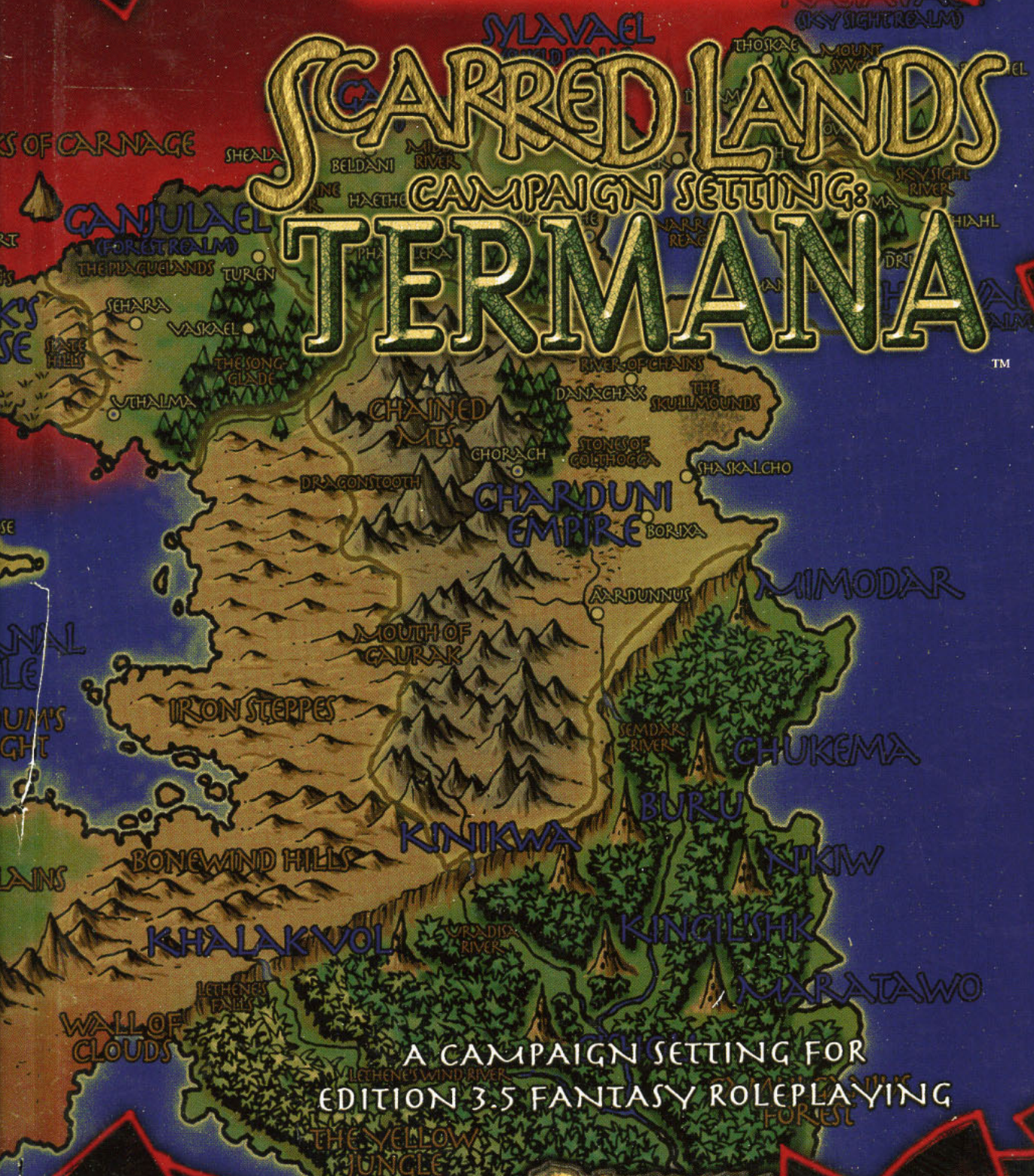


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SCARRED LANDS

CAMPAIGN SETTING:

TERMANA



A CAMPAIGN SETTING FOR
EDITION 3.5 FANTASY ROLEPLAYING

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CAMPAIGN SETTING:

TERMANA

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Special Thanks

Werner "No Heraldry Speak!" Hager for the conceptual descriptions of the Termanan heraldry in this and in the **Scarred Lands Gazetteer: Termana**. Thanks for everything, man.

Wizards of the Coast, for allowing us to reference mind flayers and yuan-ti. They're a perfect fit for a place as unique as Termana.



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SCARRED LANDS

CAMPAIGN SETTING:

TERMANA

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Introduction

There's a question that I think all game designers really need to ask themselves whenever developing a potential expansion to a popular setting. "Should we really be doing this?"

It's not as simple an answer as you might think, since it requires determining what it is that makes a setting popular in the first place. Do we just do more of the same? Make the new region/aspect/continent/whatever exactly like those that have come before? No. Do that, and there's no point in us writing the book, or in you good folks buying it. Make it totally different, then? No. Do that, and it's not really part of the same setting; just a whole new animal with some old and familiar names slapped on it.

The trick, then, to expanding a popular setting — like, oh, just for argument's sake, the Scarred Lands — is that you have to walk a very fine line. The new expansion — again, just for the sake of argument, we'll say *Campaign Setting: Termana* — has to offer something new, something different, something interesting, and yet still really feel like a part of what's gone before.

So did we accomplish that with Termana? With the hard work and effort of a *lot* of talented people, I really think we did — and I'm saying that as a fan of the setting, not as a contributor. It is very different from Ghelspad. Here is a land in many ways primeval, primitive. Across much of its face, Termana remains unchanged from the epochs before the Titanwar, or even the birth of the gods. Elsewhere, it has suffered from the titans' touch in ways the people of Ghelspad can only imagine. Here, though the titanspawn are vile, powerful and exotic, the land itself is one of the greatest threats an adventurer could face, full of

toxins, diseases and primal powers the likes of which are unknown in more "civilized" regions. Termana's dangers are legion, from the thickest depths of the Gamulganjus to the highest peaks of the Titansforge Mountains, from the dictatorial nation of Virduk's Promise to the evil-infested stagnant waters of the Blood Bayou, from the rising might of the militant charduni dwarves to the stealthy kidnappings orchestrated by desperate forsaken elves.

Yet this is still the Scarred Lands. Termana, like Ghelspad, is a land recovering from the ravages of the Titanwar. Its history is tied inextricably to that of Ghelspad, and the world beyond. The waters of Kadum's Deluge taint the shores here, as they do Ghelspad's southeast coasts. Druidic servants of the titans still strive to see their masters reborn, and worshippers of the gods still struggle against them. This is still a land ravaged by divine and unholy forces, struggling for survival — and in which your characters must face that same struggle.

We've given you every tool, every story technique, we could cram into these pages. Here you'll find additional detail on Termana's races — gnomes, gnolls and terali — to bring more life to your PCs and NPCs both. Here you'll find a brand new religion, a new way of looking at the world that reveres neither titan nor god, yet is so seamlessly integrated with existing Scarred Lands mythology, you'll swear it's been part of your games all along.

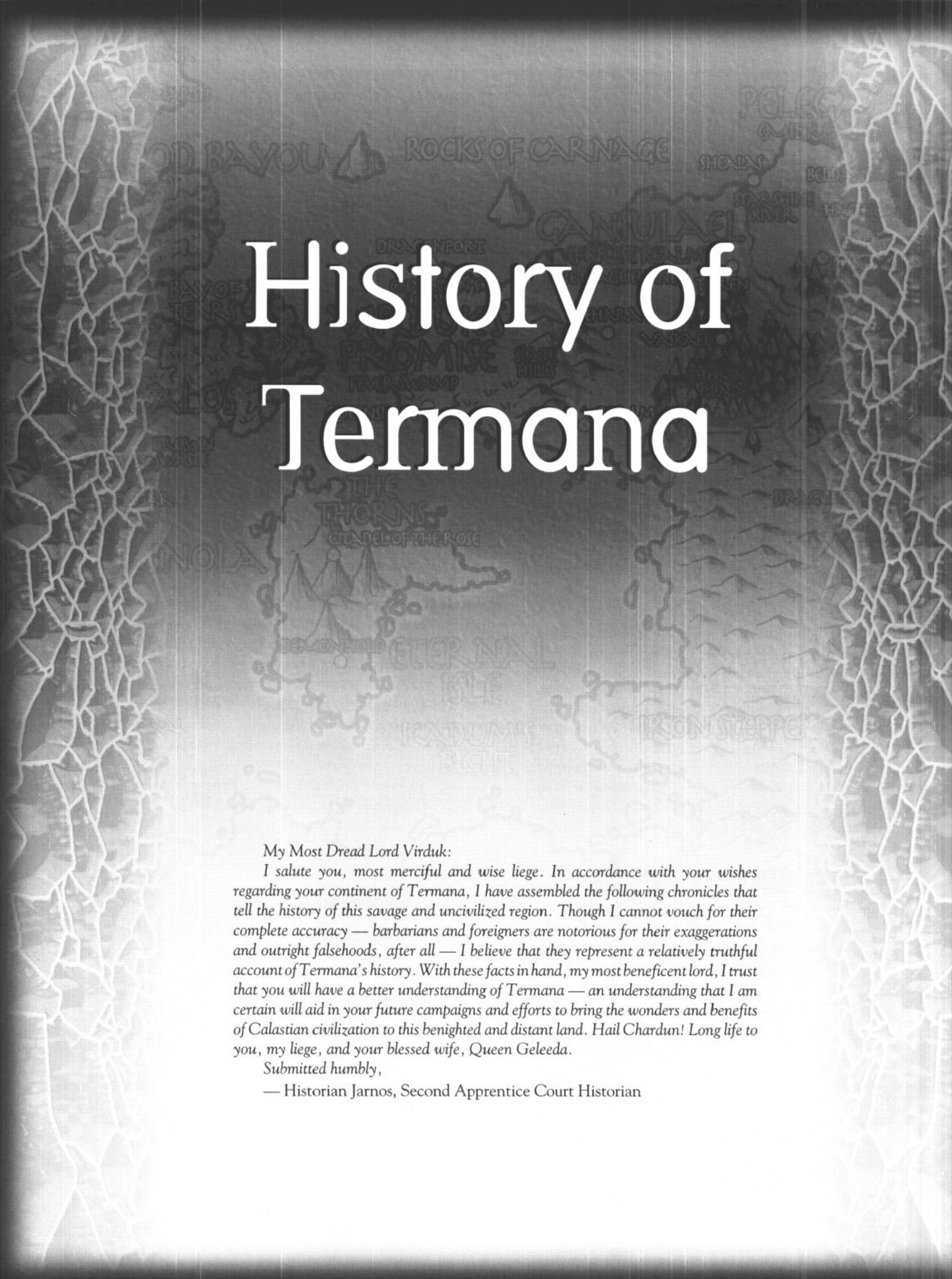
In short, and in answer to my initial question, Termana is precisely what a campaign expansion should be. It's a new continent, but the same world. Not more of the *same*, but more of the Scarred Lands.

I hope you enjoy playing in it as much as we enjoyed bringing it to you.

Ari Marmell,

Writer and Small Auxiliary Developer

Sword and Sorcery Studios



History of Termana

My Most Dread Lord Virduk:

I salute you, most merciful and wise liege. In accordance with your wishes regarding your continent of Termana, I have assembled the following chronicles that tell the history of this savage and uncivilized region. Though I cannot vouch for their complete accuracy — barbarians and foreigners are notorious for their exaggerations and outright falsehoods, after all — I believe that they represent a relatively truthful account of Termana's history. With these facts in hand, my most beneficent lord, I trust that you will have a better understanding of Termana — an understanding that I am certain will aid in your future campaigns and efforts to bring the wonders and benefits of Calastian civilization to this benighted and distant land. Hail Chardun! Long life to you, my liege, and your blessed wife, Queen Geleeda.

Submitted humbly,

— Historian Jarnos, Second Apprentice Court Historian

Ancient Empires

My research has revealed that several empires have risen and fallen throughout Termanan history, of which the Charduni Empire is only the most well known. Most of these empires have been short-lived, barbaric states that collapsed quickly in the face of internal struggles and the inability of their rulers to control such vast territories. Some of the best-known of these empires are listed below, though many others may have existed over the millennia, and I am certain that my continued research (and your continued kind, generous support, my dearest monarch) will reveal the secrets of those realms as well.

The Dragon Kingdoms

As elsewhere on Scarn, the mighty dragons once ruled their own states on the Termanan continent. As the humans, gnomes and terali struggled for existence in the deep jungles, these dragon-kings oversaw a number of kingdoms, each ruling in the manner of his own species. Legend holds that the gold dragon Umaenes ruled with benevolence and wisdom, controlling a nation of elves, humans and halflings. This state fell when it came into conflict with that of the rapacious red dragon Ma'exar, whose armies of lizard-people and flying dragon-men brutally destroyed all who opposed them. The rulers of these dragon-states treated with the elves, and formed alliances that endured even as the last of the draconic kingdoms fell to the conquering charduni.

The Halanti

The region now known as the Centaur Plains was once far vaster than it is today, a place of lush grasslands with many predators and herd animals. The predecessors of the Ulandi tribes who dwell there today once created a potent empire. The Spear-King Shantu is said to have forged his tribal warriors into a well-disciplined army, utilizing great plains-cats as cavalry mounts, with tribal sorcerers casting offensive magic on his behalf, all towards the purpose of conquering and subverting surrounding tribes. For over a century, the Halanti ruled the plains, and even defied the mighty charduni for a time. Try as they might, the dark dwarves could not fully pacify the plains, for though the Halanti Empire was destroyed, its inhabitants scattered, many living free of charduni influence until the Divine War and the collapse of the Land of Chains. Since then, the Ulandi tribe has become the most powerful and influential, though the extent of the plains has been greatly reduced.

Khanughu

North of the Centaur Plains, massive gnoll tribes fought for dominance. Adopting the ways of

his human foes, the gnoll-king Khanugu began to build cities, and equipped his warriors with metal weapons and armor. In this fashion, he created a savage gnoll kingdom, conquering humans and independent elven settlements, and enslaving their inhabitants. Soon the weight of the massive empire, and Khanughu's taste for luxury (and, it is said by his critics, his love for the females of other races) proved too much, and the empire fell in a cataclysmic slave revolt and civil war. Khanughu's empire lasted less than three decades, but brought untold destruction and suffering in that short time.

The Lands of the Silver Circle

Before the rise of the charduni, the humans of western Termana were united by a single state, based on Silverisle. Ruled by a council of warriors and druids, the empire was a powerful but harsh one, where faithfulness to the titans was the most valued quality. Those who strayed from the path were harshly suppressed, even sacrificed in massive, bloody ceremonies. At its height, the Silver Circle encompassed all of the modern human states of Termana but, weakened by the spread of divine worship, finally fell before the rise of the charduni. Eventually, only the ruling elite still paid homage to the titans, and when the followers of Belsameth and Enkili rose up, the druidic council could do little. They, their families and their followers were ruthlessly slaughtered, and sacrificed to the gods in the same manner they had once given others to the titans.

The Shan'Khud Empire

An odd alliance of human nomads and elven spellcasters once controlled vast stretches of what is today called the Iron Sands Desert. The wizards, ensconced in well-defended cities, learned the secrets of smelting iron from the red-stained sands of the desert, and gave metal weapons to the tribesmen, who conquered in the elves' name, and in the name of their patron titan, Golthagga. The elves also provided arcane support for the conquests, while the humans rode on powerful sloth-like creatures covered in sturdy scales, capable of withstanding enormous amounts of damage. In the years before the rise of the chardun, while Khanughu and the Halanti forged their own empires, the elves and their allies oversaw a collection of city-states and conquered tribesmen called the Shan'Khud (or "Iron Tribes" in an ancient elvish dialect). Partially conquered by the charduni, a remnant of the Shan'Khud survived until the Divine War, when climatic changes caused deadly winds to scour the desert, overwhelming protective spells and reducing the once-proud elven cities to dust. The few survivors perished when Chern's Curse struck, and little remains of this ancient state.

The Jungle Lands

The jungles of southeastern Termana, known as the Gamulganjus, are also called the Land Without Gods, for the inhabitants are notorious for shunning the worship of any divine beings, instead revering the ancestral spirits of the forest, called ushada. This tale is from a terali shaman named Ikuma, who tells of Termana's earliest history.

I, Ikuma, speak for the spirits. I, Ikuma, hear their words. I, Ikuma, shall tell you of this land and its past.

I welcome you, the chiefs and elders of the many terali tribes, to this council. You have come here, among the shamans, to speak of the past and of the future, and to think on matters that affect our people. You have come to hear the words of the law-chiefs and tribal elders. And you have come to learn more of the ancient tales of the *ushada*, the Primal Ones, of the Young Gods, of the yuan-ti, of monsters and demons and heroes. I speak to you now, as the spirits spoke to me, and I shall tell you of our people, and how we came to live in this place. Hear me, for I am Ikuma, and I speak for the spirits.

The Ancient Time

The ancient *ushada* speak to me of a Time before Time, in tongues that I can scarce comprehend. In that Time before Time, there was only the Land, who was Mother of All. She slumbered and dreamed, but for how long we cannot say, for there were no days then, and no nights, no sun and no moon, and no means of marking the passage of time. There was only the Land, and the Land slept. And as the Land slept, she dreamed, and slowly the world came to be. The Land dreamed the Sun into being, so that day and night came to be, and together they birthed the other *ushada*. Mountains rose up, oceans appeared, forests grew from the soil like grass, and the moons appeared in the night sky.

And at last, as she stirred to wakefulness, the Land dreamed of other things — great and mighty *ushada* like her, who also arose from the stones, from the seas and from the rivers. These were the greatest *ushada*, and from their number eventually came the Primal Ones — what the hairless *amani* call the titans. They were beings of the land — living embodiments of stone, of wind, of water and fire. Mighty *ushada* were they, greater in stature and power than any other spirits. As the land prospered, so did they. Living things grew up from the land — fish sprang from the rivers and seas, birds appeared in the air, the animals of the forest emerged from the shadows of the trees. As the Mother of the Land's dreaming called up the Primal Ones, so did it call up the living things that today inhabit the world. And it came to pass that the Land came awake, and became Mother of All, creator and destroyer in one. She and the world were one, but

they were also apart, for she oft walked the land, striding over mountains and forests and seas with mighty steps. And so did her children, the Primal Ones, the titans, the builders.

The world was different in those days. The *ushada* who speak of it are inestimably old, and their presence is weak, like wisps of smoke or cloud tossed on the winds and barely seen. Only the oldest shamans can hear them, and even then the words they hear are faint. For long years have I listened, and still I do not hear all of the ancient spirits' wisdom.

Today, the *amani* call the Land Denev, the Earthmother, and believe her to be no different from the other Primal Ones, the titans whom the Young Gods defeated. But the spirits whisper that she was more than simply another titan. She was first, she will be last, and today alone among her fellow Primal Ones she rests peacefully, and once more she begins to dream, and with her dreams she changes all that is.

But in those days, she and the other Primals walked the land, and their power was limitless. In time, they began to warp and change the world for themselves, and so it was that the troubles began.

The Primal Age

Younger spirits speak of the Primal Age, but these too are old and feeble, though their voices echo with greater clarity. They tell me that once the last of the Primal Ones had come into being, the world changed once more, as each of the great titans rose to primacy, each in his or her own turn.

The Primal Ones learned much in those days. All were inheritors of the Mother's powers, though none could create life as flawlessly and perfectly as Denev. To amuse themselves, the Primals made their own plants and animals, and watched them as they were born, lived and died. And so did countless ages pass, until at length the Primals grew bored and weary of the land that gave them birth.

The spirits say that it was the least of them, the titan called Gormoth in the *amani* tongue, who first made a thinking race. These were the viren, a peaceful race who lived in harmony with the other children of the land. Seeking to emulate their brother, the other titans created their own races as well, each in his own era. The viren were forgotten, and called Abandoned, and now dwell in the depths of the jungle, shunning others and slowly dwindling. Other, newer races, rose up to replace them.

The new races — the mortals, the thinkers, the soul-bearers — were made in a different manner from the animals. The spirits of the land were fused to the elements of the land, and often with the animals and plants that lived there, creating minds that could reason and hearts that could feel. These new creatures behaved in new and unexpected ways. They banded together, built cities, raised crops and cattle,

quarreled and fought, loved and yearned for enlightenment. And most important of all, they worshipped. They saw the great beings who strode the earth and hastened to appease them, bowing down and begging for mercy, appealing for prosperity or justice.

The Primal Ones were puzzled at this, but in time came to derive endless amusement from the tiny creatures that swarmed around them. Here, they thought, were truly worthy playthings.

The great mortal races that we know in these days were created during the Primal Age. No one knows who made most of them, and the *ushada* speak in riddles when asked. The other races, who now rule the land, but were in those days mere toys of the giants: the *amani* — who call themselves “human” — the forest-loving *dreshi*, the deep-dwelling *kantare* who worship the maker-god Goran, the diminutive *welum* and the tiny *toroi*, who mastered the spirits of the jungle. In time, we would come to share our jungle with the *amani* and *toroi*. The old spirits say that the *dreshi* once dwelt in the jungle lands, and it was they who gave it the name Gamulganjus, or “Great Forest.” Today, we know of no *dreshi*, though from time to time some claim to have found evidence of their ancient settlements.

It was in this time, as well, that our people came into being. We are *terali* — the stalkers. Though the other races do not know who made them, and do not want to know, we are proud of our heritage and of the one who created us, the Primal known as Hrinruuk the Hunter. Many great races and terrible creatures did he make, setting them against each other, or stalking them himself to test his skills. Like the other Primal Ones, great Hrinruuk went mad, and was defeated by his own children, he remains our creator, and we remember him, though we bear him no love.

In those days, we ruled the jungle, and fought the terrible things that Hrinruuk sent against us. We learned to speak with the jungle spirits, and learned of the ancient times, of the Mother, and of the creation of the world. We harnessed the forces of that ancient time, and grew apart from our brethren who still served the titans. We were the spawn of titans, it is true, yet we were also the children of *ushada* and the great hunters of the forest. The Hunter made us,



but in the end he came to realize that we were not his to command. By that time, it was too late, for we were strong and proud, and the monsters of Hrinruuk were as nothing to us.

Others came to our forest — the *amani* and the *toroi*. They were not great hunters like the *terali*, but they had their own strengths. Sometimes we were friends — we traded and feasted together. At other times we were enemies, fighting bitterly for control of hunting grounds and sacred places. We wielded the power of the *ushada*, and moved like silent shadows, but the others fought well, and honorably. The *amani* built great cities atop the mighty tepujes, the *toroi* wandered the forest, never staying in one place for long, and as time passed we all came to share the jungle. We were like a great family in those days — loving and hating each other in the same moment.

Then came the Years of the Snake, and the jungle was drenched in blood.

The Coming of the Yuan-Ti

The Epoch of Hrinruuk ended with the death of our greatest chieftess, the shaman Uhira. With her passing, the *terali* were sore beset and sorrowful, and in our sadness, we did not see that the minions of the Primal One known as Mormo had entered our jungles.

The Snake-Mother came, heralded by a wave of wicked serpents. These were not ordinary snakes, who like all living things are our brothers and sisters. No, these were evil creatures possessed by wicked spirits, driven by madness. Some were twisted into even more frightening shapes, with arms to bear swords, and cunning minds that dreamed of the *terali*'s destruction. They were led by great, many-armed snake-demons, who were not of this world, and whose very presence was an abomination. Mormo herself walked these lands in those days, gathering the serpents to her and twisting them to match her own foul soul.

It is said that the Snake-Mother was not always mad. Like Denev, she was a goddess of the land, but like most of the other titans, the power she consumed from the nameless *ushada* of the larger moon drove her mad, torturing her mind and body, making her into a thing of darkness where she might once have been a being of light. The fell twilight of Mormo fell over our jungles in those days, and to our shame, we did not rally against it until it was near too late.

Fully half our jungle home fell to the snake-folk before the surviving chieftains called a great tribal meeting. We even asked the *amani* and *toroi* to attend, as well as the few *katara* dwarves who dwelled in the jungle, drawing riches from the earth or maintaining trading posts. For long and long had we dwelled in the jungle, to the point where we all believed that it was ours and ours alone. Perhaps we fought, but never did a single race attempt to drive

the others out. Now came an enemy determined to destroy us all, and claim the jungle as its own. Already, the foul magic of the snake-man had turned vast stretches of forest to a sickly yellow, sapping the natural life from the very trees themselves.

The humans of the tepujes shared their knowledge. These creatures, called yuan-ti, were among Mormo's most valued servants, and it was through her own fell magic, and that of her snake-demon servitors, that ordinary serpents were transformed into serpent-men. It is said that another race of serpent-men lived in another land, far away, but these yuan-ti were different. They served Mormo directly, and their mission was conquest and extermination. Other creatures also marched with the yuan-ti — lizard-men, giant serpents, and other titan-spawned beasts.

Armed with this information, it was decided that our people would join in a great alliance to stop the yuan-ti's advance. In the months and years that followed, we struck back. *Terali* hunters killed yuan-ti soldiers in the night. Gnome blowgunners picked off stragglers. Human warriors and windriders fought the snake-men in open battle, often aided by the dwarves.

Many noble warriors fought and died in those days, but in the end it seemed hopeless. We slaughtered yuan-ti by the thousands, but more came to take their place, and slowly — ever so slowly — we were driven back. It seemed no one could stop the advance of the snake-folk. In desperation, we appealed to our creator Hrinruuk, but the Hunter had long since grown bored with us, and ignored our pleas.

Then it was that the *terali* shaman Kaneeka received a vision from the *ushada*. A terrible disturbance drove the spirits themselves from the depths of the Yellow Jungle, they said. Something unnatural dwelt there, sending out foul emanations that corrupted the jungle and destroyed those things that were right and natural. The human sorcerers of the tepujes sought more information, and the truth proved terrifying.

Mormo and her minions had constructed a mighty artifact deep in the heart of the Yellow Jungle. Its terrible magic transformed ordinary creatures into monsters, creating greater and greater abominations with each passing year. It was this magic that had originally created the yuan-ti, transforming them from ordinary snakes into what they are today.

If the great artifact could be destroyed, then the land might once more return, and the power of Mormo's creatures might be broken. So it was that a band of heroes was gathered — Kaneeka the *terali* shamaness, Iman the human warrior, Hulo the gnome, and Rentana the dwarf. Together, these four crossed over the frontier and into the Yellow Jungle, as the jungle alliance launched a desperate final attack. After much travail,

and many dangers, they reached the snake-demons' citadel, and destroyed the fearsome device. The cost was terrible, however; of the four, only Kaneeka returned alive. The others gave their lives that the jungle might live and the demons be defeated.

Their numbers now limited and their source of power destroyed, the yuan-ti were driven back, and retreated into the Yellow Jungle. The alliance lacked the strength to pursue them immediately, but with their victory, the people of the jungle began to prepare to attack and finally destroy the yuan-ti.

But it was not to be. A greater war was about to begin, and the world would never be the same.

The Divine War

None can say how or why the spirits that we call the Young Gods came to be. Again, the *ushada* are ambiguous, and speak in words that I cannot comprehend. Though we do not know the reasons for their existence, we know with absolute certainty that the Young Gods came, and that their coming helped to shatter the world.

Perhaps the Primal Ones grew bored again. Perhaps the teeming mortals no longer amused them. Perhaps they retained some of the creative powers of the Mother, and the coming of the Young Gods was inevitable. Whatever the cause, the Primal Ones began to give birth to new beings — spirits of immense power.

First was the brutal Vangal. Born of a strange union between three Primals, he was a being much like them, with the ability to change the very fabric of the land.

But this creature was different. The Primal Ones derived their existence from the land itself. No matter if a million million mortals perished, so long as the land was intact and healthy, they continued to live and prosper. The inhabitants of the land were nothing — mere annoyances or, at best, amusing diversions.

Vangal, though, seemed to derive his very strength from those creatures. When they fought and died, he grew stronger. And when they fought and died in his name, he grew stronger still. A strange thing it was, but the Primal Ones thought little of it, so eager were they to create more like him.

The other Young Gods soon followed. In the end, there were eight of them, and when we speak of them we use their *amani* names, for we do not worship them in our lands. They were: Corean the Warrior; Madriel the Shaman; Tanil the Huntress; Enkili the Mad; Hedrada the Law-Chief; Chardun the War-Chief; Belsameth the Witch; and the firstborn, Vangal the Berserker.

