RAGING SWAN PRESS VILLAGE BACKDROP: STAR RUN FALLS



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VILLAGE BACKDROP: STAR RUN FALLS

The elven village of Star Run Falls basks under the spray of the mighty waterfall, the Star Run. Thousands of fireflies hover nightly along the plunging waterfall, their blinking lights appearing as a cascade of flowing stars. The elves of Star Run Falls welcome visitors who come to marvel at the sight of the waterfall and the river brings merchants keen to trade with the villagers. However, the long lived elves are facing sudden and rapid changes to their idyllic lives. Recent goblin activity forced a contingent of human refugees to seek solace within the village. The fast paced human lifestyle often clashes with the timeless elves who struggle with accepting the humans in their midst. Worse yet, an evil rumour darkens the surrounding forest: the dreaded Crimson Shadow King, an evil creature said to appear in the predawn hours, arriving on a chorus of chirping crickets to steal away elven babes for his growing goblinoid army. Additionally, unbeknownst to the villagers, a princess, fleeing an arraigned marriage, hides in the village with her "grandfather," a legendary creature serving as her guardian.

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STAR RUN FALLS AT A GLANCE

The shimmering waterfall known as the Star Run cascades 353 ft. into a large, deep pool about which the elven settlement of Star Run Falls rests in the shade of the surrounding forest. Star Run Falls' citizens live an almost idyllic life in homes magically formed within the trunks of the trees. Open to outsiders, traders regularly come upriver to trade with the elves for fish and furs or consult with the wizards at its small academy. Some visit just to marvel at the Star Run. Even fey visit the elves from time to time with a few of the mysterious creatures being familiar faces in the village. The elves, in turn, keep the surrounding area free of predators such as the goblins lurking nearby.

Recently, a small group of human villagers took refuge in the village after their homes were destroyed in a raid perpetuated by a rising force of goblins and hobgoblins. Though generally less insular than most elven communities, the elves struggle to accept the permanent presence of humans in the village.

However, a new fear grips the village, one that threatens its peaceful tranquillity. An entity only known as the Crimson Shadow King has arisen in the forest, gathering a band of goblinoids including hobgoblins and bugbears about his banner. Elven mothers fear the sudden chirping of crickets drowning out the birdsong in the predawn mornings for that is when it is said the Crimson Shadow King appears to steal newborn elven babies for some unknown, dire purpose. In truth, the Crimson Shadow King is seeking to raise his own army of dark elves to add to his twisted, labyrinthine realm deep within the forest.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Ruler Guardian Ferleden Tayaos (CG male half-elf fighter 3/wizard [universalist] 3)
Government Council
Population 167 (127 elves, 20 half-elves, 15 humans, 5 gnomes)
Alignments CG, LG, NG, LN, N, CN
Languages Elven, Common, Sylvan
Corruption -1; Crime 0; Economy 0; Law -3; Lore -2; Society +4
Qualities Academy, tourist attraction

Danger 0; Disadvantages None

NOTABLE FOLK

Most of the population are nothing more than hardworking peasants. A few, however, are of interest to adventurers:

- **Grimish Featherknocker** (location 1; CG male gnome expert 3) A personable gnome, Grimish runs the village inn, the Star Landing.
- **Unya Ilyren** (location 5; CG female elf ranger 4) Star Run Falls' former guardian, Unya now runs a successful general store.
- Alera Solwyn (location 6; CG female elf aristocrat 1) A princess in hiding, Alera fled to Star Run Falls with her guardian, Balas.
- **Balas Solwyn** (location 6; NG male half-dragon unicorn) Alera's guardian, Balas disguises himself as her grandfather.

