most likely involving Minthalamos. What sages and loremasters do know, is that Minthalamos has not been heard of or seen in over nine centuries and is thought to have had its lair somewhere southwest of Spearsmouth Dale.

Centuries later, a Yuir elf mage by the name of Telin "the Elf Flame" Ammaeth built a stone tower there and forced out the humans who used it as a trading site and meeting place. It is thought that he gave his name to the location, and that human tales and stories over the centuries shortened and twisted it to its current form of Telflamm. What little is known of Telin is that he fled his homeland for unknown reasons and valued his privacy highly, lashing out with spells against all perceived intruders. After the span of a human lifetime, no more was heard of Telin and humans returned to the region

once again. The tower eventually fell into ruin, its stones carried away by other settlers for their own structures. It is believed to have stood where the Merchants' Fortress stands today, and rumors are whispered that access to the deep undercellars and catacombs of that place link up to the remnants of Telin's delvings beneath his tower, where he may or may not have fallen afoul of the drow.

Untold Stories

Collection 1

By Chris Jameson (Adventures I – VI)
& Scott Kujawa (Adventures VII – XI)

Being a collection of adventure hooks and starting tales for use in the Forgotten Realms

Adventure Hook I

The PCs are approached by a half-dragon NPC. The half-dragon is worried about his (or her) draconic parent, who has recently been contacted by the Cult of the Dragon. The dragon is on the verge of accepting the Cult's offer to be turned into a dracolich, and the half-dragon is against this. The PCs are hired to somehow prevent the transformation. How will they accomplish this?
Alternatively, the half-dragon is worried about the effects of the coming Rage of Dragons on their draconic parent, and enlists the aid of the PCs to prevent the dragon from joining in the Flight that will soon happen.

Adventure Hook II

While staying in a large town or city, one of the PCs has a romantic encounter with an attractive NPC of the opposite sex. The next morning, the PC wakes up to find that their lover has vanished, leaving behind an unusual amulet. When the PC questions the locals about his vanished lover, he finds that they know of the girl, but that she disappeared months ago! Of the amulet, no one seems to know anything. What happened to the girl, and of what importance is the amulet?

Adventure Hook III

This hook works best if used some distance from Silverymoon.

The PCs are hired to guard a particular wagon. The wagon will be traveling as part of a caravan bound for Silverymoon. The PCs, if they ask, are told that the cargo consists of various trade goods. If they look inside the wagon, all they see is a number of crates of various shapes and sizes.
At various points along the trip, nearby people come down with a mysterious illness. The symptoms include feeling tired and lethargic for a few days, and a pair of tiny wounds upon the neck. The victims often report having unusual dreams of hypnotic eyes the night before. The illness, whatever its cause, seems to have no lasting effect. The victims seem to be chosen at random: tavern wenches, fellow travelers on the road, even some of the other caravan guards.
Eventually astute PCs will connect the illness to the attacks of a vampire. Further investigation reveals that the vampire's coffin is concealed in a large crate on the very wagon the PCs are guarding!
The PCs will undoubtedly wish to slay the vampire. But then they learn the vampire's identity…
In life, the vampire was Sir Halon Naegio, a paladin of Lathander who vanished under mysterious circumstances a few years ago. Sir Halon was a famous vampire hunter, perhaps even a mentor or hero of one of the PCs. However, he suffered the fate of many other vampire hunters, turned into one of the vile undead he'd dedicated his life to destroying.
Sir Halon is struggling to not give in to the vicious nature of most vampires, and since gaining his freedom has not slain a single person. Having just recently obtained his freedom, Sir Halon now wants nothing more

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than to return to his home, Silverymoon, where trusted colleagues at Lathander's temple, Rhyester's Matins, will grant the former paladin the eternal rest he desperately desires.
Do the PCs aid the vampire in reaching his home and then his final rest, or do they slay him now, despite the fact he's not yet succumbed to his vampiric nature?

Adventure IV

The PCs find a sword or dagger that is one of the keys to a Sword Herald refuge. The PCs may or may not know about this long-vanished mysterious group, who are known for leaving a series of extradimensional refuges across Cormyr. Regardless of what the PCs know, someone knows that they hold a Sword Herald key. The PCs find themselves coming under attack from unknown assailants who are after the blade. Who are these assailants, and what is in the refuge that they want? And just where is the refuge located?