Not all were as bloodthirsty as Vangal. The Shaman was a gentle healer with only love in her sun-bright heart. The Warrior was as noble and resolute as the bravest tribal defender. The Law-Chief was stern and merciless, but always fair and just. Even the

wicked Young Gods — the War-Chief, the Witch and the Berserker — were not entirely corrupt, for like their fellow gods, they depended upon mortal worship for their very existence.

The love and devotion of the mortals fed these gods, even as the health of the land fed their parents. And when the Primal Ones playfully or thoughtlessly destroyed mortals, the Young Gods felt it like the stab of a sharp spear. In time, the Young Gods came to realize that the Primal Ones had indeed gone mad, and called a great council to decide what to do.

In the end, much like the great jungle council that went to war with the serpent-folk, these mighty beings decided that the Primal Ones must be defeated and driven from the land.

And so began the Great War that ravaged the world. The other mortal races call it the Divine War, or the Titanswar. But our people call it the Time of Sorrows, for although our land was spared much of the destruction that devastated the rest of the world, we felt the pain and anguish of both the land and its peoples.

We terali saw but little of the Great War, but what we saw was fearsome enough. When titans and gods clashed, the land itself shook and cried out in agony. When the armies of the divine races (as they called themselves) and the titanspawn (as they called their foes) marched, the air echoed with the sound of their footsteps. On some days, the sun shone black and blanketed the land in darkness. On some nights, the moon shone brightly and lit the land like day. Battles raged across our world and beyond, and the sky itself seemed as though it might shatter.

The Young Gods had created fortresses in the places beyond the world, but in those days they could still die, and the struggle against their parents soon became a struggle for the very survival of the world.

From our jungle, we watched the fight, and debated what to do should it ever spread into our lands. We knew that, far to the north the *dreshi* and those *kantare* known as the charduni struggled against the minions of the titans. Many spoke out in council, calling to aid one side or the other. If we aided the gods, it was said, we would know freedom, and help destroy the ones who had unleashed the yuan-ti on us, and the one who had created then abandoned us. The gods brought a new way of thinking, a new life, and a new world. We must fight for the gods, they said.

Others called to support the titans. Whether we loved or hated them, they were our creators, and it is a child's duty to fight beside his parents if called upon to do so. The titans were of the Land, as were we, and they prospered as the Land prospered. If they were destroyed, or driven from the world, what would happen to the Land? Would it die? Would it change into something wrong and unnatural? Would the

gods twist it and toy with it as the titans had? Would victory only bring a change in masters?

On and on the debates raged. For the most part, the humans and gnomes continued to follow the whispers of the *ushada*, and refused to choose sides. To no one's surprise, the yuan-ti rose up again in the name of Mormo, and tried to invade our jungles once more. Though we terali also remained neutral in the fearsome conflicts of the Divine War, we nonetheless stood with the humans and gnomes as we fought the serpent-folk, and after a long and bitter conflict, drove them once more to their lairs in the Yellow Jungle. We did not fight for the gods — we fought for our homes and our loved ones, and we fought to honor our ancestors.

One by one, the titans were dragged down and destroyed, dismembered or exiled. Every terali felt a dread emptiness in his soul when Tanil the Huntress and Corean the Warrior slew Hrinruuk. Father to us he was, but he was no loving parent, and we felt the same sorrow that an unloved son feels when told that his father has perished in a far-off land. The truth was that we had come to hate the Great Hunter, for though we were created in love, we were discarded and ignored by a selfish and thoughtless maker.

Tremors rocked our continent, the evidence of distant battles. The Primal One called Golphagga built his forge in a great range of mountains far to the west of the jungles, and was slain there by Corean the Warrior. Travelers told us that the titan Kadum had been imprisoned beneath the sea, and that his blood had flooded the northern lands of the *dreshi*. Other tales reached our ears, of the *dreshi*'s defeat of the Primal One called Chern and of the terrible curse that he laid upon them. *Ushada* whispered of other fearful events in even more distant lands — of betrayal and tragedy, of rebellion and death. All the while, we went about our lives in the jungle, wondering how and when it would all end.

And end it did. The Young Gods were triumphant, for the Primal Ones, despite all their power, were never able to stand together, and never realized the danger to their existence until it was too late. The Young Gods remade the world, free of the influence of the Primal Ones. The world did not end, nor was it twisted into unnatural shapes. It went on as it always had, and the spirits still spoke to us.

This was, we learned, because the Mother still slumbered beneath the land that she had made. The one called the Earthmother had in the end sided with the Young Gods against her fellow titans, and as a consequence was spared their fate.

And well that is, for the spirits know that it is the Mother who nourishes the world and keeps it alive, and it is her dreams that fill the world with life. Had the Young Gods, in their arrogance, chosen to destroy or exile her, all might have ended there.

Perhaps, the shamans say, this is as it should be. The Primal Ones each in turn served their purpose, and made the land what it is. As the Mother created the land from her dreams, so it was that her offspring filled it with life, and made the races that populate it, and even today struggle to survive. Now, as the jungle changes from dry season to the season of rain, the world has also changed, and the days of the Primals are over. The days of the Young Gods have come, and though the terali pay homage to no god or titan, we stand ready to defend our land, and to live by the wisdom of the *ushada*.

I, Ikuma, have spoken. May the *ushada* walk with you and guide you, always.

The Faithful and the Forsaken

The tragedy of the forsaken elves is known throughout Termana and beyond. The scholar-sorceress Shanak saw many of the events that are now spoken of as legend, and she tells her story with an insight that few other beings could have.

My strength fades, and my body grows old and weary, for even those of my race eventually reach the end of their days. Yet, unlike the other races, we seek not peace and solace in the arms of a gentle god; rather, we desire the darkness of oblivion and the peace of the blessed void, for our god is slain, and we are forsaken. I am called Shanak, and I remember, though my heart and soul often wish that I did not.

In those days we ruled a mighty empire. It was called Eldura-tre, before the sundering, and before we were forsaken by titan and god. And mighty it was — a realm of vast peaceful forests, lazy rivers and snow-capped mountains. Our cities were as none had ever seen before or since, with their slender, soaring towers, graceful palaces and endless halls. It is said that our wizards delved into secrets that even the titans did not know, and each of our warriors was worth a thousand lesser swordsmen. Our kings were the wisest, our laws the most enlightened, our people the most beautiful and learned.

Like the other races, we suffered under the titans' heel, but our scholars and arcanists were wise, delving deeply into the Mysteries of Mesos, stealing that power which was originally the birthright of the sorcerers. The great Citadel of the Rose was founded, and there our greatest magi dwelled, exploring the infinite reaches of creation. Such was their power that they were able to communicate with the ancient dragons, and we formed solemn alliance with many of them. Our races grew together in mutual respect and friendship.

Our realm reached its heights during those days. But it was also in that time that we planted the seeds of our own doom.

Gods and Titans

It was in those days that our magi became aware of the gods, discovering the infinite intelligences of beings that knew of our lands, but dwelt in planes not our own. The children of the titans, these mighty beings actually seemed to care for — even love — the mortal races who inhabited Scarn. It was in those days that one god came to favor us. His divine body appeared as one of our own, yet absolutely perfect in form and free of defect, and his words were sweetest High Elven. He was that now-nameless and forgotten god who rose up and took our people as his own.

Ages passed, and none but our people openly worshipped the gods. The Epochs passed as they do, and the Epoch of the Great Hunter ended when Mesos caused his brother Hrinruuk's greatest creation — a gargantuan beast of horrible might and terror — to enter a slumber, defeating the beast that even mighty Hrinruuk could not. And so it was that our people chafed under the rule of Mesos, who was a cruel and petty creature, demanding total obedience in exchange for his patronage. Slowly, we began to turn to this young god, this patron who seemed to love us as we loved him. We knew joy then, that we had at last found the one who would always watch over us and protect us.

But this joy came with a price. The days of peace were over, for the rise of the gods was the coming of war and tragedy. Many of the titans' servants troubled our realm — goblins, orcs, gnolls, ogres and other fell beasts assailed our borders, but we defeated them easily. To the south, however, the dark ones, minions of wicked Chardun, rose and grew in power. Across the continent they spread their evil, killing and enslaving in the name of Chardun and by the command of their ruler, the One in White. Only in the west, where a few weak human states managed to survive, and in the north, where the elves, the dragons and the magi in the Citadel of the Rose held them at bay, did the charduni fail to conquer.

Our god stood with us in those days, sometimes taking the field himself to drive back the endless legions of charduni and their foul undead servitors. For his part, the Great General did not deign to do the same, preferring to watch as his servitors conquered and fought in his name. The charduni had numbers, and endless fanatical belief in their cause, while we had the strength of an ancient realm, powerful allies and magic of the highest order. We knew that someday a reckoning would come, and that in the end either we or the charduni would survive. Coexistence was an alien and incomprehensible thing to our foes. The coming of the Titanswar changed all that, and for a time, we stood side by side with our old enemies.

When the Titanswar began with the destruction of Mesos, we knew that we would have to side with the divine races. Little did we know what it would cost us.

Chardun decreed that his legions fight on the side of the gods and drive the titanspawn from Termana. We disliked this, but when our god said that for a time there must be truce between the two warring races, we ended our conflict with the charduni, and turned our might against the titanspawn.

For many years we fought. On rare occasions we even fought alongside the charduni, but for the most part we pursued our campaigns separately. We were relentless. We fought and died, and ever our god was with us. For their part the charduni fought as well, brave and selfless despite their evil natures, and together we drove the titanspawn from our lands.

All knew it was but a brief respite. Someday we would fight again.

The cost of this war was terrible. Seeing the power of the Citadel of the Rose, the titanspawn opened doorways to distant realms, summoning horrific demons and monstrosities to assault the fortress. These gates were a threat to all of Scarn, and our sorcerers and wizards responded by cutting the citadel and its surrounding lands from the rest of Termana, sealing it behind impenetrable walls of magic. Many of the dragons were trapped behind this wall, and so it was that we lost our most powerful allies.

The beginning of the end came when Kadum the Mountainshaker was defeated by the gods Belsameth, Corean and our foes' patron, great Chardun. His heart was cut from his body, he was chained, and flung into the ocean north of Termana.

When the mighty titan struck the water and sank, a terrible flood of blood-tainted water rushed out, lashing the Termanan continent. Our realm was sorely beset, as coastal lands sank beneath the onslaught, and ancient cities vanished overnight. We struggled to survive, and as the waves receded, to salvage what we could from the disaster.

The charduni were worse off, however. Their armies were almost all in northern Termana when Kadum's Deluge struck. Emboldened, and less damaged by the flood, the humans rose up and swarmed through the mountain passes, shattering the dark dwarves' armies and sending them reeling back toward their homeland.

The war had passed us by, and the titanspawn were defeated. With our ancient enemies in full retreat, we prepared to renew the war, and destroy them once and for all.

Chern's Curse

It was not to be. Far across the Blood Sea, the titan Chern was driven from a distant land, defeated by the goddess Madriel and her fellows, on behalf of a noble race of elves known as the drendali. Enraged, the Lord of Plagues felt our presence, and turned his anger south against Termana. The magi in the Citadel of the Rose,

now an island in the roiling Blood Sea, sent one last message, warning of Chern's approach.

Our armies, mustering for the defeat of the charduni, turned instead toward the north and the newly-created cliffs above the Blood Sea. There we stood and waited.

The tale of what happened then has been told many times, and in many tongues across the world. I was there, though, and I witnessed all. It was our greatest moment, and our most terrible. Corrupted by Chern, our god's herald rose against his former patron and treacherously slew him. The Plague Lord expected us to flee then, terrified by his fearsome visage and disheartened by the death of our god.

But we did not. We threw ourselves against the titan. In our thousands we attacked, our manaspears flashing, our wizards summoning fearsome spells. For every warrior who fell, another rose in her place, advancing fearlessly, heedless of our losses, the death of our god enraging us, filling us with the need for vengeance.

And vengeance we gained, by the sword of the High Priest of our god, Vladawen. Infused with rage born of surviving the death of that which he held most holy, he struck and slew Chern. Of all the divine races, we were the only ones to defeat a titan without help from the gods. Of all the divine races, we were the only ones to face the foe on the field of battle, and not flee. Of all the divine races, ours was the greatest triumph. And the most terrible punishment.

Chern perished, his plague-filled body falling, his dying curse echoing in our hearts and souls. As the god Vangal arrived to bear away the corpse of his father, we felt Chern's evil worming its way into our souls.

We were changed that day. Changed into the things that we are now — mere shadows of our ancient selves, our hearts and souls tainted by the touch of the Plague Lord.

Worse still, our children sickened and died, and since that day only a handful of new elves have been born, and those were fearfully, fatally deformed. To save our race, we made a terrible decision — we would take the children of humans and raise them in our culture, using them as breeding stock so that our people would not die out. All knew that this was an unforgivable thing, unworthy of our lost god. Yet we have done so, to our everlasting shame.

The years following the war were a stark, sad shadow of the old ways. We were shattered, broken, unable to do much save defend ourselves. We met in a great council, and decided that the old realm of Eldura-tre was lost, and that we would have to divide into independent principalities.

So it was that we became the forsaken elves, and the Forsaken Realms.

After the War

Our eldest princes ruled each of these separate states. Though theoretically we were all united and would regularly meet in council to discuss important issues, we began to grow apart almost immediately. The forest elves of Ganjulael isolated themselves in their wilderness, seeking solitude and wisdom in the natural world. The midrealms of Pelegael became wild and decadent, seized by the madness of the desperate, indulging in every pleasure and perversion imaginable. In Sylavael, the Shield Realm, our martial strengths were emphasized, and the military might of the old empire survived, albeit as a mere shadow of its former greatness. Ehitovael, the Southsea Realm, was once home to our mighty navy, but after Chern destroyed most of the fleet, its inhabitants turned to quiet contemplation, dwelling in the great underwater city of Manaetae. The last of our realms, Kasiavael, the Skysight Realm, was home to the surviving high elven wizards, but their power was greatly reduced, and they too lived in sadness and isolation.

For the first few years after the fall of the titans, we tried to maintain some semblance of our old ways. But it was a doomed effort, and within three decades it was obvious that we were all drifting in different directions. We would never be what we once were.

Perhaps that is why the charduni returned. They, too, had been sorely tested, and they too had struggled to survive. Now, much reduced but still powerful, the Land of Chains stirred to action in the south. In the 46th Year After Victory, the dark dwarves, along with endless legions of slaves and grim ranks of undead, marched on the Shield Realm.

The battle that followed, as the charduni tried to force their way over the fords of the Chained River, came to its climax when the forsaken elf war-queen Kathalema faced the dread charduni general Ixasamo in single combat while the two armies watched. Sorely wounded, Kathalema nonetheless triumphed, striking Ixasamo's head from his body. Momentarily discouraged, the charduni's control of their undead and slave troops wavered and the forsaken elves swept them from the field.

The war was not over, not by any means, for the charduni are war incarnate, and cannot conceive of any other life. We continue to face each other across the frontier, raiding, scouting, probing. Many elven warriors died at Chained River Fords, replaced by half-elven troops, less experienced and less dedicated to the cause.

We continue to grow farther apart. As the years pass, we slowly become a realm of half-elves, and in the absence of our god, our access to divine magic is limited or non-existent. Our foes, the charduni, who retain a direct connection to their fell god, grow stronger while we grow weaker.

We have lost our way along with our god. Far away, our ancient wizards, in the Shalae'Uthun — the Citadel of the Rose — still cut off from the world by their own magic in the place now called the Eternal Isle, struggle against the demon-army that besieges them. That the barriers are still intact is our only evidence that they live on, for if the demons had

triumphed, they would have emerged from the Eternal Isle to ravage and destroy. Are they touched by Chern's curse? Have they changed irrevocably? We do not know, and most have lost hope. A few of us pray that one day our lost ancients will return, and that somehow they have learned a way of lifting the terrible curse of Chern.

But for the most part we remain as we have since that terrible day when our beloved god fell. We are lost, we are cursed. And most of all, we are forsaken.

The Land of Chains

From the Chronicle of the Overlord, the sacred text said to be written by Chardun's own hand. Several versions of this text exist, and this one, with its less-than-complimentary view of the charduni, is rejected as heresy by the dark dwarves.

In those days did the accursed titans walk the land, and by their fell hands did they create and twist beings in their image, solely for their amusement and decadent pleasure. Across the lands did they teem, in their ignorant legions, prey to the titans and to each other.

Thus it was that I saw these beings — these humans, these dwarves, these elves — and knew that, shorn of weakness, softness and sad failings such as mercy, pity and wasteful emotion, they might become greater, and build for Me a mighty empire, free of the taint of the wretched titans, especially that of My own thrice-damned sire and bitch-queen mother.

I took the raw stuff of the earth, and the pitiless souls of predatory beasts, fused to the rock-hard essence of the dwarven and giant races. Then it was that the first of My chosen people, those called *charduni* in obeisance to their creator, rose up from the land and asked:

"What would you have of me, o peerless master?"

And with My hand did I touch this new being, this paragon of My virtues. And I named him the first of his kind, wreathing him in shining white light, transforming his skin to the likeness of iron and his will into an extension of My own. This first *charduni* I called the One in White, and he was to lead his people to greatness.

As the One in White absorbed My essence and became the living embodiment of My will, others like him emerged, each like unto the others — with ebon skin and harsh eyes, and a limitless desire for conquest in My name.

They began to build their city then, in the mighty mountains of Termana, where the very stones turned themselves to My bidding. This was the first great city and the place where My people would begin their history of glory and blood.

Chorach it was called, and it rose from the mountains, an iron and stone fortress, dedicated only to the conquests of the *charduni*, and to the dissemination of My Word.

And that Word is War.

The Word of Chardun

Beneath the One in White, I decreed that My generals should have absolute authority, and that the warriors who served them do so instantly and without question. In those early days, some of My people showed weakness, hesitating or — worse still — refusing to obey their masters. These I punished harshly, striking them down, then restoring them as undead, so that, though they refused to serve Me in life, they would serve Me in death.

And so did My people learn the value of obedience.

In time, those who dwelt near Chorach learned of the greatness of My people, and were sore jealous. The spawn of the hated titans came in their vast numbers, flinging themselves against the walls of My citadel, casting mighty magics, and burrowing beneath the land itself to attack My people from below. They were many, these humans, these gorgons, these elves, these goblins, gnolls, dwarves, orcs, hags and serpent men. All came against My people and all fell, their forces exhausted, their armies slain.

My people were glorious, standing fearlessly, dying and rising again in their turn, smashing the proud titanspawn armies and laying low the proud and arrogant. So it was that My race proved its worth, and showed to all that the titans' time was ending.

Yet these were the days before the Titanswar, when the foul taint of the old ones still tormented the land. Even as their legions fell to Mine, the titans did not concern themselves. Many, such as *Hrinruuk* the Hunter, found the sight amusing, and approached Me with wagers and challenges, wondering how well My chosen ones would fare against theirs. It was all a game in those days — a diversion from the endless tedium of eternal life, and the worthlessness of the infinite. The titans did not care, or worse, did not even notice. Yet My people grew in strength and, at length, marched against the titanspawn.

In the south, an alliance of titanspawn — giants, orcs and gnolls — fell easily, for they had been sorely weakened in their futile attempts to bring My people low. My general *Axkamanxus* led a great army of *charduni* and the walking dead, and although the titanspawn united under the leadership of the fire giant *Zalazus*, they were scattered and driven into the sea.

It was not My way to be wasteful with fallen foes. Those slain were raised as undead, and those who lived, and wished to continue living, were made slave-soldiers, and driven north to fight the human tribes of the Termanan coast.

And when I looked upon the bloody battlefield, I was pleased, but yet I saw many brave *charduni* who had perished after fighting valiantly in My service and slaying their own legions of foes. These I raised anew, as the first of the Chardun-slain, to show that

My people could continue earning glory in My cause even beyond the frontier of death.

Seeing how poorly the titanspawn fared, the humans grew cowardly, refusing to be drawn into battle with My people. Again and again they fought, fell back and scattered. My people won all their battles, yet the foe was not defeated. I punished those generals who had failed Me, and called upon Axkamanxus to bring the humans to heel.

Of all My servants save the One in White, Axkamanxus was the boldest and wisest. She chose not to confront the upstart humans directly; rather, she called upon her necromancers to create plagues and other weapons that might cause the humans' fall.

And so it was that the charduni created diseases that killed or sickened only humans, called up legions of mindless undead to ravage human lands, and set hordes of My hunting hounds, the keffiz, to harass and trouble human armies.

My general was patient. She waited for My newest servants to do their work. In but a few years, the humans of the Termanan coast were reduced to a mere handful — slain by sickness, assaulted by undead, torn by roving keffiz. When My legions once more marched to war, the humans fell as easily as the titanspawn in the south, and Axkamanxus once more brought glory to My name.

The Land of Chains

And it came to pass that this great empire became known as the Land of Chains, for a land of chains it was. My people did not rejoice as other races might, for that was not their way. Their duty was to conquer, enslave, and subjugate, all in My name.

Then it was that the titans began to take notice of My achievements, and approached Me. Not to stop Me, not to prevent My people's conquests. No. They wished to know how I had created such a mighty race, and how they might do the same.

All I rebuffed. Hrinruuk, who desired greater challenges for his creatures. Thulkas, who was weary of the pathetic goblins and other short-lived races. Gaurak, the eater of land, who wanted creatures to more efficiently consume the world on his behalf. Chern, who wanted greater beasts to carry his plagues. Kadum, who had long since grown bored with the giants. Even My own mother, hated Mormo, the writhing dam of those things that crawl, came to Me, with words of affection and admiration, heedless of the suffering that she had heaped upon Me in My youth. Her, I took the greatest joy in spurning.

I turned them all away. If they wanted to create greater servitors, I told them, then go and do so without My help. And many tried — Mormo made the medusae, Thulkas made the thulkans, Chern crafted his spirits of the plague, and Gaurak his vengaurak. None came close to the glory of My

charduni, of the ebon-skinned dwarves who slew in My name.

Yet as My people spread across the continent, some foes continued to elude us. In the north were the high elven ones, who had forgotten their creator, but made foul alliances with Mesos the Sire of Sorcery and wielded great magics against My people.

Alone among My foes did the elves earn My respect. And yet did they earn My enmity, for they refused to bow down, and did resist My charduni ferociously. Though they were great, and brave, they were foolish and arrogant, and I decreed that My generals show these creatures the meaning of humility.

From the south, Axkamanxus advanced with the greatest charduni army yet assembled. From the north came My people, on ships built by our new human slaves, with beasts of the sea bound to My service.

And the battle was joined. Yet though My people's legions were strong, the elves resisted. Their wizards, fueled by the foul energies of Mesos, conjured forces to help their people defend themselves. And in the skies flew mighty dragons, bound to the elves by cowardly compacts. My charduni fought, and yet they could not prevail against the elves and the dragons. So it was that My chosen people began to fail Me.

Bloody war raged on the sea, and the blue waves were tinged with red, a fell shadow of the deluge that was to come. The bound beasts — sea serpents, krakens, mighty leviathans — crushed the elven ships, yet still the golden-haired ones fought on, and their dragons rained fire upon the charduni and the human fleets. In some places, My people waded ashore, and in others great armies of undead crawled from the waves. Here, we met on land, and the might of My charduni met the might of the elves and the dragons.

The god of the elves walked with them in those days, striding into battle alongside his people, smiting down My chosen ones. My people asked that I intervene on their behalf, and take the field with the charduni, but I knew that this would only make them weak, and dependent upon My presence. I told them that with My blessing they could overcome any obstacle — titan, god or mortal. And so it was that My charduni fought on.

The battles were great, the losses many. And slowly the elves gave ground, but the cost to My charduni was steep. Again, I called upon them to march forward and do battle to enhance My glory.

While the greater part of My people's armies fought against the elves, the remainder pressed west, against the human nations that dwelled there. These humans also proved resourceful, and My people's armies were halted in the mountain passes. Once more My charduni disappointed Me, for they were

unable to advance on the humans, but instead remained in the passes, awaiting the day when the elves were overcome and they could throw their full weight against the last of those who defied My Word.

Elsewhere, beyond the shores of blessed Termana, My chosen ones were more successful. Crossing the seas in ships built by human slaves, they came to the new land, the place called Ghelspad where, under My generals and advised by the One in White, they swept across the land, again ravaging and killing in My name. And the Land of Chains found root in Ghelspad. Soon, all lands would know the power of the Great General and His people.

Yet also in those days, the unrest of the Gods grew and grew. When Enkli the Fool was stripped of his power by Mesos, it became clear that We must act. Mindless buffoon though he was, the Lord of Chaos was nevertheless a god, one of Us, and We knew that the day of reckoning had come at last. Scorn would be home to Gods or titans, but not both. So it was, even as My people conquered and slew in My name, the war against the titans began.

The Titanswar and After

This was a new thing, this Titanswar. And it required new thoughts. I decreed that My charduni's wars of conquest should cease, and that they should — for the time — declare common cause with both elf and human. As is proper, they complied, and soon war once more raged across Termana. For a time, the charduni redeemed themselves in My eyes.

This was a different kind of war, however — both elf and charduni fought in the same cause, though only rarely did they fight side-by-side. The armies of the titans assailed Termana: the goblins of Thukas, the serpent-folk of Mormo, the giants of Kadum. And the land was washed in blood, and My charduni fought and died and fought again, as is their lot.

Elsewhere, the people who chose to follow the gods — those so-called “divine races” — marched against the supporters of the titans. At last, We gods entered the fray too, pulling down the titans even as Our people fought their armies. Mesos fell, then Hrinruuk, who had shamefully violated the sanctity of his own flesh and blood, and Golphagga, at the hands of My cousin Corean.

The fall of Kadum was to prove the downfall of My people, however. I joined with the gods Belsameth and Vangal to battle the Mountainshaker. Together We bound Kadum in chains of My own crafting, but Vangal thoughtlessly flung the helpless titan into the sea, and where he plunged beneath the waters, a great tidal wave of blood gushed forth, deluging Termana and drowning huge numbers of My people.

Then it was that the other divine races showed their treachery — the humans and elves descended upon My charduni. In this hour, they failed Me, and

fled like cowards. My people, whom I had once invested with My very Word, were pushed back from the mighty empire they had built. On Ghelspad it was the same — the cowardly humans, dwarves and elves drove My people from the land, and My people's courage failed.

I decreed that the charduni fall back upon the city of Chorach and rebuild. The One in White lived yet, My necromancers raised legions of undead, and My generals had saved thousands of My faithful warriors in the march back to Chorach. Though the struggle against the titans continued, I once more passed My blessings on to My people, and with grim resolution they awaited the coming of the elves and humans.

But fate once more intervened on behalf of My people. The titan Chern assailed the elves and, though he perished in the battle, his fell hand cursed the elves, and their realm was shattered. Elsewhere, the humans fell to bickering and were assailed by the titanspawn and other enemies. Slowly, the charduni's strength returned. Despite the continued defiance of the forsaken elves, the titanspawn and the humans, including the paladins of the misguided Madriel, the empire began to grow again.

The charduni were once My chosen people, and perhaps one day they will be again. For now, they do their duty to conquer and enslave in My name, but My chosen ones now dwell in the realms of Ghelspad, where the humans have taken up the cause, and now spread My Word. Of the charduni I expect little save loyalty and devotion, for they have failed Me and now dwell in the shadow of My displeasure.

The Ghoul King

Lady Shanae is a legend on Termana. She led the knightly order known as the Sisters of the Sun from the end of the Divine War until her death, 70 years later. In her dying testament, she spoke of many aspects of the order's history, including this personal account of the war against the creature known as the Ghoul King.

Hope was in short supply in the years that followed the Titanswar. Though the titans were defeated, the land was devastated. Crops failed, disease and starvation were rampant, surviving titanspawn continued to roam the land, in their bitterness slaying all those they encountered. Many cursed the gods, saying that the price of victory was too high.

My sisters and I knew better, of course. Had the gods not triumphed, the mortal races would have been ground to dust beneath the titans' heels — worse than playthings, we would have been mere vermin, for the madness of immortality and absolute power had wormed its way into the titans' souls, and only the rebellion of their children, the gods, could have stopped them.

We were the knights of Madriel. The Sisters of the Sun, we called ourselves, and we wielded our power in the name of the First Angel of Mercy, though we honor the Father of All Paladins as well. Goddess she was, and goddess she is, but not even Madriel could be everywhere at once, and in this we were her eyes, her ears and her hands. We roamed Termama, healing the sick, offering succor to the sorrowful and, when necessary, battling the surviving titanspawn.