- Hol Stannish (location 4; N male human commoner 2) One of the human refugees, Hol represents his people's interest in the village.
- Ferleden Tayaos (location 2; (CG male half-elf fighter 3/wizard [universalist] 3)
- Appointed guardian, Ferleden's duties include defence of the village.
- **Dalaros Vynardis** (location 7; CN male elf aristocrat 3) A recent arrival, Dalaros takes great interest in local politics.
- Twyno/Twyna Veshara (location 3; CG female/male elf wizard 7) The elven twins who share one body run the local academy.
- **Ziz** (location 9; CN female pixie) A fun loving pixie, Ziz enjoys bathing in the waterfall's pool and playing tricks.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Most of the village comprises peasant homes. A few locations, however, are of interest to adventurers:

- 1. **The Star Landing**: The village's one inn, it contains a slender tower offering a panoramic view of the Star Run.
- Council Hall: The village council conducts their business in this elaborate hall formed from the intertwining of many trees.
- 3. **Star Falls Academy**: Young elves learn magic here under the tutelage of the elven twins, Twyno and Twyna Veshera.
- 4. Bellshire: The human refugees live in this small district.
- Unya's General Store: This general store is a trade hub for merchants coming upriver.
- Solwyn House: Alera and her guardian, Balas, live in this small house in an attempt to hide her true identity.
- 7. **Dalaros's House**: After losing favour at an elven court, Dalaros now lingers in this modest house, plotting his return to power.
- The Star Run: Thousands of fireflies make this waterfall appear as a flowing river of stars, giving it its name.
- 9. **Star Run Grotto**: A grotto behind the waterfall serves as home to a tribe of sprites and a few other fey.

MARKETPLACE

Resources & Industry Fishing, hunting, trade Base Value 600 gp; Purchase Limit 2,500 gp; Spellcasting 4th; Minor Items 2d4; Medium Items 1d4; Major Items –

When the PCs arrive in Star Run Falls, the following items are for sale:

- Potions & Oils barkskin (50 gp), shield (50 gp)
- Scrolls (Arcane) confusion (700 gp), tiny hut (350 gp)
- Scrolls (Divine) summon monster I (25 gp)

VILLAGE LORE

A PC making a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check may know some information about the village. A successful check reveals all the information revealed by a lesser check.

DC 10: Star Run Falls is an elven village that takes its name from the spectacular waterfall around which it stands.

DC 15: Recently, a group of humans arrived in the village seeking sanctuary, which the elves granted.

DC 20: Rumours of fell creatures in the forest have many of the villagers worried, especially expecting elven mothers.

VILLAGERS

Appearance Tall and slender with pointed ears and almond shaped eyes ranging from brown, grey to green, the villagers wear their dark hair long and unbraided.

Dress The villagers dress in long tunics of green, brown or dark blue. Many wear thigh high boots made from doe skin. They wear little jewellery, except slender pendants or brooches fashioned from gold or silver about a single gemstone.

Nomenclature *male* Kiyden, Norlerden, Pythos, Tarloyen; *female* Anwa, Cerles, Martya, Yevera; *family* Enderleas, Forylaen, Onmonoas, Sirlydeen

WHISPERS & RUMOURS

A PC can use Diplomacy to gather information about the village and its surroundings. This takes 1d4 hours and requires a DC 10 check. A PC exceeding this check gains one additional rumour for each 5 points by which he exceeded DC 10. Use the table below to determine which rumour(s) the PC learns.

D6 RUMOUR

1	Dalaros Vynardis used to be a noble from a distant elven court but his brash ways got him exiled to the village.
2*	The human refugees plan on bringing in more of their kind to gain more power over village affairs.
3	Beware if you hear the incessant chirping of crickets in the predawn hours for the Crimson Shadow King is on the hunt.
4	Unya only stepped down as guardian because she was the one who supported allowing the humans to live in the village.
5*	The grotto behind the waterfall contains a pool leading to another world.
6	Ferleden has been especially grim of late, because of the increase of goblins in the forest.

*False rumour



1: THE STAR LANDING

A yellow shooting star adorns the sign hanging over the door of the village's only inn, The Star Landing, operated by Grimish Featherknocker (CG male gnome expert 3) and his family. Formed from a tree, its first floor stretches impossibly outwards before the trunk narrows into a slender tower reaching four stories high. Inside, a cosy common room leads off into separate rooms and a central stairway takes visitors to the top. The tree's top branches suddenly curve horizontally, intertwined to form a rooftop terrace that offers a panoramic view of the Star Run.