Adventure Hook V

An ancient temple once stood in a secluded locale, far from any nearby settlements. Centuries ago, followers of a rival faith razed the temple, and the ruins have been lost to time – or so everyone believed. According to travelers, the temple has recently reappeared, and is fully intact. Why has the temple reappeared, and who or what may be found within?

Adventure Hook VI

A wealthy patron hires the PCs, their mission to venture into a nearby dangerous complex – ruins or a dungeon, whichever suits the campaign. The PCs set off on the mission. Only when they are too far into the complex to easily return do they find out they were followed: one of the patron's teenage children has decided to accompany the PCs! The wayward teenager could be enamored of one of the characters, or they could be dreaming of becoming an adventurer themselves. The PCs are already finding the complex to be challenging, so can they protect a non-combatant while accomplishing their mission?

Adventure Hook VII

This could be used on the Moonsea, Sea of Fallen Stars, or up and down the Sword Coast.
Ships have been disappearing. The talk in the towns and cities around the places where the ships are disappearing claim that a large vortex of water rode over the ships before it plucked them right off the water. Where did they go? Who is responsible? It could be the Kraken Society, clergy of Unberlee, or some of the undersea races like the Sea Devils or maybe even Tritons who are angry about something.

Adventure Hook VIII

A female human stands on the street corner of a city and speaks this tale to the people around her:

> *"Once, centuries ago, there was a nation that ruled these lands. But it's decadence, like so many of the old nations of Faerûn, caused its fall. Now, however, many of the old ruins are rebuilding themselves without the help of any physical force. Lights, screams, voices, and other sounds and sights have been heard and seen coming from within these old ruins."*

After answering questions the PC's might have she says,

> *"We are hiring adventurers and mercenaries to explore these ruins and report back to the (ruling body of the nation/city/town/etc). Of course you will be paid with coins, minor scrolls, minor potions, or a favor from the ruling nation/city/town/etc, depending on what you find within. Or you could keep some of the items within but a percent of the items within, if any, belong to us."*

The ruins are really old Sarrukh or Yuan-ti settlements and she is an agent for either or both and she really doesn't work for the

nation/city/town where this scene is taking place. She just wants adventurers to loot the places and then give her the items they find within so she can use them for herself or her superiors.

Adventure Hook IX

Flodevar "Stewmaster" Volbreene, a rotund human ball of flesh, has heard of the plants and herbs grown on Nimbral. This master chef, who thinks very highly of himself, wants some of the giant dusty-red "shade roses" for his latest stew. But he can't leave his kitchen because he thinks, and rightly so, that his undercooks are morons and none of them have the skill and brains he has, even though they think the same of him. So it's time for the PC's to do what they do best and head off to Nimbral to negotiate for some of those plants and bring them back to Flodevar. (As a twist to this maybe they have a time limit because he really does work in a nobles/kings/etc estate and that family/person/being is planning on throwing a gala/ball and the meal needs to be finished before that.)