At times, even we gave in to despair and questioned the cause of the gods. Yet we were knights, sworn to uphold the way of Madriel against all odds — even against our own doubts and fears. We persevered, though the task seemed impossible.

The Coming of the Ghoul King

It was in the tenth year After Victory, when our world stood balanced on the knife's edge between life and death, that tales reached us of a powerful being who was building a mighty empire in the southwestern region of Termama, far from any civilized realm. On the forsaken island of Huros, it was said, this powerful wizard had raised up an army of the walking dead, and would claim the mantle of the defeated titans.

Alarmed, we sent our agents south to investigate. None returned. That was in 11 AV. As we sat and debated, and our priests sensed the growing evil in the south, the necromancer, calling himself the Ghoul King, struck. All along the coast of western Termama, undead monstrosities emerged from the waves, festooned with brine-weed and debris, reeking of the sea. By thousands they came, overwhelming the few humans there, who never imagined they might be attacked from the west.

Our own missions were destroyed, our shrines despoiled, for the Ghoul King revered the gods of the people not at all, and for the vanished titans felt only contempt. It was said that he gained his powers from an alien being known as Otossal, the Bone-Master. Some even called him a living avatar of this being, or claimed that he was the Bone-Master himself in mortal guise, but we were never able to determine the truth of these tales.

The human nations of Azale, Padrinola and Thorvalos fell, along with vast swaths of the southern deserts, where the Ghoul King relocated his foul citadel. Our order was scattered, and fell back in small groups, shepherding bands of refugees, giving our lives in desperate holding actions, aiding the wounded wherever we could. Occasionally, we were able to draw together small armies and push the enemy back, but these forces invariably fell apart and joined the general retreat.

Reports filtering back from the conquered lands filled us with horror. The surviving humans were living as slaves, under the absolute control of the vampires, liches, mummies and other foul undead

who served the Ghoul King. Forced to labor for their new overlords, the humans were worked until they died, then raised as undead to continue their toil. It seemed obvious to all that the Ghoul King intended to bring all of Termama under his control, and transform it into a land of the dead. Some of the living even declared common cause with the evil one, marching alongside his undead legions in the hope that they would be spared.

Counter-Attack

It was in 18 AV, after six years of defeat and horror, when all seemed lost, that the forces of the Ghoul King paused in their irresistible march of conquest. We have since speculated that his powers were stretched to their limits, and that he had to stop and regain his strength. Whatever the cause, those few months in the spring and summer of 18 AV gave us a chance to rally our forces, and craft the dispirited forces under us into a real army.

When the Ghoul King's advance resumed in early 19 AV, we had been forced into the swampy regions of northwestern Termama. But a half-year's respite had given us much-needed rest, and from across Termama the scattered members of our order had returned. Our call for aid was even answered by those from across the sea: members of Corean's Knighthoods of Silver and Mithril arrived to aid us, alongside no few members of the Order of the Morning Sky, who hate undead vehemently.

The Ghoul King's undead legions moved into the marshes, and initially we fell back. The undead pursued us deeper into the swamps, and at last we turned, striking hard, our soldiers fighting with the bravery of the truly desperate, our clerics and paladins pouring the power of Madriel and Corean upon the advancing abominations.

Perhaps the Ghoul King's forces were spread too thin. Perhaps he was not as powerful as he himself believed. Perhaps, seeing the horror that was about to descend, the gods turned their full power to our aid. Whatever the reason, we sang songs of praise to both the Avenger and the Mother of Mercy, for the Ghoul King's forces were smashed. His skeletons, zombies and ghouls were destroyed utterly; more powerful undead and demons were banished or forced to retreat. The Ghoul King's human allies were killed, captured or sent fleeing in disorder. Though we counseled mercy toward those who fell into our hands, it was rarely given, and to my own shame, I admit that many perished badly at the hands of our vengeful allies.

Now, when the Ghoul King seemed weak, we moved quickly, advancing into the territories that

he had conquered, liberating village after village, exterminating the undead and adding to our forces as we went. Now the tables were turned, for the Ghoul King seemed unable to replenish his losses. Occasionally, an especially powerful minion would throw his forces into our path, and we would be delayed, sometimes even defeated. But the spirit of Madriel was strong in our heart, and with the blessings of Corean, our advance continued.

The Last Battle

It was in 22 AV, in the southern desert that the Ghoul King at last made his stand. He had been canny, sending his forces to delay us while he called up an even greater army of undead. From the sands they rose, tearing us to pieces, sending us falling back in disorder.

We regrouped as best we could and prepared for the last battle. The Ghoul King himself had come against us. He was vastly powerful then, and though he still walked among the living, he wielded fell powers of undeath. His most powerful minions — the demons, the vampires, the ghosts and liches — stood beside him, each commanding its own legions.

But as we prepared for that desperate struggle, the air seemed to glow, and from the heavens a bright beam of light descended, bearing a shining figure, a manlike being who bore the light and love of Madriel. This was the goddess' herald, and as it touched our wounded and sick, they were instantly healed and filled with the strength of the goddess.

We rejoiced then, and moved against the foe with a new will and direction. But the herald only prepared the way. Shouting and singing, we flung ourselves at the Ghoul King's forces, who were spread out across the desert, confident of their eventual victory. From the sky rained down spears of pure light, and where they struck, dozens of undead were destroyed.

Then it was that the First Angel herself came to us, clad in shining armor, girded for war, and bearing her holy spear. Where her feet touched the desert sands, the energies of life itself rippled outward, shattering the undead, returning them to the peaceful slumber that the Ghoul King had stolen.

But Madriel is the Mother of Mercy, and even as the Ghoul King's powerful minions perished, she offered them a last chance for redemption. Some took it, returning to life and health, joining our crusade and turning against their old master.

The Ghoul King knew he was defeated then. The gods, for whom he felt such contempt, had crushed his armies, and their servants had driven him to utter defeat. As we cut down the last of his followers, the Ghoul King was nowhere to be found. He had fled the battle, and not even Madriel's powers could find him.

The goddess spoke to me then, her voice echoing in my heart and soul.

"Sister Shanae, most blessed of My paladins — with My aid you have defeated the Ghoul King and driven him from Termana. I decree that you and your order must remain vigilant, lest he return. Your mission to aid and comfort the people of Termana is unchanged, but now I grant you a home — a citadel on the Isle of Silver, where you shall dwell in peace, with My blessings. Live there, Sister Shanae, and bring My mercy to the people."

With that, Mother Madriel vanished, though her herald remained behind, tending to our wounded.

Why she did not destroy the Ghoul King I cannot say. It is not my place to question the will of the gods, for I am a mere servant, sworn to obey. I led my people from that place, to the promised land of Silverisle, where we built our great fortress-temple, the Citadel of the Sun, where we live to this day.

On Silverisle

Madriel's blessings showered upon our island, and its inhabitants prospered. We drove the titanspawn from our shores, and left the humans who lived there to go about their existence in peace. When they came to us for aid and advice, we gave it, asking nothing in return. But they were the people of Madriel, and came in the hundreds to aid in the construction of our citadel. Unlike the other people of Termana, these humans were content to live in peace and contentment. Greed, violence and pain were vanquished from our isle, and all was well.

Our citadel was completed in 32 AV, after 10 years of construction. To the south lay the Isle of the Dead, also called Huros, where the Ghoul King founded his evil dynasty, and where he had escaped after the battle in the desert. Now, Madriel's power and the spells of our priests wove a protective net around the Ghoul King's realm, sealing it from the outside world, preventing any of his minions from leaving without instantly alerting us.

Neither could the living set foot upon the island, for it was thick with the energies of death. We speculated that this was an aftereffect of the Divine War — perhaps a gate to a distant realm had been opened, allowing its evil power to pour through into our world. This, we speculated, was the source of the Ghoul King's power, and perhaps the reason that even Madriel could not pursue him there.

Years stretched into decades, and our vigil continued. Our knights roamed Termana, caring for the sick, defending the innocent, battling the evil of the titanspawn. We sailed into the dread Land of Chains, raiding into the dark dwarves' domain to liberate their slaves. We ventured to distant lands — Ghelspad, Asherak and beyond — returning with new wisdom and knowledge.

In the north, a new threat emerged from the swamps. A powerful being calling himself the Momus — as powerful as the Ghoul King, but far more subtle and clever — emerged and began to pull the strings of power among the human states. Did he serve the gods or the titans? Was he an agent of the evil forces that dwelled beneath the Blood Sea, on distant continents or planes? Did he serve only himself, and if so what did he seek? Momus' crimes were never enough for us to draw him directly into battle, and our emissaries were always treated with respect when we came to treat with him. Yet here was a clearly evil being with a taste for pain and suffering, even though his intentions were never clear.

Decades passed, and we wavered in our devotion to the words of Madriel. The Ghoul King remained in his fastness, and our wards were strong. Our work in Termana was pressing, and our numbers were few.

And so it was that the Ghoul King learned how to circumvent our wards, and send his minions across the sea to assault us, whom he now saw as his greatest enemy, and chief obstacle in his renewed quest for empire.

The Ghoul King's Return

I still led the order in those days, and in 61 AV my knights brought word to me that thousands of undead were crawling from the waves, and moving to assault the citadel.

As I said, our numbers were few. Only two hundred knights held the citadel, along with perhaps a thousand soldiers, acolytes, priests and servants. It was only by the grace of Madriel herself that the Ghoul King's first assault did not carry the citadel and slaughter all within.

My officers marshaled our defenses, while our clerics tried to call for help from the continent, and from our scattered knights. But the Ghoul King was as cunning as ever, and his magic blocked all attempts to communicate with the outside world.

As our foes flung themselves against the citadel walls, we endeavored to learn more about them and their king. While he did not accompany his armies, and his spells prevented us from calling for aid, our diviners were nevertheless able to determine that this was, indeed, our old enemy, transformed by the energies of the Isle of the Dead into a living dead monstrosity — possibly the most powerful lich who has ever existed on Scarn.

Again and again, they came against us, but the protective magic that we had cast over the years proved strong. The undead were repelled by our very walls, and our handful of clerics moved from wall to wall, their powers turning back each assault as it came. Our people fell, and we retrieved the corpses whenever we could so that they could not be transformed into undead.

Nevertheless, the tide of battle seemed to be against us. It was then, however, that the people of Silverisle came to our aid, rallying together and advancing upon our besieged citadel. Their own priests sent out the distress call that we could not, calling together our allies and members of the order.

The Silverisle army was outmatched — untrained humans against a horde of the walking dead — but their intervention distracted the enemy, forcing them to hold off their final assault. Our people, our saviors, died by the hundreds, and like us, they tried to recover or incinerate the bodies of the fallen, lest they be turned to the Ghoul King's cause. A few rose again, but never in numbers great enough to turn the tide.

We called upon Madriel and Corean, receiving new spells, divine blessings and guidance, but neither god proved able to intervene directly on our behalf. Eventually, both we and the Silverisle forces would have fallen.

The siege went on for nearly eight months, and by the end our clerics and paladins were exhausted, the Silverislanders reduced to a mere handful, and our walls battered and pockmarked. In the winter of 61 AV, the first of our relief force arrived in the form of five hundred Sisters of the Sun, who sailed into our harbor bringing much-needed supplies.

Victory and Sorrow

It was not until early 62 AV that the Sisters had at last formed a true army to save us. They were joined by several mercenary bands and forces from nations that owed us allegiance — Azale, Padrinola and even bellicose Thorvalos. They landed along the eastern coast of Silverisle and struck inland, constantly harried and attacked by raiding parties from the enemy. At length, they fought their way through to assault the forces besieging our citadel, and joined forces with the army of Silverisle. After many months, these islanders — once peace-loving farmers and peasants — had been transformed into a battle-hardened force of warriors. Though their number was greatly diminished, their bravery and hard-won skill at arms had helped to save our citadel from disaster.

Together, the two armies struck at the undead, and our knights sallied forth from the Citadel of the Sun. Once more, the strength of Madriel was with us, and the enemy was shattered, driven back into the sea and vanquished utterly.

With the last of the Ghoul King's minions driven off, we paused to survey the damage. Like the Divine War, our victory had been costly — perhaps too costly for the people of Silverisle. One in four lay dead, and perhaps twice that number sorely wounded. Our healers worked day and night to save them, and with the aid of Madriel, few of the wounded died. Most were able to return to their homes and try to rebuild their lives.

Our order was reduced by half, and it would be many years before we could return to our former strength. Solemnly, we laid the dead to rest, praying for their souls, conveying them into the merciful arms of the First Angel. There was much mourning in those days, and once more some of us began to give in to despair.

But life returned, as life does. Within a decade, much of the island had returned to its old state, though from time to time we were troubled by undead. Individuals or small bands cut off from their army or lying dormant for years would rise up and terrorize isolated villages or farms, but our knights responded swiftly, and these creatures were never allowed to survive for long.

We recruited knights from across the continent, and a new generation soon arose. These new Sisters were more direct, inclined to take action first and ask questions later. Our order had changed, and now we began to take the fight more directly to the enemy. Expeditions into the desert and the wilderness sought surviving titanspawn bands. More fleets sailed east to raid the Charduni Empire. We sent representatives to treat with the forsaken elves, and further investigate the plots of Momus. We also strove to make peace between the human nations, constantly at war and torn apart by the machinations of the Jack of Tears. Some even ventured beyond the shores of Termana, making contact with Madriel- and Corean-worshippers on Ghelspad and Asherak. Indeed, some of our sisters have taken to making pilgrimages to the Holy City of Light, Hetanu, in Asherak.

The Ghoul King had been defeated, but not destroyed, and once more his forces retreated to the Isle of the Dead. Today, 15 years after his second defeat, we are no closer to ridding the world of his evil.

With these words, I pass my authority on to my successors, for I am bound to join with Mother Madriel. Her mercy has guided me through my long life, and brought salvation to our benighted continent. I bid those who follow me continue to carry the blessings of Madriel to the people of Termana, and fight the evil of the titans wherever it appears. Above all, I bid you not to grow lax as we did, but to always remain on guard against the return of the Ghoul King, for he lives on, safe in his fastness, always scheming against the forces of the living.

Farewell, my Sisters! May Madriel guard and keep you, and may her love make you stronger. Blessings upon you.

The Jack of Tears

The most mysterious and frightening of Termana's inhabitants is the being called the Jack of Tears, ruler of the dark carnival that occupies the trackless swamps known as Blood Bayou.

Though his reputation is that of a diabolical creature whose dark laughter heralds only pain, Jack is nonetheless a cunning and slippery being, who plays his foes against each other, and the while dwelling safely in the heart of his bayou.

The most vexing question about the Jack of Tears, also called Momus and the Laughing Man, is his origin. It is known that he emerged from the swamps soon after the defeat of the Ghoul King, and even claimed to have taken a hand in the fight, helping to drive the necromancer's legions from his swamp. He seems connected in some way to the Blood Sea, and possibly to the submerged titan Kadum. His allies are the leaders of his various so-called Karnival Krewes, and the powerful Queen Ran, ruler of the Blood Sea krakens.

The Jack of Tears is always seen masked; this is appropriate, given that he presents a different face to everyone who sees him. The following tales follow his history through the eyes of those who have met him, and each sees him from a slightly different perspective.

In the Bayou

A band of warriors led by Dura, a Sister of the Sun, encountered the being that might have become Momus while fighting against the Ghoul King's legions, deep in the marshes of northwestern Termana. Her story suggests some possible explanations for Momus' origins, but has never been definitively confirmed.

Slowly, our forces had been gathering over months, in the brief respite that the Ghoul King's pause had granted us. We were not yet ready to face the undead directly, and instead held our ground in camps and fortresses in the midst of the mangrove swamp called Blood Bayou. We patrolled the surrounding waterways in flat-bottomed boats, poled along by local guides. We paladins wore light armor for fear of drowning in the filthy water should we fall overboard in our traditional full plate.

This far into the swamps, we rarely encountered the Ghoul King's undead. Our most common foes were errant bands of titanspawn, blood sea mutants, and wild dire creatures of all descriptions. This day was to prove different, however.

I led a squad of soldiers, veterans from several different nations now united under Madriel's banner. We were returning to camp after an uneventful day of patrolling when the dirty water around us began to boil and churn. I called upon my squad to prepare for combat, for it was a sight that we had seen countless times.

When the first skeletal hand reached out of the water to grip the gunwale of our boat, I struck at it with my sword, feeling Madriel's strength flow



through me. Around us, more of the foul walking dead began to emerge, and I called upon the goddess to help me banish them. Several disintegrated, or disappeared beneath the water, but almost immediately, more rushed in to take their place. This was no patrol or wandering band of undead — it was a portion of the enemy's army, probing the swamps and seeking our forces.

I shouted at our guide to get us out of that place, but even as I did, two of the enemy dragged him from the boat and into the muddy waters.

The fight was a whirl of blood, bone and steel, and I remember only instants — a zombie lurching into the boat, its near-severed head hanging by a rotting scrap of flesh, a soldier hacking one of our foes in half, another soldier with his throat torn out, gouting blood and staring at me in horror as he died... All these are burned into my memory, a waking nightmare in growing darkness.

Madriel's power sustained me. I banished many, destroyed more, called again on the goddess' blessing to fill my companions' hearts with courage, and to heal their wounds. Yet it all seemed futile, for the creatures never stopped arising from the waters, and for every one we defeated, two took its place. As the bloody sun set, I was the last combatant left standing — my companions were dead or gravely wounded.

The greatest horror was yet to come. In the twilight, a figure emerged from the swamp water, dripping with slime and corruption. It might once have been human, but now it was a pale travesty of life — a vampire-lord, with dark bestial eyes and corpse-pale flesh.

"Paladin," it hissed. "My master has bid me bring you to him."

I held up my sword, defiantly. "Never!" I shouted. "I will never go with you!"

The vampire chuckled. "You will, paladin. Alive or dead, you will."

I shouted, and prepared to defend myself as the monster strode through the shallow water toward me. I struck at the vampire, but my blow seemed to have no effect. Its claws slashed through my leather armor, and I felt hot blood on my skin. The vampire laughed again, and closed in for the kill.

But then it hesitated, giving me a chance to swing my sword at it once more. My blade bit this time, wounding the creature. Then, something amazing happened. The vampire fell back, retreating from me and, to my surprise, slipped and fell into the dark water with a splash.

In the gloom, I saw two dark forms gliding through the swamp, and where the vampire fell there erupted a geyser of water, as if a great struggle was taking place beneath the surface.

"Foolish one," said a voice behind me. "Does he not know that this is my realm now?"

I turned and beheld my savior.

I could not see him clearly, for his manlike form was hidden among the roots of an ancient mangrove tree.

"Who are you?" I asked. "Why have you helped me? Do you serve Madriel?"

The shadow laughed at that. Though I and my surviving companions, whom I tended to as I spoke to the stranger, had been saved by his intervention, the laugh was cold and cruel-sounding.

"Do I?" the being asked in sudden wonderment. "Who am I?" His voice was high and musical. "Who am I indeed? Do I serve the gods? Do I serve the titans? Am I of the blood of Kadum, or did the gods make me?" He paused for a time, and only the sound of insects humming in the darkness echoed in my ears. "I do not know, holy woman. I do not know what I am."

"You say you rule here," I said. "Is this your realm? Will you aid us in our struggle against the Ghoul King?"

The figure seemed to consider my words. As I watched, the two dark forms swam toward him and rose from the swamp. It was dark, but I fancied that they resembled two upright creatures, manlike in shape, but with the features of reptiles. I thought at first they might be asaatthi or other titanspawn, but they were different somehow — larger and more imposing, with heads more like crocodiles than serpents.

"Yes," the shape said at last. "I believe that I do rule here. I have not ruled for long. I have not been alive for long. No, I don't believe that I have. Or, mayhap I have, but certainly not like... this."

Wan moonlight had begun to shine through the trees by now. Some of this light fell upon the figure, and I fancied that I could see an emaciated man, clad in what appeared to be the tattered and filthy remnants of a jester's costume. His face was not clear — either he wore a mask or his face was covered in white paint like a harlequin or clown. The two reptile-creatures crouched protectively near him as he spoke.

"And I will help you against this Ghoul King," the creature continued. "He is presumptuous and foolish, sending these pathetic minions into the swamp where I rule. Yes, I will aid the gods. This time."

Then there was a rush of wind, and the figure was gone, as if he had never been. In silence, we

made our way back to camp, where we reported what we had learned.

To this day I do not know what this creature was, or why it helped us. In the days that followed, as we marched south against the legions of the Ghoul King, our story was forgotten.

When the being that called itself the Jack of Tears emerged from the swamps, many wondered who or what it truly was, but my surviving companions and I knew that we had already made this creature's acquaintance. Many speculated at the Jack of Tears' intentions, his motivation, and his inner nature.

I did not need to speculate. I knew of this strange being's inner nature.

For when I had allowed Madriel to guide my hand, reaching out to observe the soul of the shadowy figure in the swamp, I had detected a pure and simple evil, greater than I had ever felt before.

The Shadow-King

In the mid- to late 20s AV, after the Ghoul King was defeated, odd things began to transpire in northwestern Termana. A strange and unworldly train of wagons, accompanied by a motley band of performers and bizarre creatures, made its way through the land. Led by a being who called himself the Laughing Man, the traveling carnival brought entertainment and dark joy to the inhabitants of the region. Tholi was a smith, living in the Padrinolan village of Elthom, and writes of an early visit by the Carnival of Shadows.

They came on a night when both moons were full, shining down upon our village, making the night-fogs glow with eerie luminosity. Telis the innkeeper reported seeing will-o-the-wisps on the previous two nights, and as these were considered signs of ill omen, most of us stayed indoors behind barred doors.

My daughter Crysa awakened us from a deep sleep. She had peeked out the curtains, she said, and had seen the lights, dancing and bobbing, out in the swamp. When I went to look, I saw them as well, and they were drawing nearer. Straining to hear, I detected faint strains of music, growing slowly louder. To my amazement, I saw a caravan of wagons emerge from the darkness. Some of the lights were lanterns hanging from the wagons, while others did, indeed, dance and weave magically through the air. The wagons were garlanded with flowers, vines and bright strings of beads, glinting in the wisp-light.

All around the wagons, dark figures capered and danced. Some were tiny, shadowy figures that resembled diminutive jesters. Others were tall, graceful beings clad in harlequin's motley. Still others were outwardly human, dressed in dirty finery and soiled costumes. There were jugglers, acrobats, and strolling musicians, playing bright,

joyful melodies. The wagons were driven by hunched, cloaked figures, and muscular creatures with dark scales and the heads of alligators guarded the procession. The wind bore the sickly-sweet odor of spoiled confections.

A voice issued from the caravan, though I could not see the speaker.

"My lords and ladies!" cried the voice. It seemed light and friendly, but I felt a chill run down my spine as I heard it. "We are the Carnival of Shadows, and we come to entertain, to amuse, to excite and to edify! Come out of your homes and witness our performance, for it is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!"

Slowly, around the town, doors began to open, and curious villagers began to emerge. Soon, I stepped out as well. Crysa and my wife followed, and they seemed as torn between fear and curiosity as I.

The voice continued to narrate the show, introducing performers — Narbila the juggler, Ital the Contortionist, Gelbark the Ugliest Mortal on Scarn, Bastunia the Sword-Swallower, Asha the Fire-Dancer. Each in turn performed, and the audience grew, until at last all the village stood in the town square, watching the strange creatures in our midst.

All the while, the wisp-lights danced about, the dark shadow-jesters tumbled and pranced, the harlequins strode about, gazing at villagers with strange, alien eyes. At length, when dawn paled the eastern sky and the full moons sank toward the horizon, the performers gathered in a circle, and a masked figure appeared, dressed in elaborate feathered cloths, wrapped in a dark blue cloak.

"All hail the Master of the Carnival, the inestimable, the magnificent, the unparalleled Momus, the Laughing Man, King of Shadows, and Lord of Dark Delights!" cried one of the human performers. "All hail!"

We said nothing, but looked on as the figure strode into the center of the circle. Wisp-lights swirled around him, casting a strange, flickering luminescence. He was masked with the image of a laughing face, but in our hearts, few of us felt like laughing.

"My thanks, fine people!" shouted the laughing man, in a high and clear voice. "We hope that our little performance has brought new happiness to you in these dark times. We offer it to you in the spirit of friendship, and in the hope of future prosperity and friendship. In return, we ask for the most minimal of payments—a mere pittance, truly."

We listened in fearful silence as the Laughing Man paused.

"Enjoy yourselves," he said at last. "Sing and dance with us. Celebrate with us. But when we are done, go to

your beds." His voice remained high and jolly, but now a tinge of threat entered his tone. "Awaken tomorrow, and do not question what you have seen. Or what we have done." He stopped and his dark eyes moved across each of us. "Do this, and I will be well pleased."

The Laughing Man's words were mild, even friendly. Yet each of us felt a deep dread when we heard them, and knew in our hearts that this strange creature, a monster that seemed neither of the gods nor the titans, would do as he pleased, regardless of our wishes.

How we knew, I cannot say, but we did know... and as the sun rose, we saw what had happened. The Laughing Man and his Carnival had departed. Several villagers had been sick with a wasting disease — these were gone too, absent from their sick beds and nowhere to be found. Didu, the village idiot, had vanished as well. We all knew what had happened, but none dared to speak of it openly.

It was not until later that Nadira the seamstress went looking for her young son, only to find him missing. She cried and screamed then, believing that he had gone with the Carnival of Shadows. To this day, we do not know the truth of the matter, but most believe that the Laughing Man — also called the Jack of Tears — had taken the child away. Each night, I thank the gods that my daughter is safe in our home. All the same, I still feel a sense of dread, distant and faint, but real nevertheless, that some night I will once more see those bobbing lights, and hear that faint music, and that the Carnival of Shadows might return.

Tales like Tholi's were repeated throughout communities bordering on the Blood Bayou. No one ever saw the Carnival actually traveling through the countryside, nor was the caravan ever seen after dawn. Some villages greeted the carnival happily, glad that their outcasts could be so easily sent away. Others were reluctant, but none had any choice — the carnival came, the sick and mad vanished, and that was that. Stories of entire villages being spirited away if they refused the Jack of Tears' entertainments kept others in a constant state of fear, and few had the courage to defy the carnival.

Soon after, the Jack of Tears declared himself the Laughing Lord of the Blood Bayou, and began to send emissaries to other lands. These were his minions — dark harlequins, heron priests, or occasionally human servants. In this way, Momus formed an intricate diplomatic network, manipulating the human states of northwestern Termiana, turning them against each other and reducing the region to a constant state of war. Under the guise of maintaining Termiana's security, Momus' Krewe of Waves patrolled the waters of the Blood Sea, sometimes preying upon merchant shipping, at other times simply charging tariffs and fees, and on still other occasions seizing sailors, passengers and cargo and carrying them into the swamps.

To this day, no one knows what the Jack of Tears is up to, what his ultimate goals are, or even what cause he serves — gods, titans or himself. All know, however, that his laugh is a herald of doom and, as first discovered by the paladin Dura, that he is a being of pure and unadulterated evil.