2: COUNCIL HALL

A number of trees form the sprawling two-storey council hall. The hall houses a large chamber room where the village's elected representatives meet to discuss important matters. It also serves as the home to the current Guardian, Ferleden Tayaos (CG male half-elf fighter 3/wizard 3). Ferleden leads the patrols protecting the village. Lately, he has been getting little sleep, arising in the predawn hours to go on patrol. The lurking menace of the Crimson Shadow King weighs heavily on his mind. Some also speculate his attention is drawn towards young Alera Solwyn (CG female elf aristocrat 1) as Ferleden has yet to take a wife.

3: STAR FALLS ACADEMY

A long wooden hall connects the two large trees forming Star Falls Academy. The twins, Twyno and Twyna Veshara (CG female/male elf wizard 7), serve as the academy's headmaster and mistress. A bizarre magic experiment gone wrong left the souls of the two twins sharing the same body; each twin has possession of the body during certain hours of the day. The academy has recently broken tradition and accepted one of the young human refugees as an apprentice after the youth displayed an ability to summon eldritch forces.

4: BELLSHIRE

The human refugees named the small ghetto allotted to them – a collection of normal wooden and thatch houses – "Bellshire". After their homes were destroyed by the Crimson Shadow King's minions, the elves offered them succour.

Hol Stannish (N male human commoner 2) represents the human contingent at council meetings. The humans find it odd and sometimes trying to live in the village. Having shorter life spans, they lead more hectic lives and become frustrated with the council's slow and lumbering decision making processes. The elves sometimes have difficulty relating to the humans, treating them like pets as entire generations will come in go in a blink of the eye to the long lived elves.

5: UNYA'S GENERAL STORE

This low, stunted tree formed store lies close to the docks and is often the first stop for visitors arriving by river. Its proprietor, Unya Ilyren (CG female elf ranger 4), serves as the unofficial spokeswoman for the village as she deals regularly with merchants, facilitating the trade of goods between the two. A former Guardian for over 400 years, Unya relinquished her post to Ferleden (location 2), a move that shocked many based on Ferleden's relative youth and the unspoken prejudice associated with him being a half-elf. However, Unya knew Ferleden was more capable than her and she enjoys swapping stories with travellers more than being on patrol and dealing with elven politics.

One item Unya recommends to all visitors is a *glow rod* if they plan on travelling the village at night. Because of their lowlight vision, the elves prefer using moonlight at night. The softer light of the *glow rod* is, however, acceptable.

6: Solwyns' House

Alera Solwyn (CG female elf aristocrat 1) lives in this modest house with her "grandfather," Balas Solwyn (NG male halfdragon unicorn) who in reality is her sworn protector and guardian. Alera, a princess from a distant elven court, fled from a political marriage to an abusive husband. Together, the two masquerade as humble villagers, doing their best to stay hidden, even including changing Alera's golden blonde hair to the darker colour most villagers possess.

Living in the village is not easy as Alera's natural beauty and grace attract the attention of the menfolk, particularly the son of Hol Stannish, Tomas (NG male human sorcerer [destined] 1), a fledging magician at the academy and the village Guardian, Ferlerden (location 2). Alera avoids Dalaros Vynardis at all costs, afraid he might recognize her as he visited her parents' court many times. Balas, has his own troubles. He knows about the Crimson Shadow King but dares not confront the creature for fear of exposing himself and Alera but he senses the King is close.

GLOW ROD

A glow rod acts as if it had *dancing lights* cast on it, though the effect is not magical. The range of the lights is up to 50 ft. and the lights can be controlled by twisting the rod as a swift action. A glow rod lasts up to 6 hours.

Cost 60 gp; Weight 1 lb

7: DALAROS'S HOUSE

Dalaros Vynardis (CN male elf aristocrat 3) owns a tree house like most in the village: the base of the tree magically widened and carved out to serve as living quarters for the first 15 ft. before the trunk narrows and continues upwards as a normal tree. A recent arrival in the village, in a short time Dalaros has got elected as a council member. A former noble from another elven kingdom, the boisterous and brash Dalaros made himself unpopular there and thus was promoted as a "delegate" to Star Run Falls. A bit of a bully, Dalaros strongly opposes the settlement of humans in the village, warning they will breed like rabbits within a few generations and force the elves out.