Adventure Hook X

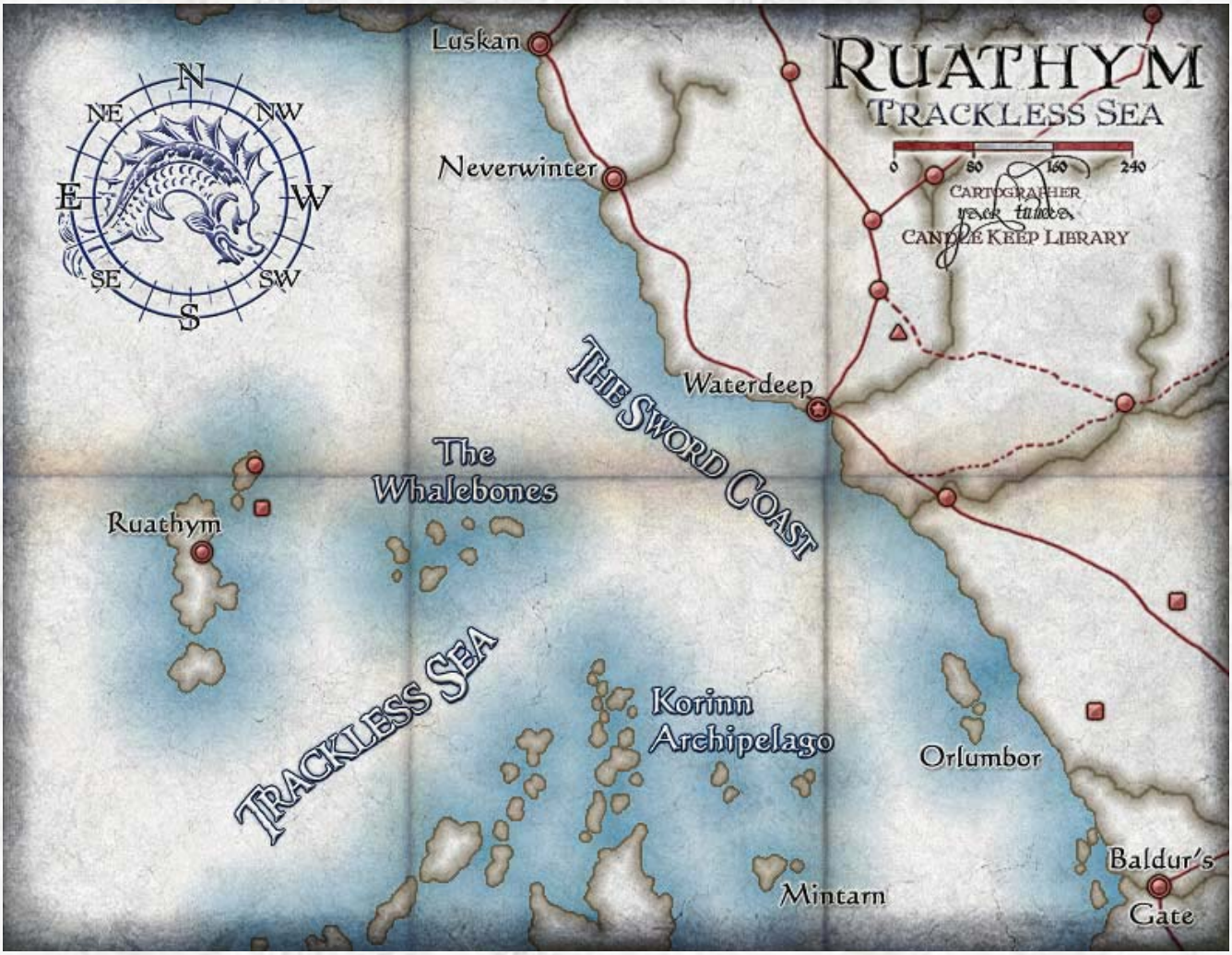
Fuorn, the treant that rules the treants of the Forgotten Forest, is concerned because Pheszeltan, the hierophant druid of the Forgotten Forest, hasn't been seen in tendays and he is usually prompt for their meetings. Fuorn last heard that the druid was going to investigate rumors of a stronger lizard man who was gathering the lizard men of the Marsh of Chelimber together, but that was tendays ago and the druid seems to have disappeared.

Adventure Hook XI

Astryl "Sunstone", a young female human ranger from the North, is seeking to bring the Circle of Shadowdale back together since it disbanded after the Time of Troubles. She is concerned that without it the animals and monsters in and around Shadowdale will spread or grow unchecked. She followed signs from Chauntea and Mielikki from her homeland in the north and those signs led her to Shadowdale. She has pleaded her case to Lord Mourngrym, and now keeps a room at the Old Skull Inn while awaiting his answer. She doesn't know it, but followers of Malar have also noticed her. Not wanting another Circle around to hunt them, they are considering how to remove her.
This is where the PC's come in; one night they hear the clash of blades near the Old Skull Inn and the shouts of battle. They find Astryl fighting for her life as she is attacked by a group of assassins the Malarites sent to remove her. The PC's can track the assassins to the group of Malar followers and remove them and then maybe the Lord will grant her request.

Laws of Ruathym

By Jamey Martin



Late in the year 1361 DR it came to pass that Abbot Herodyr the Rightwise of Neverwinter's Hall of Justice had a prophetic dream. In this dream Tyr appeared to him. The god charged Herodyr with the task of carrying both law, and more importantly, the spirit of justice, to the Northmen raiders of the Trackless Sea.