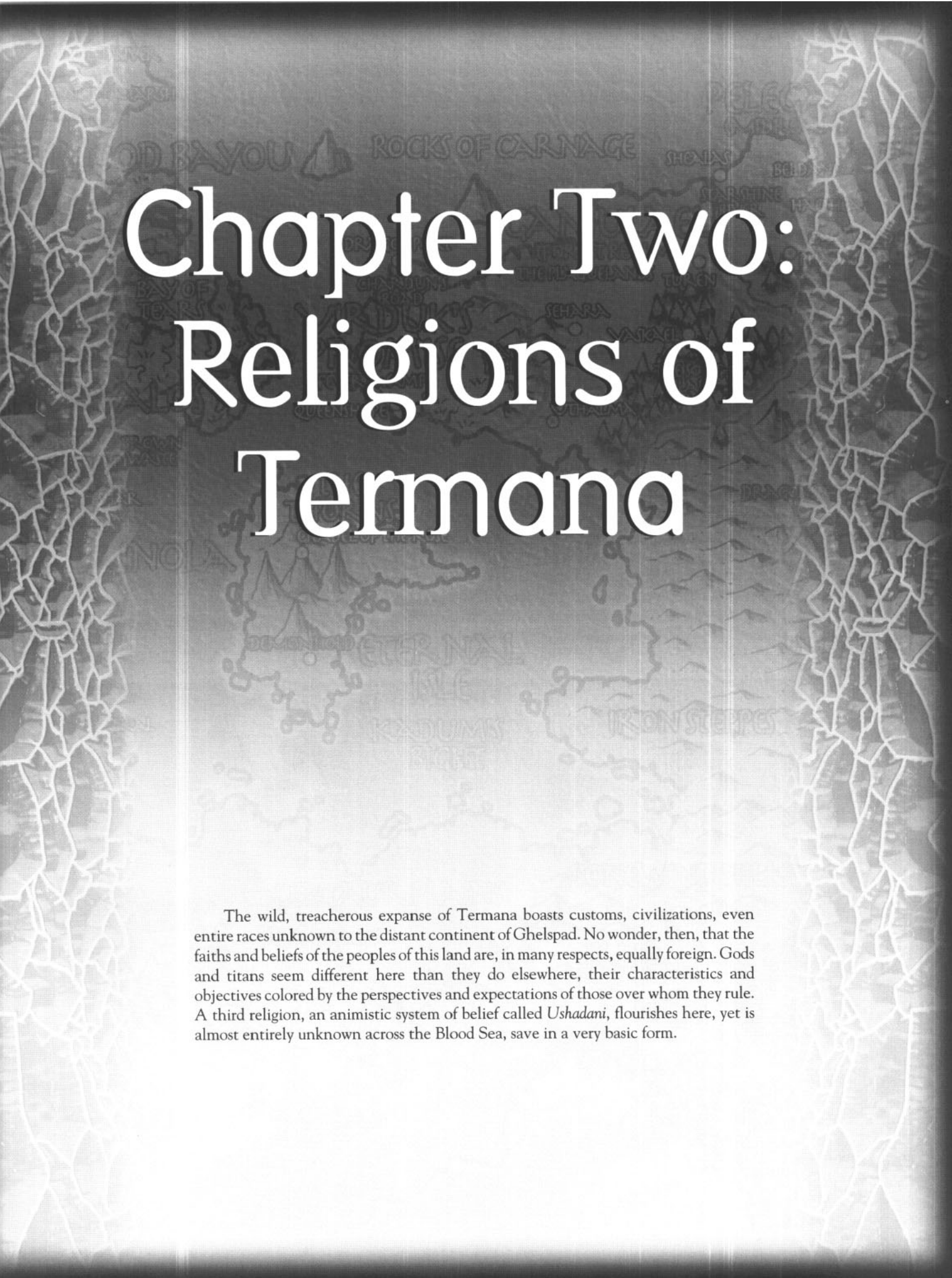
Termana Timeline

Note: Dates in *italics* are estimated.

| Year | Event |
|-----------------|---|
| <i>-1000 OC</i> | The elves found the first of their cities in northern Termana, eventually evolving into the empire of Eldura-Tre, a peaceful but powerful alliance of elves and dragons. Their god stands with them, and brings prosperity to their empire, and the titan Mesos shares many of his secrets, making elven wizards the most powerful on the continent. |
| <i>0 OC</i> | A sophisticated civilization arises in the Gamulganjus, the jungle lands of southeastern Termana. Consisting of numerous warring city-states, this civilization worships the titans, particularly Hrinruuk, Mormo and Chern. |
| <i>500 OC</i> | Seeing that other gods and titans have created races to serve them, Chardun creates his own race, the charduni dwarves, who immediately set off on the road to empire. |
| <i>1200 OC</i> | After several years of drought, crop failures, and suffering at the hands of the titans, the people of the jungle cities rise up and throw down their priest-kings, and embrace the worship of the gods. The civilization begins a long decline. |
| <i>3000 OC</i> | The Charduni Empire is at its height, spanning the continent, held in check only by the elf-dragon alliance in the north, and stubborn human states in the east. |
| <i>3465 OC</i> | The Divine War begins, and its events bring down the last of the lost jungle civilization of Termana. Chardun decrees that his charduni fight alongside the elves and humans for the moment, and the three divine races combine forces to fight the titanspawn. The Sisters of the Sun, an all-female knightly order devoted to Madriel, is formed. |
| <i>3480 OC</i> | The elven wizards and sorcerers in the Citadel of the Rose are assaulted by a horde of demons summoned by the titanspawn. The elves erect a magical barrier, cutting the citadel and surrounding lands from the rest of Scarn. |
| <i>3507 OC</i> | Kadum is bound and flung into the ocean by the gods. The resulting tidal wave of blood is henceforth known as Kadum's Deluge, and it floods much of northern Termana, sorely pressing the elves and humans. The Citadel of the Rose is completely cut off by the new bay known as Kadum's Bight. The charduni are the most direly affected, with many of their armies drowned. Immediately, the humans and elves break the truce and drive the charduni from much of Termana. |
| <i>3521 OC</i> | As the high elves prepare for the final assault on the Charduni Empire, the titan Chern approaches the continent, and the elven armies are recalled. In a tragic battle, the elven god is slain, and the enraged elves destroy Chern — the only titan defeated by mortals without divine aid. The cost is high, however, for Chern's Curse visits the elves, transforming them into the race today known as the forsaken elves. |
| <i>0 AV</i> | The Divine War ends, leaving much of Termana in ruins. The Sisters of the Sun struggle to aid the survivors. |
| <i>2 AV</i> | The elves decide to divide their empire into independent principalities. Though the princes are supposed to meet in council once a year, the arrangement soon collapses, and the varied forgotten elven states go their separate ways. |
| <i>10 AV</i> | The re-emergent Charduni Empire begins to probe along the frontier with the forsaken elves. |
| <i>12 AV</i> | A human necromancer calling himself the Ghoul King rises in southwestern Termana; his undead wade ashore along the west coast, driving the human defenders back. The Sisters of the Sun attempt to mount a defense, but they too are defeated. |
| <i>18 AV</i> | The Ghoul King's advance stops, allowing the humans a respite. Pressed up into the lowlands of northwestern Termana, they form into a single army under command of the paladin Shanae. |
| <i>19-21 AV</i> | The human alliance presses southward, driving the Ghoul King's forces before it. |
| <i>22 AV</i> | In the southern desert lands, the Ghoul King's forces make their stand, and Shanae's army is nearly defeated. The goddess Madriel intervenes on behalf of the humans, and the Ghoul King is defeated, his army scattered. The king himself flees to the Isle of the Dead, where he attempts to rebuild his forces. Madriel decrees that Shanae take the Sisters to Silverisle and begin construction of the mighty Citadel of the Sun, new headquarters of the order. |
| <i>25 AV</i> | Reports of a strange caravan of wagons and bizarre performers traveling throughout northwestern Termana begin to surface. This caravan, known as the Carnival of Shadows, is led by a being called the Laughing Man, and after its performances, it vanishes along with the mad, infirm and outcasts of the villages it visits. |
| <i>27 AV</i> | The last formal meeting of the council of princes in the forsaken elf realms. From this point forward, the principalities go their separate ways. |
| <i>32 AV</i> | Citadel of the Sun completed on Silverisle. |
| <i>46 AV</i> | The Charduni begin a major offensive against the Forsaken Elves that climaxes in the three-day long Battle of the Fords. There, the elf war-queen Kathalema defeats the charduni general Ixasamo in single combat, and the elves drive the charduni from the field. |
| <i>52 AV</i> | The Laughing Man, also known as Momus and the Jack of Tears, declares an independent state in the region of Blood Bayou. He sends his weird emissaries to neighboring kingdoms, and begins to manipulate the rulers into a constant state of warfare. |

Termana Timeline (continued)

- 61 AV The Ghoul King's forces assault the Citadel of the Sun. The siege lasts eight months, but is finally broken, though casualties among the Sisters of the Sun and the inhabitants of Silverisle are heavy.
- 67 AV Sunharrow and Karsian fight over logging rights in the Dire Woods. Some believe that the Jack of Tears is responsible for the war, which ends inconclusively.
- 90 AV King Virduk ascends the throne in Calastia on the continent of Ghelspad. The Jack of Tears learns of this event almost immediately, and dispatches a heron priest, accompanied by shadow jesters and dark harlequins, to treat with the new king.
- 102 AV Thorvalos and Padrinola go to war over disputed territory along the Whiteflood River. Momus is suspected of provoking the fight, but sends emissaries to help in peace negotiations the following year.
- 126 AV Colonists from Calastia arrive in the north, claiming uninhabited territories near the forsaken elf principalities, and calling it Virduk's Promise. Ambassadors from the Jack of Tears are again dispatched, beginning good relations between the two states.
- 132 AV The charduni attempt to invade the Iron Steppes. The invasion ends with charduni general Axamoxes staked out on the plains, left for the jackals by the victorious lamia and human tribes.
- 139 AV A raiding force from the Sisters of the Sun strikes at the charduni city of Shaskalcho, liberating hundreds of slaves. The One in White declares that a state of war exists between his nation and the knightly order.
- 143 AV Inhabitants of the Iron Steppes complain of troubling dreams, in which a gigantic, invulnerable creature, emerges from beneath the ground to spread havoc across Termama.
- 147 AV Skirmishes between the serpent-folk of the Yellow Jungle and the terali and human tribes of the Gamulganjus grow more frequent, but the yuan-ti avoid open warfare. Conflicts between human and terali tribes grow in number and intensity as well, and some blame the yuan-ti for instigating them. A cleric-wizard named Palcun arises in the tepuje city of Maratawo, declaring the Lady of Darkness (believed to be a local name for Belsameth) as the goddess of his city, and calling for a union of the other tepuje settlements into a single powerful empire.
- 150 AV A Calastian expedition returning from the Titanspire is attacked by centaur tribesmen on the Centaur Plains and wiped out. Virduk's Promise's governor, Duke Hynosu, offers a bounty of 10,000 platinum calas to whoever returns the expedition's possessions. Rumors circulate that the expedition found something important or powerful at the spire, and King Virduk is desperate to get it back.



Chapter Two: Religions of Termana

The wild, treacherous expanse of Termana boasts customs, civilizations, even entire races unknown to the distant continent of Ghelspad. No wonder, then, that the faiths and beliefs of the peoples of this land are, in many respects, equally foreign. Gods and titans seem different here than they do elsewhere, their characteristics and objectives colored by the perspectives and expectations of those over whom they rule. A third religion, an animistic system of belief called *Ushadani*, flourishes here, yet is almost entirely unknown across the Blood Sea, save in a very basic form.

How can this be possible? The higher beings of the Scarred Lands are active, tangible beings. Religion here is hardly a matter of faith; rather, it's one of simple observation. One doesn't choose whether or not to believe in Mormo, Kadum, Belsameth and Tanil, any more than one chooses to believe in the sun or the earth beneath one's feet. They *are*. The sun and the earth are the same from continent to continent, so how can the gods and the titans be otherwise?

Yet such is the way of things. Not all the gods of Ghelspad find worshippers on Termana, and those who do are different here than elsewhere. A traveler from across the Blood Sea might fail even to recognize a titan worshipper. *Ushadani* is real, its shamans and druids powerful, its practitioners on Termana as numerous as any other faith—yet few on Ghelspad have even heard of it.

Those theologians who are aware of these discrepancies have argued for countless years over what might account for them. Are the gods truly shaped and formed by their worshippers, changing their very natures to fit the expectations of the divine races? Is the perception of the titans on Ghelspad so thoroughly tainted by the prominent worship of the gods that people can no longer see them for what they are, or are the titan worshippers of Termana delusional, seeking to cast these hideous beings in a positive light for the sake of their own sense of wellbeing? Do the *ushada* not exist on Ghelspad at all, or have they simply been ignored and forgotten in light of divine worship?

We may never know — and ultimately, it may not matter. The gods, the titans and the spirits of the land are viewed through different eyes and heard through different ears on either shore of the Blood Sea. How and why this should be, and why the gods, at least, seem to conform to their worshippers' expectations, are secondary concerns when measured against the unavoidable truth that this is the way things are. The Scarred Lands boast a surfeit of mysteries and unanswered questions as it is; surely the lands will not be crushed beneath the weight of one more.

Ushadani

Do you not bleed when injury is done you? Do you not cry as your loved ones, your parents and sisters and children suffer? Do you not laugh with joy at the dawn of a beautiful day, hunger for the life of the beasts that sustain you? Do you know that others around you do the same?

*How then do you not feel the pain of the forests, hear the cries of the mountains, share the joy of the Sun as he gazes down upon his children, quail before the hunger of the sweeping river to devour ever more of the land around it? The souls of Scarn, the *ushada*, sing to us, louder and with greater beauty than your foreign gods and ponderous titans. The spirits of the world are things of wonder and glory and awe; their songs are hymns to break the heart and exalt the soul. Listen, only open your ears and listen, and we will share them with you.*

— Kavrosai, *Ushadan* druid and shaman of the Khele'liw tribe.



A Tale Told by the Ushadan

I promise you no truths, no revelations, no answers. I tell you as it was told me, and that is all I promise.

It was a time before our grandfathers' eldest grandfathers, a time when Scarn was still new, so new that age had not yet dulled its colors or tarnished its beauty. The sun shone brighter, the skies bluer, the grass greener. Mankind had taken but our first few steps upon the land, and the *ushada* the spirits of all things were far more common, and would speak and dance and war and frolic with their mortal children. And for age upon age, all was as it should be, and the *ushada* and their people were content.

But after a time, an illness crept into one of the *ushada*. For one of mankind's most beloved patrons was K'dantu, the night sun, who the worshippers of the self-styled gods call Belsameth's moon. K'dantu's brother, the second moon who even today we dare not name, was not nearly so loved, and grew covetous. Was it this jealousy alone that drove him to act as he did? Did he go mad beneath the tread of years, subject to horrors that we as mortals cannot know? Was he corrupted by some foul spirits of worlds not our own, of demons from realms that cannot exist? Some speculate that, because K'dantu's brother spends more time in the dark than she, evil powers from worlds that exist only in darkened dreams whispered foul secrets into his ears. He who told me this tale could not say what really happened, for the man who told him could not say, and thus I cannot say. We know no reason, only that it was.

The nameless *ushada* of the nameless moon grew greedy, and began to consume the power and the essence of his brother and sister *ushada*. Then did K'dantu wane, and never wax. Then did the emerald grass begin to brown, and the azure sky to darken and dull. Even the sun, mightiest of all *ushada*, began to dim, for never had the *ushada* harmed one another, and to strike back at the unnamed one, even in self-defense, was unthinkable.

And the *ushada* of Scarn turned their eyes heavenward in fear, and gathered then into the largest assembly of spirits our land has ever seen. They argued, there, amongst themselves, for many were fearful of taking action against their unnamed brother, even as they feared the consequences of inaction.

But they came to realize soon enough that if something was not done, the world itself, and all *ushada*, and all mankind, would cease to be. For the options would swiftly be only two: either the unnamed one would consume father sun, and all light vanish from the face of Scarn, or he would absorb sun's power and take his place, and all Scarn lie at the mercy of his madness.

So the greatest of the *ushada*, the mightiest of spirits, resolved to stop their brother before all was lost. Only great sun refused to participate, for still he could not bear to raise a hand against his child. And they stretched forth their powers, rose from the mountains and forests and rivers and oceans that were their very essence. They traveled high and far, farther than ever they had, and when they reached their mad brother in the dark of the night sky, they did battle.

Many of the *ushada* were destroyed then, many of the greatest and noblest of souls. But others, equally great and equally noble, the best and bravest of all *ushada*, battled still. Though they feared death, though they suffered pain such as they, as spirits, never thought they could know, they battled still, for they loved the world and their brothers and sisters and their mortal children too much to yield.

And they consumed just a little of the essence that was the nameless one, and in eating him, they absorbed some of his power. This power they used to battle more fiercely, and the mad one fell back. Then the *ushada* ate yet more of him, and grew stronger still as he grew weaker. And yet again, and again. And finally, after a time of conflict no mortal can comprehend, was the mad one destroyed, his essence fully consumed by these most noble and bravest of spirits. Today his body still appears in the night sky, but unlike his sister K'dantu and their father sun, it has no soul.

Then the victorious *ushada* returned to Scarn, and a great song of joy burst from the hearts and throats and tongues of all, human and animal and spirit. And though a constant reminder of their struggle and loss hung nightly overhead, Scarn seemed well once more.

Alas, it was not to be. For the madness and corruption that had infected the nameless one did not die with him, but was absorbed by those greatest of the *ushada* who consumed him. Slowly that same corruption blossomed within them, and drove them mad even as it had him. And they, not only the noblest of the *ushada* but, by virtue of the power taken from the nameless one, also the strongest, spurned the friendship and companionship and love of their brothers and sisters. They looked upon Scarn through maddened eyes, and were pained by its beauty and purity. They looked upon mankind, and saw not their children, but lesser beings to be slaughtered and tormented for their amusement. And they strode the face of Scarn, and left only destruction in their wake.

They were chern, and gormoth, and kadum, and mesos, and mormo, and many more besides. And mankind forgot that ever they were counted amongst the *ushada*, and called them titans...

Ushadani Defined

The Scarred Lands are alive, in a way that most of its inhabitants are unable — or refuse — to see. Everything has its own spirit, its own soul, from the mightiest river, the tallest mountain and the fiercest bear to the gentlest sparrow, the grasses waving in the breeze and the most humble stone. These spirits are called the *ushada* (both plural and singular), those who worship them *Ushadan*.

The *ushada* are absolutely everywhere. They are the souls not only of things, but of places; a grove, a field or a forest may contain many individual *ushada* in the trees and the animals dwelling there, but they also have a spirit representing the area as a whole. It is to these greater *ushada* the *Ushadan* normally direct their prayers and offerings, for in doing so they honor all the lesser spirits as well. Many families of *Ushadan* revere their deceased ancestors among these spirits, and believe their forbears watch over them still.

In fact, in several portions of Termana — most particularly in and around the Gamulganjus, in terali, human and gnome populations — ancestor *ushada* are by far the most common and most powerful of the spirits worshipped. The ancestors of a family or tribe watch over their descendants, bringing the fortunate and prosperity when properly honored, and causing much ruin and suffering — and occasionally even disaster or death — when they feel slighted or ignored.

Ushada Ancestry

The *ushada* are all related to one another. The very first was the Land, Scarn herself, and none can say from whence she might have come. It is said that the Land dreamed into being the Sun, greatest of all *ushada*. Sun and Scarn together birthed the moons, their daughter K'dantu, and their son who cannot be named. With her father and brother, then, K'dantu birthed many of the mountains and the seas that adorn her mother, for the *ushada* do not reproduce as men do. The mountain birthed the spirit of the lake that nestles in its craggy vales, and the spirits of the trees that grow upon its slopes. The lake, in turn, birthed the spirits of the rivers that flow from it, and mated with Trout and other fish totems to birth the souls of the creatures that swim within. The *ushada* of the trees birthed the leaf spirits, and together birthed the *ushada* of the forest as whole, who in turn birthed the spirits of the animals within after mating with their own totems. And so it goes, with all the *ushada* connected by ties of ancestry and blood.

Types of Ushada

The spirits of the world are not bound by mortal attempts to classify and quantify them, nor do they adhere to any specific hierarchy. That said, they seem

Aspects of Life

The *ushada* are purely spiritual beings, but some *Ushadan* cultures believe these spirits can, at times, manifest in physical form. These manifestations are called Aspects, and it is considered either the greatest of honors or the gravest of portents to see one, let alone be approached by one. Many myths of *Ushadan* cultures link their folk heroes to the *ushada* this way, claiming they were chosen for greatness by Aspects, or perhaps even were Aspects themselves.

— most of the time — to fit (or allow themselves to be fit) into four very loose and very broad categories.

Spirits of Things

The most common *ushada*, these are the souls that inhabit individual items or objects. The *ushada* of a specific tree, a rock or an animal would fall into this category. In most circumstances, these *ushada* are the smallest and weakest of spirits, yet Father Sun and K'dantu, two of the greatest *ushada*, are also of this grouping.

One of the few theological differences that separates one group of *Ushadan* from another is the question as to whether manmade objects also have their own spirits. Some *Ushadan* factions believe that they do, that the act of forging a sword from steel, or constructing a house from lumber, imbues it with its own life. Others maintain that such items are lifeless, tools only that lack any mystical awareness. A third belief maintains that the object does not possess its own *ushada*, but instead contains fragments of the spirit of the items from which it was constructed. Thus, the sword might still possess some of the *ushada* of the mountain from which the iron was mined, and the house might retain traces of the *ushada* of the trees.

One unusual sub-group of these *ushada*, almost but not quite a category in their own right, are those spirits of *concepts*, things that have no fixed physical form yet undeniably exist. The spirit of fire would qualify for this category, as would wind, the spirits of various storms, and the hated and reviled *ushada* of plagues and diseases.

Spirits of Places

Dwellers in a village might offer thanks and sacrifice to the *ushada* of the fields on which they plant their grain. A traveler wandering through a deep wood who comes across a peaceful clearing might offer prayers to the *ushada* of that clearing — or the *ushada* of the entire wood, for that matter.

The *ushada* of places often incorporate a number of smaller *ushada* under their aegis. The *ushada* of a forest, for instance, holds sway over all the *ushada* of the trees, leaves, plants and — to a lesser extent — animals who dwell within.



Certain *ushada* seem to blur the line between places and things. Does the spirit of a great mountain or a flowing river represent a specific thing or a location? Neither answer is entirely correct; as mentioned above, the *ushada* do not always lend themselves easily to categorization.

Ancestor Spirits

The *Ushadan* believe that those who have gone before sometimes join with the spirits of the world and the environment around them, rather than passing on to whatever awaits them in the next life. These ancestral *ushada* watch over their descendents, bringing fortune and safety if the living honor and remember them properly, bringing misfortune and curses if they are slighted or forgotten. Nobody, not even the wisest of *Ushadan* shamans, can say with any certainty what causes a deceased person's soul to become *ushada* instead of traveling on. Because they've no way of knowing which of their ancestors might still be present, the *Ushadan* tend to honor their ancestors as a group, ensuring that none are left out.

Totems

Totem *ushada* are often the hardest for outsiders to truly comprehend. All animals have a spirit, but each species of animal also answers to a single totem, the mother or father of all beasts of that variety. All boars answer to the totem Boar, for instance, all jaguars to Jaguar, and so forth. When and if a totem

manifests itself in physical form, it usually assumes the shape of an enormously large, perfectly healthy specimen of that race.

All the animals of a given area are the offspring of their totem and the *ushada* of that region. All the jaguars dwelling in a forest, for instance, are the children of Jaguar and the *ushada* of that forest. These relationships can get extremely complex if more than two *ushada* are involved. If that forest is located on the slope of a mountain, for instance, the jaguars may be the offspring of Jaguar, the forest *ushada* and the mountain *ushada*. This is a difficult concept for mortals to grasp, but as stated earlier, the *ushada* do not reproduce as mortals do.

Worshipping the *Ushada*

Ushadani is paradoxically both more and less a personal connection than either god- or titan-worship. With the exception of the ancestor spirits, few *ushada* ever develop a direct relationship with the shamans of the *Ushadan*. They have little in the way of personal identities; in fact, most *ushada* do not even have names as mortals understand them. ("K'dantu," in reference to the moon, isn't truly a name, but a description. In an ancient dialect of the Termanan common tongue, it translates as "Night Sun.") Instead, they are referred to by the name of the place or object to which they are connected. Sha-

mans tend to call on whichever spirits are most appropriate to the location or circumstances in which they find themselves, rather than focusing on a specific higher being the way clerics of the gods normally do.

At the same time, the fact that the spirits are everywhere and present in everything makes them a part of everyday life in a way that the titans and even the gods are not. Every aspect of life, from the simple tasks of farming and craft-making to warfare and magic rituals, is inextricably tied up with the *ushada*. Any and every action is performed only with their aid, or at least their consent, and many *Ushadan* offer a brief prayer of thanks before undertaking any task at all.

Offerings to the *ushada* usually take the form of bits of food, drink or other goods that might symbolically appeal to the spirit in question. A hunter who wishes to ensure plentiful game might burn an offering of vegetables and leaves of the sort those animals prefer to eat. An offering to the spirit of a storm, intended to placate him so that he will not flood the fields outside a village, might involve burning incense, to sweeten the air through which he travels. Wolf or Bear might receive an offering of meat. Father Sun might be offered a drink of clear, cool water, since he's constantly thirsty. (*Ushadan* maintain that this is why water evaporates in sunlight; Father Sun is drinking.)

Prayers and offerings to the *ushada* have two different but equally important purposes. *Ushadan* often make requests of the *ushada*, seeking a successful hunt, a bountiful harvest or rain to end an unseasonable drought. Other offerings are intended either to placate or drive away those *ushada* who are considered baneful. Incense and herbs, for instance, are burned in the presence of the sick, to drive away the plague-spirits afflicting them. All *ushada* are worshipped, but some are, quite clearly, viewed with greater love and affection than others. Many of the *ushada*, of course, receive both supplications and placations, since many represent concepts both harmful and helpful. Fire, rain, and many of the beasts of the land are friends to the *Ushadan* only in moderation.

Most offerings to the *ushada* are granted privately, and many *Ushadan* keep small shrines in their homes for just this purpose. Only on holy days, or if an entire community is beseeching a favor, will a shaman or druid lead a ceremony of many *Ushadan* in prayer and sacrifice. Under these circumstances, the shaman himself performs the actual offering, while the other participants add their voices to his prayer or engage in ritual dances. Few *Ushadan* practice human sacrifice, though some more martial Termanan communities are known to do so.

Ushadan Druids

Although they are cosmetically different, calling upon local and individual spirits rather than a single titan, druid/shamans of *Ushadan* are mechanically the same as those who call on the power of the titans — that is, they all belong to the druid class.

Ushadan druids call upon whatever spirit is most appropriate to the spell they are casting or the ability they are using. A druid might call on the spirit of the nearest river, or perhaps the rain, when casting *create water*. She might call upon the *ushada* of fire or on Father Sun when casting *light* or *flame strike*, and she would call upon the totem Horse when *wild shaping* into a mare. All of these changes are, of course, entirely cosmetic, and have no mechanical impact on the druid class.

Ushadan shamans are extremely well suited to the either the weaver of spirits prestige class (see the Appendix) or the spirit walker prestige class (see **Relics and Rituals II: Lost Lore**). In fact, in many Termanan cultures where *Ushadani* is prevalent, spirit walkers and weavers of spirits are more common at higher levels than single-classed druids.

In the Termanan common tongue, the titles of “druid” and “shaman” are almost interchangeable, distinguished from one another only by a slight change of inflection. Either title is acceptable for use when referring to an evoker of the *ushada*. Only the term “druid” may be used to refer to Titan-worshippers, however, and calling a Titan-worshipper a shaman is an insult both to her and to the *Ushadan*.

Ushadani Across Termana

Given Termana's sketchy records and histories, and the fact that *Ushadani* is prevalent to a greater or lesser extent across the length and breadth of the continent, it is impossible to track down either a specific originating culture or date of birth for the religion. *Ushadani* has been widely practiced since well before the Divine War, and was already entrenched in nearly every Termanan culture before the any of Scarn's mortals had ever heard of the gods.

As to whether or not *Ushadani* predates titan-worship or not, that depends entirely upon who one asks. As spelled out in the legend above, the *Ushadan* believe that the titans were originally *ushada* who were corrupted by power and forgot what they had been. Followers of the titans, however, maintain that their primal masters predate the *ushada*, and that they are in fact the parents and creators of the spirits of the Scarred Lands. Short of asking the titans or the *ushada* themselves — and assuming one could both convince them to respond and believe what they had

to say — it seems as though no definitive answer will ever be forthcoming.

Today, *Ushadani* is far more common in the south and west of Termana. *Ushadani* is most prevalent in nomadic and tribal cultures, rather than areas of so-called civilization. Many of the continent's kingdoms have adopted god-worship as their primary religion, although sizable portions of the population practice *Ushadani* in those nations that have no governmentally sanctioned faith. Most *Ushadan* are either humans dwelling outside the major cities, gnomes and the feline *terali*. It's worth noting that while the specifics of *Ushadani* may vary from region to region, they do *not* tend to vary across racial lines. For instance, the *Ushadan* of the Gamulganjus — human, gnome and *terali* alike — place substantial importance on ancestor *ushada* and believe that manmade objects lack spirits. Human *Ushadan* dwelling in Virduk's Promise, however, tend to believe that manmade objects *do* possess *ushada*, and they relegate their ancestors to the least important position amongst all spirits.