FERLEDEN TAYAOSCR 5 (XP 1,600)
This gaunt faced elf bears a grim expression. His eyes are cold
and determined.
Male elf fighter 3/wizard (universal) 3
CG Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +2, Sense Motive +0
Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +9, Swim +9
AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; CMD 20
(+5 armour [+1 chain shirt], +2 Dex, +1 dodge [Dodge])
Immune sleep
Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4 (+5 vs. fear, +6 vs. enchantments)
hp 40 (6 HD)
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +4; CMB +7
Melee +1 elven curved blade (Power Attack [-2/+4]) +9
(1d10+5/18-20)
Ranged mwk longbow (range 100 ft.) +7 (1d8/x3) or
Ranged hand of the apprentice (range 30 ft.; 6/day) +8
(1d10+4/18-20)
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 3th; concentration +6 [+10
grappling or casting defensively]; spell penetration +5;
arcane bond [ring], arcane spell failure [20%])
2nd—acid arrow, mirror image
1st—alarm, shield, sleep (DC 14)
0-dancing lights, daze (DC 13), detect magic, message, read
magic
Combat Gear arrows (20), <i>potion of cure moderate wounds</i> (2),
wand of magic missiles (28 chgs.)
Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 8
SQ armour training (1), bravery (+1), cantrips, elven magic,
weapon familiarity (elven)
Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Power Attack ^B , Scribe Scroll ^B ,
Toughness, Weapon Focus (elven curved sword)
Skills as above plus Appraise +7, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate
+5, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (geography) +9,
Knowledge (nature) +9, Linguistics +8, Spellcraft +9 (+11 to
identify magic items), Survival +6
Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Goblin, Sylvan
Gear as above plus spell component pouch, 13 gp
Spellbook as above plus GM's choice

8: THE STAR RUN

The waterfall around which the village clusters gets its name from the thousands of fireflies congregating around it at night. Their flickering bodies appear as a river of stars in the waterfall's glimmering rush as it cascades 353 ft. from the cliffs above into a large and deep pool below. The pool teams with fish swimming upriver to breed with an almost supernatural fecundity, providing a bounty to the villagers who fish its sparkling depths. Some villagers fish the pool's waters while others base their livelihoods around the visitors coming to gaze upon the falls in all their breathtaking, natural glory.

9: STAR RUN GROTTO

Behind the Star Run, lies a cave entrance to a large and beautiful grotto covered with luminescent mosses and fungi.

Home to a tribe of sprites, it is their presence that attracts the fireflies congregating around the waterfall at night. The sprites protect the waterfall, seeing it as their home, however, they rarely interact with the village. Instead, Ziz (CN female pixie) serves as the sprites' spokesperson, having been accepted into the tribe long ago. Ziz (whose real name is much longer and unpronounceable by non-fey) enjoys interacting with daily village life, always astounded and curious about new faces. However, she has a whimsical side, playing usually harmless tricks unless provoked.

Many of the villagers know to stay out of grotto in respect to the sprites and leave out offerings of sweetened milk and candies to placate Ziz.

Elven Villager	CR 1/3 (XP 135)	
Elf commoner 1		
CG Medium humanoid (elf)		
Init +2; Senses Perception +3, Sense N	Aotive +1	
Speed 30 ft.; ACP 0; Climb +4, Swim +	4	
AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; CMD	12	
Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -1		
hp 6 (1 HD)		
Space 5 ft.; Base Atk +0; CMB +0		
Melee dagger +0 (1d4/19-20)		
Ranged shortbow (range 60 ft.) +2 (1d6/x3)		
Combat Gear arrows (20)		
Abilities Str 11, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12	, Wis 8, Cha 9	
SQ elven magic, weapon familiarity (e	lven)	
Feats Alertness		
Skills as above plus Handle Animal similar) +4	+3, Profession (fishing or	
Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan		
Gear as above plus belt pouch, 2d4 cp	o, peasant's outfit	

LIFE IN STAR RUN FALLS

Life in Star Run Falls is sedate and carried on at a very slow pace, as suits the elves of the place. The recent arrival of the human refugees has created some minor tensions, particularly around the humans' desire to log the surrounding woodlands. The looming threat of the Crimson Shadow King concerns most of the villagers – particularly those expecting a child.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

Fish abound in the pool at the base of the waterfall and small canoes ply its waters, hauling in catches sold to merchants coming up river. Other villagers hunt in the surrounding forest for meat and fur. However, they take great care to not over hunt, only taking what is needed.