In obedience to the will of Grimjaws, this great mission began in the island realm of Ruathym, which had recently been softened and humbled, even terrorized, in their war with the city-state of Luskan and it's wizard-lords. Likewise, have these Tyrsmen become known as Lawspeakers, of which, only four have accompanied Herodyr to Ruathym. They are, however, served by up to a dozen aids and aspirants, and despite their small numbers, or perhaps because of them, the Lawspeakers have been well received. They have already succeeded in "reorganizing" the realm into jarldoms, based upon the customary divisions of Ruathym proper, Holgerstead, Axengaard, and Nerth,

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and establishing in each the sacral Doomstones (Judgement Rocks) at which legal cases will thence be tried and at which jarls shall be chosen and hailed in their respective localities.
The Great Doomstone of the realm of Ruathym rests within the jarldom of Ruathym, as a matter of both honour and centrality. This is the "high court" of the land, where men bring disputes that, for whatever reason, cannot be resolved in local moots or around regional Doomstones. It is also where political decisions are made, and where the First Axe of Ruathym is chosen, though this latter custom is only brought into play, these days, in times of war. Outside of war the preeminent jarl is simply the "High Jarl", but beyond that prestige exercises little formal authority over his fellows. The power of the First Axe however is understood to be absolute in times of war, and can only be contravened by a Lawspeaker in terms of crime and punishment. Even then it is less the Lawspeaker and more Grimjaws himself who reserves the right of judgement.

At Midsummer, the Lawspeakers of Tyr preside at their respective Doomstones to explain and oversee procedure, as well as to demonstrate the judgement of Grimjaws when so called upon to do so.

One way the Lawspeakers demonstrate the judgement of Grimjaws is through the use of the Rod of the Righteous. This is a simple black iron rod, the end of which is heated red hot and blessed with certain spells in the name of Tyr. Following the heating, and in order to demonstrate such things as an evil or deceitful nature (*detect evil, detect lie*), the person in question will be asked to grasp the heated end of the iron and swear to their honesty or goodness. If they are true and righteous, the might of Tyr protects them from harm. If they are false, they suffer the effects of grasping a red hot iron rod.

Another method, muchly favoured by the Northmen, is the trial by combat. These are generally fought on a small island, or in a specifically staked-off area that is seperate from the rest of the realm. This area is blessed by a Lawspeaker, who calls on Grimjaws to preside over the combat and lend his might to the righteous. And so it goes, with the truly righteous fighting as though under the cumulative effects of both a *prayer* spell and a maximum effect *aid* spell for the duration of the duel.

These ritual combats can last until first blood, or until mercy or quarter is requested, but pride usually makes them life or death affairs. They are also not a common form of arbitration. Trial by combat can only be called upon in cases involving accusations against another of a highly personal and socially malicious nature (eg. A person is accused of cowardice, treachery, or adultery.)

From Ruathym, the Lawspeakers hope to spread over all of the islands of the Northmen.

Opposing the spread of the Lawspeakers of Tyr, particularly on the island of Ruathym, is the Arcane Brotherhood in Luskan, who still maintain a secret influence in the island realm. This influence comes in the form of Voroluk the Black, younger cousin of Jarl Wedigar Ruthmaald and Hetman of Volunsburg in Hogarsteads Westlands.

Voroluk has long resented the fact that his cousin, as opposed to he himself, was made Jarl of Holgerstead. And this was only compounded when Wedigar and his berserkers, of all the jarls and warriors of Ruathym, managed so valiant and praiseworthy a defense against the invading Luskan marauders.

Thus, with the secret aid of the Arcane Tower, Voroluk has assembled an elite force of his own. This force is rumored to be composed of a band of Uthgardt barbarians -- each of them bloodthirsty outlaws, much feared for their rumoured savagery and ruthlessness. Tales of these barbarians abound: they wear the pelts of worgs; they are immune to both fire and iron; they attack at night; they transform into ravenous wolves in combat; and they rend and consume all they kill.

One of the lesser wizards of the Brotherhood have also set themselves up in the northwestern reaches of Holgarstead, where he will send forth orcs and other

monstrosities to harry the outlying communites of the Westlands and force them into Voroluk's protection... with the ultimate aim of having them declare Voroluk Jarl of the Westlands.

ORGANIZATIONS

The Forgotten Scroll

By Bradley Russo

Greetings traveler, I am Rastromo Meradoc... more commonly known in the civilized regions of the Heartlands, as the Sage of Perth.