Views of Other Faiths

The *Ushadan* tend to look upon titan-worshippers as misguided and deluded brethren. To their way of thinking, the titans are still *ushada* — even if they

have grown corrupt and more powerful than any of the spirits should be — and are thus worthy of respect. But to venerate them to the exclusion of all other *ushada*, as the titan-worshippers do, is sheer folly. Without the spirits of the mountains and the rivers and the trees, the birds and the beasts, Scarn would truly be a dead land. The titan-worshippers have fallen prey to an all-too-human folly: the belief that worship and respect are due only to the most powerful, even if they have lost their way. The *Ushadan* understand their lost brethren, for at least they still venerate the natural forces, but they long for the day when the titan-worshippers — yes, and the titans themselves — realize that they've strayed and return to the fold.

The *Ushadan* view of god-worshippers is somewhat less clear. Two schools of thought exist among the *Ushadan* regarding these so-called divinities. The first and most common belief is that the gods, like their parent titans, are abnormal examples of the *ushada* themselves. The gods do not act like their brothers and sisters, and may even have themselves forgotten what they are, but still they are a part of the same spiritual family to which all powers ultimately belong. Some *Ushadan* have even adopted several of the gods into their own worship, venerating them along with all other *ushada* who hold sway in a given



Ushadani and Ghelspad

Travel between Termana and its northwestern neighbor may not be terribly frequent, but it's far from unheard of, and it's been happening for centuries. Why, then, has *Ushadani* not appeared in even the smallest numbers on Ghelspad? It cannot be because the *ushada* do not exist there. The *ushada* are spirits of nature and Scarn itself; to say that they are absent from anyplace in the world is no more rational than to say that some lands are too far from the sun to ever see daylight. Besides, those very few *Ushadan* druids who have traveled to Ghelspad for mercantile or other pursuits have found their magics no less effective, thus proving the *ushada* exist there to answer prayers.

To make the question more frustrating still, evidence exists that some *Ushadani* legends and beliefs have crossed the Blood Sea to Ghelspad, even if the religion itself has not. A Lageni myth maintain-

ing that the Nameless Orb is a deceased deity, the brother to Belsameth who attempted to steal her power, is — at least in the eyes of the *Ushadan* — clearly a corruption of their own legends of K'dantu and the rise of the titans. The similarities are too great to ignore, so obviously *some* form of contact between *Ushadan* and the people of Ghelspad occurred in the distant past.

Could the gods, who hold greater sway over Ghelspad than they do over Termana, be so jealous that they bend their efforts to ensuring that yet another competing religion never arises there? Could the presence of the imprisoned titans, of whom more exist on Ghelspad than here, somehow impede long-term access to the *ushada*'s powers? To date, none of the *Ushadan* have found a definitive answer, and most of their druids and wise men have more immediate issues on which to focus their efforts.

region. This belief is most prevalent in those *Ushadan* who dwell nearest to, or even within, the unified kingdoms of Termana.

Other *Ushadan* hold a more alarmist view of the gods. In their eyes, these deities are truly outsiders, spirits that are no part of Scarn. This makes them exceedingly dangerous, and makes those who worship them fools. Even the titans, for all their destructive tendencies, are a part of the world itself. The gods are not. They have no place in the natural order, no vested interest in the good of the world save for the worship and souls they extort from their followers. How, then, can they truly be said to have the world's best interests at heart? Even worse, if the gods are not *ushada* of Scarn, what then are they? Could they be the *ushada* of some other world? If so, what could possibly have happened to their original home that they were forced to find a new one here? Might whatever catastrophe befell their original world not afflict the Scarred Lands as well?

This interpretation of the gods is slowly fading out in the face of the expanding population of divine worshippers, but is still relatively common among the distant tribes of Termana, as well as the gnomes and terali.

One grudge against the gods that the *Ushadan* do not share is the titan-worshippers' anger at the halting of the Cycle of titanic Epochs. In the days before the titans went mad and forgot their place as *ushada*, the Cycle did not exist and Scarn followed a single, established set of natural laws. It was the titans themselves who began the Cycle as they wrestled amongst themselves for dominance over Scarn. When the Divine War and Denev's betrayal stopped the

Cycle in its tracks, it stripped much of the titans' power from them and served as the first step on Scarn's path back toward the natural order. For this, if nothing else, even those *Ushadan* who fear the gods owe them a debt of gratitude.

Titan Worship

You would paint the titans with a broad brush indeed, darken and declare them evil so that you might feel better about your so-called gods and your place in the world. Is the lion evil for feasting upon its prey? Is the ocean evil for wearing away the shore, or the storm evil for tossing its lightning at whim? This is the way things are, this is nature. Only a race so arrogant as to assume that the world must change to suit its own whims could think this evil, and it is for this reason and no other that you vilify the titans thus.

— Chava Rhuka, druid, devoted of Thulkas

Titan-worship Defined

It is a strange thing, this concept called "civilization," strange and powerful. It changes not only the lifestyles and customs but the very beliefs of those who live beneath its influence. More impressive still, it changes *history*, for the best way to convince newly "civilized" (read: conquered) people that the new ways are superior to the old is to make them believe the old ways were *always* faulty, corrupt, inferior. History, as the axiom states, is written by the victors.

On Ghelspad, the continent across the Blood Sea, that civilization and those victors were made up of the worshippers of the divine, and they saw to it that titan-worship was thrown down, denigrated, reviled as evil. And in many ways, they were not

wrong. When the Ledean Empire flourished across the northwestern continent, when the Conventacle of Ancients held sway over the very concepts of religion, worship of the titans indeed became a dark and twisted thing. As the empire grew ponderous and greedy, its religious leaders grew ever more concerned with maintaining and expanding their own powers, their own luxuries. Rituals of worship were intended not to honor the higher powers, but to exalt those who performed them, and to keep the faithful cowed and in line. Even after the empire fell, these practices had become the norm, and they survived long after those who began them were gone to dust. If the gods and their disciples were so easily able to paint the titans' followers as vile and inhuman during and after the Divine War, it was because their own actions left them open to such charges.

Termana, though, has never suffered beneath the Empire of Lede. The civilization of the divine worshippers comes but slowly, gradually and with much effort to this wild land, and has yet to expand itself into either the heart of Termana or the hearts of Termana's natives. On Termana, the worship of the titans has not been corrupted by self-serving priesthoods such as the Conventacle, but follows still the old ways from a time before mankind had ever heard of gods. To the "civilized" cultures of Ghelspad, Termanan titan-worship is pagan, primitive, evil. To Termanans, it is pure.

Titans as Forces of Nature

The animosity between worshippers of the titans and followers of the gods has too many causes to list, but per-





haps the greatest of them is the god-worshippers' inability to wrap their minds around a single, simple concept. "The titans are vicious, destructive, cruel," they maintain, "so those who revere them must be likewise." And with that single misapprehension, they shatter any hope of reconciliation or even coexistence between the two factions.

On Ghelspad, perhaps, after the Conventacle of Ancients, they might have a point. Not here, in the unspoiled lands and unspoiled beliefs of Termana. Many here, titan-worshipper or no, do not see the titans as evil.

Are they destructive? Uncaring? Even cruel? Of course they are. So is the wolf when it runs down its prey, takes it in its jaws, shakes it to snap its neck. So is the tornado, which touches down in empty field and crowded village alike. So are the seasons, the rains, the snows, the floods, sickness, drought, famine, the dawn, the dusk, old age and death itself. They are all inevitable, all relentless, all a vital and inextricable part of nature and the natural order.

As are the titans.

Why Titan-worship?

So why revere them? If they are not evil, they are at least uncaring, even oblivious to the actions of mortals. What do they offer?

Perhaps they offer nothing at all. The notion that worship and reverence must be *bought*, purchased by favors or fortune or miracles, is a relatively new one. The gods brought it with them, to inspire in

mortals the worship they require. To the followers of the titans (and, to a lesser extent, the *Ushadan*), the notion is an alien one.

Why worship the titans? Because they are clearly the most powerful force on Scarn, because they hold the power of life and death, survival and destruction. Worship them because they are worthy of that worship, not because they must bribe the prayers from your lips and the offerings from your hands.

The titans do not grant druids their spells, the way the gods dole out powers to their clerics like a parent passing sweetmeats to whining children. Instead, it is the druid's reverence for his master that allows him to tap into the tiniest portion of the titan's power, and the power of the world around him. As with the titans themselves, strength must come from within, not without; a spellcaster who relies on the favor of others for his power, who does not possess the strength and fortitude simply to take it, is unworthy of that power.

Yet not all titan-worshippers are druids, any more than all who worship the gods are clerics, and it is this detail even more than all the others that many outsiders cannot understand. The druids, at least, have spells and other mystical abilities to show for their efforts. What does the common mortal gain from calling upon the titans, if they care nothing for their worshippers?

Prayer to the titans is all about invoking the titan's positive aspects and propitiating and averting

the negative. When a blacksmith offers a prayer to Golthagga, he isn't asking the titan's help in forging a new tool. Rather, he's calling upon the shaper aspect of the titan, his strength, his precision, his craftsmanship. The blacksmith believes that he, like the druids, is partaking of the titan's power and skill directly, drawing it from the world around him, rather than attempting to convince the titan himself to consciously grant it. As well to ask the mountain to voluntarily give up its iron as to ask a titan to bless an undertaking. Thus the blacksmith doesn't request; he takes. And the titan, if invoked properly and respectfully, should never notice.

The majority of those prayers and offerings made to the titans, of course, are intended simply to ward them off, to placate their destructive natures so they will turn their attentions elsewhere. Unlike the gods or the *ushada*, the titans do not look upon those who venerate them with any greater affection than they look upon anyone else. These prayers are not intended to change the titans' attitudes, then, but instead to trick or inspire them into moving on.

The logic — so far as logic can be said to influence this sort of behavior — is simply this. The titans are primal forces, drawn and steered by urges and whims incomprehensible to mortals. They are covetous and greedy, seeking to spread their influence to all corners of the Scarred Lands. By offering up prayers and sacrifices and supplications to the titans, the members of a tribe hope to convince the ancient powers that their influence in a region is already well established, and they've no need to return there once more. It is a tactic designed in ancient days to play upon both the ego and the capriciousness of the titans. Many of them find it difficult to cleave to a single, specific course of action. If they can be convinced, even briefly, that they already hold sway over an area, they may well find themselves distracted by some other objective and change their course.

It seems a thin hope on which to pin an entire religion, and yet, for whatever reason, it works. In the days before the Divine War, those tribes and cultures who offered frequent prayers and sacrifices to the titans did seem to suffer less from their depredations. Even today, with the power of the titans largely curtailed, titan-worshippers seem to suffer disaster and catastrophe less often than others in the same vicinity.

Many titan-worshippers and titan-worshipping tribes follow this train of logic to its obvious (and unfortunate) conclusion: That is, if simply trying to redirect the titans' wrath is good, giving them a specific place to go, a place that is not one's own home, is even better. After all, trying to placate the titans is not always sufficient. They are not merely the cause, but also the effect, of the concepts they repre-

Playing a Titan-worshipper in Termana

It may be possible, when participating in a campaign set in the lands across the Blood Sea, to play a druid of a titan other than Denev without portraying her as evil, but it is not common, it's not easy and you're likely to find few if any willing allies among either faction. Termana's culture, however, opens up new vistas and new possibilities for your player characters.

Many of Termana's titan-worshippers are just as monstrous and vile as those who frequent Ghelspad's shores. They're destructive, seeking only to spread the power of their chosen patron by any means possible. They conduct hideous, bloody rites in their master's name, and seek to throw down the gods and resurrect the titans to their "rightful" place.

Others, however, are not so horrific. As discussed above, they pray to the titans in order to avert their wrath, emulate them so that they might increase whatever positive aspects the titans represent. An herbalist might well offer sacrifices to Mormo, even should her current project be a soothing balm rather than a deadly venom. A sorcerous titan worshipper certainly honors Mesos in hopes of tapping into his far-flung magics, and a healer and surgeon appeals to Chern for knowledge and power over sickness.

It's worth repeating that none of these people are asking the titans for aid in the way god-worshippers pray to their patrons for help. The titans are incapable even of understanding such pleas for aid, let alone responding to them. No, worshippers and especially druids believe that by emulating their masters they can tap into the same primal sources of power the titans themselves represent. Their prayers are not requests, but a means of channeling. Even the most peaceful of titan-worshippers learn that they cannot ask; they take what they need, and any failure of accomplishment is a sign of their own weakness.

Titan-worshippers are, almost universally, a harsh people — but Termana is a harsh land. Just as nature, while often cruel, is not evil, so too are many of Termana's titan-worshippers good people, doing only what they must to survive in a bleak and dangerous world.

On the other hand, a large number of them are indeed malicious and vile, and one cannot always tell the difference until they've come within a dagger's reach...

sent. Chern, for instance, may have caused disease wherever he traveled, but he was also drawn to those places already trapped in the grip of plague, and even today it is thought that his attentions can draw illness to a region despite his inability to physically travel there. Prayers to the titans might convince them that they have already attained sufficient dominance over a region, but it might also draw them back to enjoy the destruction they've wrought. Some of their worshippers, then, seek to placate them not merely through prayer, but by spreading the same forms of terror and destruction the titans themselves prefer. If Thulkas, they say, is drawn to fire, then let it be the burning homes of our neighbors, rather than our own, that call to him. Let him see us, not as mortals to be toyed with as he will, but as extensions of his own might, the sparks from his great eternal flame.

Titan-worship Across Termana

As with *Ushadani*, titan-worship is far more common amongst the tribal cultures of Termana's wilds than it is within the civilized nations. It is completely absent within the communities of both the forsaken elves and the Charduni, and exists only in the form of hidden cults and secret societies inside the major cities of kingdoms such as

Virduk's Promise, Azale and Karsian. These underground sects often devote much effort to sabotaging and weakening the local churches, seeking to chip away at the power base of the gods in the region. Many accomplish this through the violent excesses for which they are stereotypically known, but others take a more subtle approach. In more than one city, titan cults filter out among the populace and seek to make life better for the commoners, curing diseases and assisting those in need in ways the government and the official churches cannot (or, in some cases, will not). It is in these cities that the titan cults have begun truly to grow and thrive, and the time may not be distant when they will have enough strength to challenge the local churches and governments directly.

Titan-worship is somewhat more prevalent in lawless realms such as the Gray Isle, and rumor maintains that the twisted inhabitants of the Blood Bayou honor the primal forces as well, when they aren't worshipping the Jack of Tears as a deity incarnate. (Then again, rumor maintains a great many things about the inhabitants of the Blood Bayou,



not a few of them contradictory, so this particular rumor and a copper piece will buy you a watery ale.)

Although they often share the same general region, titan-worship and *Ushadani* rarely occupy the same ground, or find root in the same tribes. Regardless of which came first — a question that is a source of constant rivalry between the two faiths — the ties between them are far too tight for either to escape, and this makes their followers uncomfortable,

That said, on very rare occasions, a single tribe will indeed adopt an amalgamation of *Ushadani* and titan-worship. These tribes usually follow the belief that the *ushada* are offspring and servants of the titans themselves, and honor them thus. They revere the titans, and propitiate and sacrifice to them at regular intervals, but the majority of their prayers are directed towards the *ushada*, who are far more inclined to answer their worshippers' petitions. To date, all of these tribes have been human; gnomes, terali and other *Ushadan*-oriented races seem unwilling to mix the two faiths under any circumstances.

Concentrations of titan-spawn in the wilderness very often inspire human and humanoid titan-worshippers to live nearby. Those worshippers who seek to emulate their masters' more destructive impulses and spread devastation to their neighbors may attempt to join forces with these inhuman creatures, or at least to revel in their wake. Those who attempt to placate the titans, who hope to be spared their ravages and call upon them only to grant strength and skill, also sometimes choose to dwell near titan-spawn. As with the prayers they offer, they hope the presence of the titan-spawn will convince the titans that the area already belongs firmly to them, and inspire them to focus their attentions elsewhere. The titan-spawn themselves, of course, don't particularly care why they have a bunch of humans encroaching on their territories, and conflict between spawn and worshippers of the same titan is not uncommon.

Views of Other Faiths

Titan-worshippers of Termana tend to look upon the *Ushadan* as weak-willed and deluded. Titan-worshippers believe that the *ushada* are servants of the titans themselves, spirits of the world that were either created deliberately, or else sprang from the same primordial forces as their own masters. Some believe that the *ushada* are less common than the *Ushadan* maintain, and that they



spend much of their time fluttering about on errands for the titans. Others believe, as the *Ushadan* do, that all things have a spirit, that the mountain births the lake which births the river — but that the titans are literally the patriarchs and matriarchs of the family, that it was Kadum who birthed the mountain.

Whatever the case, the notion of worshipping the *ushada* in place of the titans is, to titan-worshippers, the height of foolishness. The *Ushadan* honor the servants, but not the masters. They ask the help of lesser spirits, rather than tapping directly into the primal powers of the titans themselves. Worst of all, they maintain in their idiocy that the *ushada* birthed the titans, rather than the other way around!

Still, titan-worshippers do not hold the same hostility to the *Ushadan* that they do god-worshippers. For all their foolishness, they are still potential allies, as their allegiance to the *ushada* puts them much nearer the titans than the gods. Hostilities flare up from time to time, but for the most part, titan-worshippers prefer discourse and proselytizing to bloodshed when dealing with their misguided brethren.

When it comes to their feelings toward the god-worshippers, however, Termanan followers of the titans look very much like their counterparts elsewhere. The gods are usurpers, power-hungry alien entities with no connection to Scarn who threw down the rightful lords and must be thrown down in turn. Many titan-worshippers devote their efforts to openly battling the churches of the gods, either through violence, through efforts at coaxing away their worshippers or — most commonly — a combination of the two. Others encourage their *Ushadan* neighbors to continue the practice of adopting the gods into the pantheon of *ushada*, for that reduces their power and status to a mere handful amongst thousands of equals. And of course, some titan-worshippers simply wish to be left alone, but even they tend to harbor a simmering resentment for the followers of those who destroyed or imprisoned the rightful masters of Scarn.

The Titans of Termana

Because the titans are primal forces and make (or at least made) their presence felt regardless of how their worshippers behaved, their natures and abilities are less open to interpretation than are the gods. Still, the people of Termana do not view the titans in quite the same way as do the people dwelling on other continents.

Chern

(Churn)

If any titan can truly be said to hold the distinction of Termana's single most important power, it would have to be the Scourge. The father of all plagues, for better or worse, has impacted this continent as no other force, spreading his disease and poison throughout much of the land. All manner of horrors that ravage Termana like no other continent, everything from fouled waters to cattle sickness to hideous contagions that wipe out entire villages, can be traced back to the so-called Last Great Sickness.

As such, Chern's cult is one of the largest found on Termana. The fact that his power is, for the most part, destructive means nothing; clearly, the Scourge wields the most power on the continent, and that — according to his worshippers — means that he must be honored. Chern-worship appears in almost every corner of Termana, from open rituals practiced among the nomadic tribes to hidden conclaves held in the heart of the most populous, divine-dominated cities. Many titan-worshippers call on the Scourge in hopes of warding off disease, or at least turning a plague from their own direction toward someone else.

Symbol: Plaited lock of hair with primitive humanoid dolls braided into it



Gaurak

(GAU-rock)

Termana may be savage, untamed, harsh, difficult to survive and ravaged with plague, poison and deadly beasts — but for all that, it is clearly a continent on which life, in one form or another, thrives. Certainly it would have provided the Glutton an attractive place to appease his endless hunger, but Gaurak chose to focus his attentions on other continents. Now that the Voracious One is defanged and entombed beneath the earth, with little chance of him being able to devour much of anything in the near future, the people of Termana pay him



scant attention. His cult of worshippers on this wild continent, while certainly devoted, is a relatively small one. Many of his druids operate alone, unable to find even a single companion who shares their beliefs. Even the so-called Mouth of Gaurak, one of the few passes through the Chained Mountains, sees only a small amount of reverence in his name.

Symbol: A fang

Golthagga

(gol-THAH-ga)

The Shaper is said to have kept his forge on the continent of Termana, deep in the Titansforge Mountains. As such, though Golthagga's abominations are not necessarily any more common here than on Ghelspad or other continents, Termana in general, and the region around the Titansforge in particular, serves as the center for several large cults who worship the Titan of the Forge. Golthagga is also the patron of many titan-worshipping smiths, who call only upon his abilities at the forge and have little interest in the more obscene products of his creative urges.

Symbol: An anvil

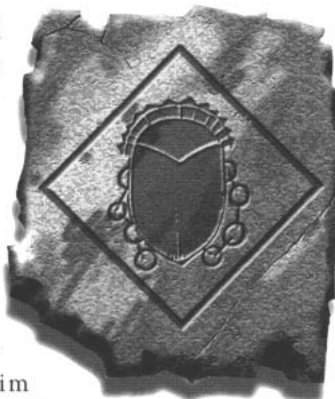


Golthain

(GOL-thane)

The so-called Faceless titan, the only one of that primal to ever show even a hint of compassion for the mortal races, is almost universally reviled across Termana. Not only do the god-worshippers despise him because he is a titan, but the titan-worshippers consider him a weakling and very nearly a traitor, second only to Denev in their antipathy. Both factions look down on him for his weakness, as life in Termana, by its very nature, breeds a respect for strength however it's used. As such, Golthain's cult is easily the smallest of any in Termana, and is only a few small catastrophes away from ceasing to exist at all.

Symbol: A blank-faced mask



Gormoth

(GORE-moth)

The Writhing Lord, split in twain by Vangal and Chardun and left to suffer for all time, also possesses only a small cult of worshippers on Termana, though those he has are fanatic even as compared to most titan-worshippers. Many of his twisted spawn have found their way to the savage continent, making the depths of the wilds that much more dangerous. Because Termana is such a stronghold of Mormo's worshippers — deadly enemies of Gormoth's cult — the Writhing Lord has never enjoyed much popularity here, and is unlikely to do so anytime soon.

Symbol: An abstract face with a jagged line down the center

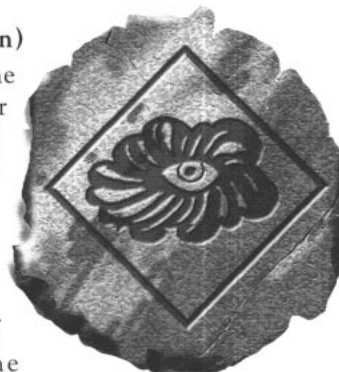


Gulaben

(goo-LAH-bin)

The Lady of the Winds has never been the most widely worshipped of titans (and some say she isn't a titan at all, but merely an incarnation of Lethene). The coastal areas of Termana, particularly those that suffer severe storms, sometimes see the occasional rise of a Gulaben cult, and in portions of the continent where insanity is common (often brought on by impure produce and water), she is honored as the Mistress of Madness. For the most part, however, most titan-worshippers inclined to pay homage to the power of wind and storms instead worship Lethene.

Symbol: A swirling cloud set with a blue eye



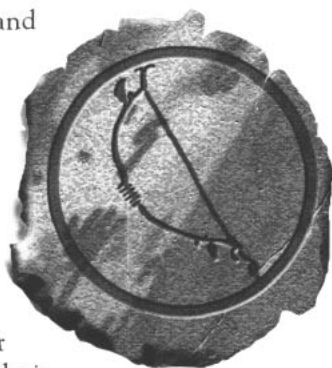
Hrinruuk

(h-RIN-rook)

Given the struggle for survival that is life on Termana, especially in the jungles and deserts, it comes as no surprise at all that the Hunter is one of the most widely revered and invoked titans on the continent, challenged

only by Chern and Mormo for widespread worship. Hunters in search of prey to feed themselves, their families or their communities; warriors who seek to clear the area around their homes of the deadlier titan-spawn; and even those who seek to escape those who pursue them — all these, and more besides, invoke the name, the skill and the power of Hrinruuk. An enormous number of tribes venerate him openly, and even a substantial portion of the so-called civilized population embraces his teachings.

Symbol: A bow



Kadum

(kah-DOOM)

The people of Termana could never forget the Mountainshaker, even if they wanted to. The bay of Kadum's Bight, which was once a verdant stretch of land, as well as the corruption of the Blood Bayou, provide constant reminders that the Father of Monsters lies bound not terribly far off the coast, constantly leaking his foul corruption into the surrounding waters. As such, the shores of the Bight and those portions of the Blood Bayou not completely under the sway of the Jack of Tears (of which there are admittedly very few) are focal points of Kadum-worship. Many of the native tribes respect Kadum's sheer strength and viciousness, and his worshippers among the northern nations hope to draw on that strength to advance their own agendas. Unlike most sane individuals, many of Kadum's faithful take great comfort in the corruption of the lands and waters around them, and in the presence of so many spawn of the Bleeding One, for it proves that his might has not yet run its course, that he still bleeds deep beneath the waters of the Blood Sea — and thus, that he may still one day be freed to shake the earth once more.

Symbol: A cracked or broken mountain peak.



Lethene

(lay-THEEN)

The Dame of Storms sees much worship along the storm-ravaged coasts, particularly those tainted deluges that blow in off the Blood Sea. On Termana, however, the Untamed One is worshipped more often as the patron of dark spirits and ghosts, who share her insubstantial nature and mercurial temper. Many Lethene-worshipping tribes are sworn enemies of the *Ushadan*, for the followers of the titan seek to claim dominion over those who worship the spirits that are (or so Lethene's followers claim) mere offspring.

Symbol: A ghostly hand

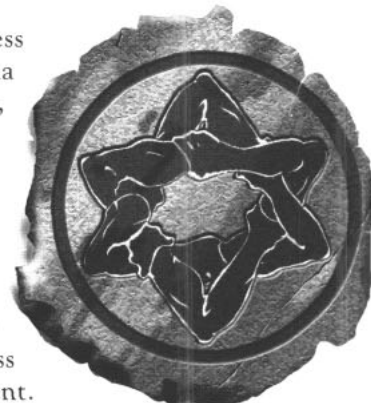


Mesos

(MAY-sohs)

Sorcery is no less common on Termana than elsewhere but, because the shamans and spellcasters of the tribes tend to be druidic shamans, sorcerers hold a slightly less important position across much of the continent. Nevertheless, they are common enough, and powerful enough, that their patron, the Sire of Sorcery, is widely worshipped in Termana. Mesos lacks the truly substantial cults of Chern or Mormo, but his followers are numerous enough that they still have considerable influence. Unlike most of the titans, worship of Mesos on Termana is nearly as common in the larger cities as it is among the savage tribes, for many ambitious nobles, greedy merchants and even peasants who simply seek to improve their lives turn to magics as their best (or last) hope.

Symbol: Six arms clasp each other to make two triangles overlapped that form a six-pointed star



Mormo

(MORE-moh)

The Mother of Serpents is one of the dominant titans of Termana, due to the poisonous nature of so many of the continent's



indigenous creatures.

Lethal snakes, biting insects, toxic plants — all these combine to make poison at least as wide-spread a killer as disease, allowing Venom's Damn to challenge Chern for the "title," such as it is, of

Termana's most influential titan. Additionally, many tribal healers, spellcasters and mystics call upon Mormo as the Queen of Witches, for her magics are seen by many as being more in tune with the Scarred Lands and the natural surroundings than are those of Mesos.

As on Ghelspad, Mormo's titan-spawn are among the most common and most varied, forcing even those who do not worship her to acknowledge her overriding presence.

Symbol: A serpent

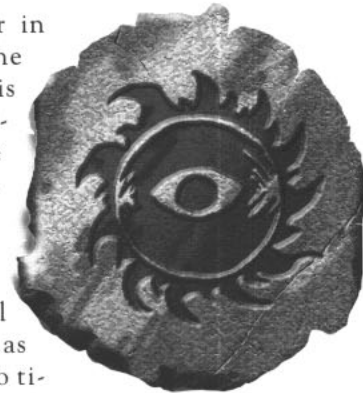


the ground, for in his guise as the Iron God, he is said to be an extension of the earth itself. Many who invoke Golphagga the Shaper call upon Thulkas as well, for the two titans are believed by some to

be inextricably linked, one providing much of the raw material for use by the other.

Much to the chagrin of Thulkas' worshippers, many Ushadan maintain that, when Corean fired the Iron God into the sun, he was consumed by the Sun *ushada*, thus proving the superiority of the spirits to the titans who are supposedly their corrupted brethren.