Others maintain small vegetable gardens, selling their produce from home and the extra at Unya's store. Some of the humans have suggested logging. However, the village council has so far ruled against this leaving them to farm tiny plots of land (and grumble among themselves).

LAW & ORDER

A free spirited people, the villagers do not believe in a codified set of laws. Instead, a council of nine elected representatives oversees administrative issues with any villager welcome to attend their meetings if they have a topic or issue they want to discuss. The council elects one of its number as the Guardian, a de facto leader that serves as a protector responsible for leading small patrols into the forest as well as maintaining peace within the village. Few crimes occur and thus there is no jail. Wrongdoers are required to make recompense for their actions with the worse punishment being exile from the village.

EVENTS

While the PCs are in the village, one or more of the below events may occur. Choose or determine randomly:

D6 EVENT

1	The village is abuzz as a human has just been brought before the council for illegally cutting down a tree.	
2	A talking rabbit hops around in front of the academy fuming. In reality, it is Dalaros who has been transformed by one of Ziz's spells after being caught spying on her while she bathed.	
3	A group of human merchants have recently arrived and taken up residence at the Star Landing while they do some trading and take in the sights.	
4	A heavily pregnant elven woman converses with Ferleden outside the council hall. She appears very worried about her impending child. She claims to have heard the crickets chirping loudly that morning.	

5	The human refugees are loudly celebrating a local holiday from their old home with elven wine purchased from Grimish.
6	A teenaged human boy carries a heavy basket of vegetables for a beautiful elven girl. She looks on in dismay as the boy suddenly trips, spilling vegetables everywhere. He is obviously deeply embarrassed and quickly stoops to pick them up.

BALAS SOLWYN

CR 6 (XP 2,400)

Golden scales cover the reptilian clawed forelegs, face and back of this unicorn which also sports two leathery golden wings.

Male variant half- gold dragon unicorn

CG Large dragon

- Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +12, Sense Motive +5
- **Speed** 60 ft., fly 120 ft. (average); **ACP** 0; Acrobatics +10 (+22 jumping), Fly +8, Stealth +12 (+15 in forests)
- AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 16; CMD 26 (30 vs. trip); magic circle against evil

(+3 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

Magic Circle against Evil (Su) This ability continually duplicates the effect of the spell. Balas cannot suppress this ability. Its effect are not included above.

Immune charm, compulsion, fire, paralysis, poison, sleep

Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +6; +8 vs. effects created by evil creatures hp 45 (4 HD)

Space 10 ft.; Base Atk +4; CMB +13

- Melee bite +11 (1d8+8),
 - 2 claws +11 (1d8+8) and

gore +12 (1d8+8)

Atk Options breath weapon (30-foot cone of fire; 4d6 fire damage; DC 18 Reflex halves; 1/day), powerful charge (gore, 2d8+16)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +17)

- At will—detect evil (as free action), light
- 3/day—cure light wounds
- 1/day—cure moderate wounds, greater teleport (within forest territory), neutralize poison (DC 22)

Abilities Str 26, Dex 17, Con 22, Int 13, Wis 21, Cha 26

SQ change shape (polymorph), magical strike, wild empathy

- **Change Shape (Su)** Balas can change his appearance as *polymorph* but retains most of his own physical qualities.
- Magical Strike (Ex) Balas's gore attack is treated as a magic good weapon for the purposes of damage reduction.
- Wild Empathy (Su) This works like the druid's wild empathy class feature, except Balas has a +6 racial bonus on the check.

Feats Multiattack, Weapon Focus (horn)

- Skills as above plus Handle Animal +14,Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Survival +12 (+15 in forests)
- Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

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