Let me tell you a tale of one of the most important and yet very secretive organisations at work in the Realms today. They call themselves ***The Forgotten Scroll****. They are a group of like-minded individuals who have pledged themselves to seeking out and protecting valuable pieces of lore... whether it is long and lost... or the secrets of yesterday and today. Come with me now as we explore the history of this unusual organisation, and delve into the dark corners of Faerûn in a scholarly pursuit of forgotten lore.*

Part 1 - Origins

fter the Year of Shadows had passed, and the tumult caused by the Time of Troubles had settled, there was a wizened old baker who suddenly found himself with a new purpose and a new meaning for his life. His name was Maltenthus.

Historical records from that year suggest that he once lived in the merchant city of Teziir, a port on the Dragon Coast. Maltenthus, who married only once, had three children with his wife of 40 winters. He had supported his family for over 30 years from the earnings of his prosperous baking shop in Teziir, having had access to all the exotic grains, nuts, and fruits that would come through the port before being loaded onto caravans and sent further inland. His loaves and rolls were always held in the highest regard throughout much of the city, and sometimes beyond. Some of his more exotic creations would even find themselves adorning the dinner tables of some of the more influential members of the Council of Merchants.

Soon after the rise of some of the current Council Merchants, Maltenthus began to realise that he'd gained a measure of notoriety with the Council, and as a result, he found himself suddenly within their employ. The Merchants secured the lease of his baking shop, and brought both the prosperous baker and his operation under retainer. He closed down his shop on Racahl Lane and moved into a moderately-sized building that sat alongside the main Council of Merchants chamber. He was to provide the Council with the best loaves he could bake, and in return, the Council made assurances that, so long as he ensured to provide them with his very best creations, his business in Teziir would be well-supported. Full of pride, and with a little arrogance, Maltenthus soon afterwards began plans to expand his business by employing apprentice bakers from the north, in the lands of the Forest Kingdom.

Business proceeded rather well for the baker, his family and his employees, and for several years... they all led fortunate and rich lives. Unfortunately however, after Maltenthus's plans had been put into effect and fostered a wealthy concern, an infectious plague swept through some of the more affluent suburbs of Teziir, and several powerful merchants on the Council fell severely ill. Investigations conducted by high level clerics and qualified healers from some of the more prominent temples in Teziir revealed little at first about the origins of the plague-like infection. Speculation soon spread like wildfire across many of the usual rumour mills within the city. Theories that the Night Masks had some involvement in the affair began to spread. Socialites postulated that the Night Masks were attempting to solidify their power base in Teziir by assassinating several key Council members. Other rumours suggested possible intrusions by foreign powers in an effort to

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destabilise the internal government of the city, in order to render Teziir too weak and disorganised to repulse an invasion. Finally, some started to look to their very own officials, believing that a rival Council Merchant may have been involved. Regardless of the true cause of the plague, Maltenthus's business suffered slowly, but greatly, until one day the orders from the Council simply stopped. His support from the Council seemed to disappear almost immediately, and fearing the worst, Maltenthus considered the possibility that he might have to re-locate his shop back to its old premises on Racahl Lane.

As the status of those who carried the infection worsened, Maltenthus made some enquiries with local ministers regarding his retainment and the lack of support for his operation. To his great displeasure, Maltenthus was virtually ignored. The pride he once had felt by being the envy of all bakers across the Heartlands was now replaced with loathing and fear. He feared for his not-so-secure future now, and wondered how he could continue to support his growing family and lavish lifestyle, not to mention the hundred or so employees he now had working for him as part of his one successful bakehouse operation. Seeing no way through the despair that was to come, and finding little solace in the prayers of some of the local clergy, Maltenthus did the only thing he felt he could do, the only thing that ever brought him true pleasure. He returned to his shop and began the production of the next day's shipment of breads and rolls. The very next morning, after the First Minister for Trade in Teziir sent a request to Maltenthus's bakehouse suggesting that he should perhaps starting finding work elsewhere, Maltenthus simply downed his equipment, and without a word to his family, his employees or his apprentices, left the city, taking nothing but the walking stick he now required to access difficult terrain, and the clothes on his back. He left Teziir, his family, his business, and his employees all behind.

The Time of Troubles had begun.