Symbol: A red sun with a black eye in its center



Thulkas

(THOOL-kahs)

The Father of Fire is worshipped primarily in the harsher, desert regions of Termana. He is also the patron of miners and those who work deep in the mountains and the depths of

God Worship

Yes, the gods turned on their parents, came from outside to take stewardship of this world. Let them call our lords usurpers, then, and traitors. It was the titans, not the gods, who threatened the mortal races with extinction and the very world with destruction. And when men and elves and dwarves cried out,

when we needed protectors against the ravages of those titans, it was the gods who answered, the gods who saved Scam itself from the rampages of its uncaring parents.

Who, then, are the real villains, and who the heroes? And who, truly, are the "rightful" lords of this world?

— Dirian Misceval Sovellos, high priest of Hedrada, Regama, capital of Karsian

God-worship Defined

One might wonder if it's truly necessary to examine god-worship on Termana to the same extent as the other faiths. After all, god-worship is the most prevalent religion throughout the Scarred Lands, across cultural and racial borders. Surely it cannot be all that different here than it is anywhere else, can it?

Yes, actually, it can.

God-worship is the religion of the "civilized" regions of Termana, the faith of the crowded cities and the progressive governments. Its followers are gathered in large populations, its resources far more tightly focused than other belief systems. It is, on the surface, as overwhelming a force here as it is on Ghelspad, and it would seem to be only a matter of time before Termana, like its nearest neighbor, is wholly dominated by divine worship.

But civilization itself is still a nascent, struggling thing on this wild continent. Its handholds are many but not necessarily firm. Termana has a way of halting the advance of civilization, and of subtly changing even those sophisticated cultures that already thrive here. The religion of the gods is no more immune to the natural forces here than any other aspect of civilization, and has changed right along with it.

It's important to note, at this point, that god-worship is the only one of the three primary faiths that is not truly native to Termana. Yes, certain cultures — most particularly the forsaken elves and the Charduni dwarves — have practiced the worship of deities since time immemorial. But neither Chardun nor the fallen god of the elves ever gained much reverence beyond those races; the rest of Termana remained tightly in the grip of the *ushada* and the titans.

It was travelers from Ghelspad, many of them refugees from the persecution of the Ledean Empire and the Conventacle of Ancients, who truly brought god-worship to these shores in the days before the Titan War. They came in



small numbers, each cleaving fast to their own chosen cult or deity. At first, they found few converts among the native populations, for the *Ushadan* were inclined to treat these “new gods” as simple *ushada*, and the god-worshippers were understandably reluctant, after their experiences back home, to preach to the followers of the titans. They were, to begin with, very much alone in a strange, hostile world. In order to fit in as best as possible with their new neighbors, and to make their beliefs match their new circumstances, the god-worshippers slowly and subtly began to alter their customs and behaviors. As their communities grew, and their populations began to expand both through normal reproduction and the eventual assimilation of natives, those new beliefs and concepts became the accepted norms. Today, the god-worshippers of Termana believe differently, in many ways, than their cousins elsewhere.

Still, the general view of the gods is the same here as it elsewhere. The gods are paradoxically entities both of Scarn, and outside it. They are the offspring of the titans, primal forces of the world, and yet they dwell beyond, in worlds unimaginable to mortal minds. God-worshippers see no inherent contradiction in placing the good of their world in the hands of higher beings who come from outside. After all, those native powers who existed before the gods certainly weren't doing much to maintain Scarn, were they?

The Gods of Termana

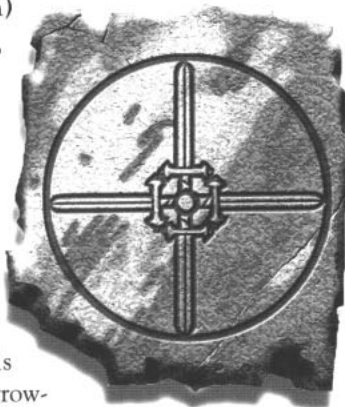
As mentioned above, the people of Termana view their deities through a slightly different lens than their brethren elsewhere. As such, the precise nature of those gods, their behaviors, even — in some cases — the pronunciation of their names, are subtly (or not so subtly) altered.

Domains marked with an asterisk (*) are detailed in **The Divine and the Defeated**.

Corean

(CORE-ay-ahn)

The Avenger, one of the most honored and revered gods on Ghelspad, is little worshipped and practically unknown across much of Termana. No kingdom officially promotes his church. A small but growing faction of the Gold Knights exists here, spreading healing and protecting the innocent in the Champion's name, but they still have



much work ahead of them, and much territory they have yet to enter. Beyond their limited influence, Corean is represented only by a select few loners and the occasional church located in isolated regions. Some are wanderers who have taken upon themselves the mantle of guardians of the oppressed, but the majority of Corean's worship is directed to his incarnation as the god of strength and smithing. In many border communities, teetering on the brink between civilization and wilderness, Corean is the patron of righteous retribution and vendetta, invoked in his most purely martial capacity by those who seek justice against those who have wronged them. In others, he is worshipped in his incarnation as the god of fire, and often associated with the fire *ushada* of the native peoples.

Alignment: Lawful good

Domains: Fire, Good, Law, Protection, War

Holy Symbol: Four longswords pointing outward, one at each compass point

Favored Weapon: Longsword

Invocation Benefits: Each round that a worshipper invokes Corean, she may add +1 to any of the following die rolls: Craft or Profession checks involving blacksmithing, forging, or the creation of weapons; Survival rolls used to start campfires or light torches; Knowledge or Profession rolls related to smithing, war, or fire. (Many in Termana use this ability to aid them in extinguishing fires that have raged out of their control.) Characters may also call upon Corean while in combat, and for each round spent invoking the Champion, they may add +1 to their next attack roll. The maximum benefit derived from invoking Corean is +3 in all cases.

Madriel

(MA-dree-el)

In this land of exotic disease and venomous creatures, where life is a constant struggle, it comes as no surprise that the Redeemer is most frequently invoked in her capacity as the goddess of healing. Many of the civilized nations revere the First Angel of Mercy as one of their primary patrons, encouraging their citizens to honor her first among deities. Some spiritual people take her teachings of mercy and compassion to heart, attempting to live their lives by her teachings, but most of her followers call upon her purely as healer and preserver, and otherwise do what they must to survive



Termana's harsh environs. The Sisters of the Sun, a knighthood of warriors devoted to the First Angel of Mercy, have existed on Termana for many years, and were at the forefront of the war to turn back the Ghoul King's invasion.

Alignment: Neutral good

Domains: Air, Good, Healing, Plant, Sun

Holy Symbol: Spear with a tassel of peacock feathers

Favored Weapon: Spear

Invocation Benefits: Those who spend a full round invoking the Redeemer gain a +1 bonus to saves against negative energy attacks, as well as the ability to heal one extra point of damage per healing spell and a +1 bonus to all Heal skill checks. Worshipers can pray for three consecutive rounds for a maximum benefit of +3.

Tanil

(tah-NEEL)

The Huntress is, unsurprisingly, one of the gods most frequently worshipped on Termana, and one of the very few who has found even the slightest degree of acceptance amongst the nomadic tribes. Tanil's influence over the hunt, archery, travel and good luck make her perfectly suited to a land such as this. Her name is found often on the list of tribal *ushada*, for many of the *Ushadan* tribes have adopted her into their pantheon, and even the occasional community of titan-worshippers have acknowledge her as a kindred spirit and guiding force. In fact, in some civilized nations of Termana, worship of Tanil is looked upon with no small amount of suspicion, as her followers seem almost as "primitive" in the eyes of some as do the *Ushadan* and titan-worshippers themselves. Her worshippers here view Tanil as the ultimate survivor, and seek to emulate her in hopes of drawing her favor.

Alignment: Chaotic good

Domains: Animal, Chaos, Luck, Plant, Travel, Trickery

Holy Symbol: Three bronze arrows, crossed in the middle

Favored Weapon: Longbow



Invocation Benefits: A character may spend a full round invoking Tanil to gain either a +1 attack bonus with ranged weapons, a +1 bonus to any roll involving music, or a +1 bonus to Survival skill checks. The maximum benefit that can be gained in this manner is +3.

Hedrada

(heh-DRAH-dah)

The god of order and knowledge, the Judge is rarely worshipped in these lawless lands. Only in the martial nation of Karsian is his church openly supported, and only the most scholarly of sages or the most rigid of magistrates honor him elsewhere. Most Termanans consider his civilized teachings too rigid and unyielding to adapt to the wild environment of their continent, and most who dwell in or near the wilderness have more immediate concerns than the codifying of customs and laws or the recording of ancient lore. Many of Termana's god-worshippers view Hedrada as stodgy, stiff and ultimately ineffectual; metaphorically, they treat him as the strict old grandfather of the divine family, respected to his face but ignored outside his immediate presence.

Alignment: Lawful neutral

Domains: Judgment*, Knowledge, Law, Protection

Holy Symbol: Stylized two-headed hammer

Favored Weapon: Warhammer

Invocation Benefits: A full round spent invoking Hedrada grants a +1 bonus either to any rolls made to distinguish truth from falsehood (such as a Sense Motive check) or to resist outside emotional manipulation (such as most Will saves). Each additional full round spent invoking the Lawgiver increases the bonus, to a maximum of +3.



Denev

(den-EV)

The Earth Mother, mistress of nature and the seasons, is widely revered in this primal, uncivilized land. The only titan accepted and counted amongst the gods, her Termanan worshippers are very much like those found elsewhere on Scarn. The interpretive differences that have subtly shifted the ways in

which the gods are viewed here have not impacted Denev in the same way. The god-worshippers of Termana regularly thank her for a bountiful season or a mild summer, pray her to turn aside her wrath during the monsoons or other



natural disasters, and otherwise honor her in the way a child might honor a loving but harsh-tempered parent. On Termana, the worship of Denev often goes hand-in-hand with the worship of Tanil, for the goddess of the hunt is considered more approachable and kinder than her mother.

Alignment: Neutral

Domains: None; as is the case with the other titans, all Denev's priests are all druids, and Denev cannot grant clerical spells.

Holy Symbol: Stone sickle with a flowering wooden hilt

Favored Weapon: Sickle

Invocation Benefits: Denev does not hear prayers and invocations as do the gods, but she has ordained various minor rites her followers may perform to draw her favor. These Rites of the Land require that those performing them be genuine worshippers of the Earth Mother, and require an applicable skill check (DC 15). These rituals include:

The Green Prayer: Used by farmers and others who work the land, this ritual involves coating the hands in soil before work and grants a +1 bonus to all Profession rolls applicable to agricultural work. It lasts for the remainder of the day.

Woodman's Supplication: By leaving bits of bread or other food for woodland creatures in exchange for their help, is a substantial boon to those traveling through wilderness areas. As the traveler ventures through the woods, animals and birds make noise, flutter about, and otherwise attempt to attract the woodsman's attention to things — particularly hazards and predators — he might not have noticed. This grants a +2 bonus to Survival, Listen and Spot checks while in the forest.

Midwife's Blessing: This ritual, which requires a midwife consecrate the area in which she works with spring water and sigils drawn in the juices of berries or tree sap, grants a +1 to Profession (midwife) or Heal skill checks. If successful, the patients also gain an additional hit point per day of rest while under the supplicant's care.

Enkili

(en-KEE-lee)

Even in those nations in which he is regularly worshipped, the Trickster is not a popular god among Termanan god-worshippers. Rather, much like the titans, he is considered a force to be placated or avoided, rather than a patron to be invoked.

The people most often think of him as a bringer of discord, a chaotic and capricious divinity who sows chaos and deception for their own sake. They believe also that he respects those who prove themselves capable of taking his jokes with equanimity. Someone suffering a run of truly bad luck is said to be tested by Enkili, and those who bear up well will supposedly be rewarded with an equal or longer run of good fortune afterwards. When Enkili is invoked, as opposed to merely placated, it is usually in hopes of bringing misfortune to one's enemies.

Oddly enough, while the Forsaken Elves have turned down the offers of several gods to become their new protectors since the death of their own demigod patron at the hands of the Scourge, a small but growing underground faction of Enkili-worshippers exists among them. Perhaps this comes from the desire of many Forsaken Elves to maintain — even in illusory form — the beauty and glory of their last days, when their civilizations thrived and their god yet walked among them. This is most common in Pelegael, but is slowly spreading to other elven nations as well.

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Domains: Air, Chaos, Luck, Travel, Trickery

Holy Symbol: A mask with lightning bolts in place of eyes, nose and mouth

Favored Weapon: Flail

Invocation Benefits: A worshipper may invoke Enkili for a full round to receive a +1 bonus to any of the following rolls: Balance, Bluff, Disguise, Jump or Tumble checks, and Reflex saves. For each additional round the worshipper spends invoking the Trickster, the bonus increases to a maximum of +3. Unlike other gods, Enkili allows her followers to split this bonus among multiple uses; thus, it may be attributed to a single check (such as a +3 bonus on a Jump check) or divided among several (such as +1 to a Reflex save and +2 to Bluff).



Chardun

(char-DOON)

Of all deities currently worshipped, the Overlord has had the longest presence on Termana, for the Charduni dwarves revered him long before most native humans had even heard his name.

His influence only grew stronger when the divine worshippers fled to Termana to escape the Conventacle, for in this harsh land where conflict is all too frequent and every bit of land must be fought for and conquered, who better than the Great General to ensure victory? Chardun's doctrine of strength and dominance proves a terribly popular one to those who are accustomed to a life of struggle, and he is one of the most popular deities of Termana. Even those who do not necessarily subscribe to his more militaristic or brutal doctrines are inclined to invoke him in times of war, and his worship is far more widespread within the general population of Termana than it is on the continent of Ghelspad.

Alignment: Lawful evil

Domains: Domination*, Evil, Law, Strength, War

Holy Symbol: Blood-soaked golden scepter crowned with a thorny laurel wreath.

Favored Weapon: Warscepter or mace

Invocation Benefits: A worshipper of Chardun may, by spending a full round invoking the Overlord, gain a +1 bonus to any of the following rolls: Concentration, Diplomacy, Intimidate or Sense Motive skill checks; checks for any skill involving military tactics or strategy; any attack roll; any roll to inflict damage using a spell. Each additional round spent in invocation increases the bonus, to a maximum of +3.

Belsameth

(BEL-sa-meth)

Although worshipped by those who ply death as a trade and who work only by the light of the moons, just as she is elsewhere, the Slayer is most frequently invoked in Termana as the goddess of witchcraft and madness. Life is hard



here, and some who survive to old age have exhausted themselves in mind, body and soul. They go on, but their eyes are empty, no longer seeing the world around them as it truly is — or perhaps seeing truths that their “sane” brethren cannot. Further, many of Termana's foul diseases and poisonous plants and beasts cause delusions and other mental anguish to those who suffer them. Whether it comes from a true sickness of the brain or possessing spirits — assuming any real difference between the two exists — madness is a very real threat and an inescapable fact of life. Belsameth's worshippers most frequently honor her in order to prevent madness, rather than to cure it. Others call upon her to inflict her ravages or other curses upon the heads of their enemies. Even the greatest of Belsameth's priests and witches do not call upon her lightly, however, for fear that one day she will take more notice of them than they like and drive them mad in their turn.

Alignment: Neutral evil

Domains: Death, Evil, Magic, Trickery

Holy Symbol: Thin silver circle on a black field (signifying the lunar eclipse)

Favored Weapon: Dagger

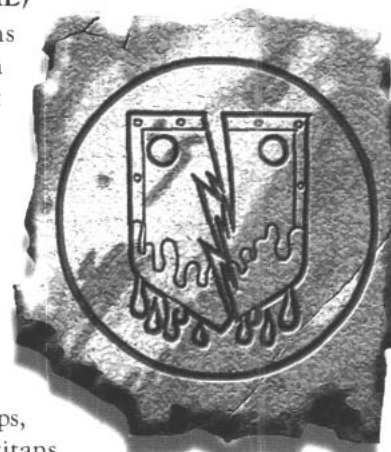
Invocation Benefits: Invoking Belsameth for at least a full round grants a +1 bonus to saves and attacks against followers of any of the good-aligned gods. This bonus may be raised as high as +3 by praying for three consecutive rounds. If the invocation is made during the full moon or a lunar eclipse, it requires but a single round to gain the full +3 bonus.

Vangal

(van-GAHL)

It seems strange, given the inherent violence of life in Termana, but the Ravager is almost unknown among the god-worshippers here, at least as compared to his brethren. Perhaps, between the titans, Corean, Chardun and

Belsameth, the people here have their fill of destroyer deities and do not feel the need for another. Maybe Vangal's priesthood, chaotic as it is, simply never developed the organization required to survive in the earliest days when god-worship first arrived on Termana's shores. Whatever the case, the worship of Vangal is largely limited to lone fanatics, and actual churches to the Reaver are as rare as Slarecian poetry.



Alignment: Chaotic evil

Domains: Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Strength, War

Holy Symbol: Cloven shield dripping blood

Favored Weapon: Battleaxe

Invocation Benefits: For each round spent invoking her patron, a follower of Vangal receives a +1 bonus (to a maximum of +3) to strike opponents normally immune to normal attacks (from damage reduction, incorporeal form, and the like). This bonus does not actually improve the worshipper's attack or damage rolls; it simply allows her to treat the weapon as though it had such a bonus, for purposes of overcoming resistance. This does not stack with any magic attributes of the weapon. If the worshipper is wielding two weapons, she may grant this bonus to both of them with a single use of the invocation, so long as they are both axes of some sort.

God-worship Across Termana

Worship of the gods is restricted largely to the northwestern portions of Termana, on and around Kadum's Bight and the Blood Sea — those regions where the fugitives from Ghelspad settled in the days of the Ledean Empire. Outside that area, the only major enclaves of divine worship are the Charduni Empire and the forsaken elf kingdoms.

In the ages that have past since the Empire of Lede conquered most of Ghelspad, the faith of the gods has spread from a few small communities hugging the shores of the deep ocean to a widespread and swiftly growing religion. Although they were initially treated as strangers and outsiders by the Termanan natives, the god-worshippers swiftly began to convince many of the locals that their beliefs offered something the older religions could not. Several *Ushadan* tribes adopted the gods into their own pantheons as discussed above, and a few of these eventually evolved over the years to the point where the new "spirits" were clearly dominant over the other, older entities. A sizable minority of titan-worshippers found the notion of higher beings who actually cared for their followers an attractive one, and left off their old ways for the new.

Not all the expansion of god-worship was accomplished peacefully or through proselytizing, however. Many of the northwestern nations are highly militant, honoring Chardun, Enkili and Belsameth; they conquered much of the land they now hold through force of arms, and they were not averse to converting their new "citizens" at sword-point. Other

Clerics of Termana

Although the precise details of the deities may differ from Ghelspad to Termana, the mechanical rules for portraying their servants remain the same. Domains, invocation benefits and favored weapons are unaltered from their descriptions in *The Divine and the Defeated* and *Scarred Lands Campaign Setting: Ghelspad*.

nations, such as Virduk's Promise, officially permit all forms of belief within their borders, but tend to favor the gods (or even specific gods) over all other forms of religion, and subtly encourage their citizens to act accordingly.

Views of Other Faiths

God-worshippers tend, on average, to view the *Ushadan* as pagans and primitives — although whether they are seen as harmless or dangerous depends on the individual. Some feel the *Ushadan* are merely backwards, granting their devotion to spirits who either do not exist at all, or are clearly inferior to the gods themselves. Who would pray to a tree or a mountain, when entities exist who can destroy and create such wonders a thousand times over?

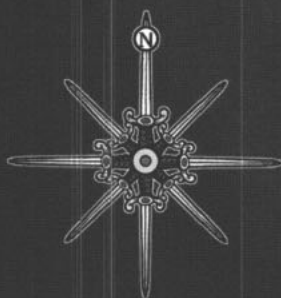
Other god-worshippers see only that *Ushadani* is closely tied with titan worship, and fear the *Ushada* might one day be persuaded to join with their brothers and sisters in turning against the followers of the divine. Unfortunately, these people are in danger of fulfilling their own prophecy, for their contempt and hostility toward the *Ushadan* can only destroy any sympathy or goodwill they might once have had.

Both factions find the *Ushadan* tendency to either dismiss the gods or to consider them as just another form of *ushada* to be mildly insulting, but most learn not to show umbrage, for fear of causing further trouble.

Unsurprisingly, the god-worshippers have little love for the followers of the titans. They consider titan-worshippers dangerous, deluded and possibly downright insane for offering reverence and devotion to beings of such mindless destruction. To the followers of the divine, the gods literally saved the entirety of Scarn when they threw down their parents. For mortals to seek to return those titans to power is tantamount to both suicide and genocide, and the titan-worshippers must be thwarted at any and every turn.

BLOOD SEA

THE
CERULEAN
OCEAN





Chapter Three: Nations of Termana

We will tame the chaotic tangle that is Termana, lovingly sculpt and shape it into echoes of Form's perfection. What the titans built, we shall improve in the gods' names.

Where there is wilderness, let us build our cities; where there is emptiness, we shall stake our claim; and truly make this wild continent a haven for all civilized peoples.

— From the Journal of Crestophoro Ren, fabled architect of Virduk's Promise

Termana is so well known for its wilderness that many non-natives forget that it boasts numerous nations, states and cities — many at least as old as anything Ghelspad or Asherak have to offer. Though the jungle vines wrap themselves tight about their towering trees, and many a swamp drowns the land beneath it in stagnant waters, the Divine races have nevertheless carved out their own lands, drawn and erected their own borders. Termana may not be as “civilized” as Ghelspad, with its many savage tribes and spirit-worshipping peoples, but the oasis of northern sophistication that is Virduk’s Promise is far from the only “civilized” nation on Termana — even if the people therein might have one believe otherwise.

Azale

Name: The Sea States of Azale

Population: 125,000 (85% human, 10% half-elf, 5% halfling)

Government: Oligarchy

Ruler: Council of Nobles: Duke Marias (*male human Ari10, LG*), Duchess Thelemara (*female human Ari1/Rog3, CG*), Sir Atelan (*male human Ari8/Ftr6, NG*), Lady Evenal (*female human Ari9/Sor5, N*), Count Valtire (*male human Ari5/Ftr8, LN*), Sir Comus (*male human Ari7/Rgr5, NG*)

Capital: Vingus (20,000)

Major Cities: Hothai (5,000), Julosha (2,000), Shekk (2,000), Chel (1,000)

Languages: Termanan

Religion: Madriel, Tanil, Enkili

Currency: Azale uses Karsian currency

Resources: Fishing, tin, iron

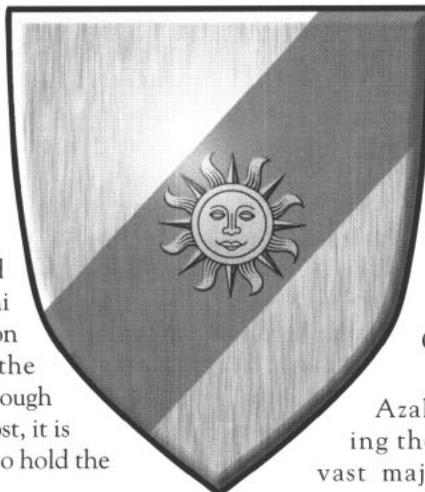
Major Imports: Grain, produce, lumber

Allies: Silverisle, Karsian

Enemies: Blood Bayou

History

In the earliest remembered histories, the region now known as Azale was a collection of small nations stretching from the Wolf’s Teeth pass in the south to the Antareas River. Known as the Sea States, these maritime nations banded together for protection against both larger human nations and threats from the east. In 3110 OC, the Sea States Alliance faced its greatest challenge as charduni war bands descended on the region from the eastern passes in the Thunderspike Mountains. Although most records from this time are lost, it is clear that the Alliance was able to hold the



mountain passes for hundreds of years against the probing Charduni Empire. Scholars still debate the reason the powerful dark dwarves didn’t overwhelm the smaller human states, but the factors most commonly cited include the small size of the passes, the fact that the charduni were directing a large portion of their strength against the high elf empire to the north, and the naval might of the human states.

This impasse lasted until the dark dwarves withdrew during the Divine War. The Sea States participated in the war primarily by providing naval aid to the elven fleet and other human nations. Although the Sea States were known for their naval prowess, their fleet could not withstand Kadum’s Deluge. The bloody waves devastated the Sea State’s military, a loss from which the region has never recovered.

After the end of the war, the Sea States feared further attack by the Charduni Empire and moved their remaining soldiers into the passes of the Thunderspike Mountains. This left the small nations wholly unprepared for the surprise attack from the north. By 8 AV, Karsian, which had emerged from the Divine War with a strong and experienced army, quickly conquered the northern Sea States and annexed the region. The Sea States’ remaining forces were able to temporarily hold Karsian’s advance at Azale’s current borders, giving the alliance an opportunity to surrender to the larger nation before being overwhelmed. The war ended with the humiliating Treaty of Vorsus, which requires a yearly tribute to Karsian and prevents the Sea States from raising an army or navy. However, the Sea States came out of the war as a single nation, Azale, named for the province containing the largest city and capital.

In 12 AV, the Ghoul King made his first appearance on the mainland of Termana, his undead legions quickly overwhelming the frail defenses of conquered Azale. Although the Karsian garrisons held the undead at bay while the populace of the largest Azalean cities fled north, every city was sacked and burned and those poor souls unable to avoid capture were enslaved or added to the undead ranks. It is said that delaying action on the part of Azale gave Karsian the time to deploy its soldiers and prepare for the coming of the Ghoul King. In any event, the Azalean people lived as refugees or slaves for a decade until the Army of the Living drove the undead south into the Hills of Change.

Of all the human kingdoms, Azale suffered the most damage during the Ghoul King’s reign. With the vast majority of its people driven off

The Treaty of Vorsus

Signed in 8 AV during the surrender of the Sea States at the fallen city of Vorsus, the Treaty of Vorsus recognized Azale as a single nation for the first time. Although highly unfavorable to Azale, the treaty was needed to prevent militaristic Karsian from annexing the rest of the beleaguered nation. The treaty was held in abeyance from 12 AV to 22 AV, the years of the Ghoul King's reign. In 22 AV, after the Ghoul King's forces were driven from Azale, the treaty was reestablished and modified with the latter two provisions. This amendment guaranteed Azale's independence but assured Karsian would have a degree of control of its development.

The Sea States of Azale, hereby acknowledged by The Allied Fortresses of the Karsian War Queen, does agree to:

- Undertake no hostile military action against Karsian. In return, Karsian agrees to halt all military action against Azale.
- Deliver to the War-Queen of Karsian an annual tribute of 2,000,000 gold pieces, payable either in monies or previously agreed-upon goods and materials.
- Cede to Karsian all territory beginning one mile west of Julosha and north to the Antareas River.
- Maintain no naval force. Merchant vessels that desire naval protection shall hire or otherwise acquire such from Karsian vessels.
- Maintain no standing army. Militia may not be called for longer than two months without permission from the War-Queen of Karsian.
- Allow such legions as Karsian chooses into Azale to garrison cities and provide for the general defense. Except in times of war, such legions shall not exceed 10,000 soldiers.
- Be governed by a council of six nobles. Five nobles shall be chosen by the nobles of Azale. The remaining noble shall be chosen by the War-Queen of Karsian.
- Try Karsian citizens in accordance with the laws of Karsian.

and the prosperous northern third of the country annexed by Karsian, Azale was unable to rebuild its once impressive cities and wealth. After driving off the Ghoul King, there was a push by some in Karsian to annex the rest of Azale. However, the Sisters of the Sun, the heroes of the war against the Ghoul King and a potent military force in their own right, supported Azalean independence.

Eventually the Karsians decided they would rather not be responsible for a decimated wasteland of a nation, and instead they simply helped Azale rebuild and reasserted the Treaty of Vorsus. Because much of the nobility in the Sea States had been destroyed during the war, Karsian replaced them with heroes from the war and its own petty nobility, solidifying its control over Azale.

130 years after the fall of the Ghoul King, Azale remains a poor nation in thrall to powerful Karsian. Karsian's legions and Azale's seclusion have made the nation rather apathetic and hedonistic, the people having long since accepted their subservient — but safe — lifestyle. Because of its distance from the Blood Bayou, Azale has, for the most part, avoided the corruptive influence of the Jack of Tears which plagues northwestern Termana. The people of Azale have largely forgotten their impressive past, content to make the most of their meager lives under the watchful eyes of Karsian's legions. Unless Azale can break the dual chains of Karsian's control and its own apathy, it will never again achieve its pre-Divine War status.

Geography

Azale mainly consists of high, arid plateaus and foothills in the shadow of the Thunderspike Mountains and stretching west to the Cerulean Ocean. A number of relatively safe passes wind through the western mountains, making Azale a waypoint for traders traveling to Padrinola or Karsian. In the northern regions, the land begins to flatten into fertile plains just south of the Winter Peak until reaching the Karsian border. In the south, Azale stretches into an even more arid portion of the Thunderspike foothills. This land is difficult and bleak, attracting few settlers to the frontier. Once a sea-faring nation, Azale has a number of excellent natural harbors on its western coast. The nation's southern coast lacks harbors, instead possessing beautiful beaches, once the landing point of the Ghoul King's legions upon mainland Termana.

Flora and Fauna

The temperate hills, plains and coasts of Azale are home to mundane wildlife, such as wolves, bears, deer, sea birds and coast lizards. A unique lizard native to Azale is the aquatic kalupa, considered a delicacy in Azale and Karsian. Although a relatively



safe land, titanspawn such as thunder kites and storm children sometimes wander out of the Thunderspike Mountains to plague the mountain passes or mines until the militia can put them down. Similarly, titanspawn such as hobgoblins and Golphagga's monstrous creations occasionally attack Azale's southern frontiers from the Hills of Change and the Iron Sands Desert. Now and again, dormant undead remaining from the Ghoull King's era awaken to stalk the countryside. Many whisper that the Ghoull King's more powerful servitors, such as liches and vampires, may remain hidden in Azale and exert a subtle influence over the country.

Culture

Azale is a very mixed and disparate nation, its citizenry formed from immigrants and survivors of the Ghoull King's ravaging. Thus, one can find communities of Karsians, Thorvalans, halfling refugees, Calastians and even half-elves. This diversity has created an atmosphere of tolerance that is not often seen among the squabbling human nations of northwestern Termana. Azalean culture, therefore, is an unwieldy conglomeration of the customs of other lands, especially Karsian. Food, dress and entertainments reflect the popular trends in Regama, albeit with several months delay. Thus to Karsians,

Azale seems like a chaotic and rustic mockery of their cosmopolitan nation. Recent years have seen a steady flow of Karsians into Azale as political unrest and rebellion grow. Both dissidents, who desire political freedom to plot against the war-queen, and minor nobles, who want land and power to supplement their Karsian holdings, establish themselves on the Azalean frontier.

Azaleans are often misperceived as ambitionless hedonists, when in fact, they tend to hold a fatalistic attitude. A poor and infertile nation held in thrall by Karsian, Azaleans have hard lives and little opportunity to acquire wealth. They are in constant danger of invasion by Karsian's legions from the north and by titanspawn from the Thunderspike Mountains and the Iron Sands Desert. Rather than dwell grimly on their difficult situation, Azaleans seem intent on making the most of their meager lives. Unlike the elven nation of Pelegael, this attitude is not a false joyfulness masking a deeper depression and loss of hope. Rather than engaging in simple escapism, Azaleans make a conscious decision to live in the present and to ignore the inescapable and bleak future. Also unlike the elves, Azalean entertainments are rarely debauched or perverse, consisting instead of simple amusements such as enjoying good food and

drink, dancing, music, and games of skill with friends and family.

It is said that Azaleans work only as much as necessary to support their incessant revelry, a proposition that is reflected in Azale's numerous national holidays. It is customary for Azaleans to spend Vandy nights in a local tavern celebrating the passage of the week with food, drink, music and dancing. The last Denday of every month is a day of leisure and feasting in celebration of the Earth Mother's bounty. The Banishing of the Dead, celebrated on the first Madraday of Madrot, commemorated the expulsion of the undead legions of the Ghoul King from Azale by the Sisters of the Sun and the Army of the Living in 22 AV. The one holiday that no Azalean celebrates is the Day of Protection, the first Hedraday of Hedrer, marking the signing of the Treaty of Vorsus. This is a day of fasting, long-winded speeches Karsian dignitaries and Hedradan priests, and quiet reflection — completely antithetical to the nature of most Azaleans.

Crime and Punishment

After of the expulsion of the Ghoul King, Azale had to reinvent its laws and its system of justice. Because the nation had agreed to apply Karsian law to Karsian citizens, Azale adopted that nation's system of laws whole cloth rather than develop new laws to apply separately to its own people. Over time, Azalean law has matured and developed away from its Karsian roots. Its laws are now less complex and standardized but more responsive to individual circumstances. Ironically, Azalean laws have relaxed to such a point that Karsians accused of a crime are subject to harsher penalties under Karsian laws than they would be under Azalean law. This has prompted some Karsian criminals to deny their own nationality in hopes of less severe penalties. Traveling magistrates administer the nation's laws.

Armed Forces

Azale has no permanent standing army in accordance with ancient treaty. Defense is nominally handled by Karsian legions garrisoned in Azale. In fact, Karsian legions patrol the largest cities as a display of Karsian strength to quell even the thought of rebellion, leaving the countryside completely unprotected. Fortunately for Azale, the Sisters of the Sun maintain a large mission in the capital city of Vingus, from which detachments patrol the whole nation. The Sis-

The Deathwatch

In 22 AV, after the Ghoul King and his legions had been driven south by the Army of the Living, several paladins and other volunteers remained in Azale to hunt down the Ghoul King's remaining servants, human and undead. Calling itself the Deathwatch, the group successfully slew Hadarax, a rogue charduni necromancer, a lich and the Ghoul King's lieutenant in 31 AV. The Deathwatch has since maintained a presence in Azale, taking direction from the Council of Nobles and recruiting paladins, clerics, rangers who specialize in hunting undead, and other adventurers. The Deathwatch tracks down rumors of undead, hunts reawakening servants of the Ghoul King, and awaits any sign of the Ghoul King's return. The Deathwatch is based in Hothai and is active throughout Azale.

Deathwatch [General]

Having studied undead for decades, the Deathwatch has learned to find and take advantage of their foes weaknesses.

Prerequisites: Cha 13, ability to turn undead or favored enemy (undead), base attack bonus +6

Benefit: Members of the Deathwatch are able to inflict critical strikes upon corporeal undead. This allows rangers to inflict extra damage upon undead that are favored enemies. This still does not allow rogues to inflict sneak attack damage, however.

Normal: Undead are immune to critical hits.

ters have made it known that they support Azale, and any nation to attack it would earn their wrath. Azale has been known to raise militias when necessary to drive off titanspawn threats or at the rumor of charduni attacks. After the militia has been raised, the Council of Nobles sends runners to Karsian for permission to maintain the militia for longer than two months, according to ancient treaty. Unfortunately, Karsian is often uncooperative and slow to respond to these requests, sometimes waiting until after the two-month deadline to answer at all. Many in Azale fear that should a true threat arise, the nation will be wholly unprepared to meet it. Finally, a group of mercenaries and volunteer adventurers called the Deathwatch, employed by the Council of Nobles, awaits any sign of the Ghoul King's return and destroys undead where they are discovered.

Cities

Virtually every Azalean building has been constructed since the Ghoul King was driven off in 22 AV. The only buildings to survive the war were Castle Vingus, which was used as the Ghoul King's base of operations, and Lighthouse at Shekk, which still contains the Ghoul King's undead taint and negative energies. Buildings constructed since the war tend to be of low quality, hastily constructed of wood with thatch roofs. In more recent years, Karsian nobles and other wealthy immigrants have constructed studier, stone buildings and have introduced tile roofs. Buildings tend to be squat and wide; two story structures are rare.

Vingus

Large City, Population 20,000
(83% human, 14% half-elf, 3% halfling)
Ruler: Duke Marias (*male human Arit0, LG*)
Gold Piece Limit: 40,000 gp
Assets: 40,000,000 gp
Resources: Iron, finished goods
Militia: Karsian Legions: 1,000 Ftr2; Sisters of the Sun: 20 Pal4; Deathwatch: 5 Rgr2/Clr5

The capital of Azale is a crowded, busy, dirty city, a poor replica of Regama lacking all the grace and splendor of Karsian's capital. The narrow streets are framed with squat wooden dwellings nearly identical to one another. However, even the city's squalor and overcrowding cannot dampen the spirit of the Azale's people. Behind the drab building fronts are brightly decorated and warm interiors, often filled with laughter and music. The city is home to parades during Azale's countless holidays, and throughout the city, one can hear singing as Azaleans dodge work to make merry.

1. Castle Vingus: Once the base of operations of the Ghoul King on mainland Termana, Castle Vingus now serves as the meeting place for the Council of Nobles. The Council holds numerous revelries in the castle to celebrate holidays, open to both nobles and commoners selected by lottery.

2. Mission of the Eternal Sun: A garrison maintained by the Sisters of the Sun,

this large stone building also serves as the city's main church of Madriel.

3. The Duke's Manor: The ruler of Vingus, currently Duke Marias, resides in this large stone manor. The duke holds court for local and visiting nobles.

4. The Elven District: About 137 AV, a large community of half-elves migrated to Vingus and settled in this neighborhood. While the elf-bloods have not spoken as to why they left their homeland or what their goals are in Azale, more have migrated to this region since the first, largest influx, and a steady flow continues to this day.

5. Temple Row: Each of the Eight Victors is represented with a temple on this broad causeway, but those devoted to Enkili and Tanil are especially prominent.

6. Karsian Barracks: The Karsian legions garrisoning Vingus are stationed in these barracks. Currently they house about a thousand soldiers, although they are less than half full.

Other Cities

Hothai: The southernmost town in Azale rests at the head of an inlet of the Cerulean Ocean and at the base of the Wolf's Teeth Pass. This makes Hothai an important stopping point for trade into Azale and Padrinola. Hothai also serves as the base of operations for the Deathwatch.

Julosha: A small farming town on the border with Karsian, Julosha is the center for trade with Karsian as well as the base of Karsian's legions within Azale.

Shekk: A small fishing town, Shekk is a center of trade and Azale's main harbor. Unfortunately Shekk still possesses a remnant of the Ghoul King's reign, a lighthouse blighted with negative energy whose sickly green light occasionally turns ships astray and summons aquatic undead horrors.

Chel: A small mining town, Chel is full of iron and tin prospectors. Recently, a series of claims by some minors that they have located large deposits of gold has triggered something of a gold rush.

Charduni Empire

Name: The Land of Chains

Population: 2,000,000 (75% charduni dwarf, 25% other)

Government: Empire

Ruler: The One in White (*male dwarf Clr20, LE*)

Capital: Chorach (75,000)

Major Cities: Borixa (50,000), Danachax (35,000), Shaskalcho (15,000), Aardunnus (12,000)

Language: Charduni

Religion: Chardun

Currency: Platinum marshal (10 gp), gold general (5 gp), gold slaver (1 gp), silver chain (5 sp), silver clasp (1 sp), copper fist (1 cp)

Resources: Iron, silver, gold, slaves

Major Imports: No major trading partners; slaves and technological know-how from prisoners

Allies: None

Enemies: Forsaken elf realms, centaur tribes

History

They came as a thing which spanned the height of the sky, consuming the ocean and sun alike. Were we ten times ten our number, we would have been as ants before the stampede. As it stood we compared barely with the dust beneath their feet.

— General Razuul of Elz, on seeing the charduni advance

Even in ancient times the charduni war machine was massive. Records from OC 2700 indicate their legions numbered some one-and-a-half million strong. Strung across the continent in outposts and fortified towns, it nonetheless eclipsed every local army they encountered. Created for war and trained from birth, charduni armies of that era were several times as effective as human armies of comparable size. Even the elves, for all their magic and draconic allies, had trouble keeping the will of Chorach at bay.

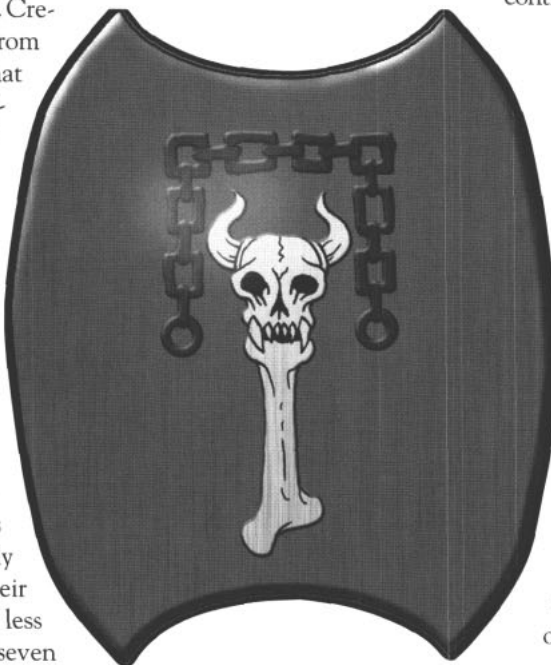
The charduni possessed a long view, which is to say they were the unstoppable grinding stone with a single-minded determination. Making other dwarven races seem frivolous in comparison, they carefully planned the destruction of their enemies over a period of no less than 200 years. It took “only” seven

decades for that plan to be abandoned, as missives from Chorach declared that a new front was to be opened on the continent of Ghelspad. Entire garrisons and fort towns were disassembled in preparation for this campaign, a movement of troops and supplies that outshone the total reserves of many nations of the day. The humans were too concerned with congratulating themselves on their “victory”, and even the elves sighed in relief. Few could have foreseen the events that were soon to unfold.

Acting under the guidance of captured sea witches and cabalist soothsayers, the charduni began assembling a navy as great as their army. It was during this time—around OC 2760—that the city of Shaskalcho was founded. In five short years the dwarves had erected a port several times the size of the average nation’s capital city. The next phase of their ambitious plan allocated a quarter of a century for pure preparatory work. As a final gesture of strength and to ensure the human nations of Termana would not come to the aid of their Ghelspadian brethren, a task force was sent along the western coast, destroying the human naval capacity and culminated in the sacking of Crylasta, Brinan, and Breskal in 2772. Their work complete, the dark dwarves once again waited for Chorach’s lead.

The Ghelspad campaign began in OC 2786. It was accurately predicted that the northern continent would be unprepared for a naval assault. Much credit was owed Under-General Nexislonn who staged 18 maritime “disasters” between OC 2780 to OC 2783. Both the elves of Eldura-tre and their dragon allies had not guessed that these victories were staged for their benefit. It was inconceivable to the prevailing wisdom of the time that the charduni’s “poor” sailors and “rickety” ships would survive a journey to southeastern Ghelspad, much less the

continent’s western coast. It was exactly for this reason that the dark dwarves chose to land there. The first naval wave included 3,054 ships carrying 50 detachments numbering over 200,000 infantry. To these were added a second wave, arriving precisely two weeks later and carrying the charduni main force of 110 detachments and half a million infantry. Far from homogenous, the task force included cavalry, air support, siege divisions and assassin corps along with their traditional infantry. In all, the Ghelspad campaign saw a commitment of one-fifth of the Land of Chain’s military resources.



Resistance was disorganized and the human nations of Zathiske, Elz, Darakene and Ankila were overrun in weeks, with only Calastia spared. Noteworthy opposition was encountered only at the Broadreach Forest and Burok Torn, the latter of which was finally circumvented and conceded to non-tributary/future invasion status. By Denev's intervention the charduni advance was halted at the Ganjus and Almathea. It is telling of their character that the charduni considered their operations as a whole to be a dismal failure. With a "mere" 73 percent of Ghelspad under their dominion, the general staff committed ritual suicide to fuel an empowerment ritual for the next generation of leaders. In addition, military reorganization in the Termanan theatre was made to reflect lessons learned in the Ghelspad campaign. An over-reliance on infantry was identified as the causative agent of the expedition's failure, leading to the modern development of "cascade warfare."

Both the Ghelspad and Termanan theatres were to suffer significant setbacks with the opening of the Divine War. Troop reallocation weakened charduni patrols, leading to incursions by titan forces and revolts by annexed populations. It took 17 years, even despite the turmoil of the Divine War, for the dark dwarven grip to fail. The concurrent losses throughout their former domain, however, crippled what was otherwise one of the Divine's strongest weapons against the titans. Nonetheless, these sacrifices were seen as worthy, and despite their losses the charduni made the titan armies pay dearly with every encounter. In the end it took Kadum's Deluge to slow the charduni war machine by any appreciable degree.

With their armies drowned, word spread quickly that the dark dwarves were vulnerable. Uprisings erupted in previously stable areas, and even the charduni home territories saw unprecedented unrest. This continued throughout the war and reduced the charduni's effectiveness all the more. Some of the rebelling populations acquitted themselves well under charduni scrutiny, so much so that the charduni implemented a system of "outlander armies" made of such worthies. Among these were the annexed wild elves of the south and the beast-gatherers of the coastal flats. After centuries of service these modern races bear little resemblance to their forebears and are wholly loyal to the dark dwarves. The charduni, it would seem, are masters of cultural conquest as well.

The charduni took the remainder of the war in stride, not missing a step when the elves prepared to overrun them nor when their greatest enemies were suddenly destroyed by Chern. Ever the uncompromising observers of treaties (a form of military law as they see it), the charduni took to the Divine Armistice with no complaints. However, their once proud nation had been laid low, and treaty or no the dark

dwarves made ready again to spread their might across the land. With only a quarter of Termana under their control, the modern Land of Chains cannot support the armies which the dark dwarves once took for granted. Nonetheless, the charduni have placed their considerable ingenuity to the task. At most it will be a handful of decades before they are ready for invasion once more.

Geography

The Land of Chains alone would be enough to give the Scarred Lands its name. Covered by giant artificial chasms, torn to pieces by strip mining, and tended in places to actually promote the formation of wrack, the land has been made as much a slave as anything else within the dark dwarves' dominion.

As if to rebel against the charduni, powerful earthquakes frequently rock the Empire. Charduni buildings are designed to withstand such upheavals, though slave houses are not. Thousands die every year as a result, which helps to maintain the ambient wrack at uncomfortable levels. Part of the reason why the Empire's mineral wealth remains great despite over-mining is because these tectonic crises expose rich new deposits. Thus, though it is well within their power, the clerics have Chorach have done nothing to mitigate them.

Skullmounds (Temperate Hills and Plains, EL 6; Haunted/Magical, EL 13): The Eastern Wrack Field, as the charduni call it, has slowed its growth in the past half century. A lack of wars and the attendant supply of bodies are to blame. This is of great concern to the clerical orders overseeing the field, for it is the wrack which they use to create dragon-class creatures to serve in the charduni army. To counter this problem, the charduni are hastening preparations for their Asherak campaign.

River of Chains (Temperate Hills and Aquatic, EL 11): The River of Chains forms the northern boarder of the Empire. It ranges from approximately 110 feet at its widest to a little over 30 at its narrowest, with an average span of almost 80 feet over half of its course. The bedrock is of poor stability, liable to collapse under the slightest stress. The site of centuries of fighting between elves and charduni, the river is a wrack field second only the Skullmounds. Savvy resource managers, the charduni also reap the river's considerable and dangerous fauna. True rituals designed to tap the ambient wrack have made crossing the river so hazardous that the charduni have been able to disassemble some of their border forts along it.

Stones of Golphagga (Temperate Mountains and Underground, EL 6): The Stones are the mineral horde of the Land of Chains, a seemingly endless supply of adamantite, mithril, iron and more mundane wonders like diamond, opals and rubies. Interestingly, working conditions here are consider-

ably better than elsewhere on Scarn, and slaves working the stones have a better survival rate than those laboring in other regions. It is not that the charduni are being considerate; rather, they can ill afford to lose their already lean supply of labor. Like virtually everywhere else in the Empire, the constant supply of work-related deaths and overseer harshness has given the Stones a thin veneer of wrack.

Flora and Fauna

Though their reasons are far from altruistic, the charduni are mindful to keep the biological wealth of their nation secure. Their reliance on exotic mounts and exotic animal products for alchemical weapons is their chief motivation. Some dark dwarves even specialize in animal handling and herbalism, the better to understand, care for, and exploit this natural resource.

Among their accomplishments, the charduni have bred their “wildlife” to the point that they’re unrecognizable. Beyond their unnatural size and health, such animals are aggressive and often as vindictive as their dwarven masters. Usually gentle creatures such as horses and sheep have iron-strong hides and a taste for blood. Songbirds instinctively attack opponent’s eyes, then drive them off cliffs. Plants are no exception, being poisonous, carnivorous and vectors for parasites.

Perhaps a byproduct of its wrack fields, the Land of Chains is home to many incorporeal creatures and outsiders. The most significant upwelling occurred around 110 AV, though since that time ethereal creatures have slowly waned in influence. Outsiders, however, have only increased their incursions, though the charduni have planned no eradication campaign against them as of yet. A countryside swarming with demons and ghosts is a useful tool in discouraging escape attempts by slaves.

Culture

The harsh charduni pay careful attention to the cultural trends of the state. The clerics at Chorach sift through volumes of reports, ensuring that the newest fashions, games and whatever else the citizenry adopt remain within the bounds set by the One in White and Chardun. Intervention is rarely necessary, though particularly blasphemous works are dealt with summarily and quickly. Totalitarian though it is, most charduni fully endorse this practice. The truth is that most charduni are very afraid of change.

Stability is in the charduni’s blood. They hate trying new things, unless they have some military application, and even then they go about it with grudging reluctance. Only when something is tested and proven worthy do they take to it with any semblance of enthusiasm. This stolid attitude is, in part, the reason they did so poorly in both in the

Termanan and Ghelspadian campaigns. It’s also why someone trying to learn about charduni customs has such an easy time of it — they haven’t changed for hundreds of years.

By extension, charduni are hateful of all things different. The charduni regard themselves as the pinnacle of godly creations. Chardun did after all make them to be perfect, so why should they have to tolerate the flawed races of the lesser deities? Their religious state finds secular nations an abomination, and they are enraged by those peoples who have abolished slavery. Even when the rare (very rare) charduni decides to forsake his heritage and make a life among others, he maintains a constant feeling of disgust at the close proximity of “outlanders.” This makes their manner forced and awkward, and even sincere attempts at courtesy can be misconstrued as an insult.

Additionally, charduni hate all things which provoke strong sensations and emotions. War aside, everything from loud noises, pungent scents and even bright clothes are completely at odds with the dark dwarves. While most simply find them unpleasant, a rare few — considered mad by their brethren — experience truly dramatic reactions. A few simply freeze up, unable to process the sudden influx of stimuli. Others enter a blind rage wherein they try to eradicate the offending source. Still others develop a minor but lingering derangement relating to the stimuli and thereafter react very strangely when confronted by it. The most legendary example was the Mad General of Gaxoon (her actual name having been stricken from all records) who would set off on lone expeditions after seeing any brilliantly plumed bird. She met her supposed end at Brinan, where after seeing a peacock she commandeered a small ship and sailed into the western horizon never to be seen again.

This hatred of new stimuli is causing particular problems with the slaves in Chorach, where a new form of dance has begun spreading through the slave population. So far, the Charduni have taken no action to stop this growing pastime; while the dance itself is graceful and almost hypnotic, it doesn’t pose an actual threat, and if it keeps the slaves occupied during what little spare time they have, the overseers are inclined to allow it to continue.

Crime and Punishment

The charduni legal code is extensive and exceeded in scope only by their military protocols. Known as the Lex, it is among the oldest and most stringently followed commandments anywhere on Scarn. With origins as old as the Empire, and supposedly handed down in part by Chardun itself, the Lex doubles as a major religious text.

Within the Lex's expansive volume are laws governing everything from non-active personal during wartime, caste obligations and etiquette, property, murder and physical harm, child rearing, and even what foods can be prepared during what circumstances. Learning and understanding the Lex is a lifelong endeavor starting for most charduni at the age of five. Even by the time they reach adulthood most charduni only understand the superficial meanings of the Lex. Only clerics and those devoted to the Lex's execution (the *lextors*) truly comprehend the code's nuances.

It should be noted that the Lex applies only to free citizens — in other words the charduni themselves. The "laws" regarding non-charduni vassals and prisoners are fairly simple — they are slaves and have no rights, they follow their masters or die.

Armed Forces

Those familiar with the Calastian legion structure will find similarities within the charduni military. This is no accident — the humans adopted much of their current practice by watching the dwarves go about theirs. In truth, the dark dwarves could probably dispense with such crutches (their minds are innately military and they instinctively sense the order of battle), but they have found this system convenient, especially when trying to coordinate their native forces with slave gangs and Outlander Detachments.

The primary unit is the *detachment*, a unit 4,000 soldiers strong. They are self-sufficient, highly mobile and designed with redundant avenues of command so that assassination or battlefield loss of one leader does little to slow the operation of the unit as a whole. Detachments usually have a focus, a subspecialty that distinguishes it and determines its prime function when coordinating in a larger army. These include artillery, cavalry (usually mounted on charduni war goats; see **Creature Collection III: Savage Bestiary**), urban combat, counter-magic and amphibious operations, among others. Their focus aside, all charduni detachments (and for that matter, all charduni) are expected to be able to fulfill any role which is required of them.

Charduni ranks are essentially the same as most other hierarchies, albeit with different names. The major difference is the charduni "grand," "under" and "in-grey" qualifiers. Grand-officers function in collective commands and can best be thought of as the designated "first among equals." A grand-general, for instance, would marshal several armies under his command. Under-officers function as a backup should their commanding officer should die or be rendered combat-unworthy. Particularly important posts may have several under-officers at a time. Officers-in-grey hold religious rank in addition to their military post.

Cascade Warfare

The charduni are master of their particular brand of lightning-fast invasions known commonly as cascade warfare. Based heavily on mobility and pinpoint targeting of key enemy forces, cascade warfare developed following the failure of the Ghelspad campaign. Essentially, the invading force is divided into multiple waves, each one with a different focus from those preceding and following. The waves attack in quick succession, never slowing to give the opponent a chance to recover and always coming from a different angle so they can never adapt.

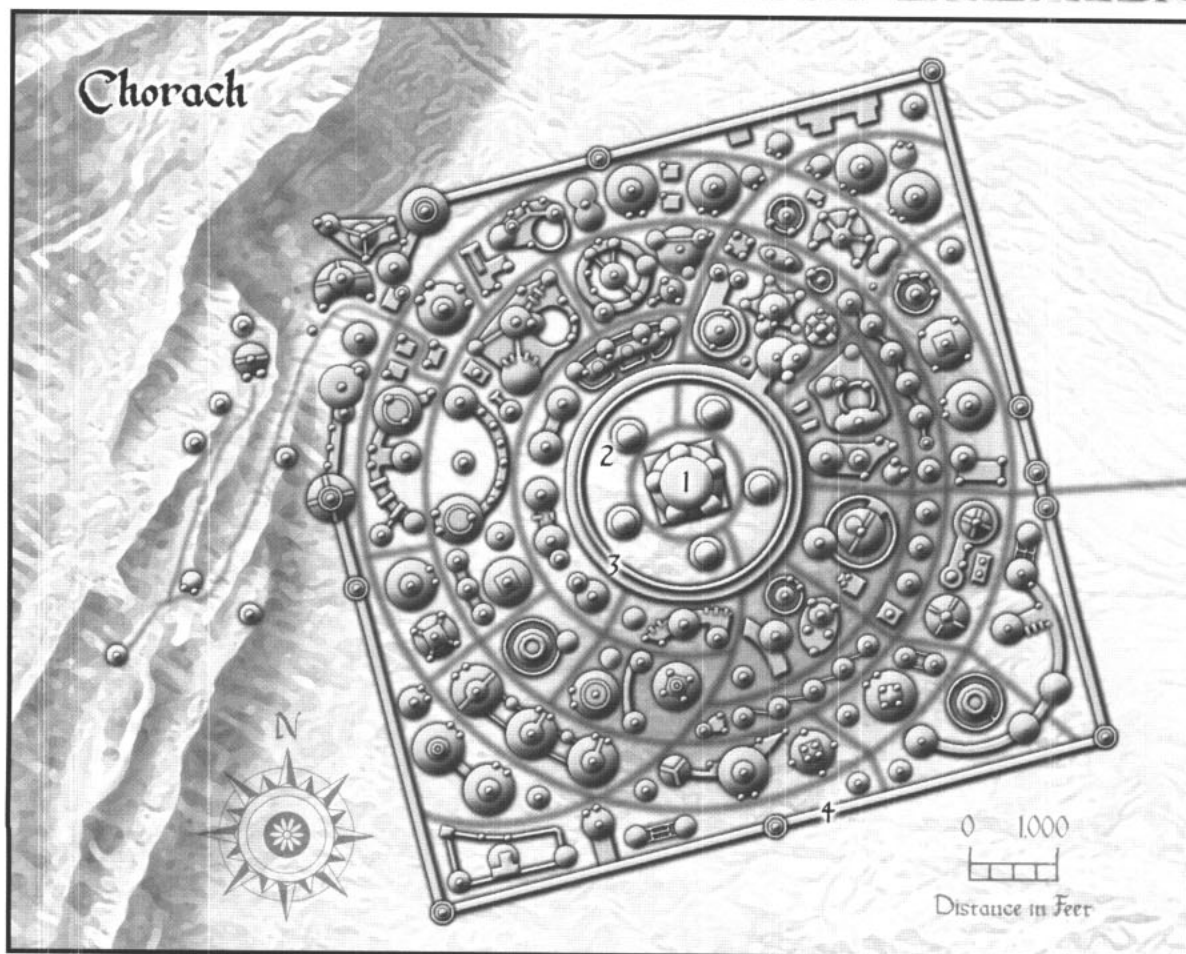
The technique was put into practice during the Divine War, with devastating results for titanspawn armies. At the Battle of Axaamor, nearly half a million orcs were slaughtered by a small charduni force of 10 thousand. The resultant backlash in negative energy was enough to fill the countryside with angry ghosts. It was used again at the Kelxaath Deep, about 30 miles off the shore of the modern day Bloodsrain Woods. There the charduni navy first massacred the piscean army sent to attack Calastia and then destroyed their city of Okollon. Sailors know this locale well, for no star will reflect its light upon its waters.