For much of the year of 1358 DR, Maltenthus travelled far and wide across western Faerûn. He withstood the depredations of rogue bandits and wandering Zhentarim. He saw the changing of much of the land as the result of godly magic gone awry, he watched as deities fell to the power of humans, and witnessed both the true bravery and true wickedness that lay within the hearts of men. Throughout much of his travels across the Heartlands and the North, Maltenthus experienced the lives of many of the races and places he came into contact with, sometimes staying in one place just long enough to bear witness to important events or festivals that held some meaning to some race for whatever reason. He took the time to sit and listen to tavern tales and fire-side stories -- tales of heroism and treachery, of good and evil, of hope and despair; he was entranced by them all." And even further down, "Never before had he experienced such pleasure in such a simple exercise -- most of his life had been dedicated to the making of bread, from his first day as an apprentice to his father, to his final days in Teziir. Never had he known the pleasure that comes simply from learning and finding things out.

He visited the huts, towers, and stalls of all the local scholars, sages, and loremasters in every town and city he came across. He purchased both common and rare tomes relating to many different subjects and in return, this baker would provide the scholar, the sage, and the loremaster with some of the best loaves of bread he could create with the local resources and equipment in the towns where he made his purchases. He carried his books upon the back of a beast of burden whose name he was still unfamiliar with. He journeyed always during the day, wanting to experience nighttimes in one place or another so that he could look up and study the stars and planets -- celestial objects that he'd never really considered before. It was around this time that Maltenthus began keeping journals of all his experiences, relating all that he had seen and heard so far (as well as his old mind would allow), and recording his thoughts and feelings about his travels through the Realms. Never before within his long existence had he experienced such contentment -- not even on the day he married his lady friend, who he had known since his youth on the streets of Westgate. "Never before," he wrote, "never before..." And never would he forget the next major chapter of his new life in the Realms.

His greatest experience was still to come, as he ventured deep into the heart of a city of the North called Silverymoon.

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Join me next issue, as we explore the further journeys of Maltenthus, his time in Silverymoon, and the early days of the society he founds that will one day give birth to a legend.

Mercenary Companies of the Realms

By Daniel Rosenquist

The men and women from countless regions and races that fight goes under many names may it be Sellsword, Soldier of fortune, Mercenary, or Hiresword. Even thought they seem to be set apart at a first glance, they do follow a common cause. They fight for gold, the battlefield is their home and the death cries of the fallen is their lullaby. The lust for more power, for those that have it, is an endless cycle and so these men and women always find work when the horn of battle sounds.

The Iron Blood (Thul Ang Gijak-Ishi)

Type: Recruited, veterans.
Base: Tammar, in Thesk
Current Sphere(s) of Operation: Thesk, the northeast and eastern border communities, as well as central Thesk to the end of Thesk Mountains near Zarthul.
Leader: Orgor One-tusk.
Government: Military hierarchy
Number of Members: 40-60
General Alignment: CG, CN

istory:

The Iron Blood was founded by Orgor (Male orc Barbarian 2/Fighter 9) after an orcish victory against bandit lords who had seized the town of Tammar, in north-eastern Thesk, as their own. When the merchant council of Phasant saw the rise of this bandit stronghold plaguing their caravans, they took measures. The merchants hired every orc they could find that the Zhents had left behind. The orcs easily crushed the bandits and were celebrated as heroes. The new council of Tammar, realizing what a strong asset the band of orcs could be, suggested that they should form a local guard force for the community. The orcs, not used to humans being grateful towards them, were first a bit taken off guard. Many of the orcs were distrustful, and said that the humans would probably just betray them and leave them to the Red Wizards when the time came. Some left, but two groups stayed on. One, under the leadership of an orc called Gurzze, became the local militia of Tammar. The other, smaller group, perhaps 25 orcs strong, formed a mercenary company for hire. Under the leadership of Orgor, the group fought off raiders from Thay, groups of bandits, ogres on the rampage, and a small army of dragonkin. Many of the original members were slain, and new warriors (mostly other orcs, but a few humans as well) were added to the ranks. In fact, they have been able to expand their numbers beyond their original contingent, now becoming a force to be reckoned with when trouble stirs in eastern Thesk. The company currently consists of: orc warriors (35), human scouts (5), and human and orc archers (10). The Iron Blood proudly displays their sigil wherever they go: a sword and an axe, crossed over, on a dark red background.

Strategies and Tactics:

The Iron Blood used to just find their foes and charge them, relying more on their battle prowess and numbers to win the day, rather than tactics and guile. After a having lost a large number of companions in a fight with bandits in Sur Hills, they began to organize themselves in a more militaristic fashion.

With a core group of about 30 orcs, and the support of nearly a dozen archers, they were more successful. Orgor also hired on a few human scouts, who have proven their worth and their skills on many occasions. The Iron Blood generally only does protective business or escorting caravans between settlements. But they have been known to rout out lairs of monsters and bandits to help keep the local order in eastern Thesk.

Personality:

The Iron Blood are motivated largely by their new relations to humans, willing to prove that they are worthy and trustful -- though they do enjoy being paid for the killing and slaughter. They have few enemies other than humanoids, but they have clashed a few times with Shadowmasters and the Nine Golden Swords, as well as Red Wizards.

Logistics:

Their equipment varies widely, though most members choose a battle-axe and longsword, along with a sturdy shield. The group re-supplies in Tammar, since that is their base of operations. Captain Gurzze also has a standing deal with the Iron Blood: supplies for help, if ever needed.

Cost:

The company hires themselves out for 40 gp per day, plus 10 percent of any loot that doesn't directly belong to their employer.

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Journal of an Apprentice Scribe

Berdusk

By J P Hazelhoff

Well met fellow scribes and learned scholars.

Allow me to introduce myself, I'm Rikos Dughol of Saradush in Tethyr. I have been traveling across Faerûn, at least across the regions known as the Western Heartlands and the North, as an apprentice scribe with my master Brin Orgul.
During my travels I have kept a journal of the places I have visited and things I have seen. As I retrieve and edit these journal entries while staying in Candlekeep, I will make them available for all to read. My work might resemble the works of Volothamp Geddarm, whose works I came across during my studies, but are by no means copies of his excellent work which have served me as a wonderful source of inspiration.

Most of the journal has been written during those moments when I did not have to perform some tasks for my master or wasn't occupied with the physical part of traveling. The entries in the journal might therefore appear sometimes as disjointed. And the publishing might not be entirely in a chronological order as during an unfortunate incident with an over-eager air mephit.

I hope the journals will provide you with insight in those places I have visited as much as Volothamp's journals meant for me.

Till swords meet,

Rikos Dughol of Saradush

* * * *

Journal of an apprentice scribe by Rikos Dughol of Saradush

12th Hammer 1371, Year of the Unstrung Harp

Blessed Oghma, finally we made it to Berdusk, the so called Jewel of the Vale. I don't know why my master set out to travel in this season. Remaining in Nashkel throughout Auril's reign would not have been much wiser. Beregost wasn't that bad a place to stay a while longer. Unfortunately a crazed Thousandheads caravan master also decided to stay there before moving on towards Berdusk. Who ever heard about caravans traveling in the Drawing Down and Deepwinter? But master Orgul didn't seem to care or know and booked us passage; tendays of freezing cold, stinging sleet and snow and sucking mud. My fingers still feel cramped despite the warmth of the roaring fire in one of the city's Tankard Houses. The Three Harpists or some such I believe.

The warm spiced wine helps one warm up again. My fingers feel less cold and cramped now. Master Orgul has left to book us accommodations somewhere in the city. Looks like we will be here for a while, that leaves me time to write some more in my journal. Some of the snippets of conversation I've heard so far and the reputation of the

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city provide enough inspiration to write down. Who knows, someday my journal or copies thereof might find their way into the library of Candlekeep, or the Soaring Spirit or the royal archives at Darromar.

When we finally got the gates of Berdusk in sight I felt a wave of relief. Though the landscape must be very pleasant in spring and summer, winter weather turns the Uldoon Trail into a virtual river of mud and slush. The temperature in winter seems to swing around the freezing point. Driving snow one day and stinging rain or hail the next. Never cold enough for the mud to freeze solid, or the snow to remain and provide better footing. I believe that everyone in the caravan was relieved to see the walls of the city and the two hills on which it is built. Despite the low hanging clouds and the steady drizzle that accompanied us on the last leg of the journey, Berdusk's castle clearly visible on the bigger of the two rocky hills.
Before entering the city, we had to cross the Chionthar via Moondown Isle, the river a churning mass of white water[1], ice floes and floating debris. The sound of the rapids at the Breaking Steps just out of sight upriver was clearly audible. Orbrind Sonshal, one of the bearded veteran caravan guards told me that the river is impassible for craft larger then a simple raft or canoe at the rapids, save for the winch system that ferries special barges relatively safe along the obstacle. Moondown isle is an almost barren mass of rock which provides a solid foundation for two bridges to span the river. The southern bank of the Chionthar holds a collection of ramshackle buildings, and a few new buildings that seem more solid. I wouldn't be surprised if within a couple of years the city will claim the shanty town as part of Berdusk proper. Of course a new wall would have to be erected, but it would give the city even more control over the river trade.

Directly after the Riverroad Gate, through which we entered the city, lies a wall complex that belongs to the Thousandheads trading coster. This is where master Orgul and I said farewell to Orbrind and the rest of the caravan. My master seemed to know where to go, following a cobbled street which actually is wide enough but seemed cramped because of the overhanging tall houses[2] to a crossroads. The enameled street signs on the building told me we were turning of Steelsword Street onto Gollahaer. Though I would have lingered a little longer at an interesting shop – Ondraer's Fine Pages – master Orgul pulled me along onto Gollahaer towards a bridge.

Having to stop before the bridge because of several carts crossing it, gave me the time to look around a little before continuing wherever may master was going. The bridge – The Handspan Bridge – spans what looks like a natural harbor, though at several places manmade quays have replaced the steep rocky banks. A current in the harbor flows towards the south where the Chionthar flows past the city pulling at the moored high sided barges. Probably a stream or river of sorts flows into the harbor. At several places grate covered openings empty into the harbor – they must be the endpoints of the city's sewer system – I have seen numerous sewer gratings in the streets. From my vantage point, I couldn't quite see the end of the harbor; another bridge was blocking my view, but beyond, the two hills dominating the city were clearly visible. The rightmost covered in trees, some leafless due to the season, others evergreens.

After the Handspan Bridge it turned out to be only a small walk to the Tankard House my master had in mind; The Three Brave Harpists – the signboard displaying a sword and three harps. From the outside the place is hardly distinguishable from the others lining the street; tall overhanging steep-roofed buildings; only the signboard and the sound drifting through the door and closed shutters indicating the nature of the place. The inside of the Tankard House is quite

[1] Only in winter and spring does the Chionthar resemble a white water river near Berdusk. In summer and autumn only the rapids at the Breaking Steps are real white water. Despite this fact the current in the Chionthar is strong and upriver trade frequently uses draft teams – either men or horses – to pull the barges upriver.

[2] Most 'common' houses in Berdusk are stone affairs up to the 2nd or 3rd floor; any construction higher is typically done with wood and plaster.

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comfortable. A roaring fire in the hearth – very welcome after the journey – several tables and chairs set in front of a small stage and of course a bar serving a variety of drinks and a limited selection of food. The place isn't much filled; the table I'm sitting at is conveniently close to the hearth and allowing me a view of the establishment.

An elderly looking gnome is playing some flutelike instrument[3], filling the room with pleasant and lighthearted background music. At the table next to me sits a rather big – or should I say fat – man in rich looking clothes; probably a merchant of sorts. Thumbs hooked behind the belt circling his ample belly he leans comfortably in the chair listening to the small musician. Near the bar an off-duty guard is flirting with a young woman. Her ample bosom probably claiming the man's attention more then her face which, though far from being ugly, is not real pretty either. Mistress Hella Strongarm is the portly woman running the Tankard House. She seems always busy, either serving the patrons or polishing the bar or mugs or hauling a cask of wine or beer from the cellar.

Master Orgul has returned and has found a place to spend the night. He promised me the day off tomorrow. I'll go do some sightseeing during the day and will write some more about the Jewel of the Vale in the evening

[3] Note: The instrument the gnome is playing is called a 'Shaum' a double-reed instrument, a sort of primitive oboe or bassoon, most popular with gnomes. [FRCS page 22]

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Credits

Volume I of the *Candlekeep Compendium* contains the work of many people, who have put much time and effort into penning these articles of lore. Many thanks to all who contributed and helped on this project.

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We hope you have enjoyed this volume of Realmslore. Any feedback is greatly appreciated. Please email us at **compendium@candlekeep** or visit the Candlekeep forum at **http://www.candlekeep.com/forum**

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Volume II

Keep an eye out for *The Candlekeep Compendium Volume II*, containing new Realmslore and further installments of regular articles penned by our master scribes.

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