These clerics of Chardun are granted a tangible respect by all charduni. They are the only soldiers in the charduni military who can directly question (though never countermand or ignore) the orders of a superior officer.

A relatively new development which should be noted is the creation of the charduni Outlander Detachments. These are identical to a normal detachment save that they are made up of captured populations who have converted to the charduni faith. Taking to their duties with the zeal of the newly faithful, the Outlander Detachments are (if possible) more charduni than the charduni and not only fiercely loyal but highly effective by boon of the diverse skills they possess. For their part, the charduni are surprisingly tolerant (relatively speaking) of these new detachments.

Cities

Urban centers account for 75 percent of the Empire's population, making it one of the most city-bound populations in the Scarred Lands. Each city is run like a military installation, with a strict hierarchy of command which every charduni is expected to obey. Public works are organized like logistical corps, with captains overseeing matters such as sanitation, housing, policing, garrison support, hinterland control and education. Most modern centers are designed



along the radial-spoke and grid pattern, except where environmental features prevent uniform construction. A central circular city containing public buildings is surrounded by a larger grid city, usually in the form of a square. Slate and basalt quarried from the Chained Mountains are the favored construction materials of the dwarves, as their innately anti-magical nature helps keep unwanted supernaturals beyond the city limits.

Chorach

Metropolis, Population 75,000

(80% charduni dwarf, 20% other)

Ruler: The One in White (*male dwarf Clr20, LE*)

Gold Piece Limit: 200,000 gp

Assets: 750,000,000 gp

Resources: Iron, marble, slaves, weapons, charduni artifacts

Militia: Garrisoned Troops: 16,000 Ftr6 (the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 10th detachments); City Patrol: 7,500 Ftr4

Chorach is the heart and brain of the Empire, the womb from which it sprang, and the throne upon which the charduni soul sits. Its modern span includes over 60 square miles of directly urbanized land and about 50 square miles in auxiliary hinterland. Domed granite and marble make up the majority of its structures, with a few cubic buildings used exclusively by the religious caste. Even from afar it is an impressive site, from its mountain-like profile to the giant statue of

Chardun standing watch over it. The charduni armies are ever present, their armies patrolling the lands below and its wind riders patrolling the skies above.

1. The First Fortress: Residence and command post of the One in White, the First Fortress is crafted of adamantine-bounded granite walls surrounding a square of central pylons atop of which are His Most Blessed's command chambers. The First Fortress's mandala pattern construction is divinely inspired and affords deity-level protection to its occupants. No known force has yet breached its walls.

2. The Five Towers: Command post of the five Generals of the Command, each tower was raised and consecrated from the iron heart of a fallen star. They are black iron and mithril composite in construction, arranged around the First Fortress, and built to act as defense posts in case of invasion. Each also serves as a divine resonator to amplify any invocation performed within the First Fortress.

3. The Iron Wall: The border of the inner city and oldest wall in the Empire, its many corridors and apartments house the city patrol and the city dungeons. Its walls are bound with servitor spirits, some as old as the Empire itself.

4. The Thorn Wall: The border of the outer city and one of six living walls within the Empire, the lore

of this wall's construction is only now being recovered. Horrific in its effectiveness, the wall doesn't merely stop invaders but consumed them. It contains no apartments and houses, instead the rotating garrisons which are stationed at Chorach. It thereby effectively supports a perennial population in the thousands.

Other Cities

Aardunnus: Nearly as old as Chorach, Aardunnus is an ancient city of temples and solemnity. Some 16 detachments are posted here at all times, and its religious function aside it is also the home base of the charduni southern armies. It safeguards the lower half of the Chained Mountains and keeps a watchful eye on the Wall of Clouds. The families of Aardunnus are a proud group, for their lines have been blessed with many divine gifts over the generations. Those born here take naturally to the powers and obligations of the cleric.

Borixa: The command post of the eastern armies, Borixa is the only surviving catacomb city in the Empire. Built shortly after the rise of Chorach, Borixa's underground network is nearly as extensive as its aboveground structures. It harkens to a time when the dark dwarves were still solidifying a cultural heritage, when vast underground settlements were established in deference to the charduni's dwarven heritage.

Danachax: The northern fortress city of Danachax is the imperial center for siege warfare. New munitions are conceived and perfected here, as are new ideas for fortifications. The proximity of the elves gives the charduni many chances to test both.

Shaskalcho: The newest of the major charduni cities, Shaskalcho is nonetheless quite old. Its fortifications are peculiarly distinct, which reflects the fact it is the Empire's only significant port. Built by and for captured engineers who would build the charduni invasion fleet against Ghelspad, many of Shaskalcho's citizens are of mixed blood. Not surprisingly, it is also the home base of the Empire's Outlander Detachments.

Ehitovael

Name: Ehitovael, the Southsea Realm

Population: 100,000 (85% forsaken elf, 15% half-elf)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: Wave-King Glitheval (*male forsaken elf* Ftr5/Wiz15, NG)

Capital: Manaetae (25,000)

Major Cities: Ashiahl (3,000), Tahema (2,000), Baenash (1,000), Druenchol (1,000)

Languages: High elven

Religion: None

Currency: Gold wave (5 gp), gold gull (1 gp), silver shark (5 sp), silver skate (1 sp), copper eel (2 cp), copper crab (1 cp), tin urchin (0.5 cp)

Resources: Fish, timber

Major Imports: Grain, cloth, iron

Allies: Forsaken elf realms

Enemies: Charduni Empire

History

During the reign of Eldura-tre, Ehitovael was a powerful mercantile province known for producing the best ships and naval forces in all of Termana. Even the mighty fleet of the Charduni Empire and the aquatic beasts enslaved in the Great General's service were unable to contest the swift but strong high elven galleons. For centuries the great elven fleet held at bay the unending tides of black dwarves, leaving the folk of Ehitovael to their peaceful lives of meditation, worship, and scholarship. Then the Titanswar shattered even this distant sanctuary.

For the first time, high elf stood with dark dwarf against the vile armies of titanspawn. The vast might of these two empires soon drove the shattered remnants of the titanspawn into the harsh wilderness of Termana. But this victory was not without cost. When the titan Kadum was hurled into the Cerulean Ocean between Ghelspad and Termana, a blood-saturated tidal wave of unprecedented size swept across the northern Eldura-tre, including the realm now known as Ehitovael. However, shielded as it was by the realm of Kasiavael, and owing to the fact that most

Ehitovael cities already rest at least partially below the waves, the realm suffered far less damage than one might expect. A considerably greater loss to Ehitovael occurred when the bloody tidal wave smashed the vulnerable ships of the elven fleet into the jagged cliffs of northern Termana. Dozens of ships were destroyed that day, weakening the Ehitovael fleet for the tribulations to come.

A call went out to send the remnants of the fleet southward to finish off the charduni, as the dark dwarves suffered far greater losses from Kadum's Deluge than even the elves' beleaguered forces. Before long, however, a vision sent by the high magi of the far-off Citadel of the Rose convinced the Ehitovael captains that the true threat to Eldura-tre came from the north. As the rest of the high elven empire soon discovered, the monstrous titan Chern was headed to their lands from across the sea. Even with this warning, the elven fleet was barely able to reach the Cliffs of Promise in time to meet the Plague Lord, leaving the tired sailors in poor condition to fight the greatest enemy that Eldura-tre had ever faced. Despite their fatigue, despite the death of their god and the treachery of his herald, the fleet of Ehitovael fought relentlessly, pushing the vicious titan towards the shore and the waiting blades and spells of their compatriots. A bittersweet victory, Chern's death left the elven fleet a hollow wreckage that could do naught but slowly stagger to the waiting docks of Ehitovael while contemplating their now forsaken nature.

Since the Divine War, Ehitovael's few remaining ships have been called to duty defending the northern lands from horrible Blood Sea monstrosities, curtailing the spread of the redeveloping Charduni Empire, and defending elven merchants. Barely able to maintain their remaining ships, the Ehitovaens have neither the resources to rebuild their once-great fleet nor to meet the needs of the other forsaken elf nations. Although elven ships are built to last centuries, the hard-pressed remnants of the elven fleet have begun to wear, and each year more are lost to the ravages of time and battle. Ehitovael itself has become a realm of quiet desperation hidden by serene meditation, where forsaken elves cling frantically to their glorious past even as their society crumbles around them.



Geography

Ehitovael lies on the southern half of the Isle of Eldurathryn, meaning "Eldura Riven," a large island off the eastern coast of Termana. The island is named for the empire that was destroyed and largely sunk below the crimson depths of the Blood Sea during Kadum's Deluge. The terrain is pleasant and temperate, with ancient forests, sunny plains, and rolling hills. The elven settlements are mostly situated along the coasts, often extending into the warm waters of the Narrow Reach. Southern currents keep the bloody waters of the northern seas at bay, protecting the elven settlements from the worst effects of Kadum's taint. The northern border with the realm of Kasiavael is formed primarily by the Skysight River.

Pleasant Hills (Temperate Hills, EL 2): These bucolic hills in the center of Ehitovael are rumored to be one of the few remaining places where the beauty and magical nature of pre-Titanswar Scarn linger on. The Pleasant Hills refresh the soul, heal the body, and compose the mind. Titanspawn and other dangerous creatures are almost never encountered here, as the elves fiercely protect these hills. Elves often visit the Pleasant Hills to experience some hint of the blessed nature that was ripped from them with their god's death.

Flora and Fauna

The primeval deciduous forests in the island's interior are said to contain creatures of legend that have all but disappeared from the rest of the Scarred Lands. Creatures such as hamadryads, nymphs, pseudodragons, treants, unicorns, basilisks, and hydras have been seen in these woods, although they rarely threaten travelers and the Ehitovael elves know how to best avoid them. The forests and seas are kept free of dangerous titanspawn by the vigilant elven patrols. Although it is rare, demons, undead, and powerful abominations occasionally wander across the northern border from Kasiavael. It is thought that the magical properties inherent in the Skysight River and the nearby Pleasant Hills repulse and contain such creatures.

Culture

Like the rest of the forsaken elf realms, Ehitovael is a civilization in search of itself. Few elves fully realize how much of their culture has been lost to the slow decay that has gripped their realms since the death of their god. Nevertheless, compared to the other forsaken elven communities, Ehitovael has retained a character most similar to the "true" high elven nature of old. These elves are kind yet isolationist, individualistic yet respectful of others, and passionate but tempered with the wisdom of ages. Though marked with the desperate sadness that pervades all the elven



The Crystal of Ehitovael

The material composing the crystal walls of many Ehitovaen buildings shows a remarkable similarity with the crystal found in the tepuje city-states of the Gamulganjus (see Chapter Four). Although travelers between the two realms are exceedingly rare, ancient elven texts have described the tepuje crystal as having many of the same traits as the Ehitovaen crystal, including its hardness and its capacity for storing magical energy. The crystal growers of Ehitovael have done their best to mask rumors and hide any texts describing the tepuje crystal in order to conceal their secrets.

The truth is that Ehitovaen crystal and tepuje crystal are in fact the same substance. In ancient times, when the high elves were the blessed of Mesos, the Sire of Sorcery discovered a remarkable crystalline substance in the tepujes of the southern jungles. Detecting both slarecian taint and impressive arcane properties, Mesos obscured the tepujes from the detection of both titan and god. However, the mighty titan also gave a quantity of the crystal to the high elves, a people with impressive arcane prowess and undying loyalty. To better delve into the crystal's purpose and properties, Mesos vested a faction of the elves with a portion of the power and secrets stolen from the slarecians.

Although the elves have never learned the origin of their unique talents, they were far more successful at harnessing the power of the crystals than even Mesos imagined. Not only did the elves learn to imbue the crystals with energy, but they learned to grow new crystal, and eventually formed the crystal grower guild to better guard their secret.

The crystal growers disguise their crystal formation by contending that the crystal is the product of sea life and magically hardened. Recent rumors have reached Ehitovael of tepuje cities in the south where the inhabitants speak a strange language and wield crystalline weaponry. Hoping to discover the source of their strange powers and the crystal, the guild has sent emissaries to the southern jungles.

If using psionics to represent the slarecian's power in your campaign, elves of the crystal grower guild may advance as psions, normally as shapers but to a lesser extent as seers and nomads. While many in the guild remain loyal to Mesos, the titan's demise and the passage of years has lessened their fervor. These elves are able to take the Craft Tepuje Crystal, Tepuje Psicrystal, and Greater Psicrystal feats.

Craft Tepuje Crystal [Psionic]

Through the careful accumulation of psionic power, the psion is able to grow and shape tepuje crystal.

Prerequisites: Craft Universal Item, Int 14, ability to manifest *fabricate*

Benefit: This feat allows the psion to grow tepuje crystal to create weapons, armor and items. It is said that the greatest crafters working together can create whole buildings, but this is beyond the skill of a single crafter. To create crystal in a particular form, the crafter must have the relevant Craft skill and consult the following chart to determine the base value of the crystal item. The shaper must then expend half the base price gp in raw materials and create the crystal item as if he were using the appropriate Craft skill. Note that the shaper receives the standard +2 circumstance bonus to Craft checks for working with tepuje crystal.

| Item | Enhancement Bonus | Base Price Modifier |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Light armor | +1 | +1,500 gp |
| Medium armor | +1 | +3,000 gp |
| Heavy armor | +1 | +6,000 gp |
| Shield | +1 | +1,500 gp |
| Medium weapon or smaller | +1 | +2,000 gp |
| Large weapon | +1 | +4000 gp |
| Other items | — | +1000 gp/lb. or +500 gp if weightless |

realms, Ehitovaens — unlike others, such as natives of Pelegael — still possess some hint of hope for the future.

Also unlike many forsaken elves of other realms, Ehitovaens are not utterly dependent on magic, nor on half-elven and human servants. These elves con-

sider it a point of pride to be self-sufficient, secretly viewing the high magi of nearby Kasiavael with disgust. It is rare to see Ehitovaens displaying the vulgar magical power that is so common among their northern neighbors. Unlike the cities of the Skysight Realm, Ehitovaen cities are rarely cloaked in illu-

sions to hide decaying structures or encased with magic of flight to ease transportation. Similarly, Ehitovael does not abide slavery of humans in any form. Ehitovaens support this prohibition both because they see slavery as a moral wrong (in keeping with the teachings of That Which Abides) and because they believe a reliance on slavery makes a people soft and weak. Half-elves living in Ehitovael are treated with respect and given every chance to succeed, yet a half-breed who looks very closely will notice a subtle disdain and prejudice even among these most enlightened of forsaken elves.

Perhaps the most significant achievement of the Ehitovaens is the incredible architecture of their underwater capital Manaetae. Magically reinforced, transparent rock-like material allows the city-dwellers to view the colorful aquatic life and beautiful blue water surrounding them. A city of graceful curves and wondrous crystals, it seems almost to have been grown from the depths. While other Ehitovaen cities contain a lesser degree of the transparent rock-crystal, all but the most recent structures contain crystalline ornamentation. Since the Titanswar, elven artisans have found it harder to grow this crystal, preventing the repair of many famous and beautiful sites and the creation of new cities. The artisans suggest that they must be careful to grow the crystal in areas without the slightest trace of Kadum's blood, lest the crystal take on the malign properties of that vile titan. Like other forsaken elves, Ehitovaens clothe themselves in elegant courtly garb with overly complex designs. In this realm, blues and greens are preferred, with patterns that vaguely resemble waves, crests, and even whirlpools.

A tradition that has taken root in Ehitovael since the Titanswar is the increasing popular practice of asceticism. By nature a contemplative people, Ehitovaen ascetics take their meditations to an extreme by eliminating all forms of worldly distraction and fleeing to the serene countryside. Those who take up the path of the ascetic are mainly clerics and monks, pining for the loss of their god. By deadening themselves to the physical world, these reclusive elves hope they might become more in tune with That Which Abides and make contact with any remnant of the demigod. Fellidael, a wry sage from Pelegael once pointed out the irony of such a position; since That Which Abides no longer exists, his followers have no hope of an afterlife with their god. So, at least in his estimation, the ascetics are giving up the only world they can possess and the only life they can know for the promise of eternal void. Of course, only a Pelegaen could find humor in this.

Crime and Punishment

With the shortage of able-bodied elves common to the forsaken elf realms, the nation cannot afford to punish crimes too harshly. Because of the wealth of

Forsaken Elf Monks

Although monastic discipline is rare among the largely chaotic forsaken elves, the ascetics of Ehitovael often dedicate themselves to their devotions completely, becoming monks. These monks are fairly reclusive and not well organized; they do not consider themselves a single order. The majority of elven monks tend to be clustered around the Pleasant Hills, although a potential student would probably have a difficult time convincing another monk to take enough interest to train her. Most ascetics learn by observation of other monks and insight garnered through decades of meditation.

Ehitovaen monks may multiclass freely as clerics of the lost elven demigod.

most forsaken elves and the general prevalence of magic, theft and other petty crimes are almost unheard of. The king or a council of elders mediate disputes between elves and, for the most extreme crimes, proscribes banishment from the realm. Visiting elves from other realms are usually aware of the prohibition against human slaves, and simply hire servants rather than employ slaves when traveling through Ehitovael. The king is currently considering a law making it illegal to possess slaves on any Ehitovaen ship. Since Southsea Realm merchants are responsible for much of the commerce between the elven realms, it is hoped this measure might curtail slavery in other regions. It is uncertain how the other elven communities would react to such a provision.

Armed Forces

All able-bodied elves are expected to participate in the defense of their realm. Indeed, patrols rarely have any problem recruiting new members to eliminate the few titanspawn found here. If the Ehitovaen patrols are unable to deal with a particularly dangerous creature, they are quick to call upon magical aid of the Order of the Wave or even the mages of Kasiavael. Ehitovael also maintains the remnants of the once-mighty high elven fleet. Although few in number, their ancient ships are fully manned by powerful high magi of the Order of the Wave and sailors with centuries of experience. The vast majority of sailors remember vividly the great naval battles of the Titanswar and the confrontation with Chern. The remnants of the elven fleet are woefully insufficient for the many tasks required of them, leaving them thinly spread and vulnerable.

Cities

Most Ehitovaen structures are constructed of a hard, crystalline material unique to this realm. They

1. The Crystal Stracase: Elves enter the city by wading out in the blue sea, only to descend into this and functional.

tals of other realms, the entire city is well maintained maximum population capacity, but unlike the capital life. Currently Manaetæ holds only about half its magic, preventing possible assaults by dangerous sea delicate crystal is reinforced with powerful abjuration and golden light penetrating from the surface. The ent crystal, forming a city that sparkles in the silvery ages. It is constructed of strange corals and transparent Manaetæ has stood largely untouched through the A beautiful city and the pride of Ehitovael,

Wiz5

Militia: City Watch: 250 Ftr2, 25 Ftr2/Wiz1; Spellguard: 10

Resources: Fish, crystal, ships

Assets: 125,000,000 gp

Gold Piece Limit: 100,000 gp

Ruler: Wave-King Glithevael (male forsaken elf Ftr5/Wiz15, NG)

(Forsaken elves 78%, Half-elves 20%, Humans 2%)

Metropolis, Population 25,000

Manaetæ

more than small towns.

of Manaetæ, Ehitovael "cities" are small, hardly keep its formation and subsequent shaping a secret, even from their high elven allies. With the exception

Ashahl: This harbor city sits at the mouth of the Foresight River, and serves as the port for most goods leaving the interior of the Isle of Eldurathryn.

Other Cities

undersea creatures.

6. The Crystal Farms: The translucent crystal used to construct buildings is grown here using strange

disrepair and disuse.

5. The Ruined Temple: Once honoring the forgotten elven god, this great temple has fallen into shapes and colors that glows with an internal light.

siders as the most beautiful sight yet remaining in these Scarred Lands, the Palace is a place of wondrous

4. Palace of the Wave-King: Described by out-

of locks.

magically transported to the surface through a series remains of the great high elven fleet. Ships are

3. Dock: This underwater dock house what

colored fish outside the city.

for viewing the beautiful coral gardens and brightly

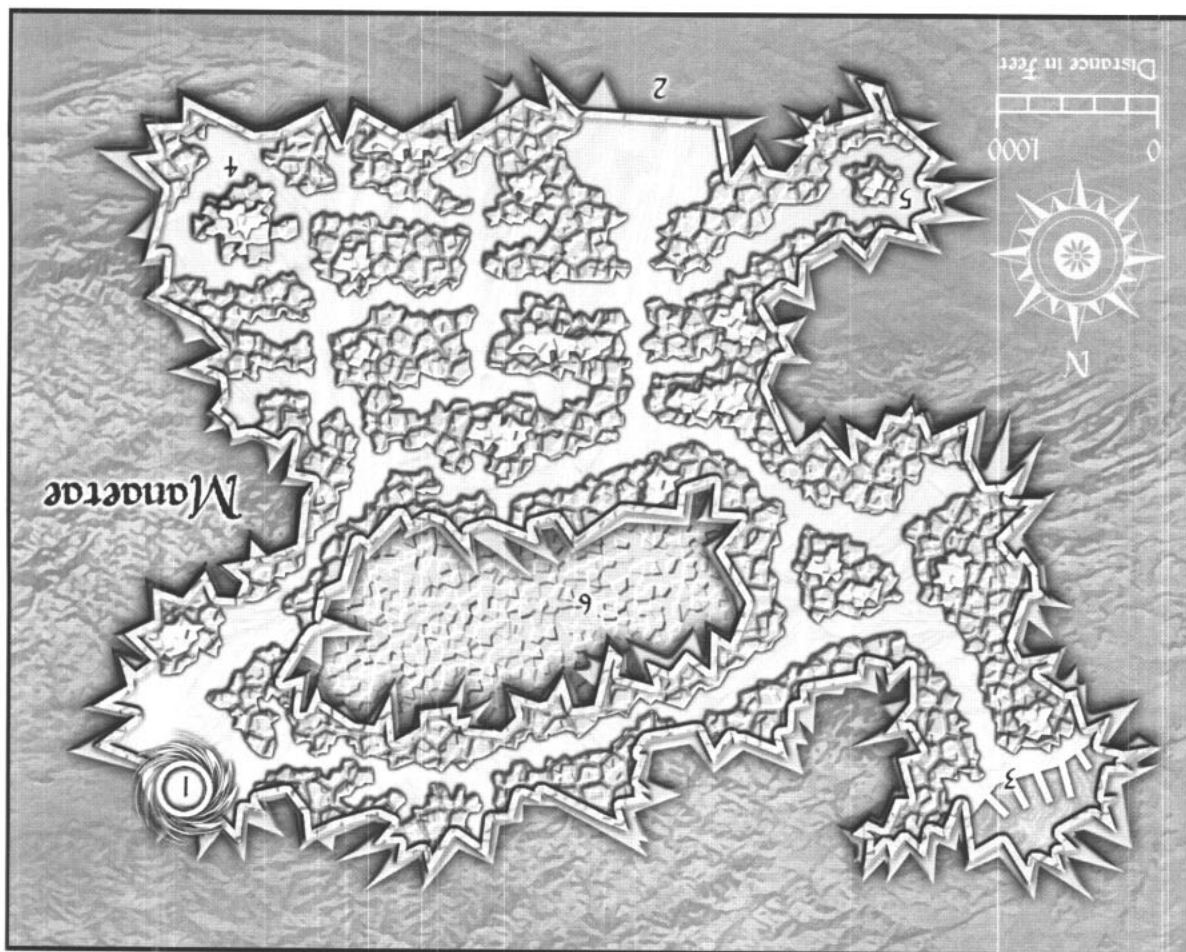
stead, a huge, flat wall of transparent crystal is available

imprisoning their aquatic neighbors in tanks. In-

2. The Aquarium: Elves would never dream of

tion as both wondrous and terrifying.

clear crystal column. Outsiders describe the trans-



That Which Abides

Slain by Chern during the Titanswar, the name and identity of the demigod of the high elves has been forgotten by all. Even his most devout priests have lost the rituals and forms of his worship. The elves remember only that they loved their god more than their own lives and that he represented the ideal high elf, all that was noble about their race. Elven sages have long speculated as to the cause of mysterious memory loss, since other gods, such as Miridum and Hadarus, have been lost without this strange memory backlash. The most popular theory is that Chern's curse, which has robbed the elves of their previous vitality and ability to bear offspring, affects their very minds and souls as well, robbing them of the knowledge of their god. After realizing that he was doomed, they reason, Chern unleashed his curse as an act of spite upon the tiny mortals that had dared to raise their blades against him. The bitterest of elves realize that their god could well be alive but unable to reach his children as he slowly starves to death for lack of worship. Most elves mock this theory, reasoning that their god would find a way to contact them if he yet existed.

Yet it is said artifacts still exist that bear some connection with the demigod. For example, it is widely

known that the dying god bequeathed his power to his most powerful priests so that they could strike down the vile Chern, and some speculate they bore artifacts containing a portion of the god's essence. For years, elven adventures and scholars have sought to collect these artifacts with the hope of resurrecting their god. All such efforts have failed. The more pessimistic sages hypothesize that, even if all these artifacts were reunited, the elven demigod could not be resurrected unless his name was known, a feat that is currently impossible.

The forsaken elves continue to refer to their god as That Which Abides, more out of hope than any real evidence that he does, indeed, abide. Most elves are too proud to accept the worship of another god, no matter what the price, and such is heavily stigmatized by their culture. Forsaken elf clerics of That Which Abides are able to perform only the simplest of divine miracles, powered by the pacts that the gods as a whole made with mortals in ages past rather than the divine energies of their lost god. Clerics of That Which Abides have access to the domains of Chaos, Magic, Trickery, and Knowledge, perhaps giving some insight into the forgotten nature of their god.

Tahema: An expansive farming community, this town also serves as the base for most patrols of the deep forest and the nearby Pleasant Hills. Mystics and ascetics occasionally wander into this town from the nearby hills to seek shelter or reveal the fruits of their meditation.

Baenash: Along with Anchoer of Sylavael, this harbor town serves as a chokepoint along the Narrow Reach, preventing blood-tainted creatures from plaguing other elven settlements.

Druechol: A small town known for its excellent artisans and crystal workers. Unlike most Ehitovaen cities, Druechol lies completely under the blue waves of the Cerulean Ocean.

Ganjulael

Name: Ganjulael, the Forest Realm
Population: 60,000 (80% forsaken elf, 15% half-elf, 5% human)
Government: Monarchy
Ruler: Prince Shendael (*male forsaken elf Rgr8/Wiz12, CG*)
Capital: Uthalma (5,000)
Major Cities: Turen (1,000), Vaskael (500), Sehora (500)
Languages: High elven
Religion: None
Currency: None official; most transactions are by barter
Resources: Timber, fishing
Major Imports: None
Allies: Forsaken elf realms
Enemies: Charduni Empire

History

During the great age of Eldura-tre, the province of Ganjulael was known as the pristine wilderness heart of the elven empire. It is said that the elven race originated in the deep forests, created by Denev the Earthmother, and then spread throughout the world of Scarn. Ganjulaens have gone so far as to say this mystical primordial forest crèche lies within their own realm, that this is why Ganjulael holds a special place in the elven heart. Before the Divine War, Ganjulael was the sparsely populated backcountry of the elven empire, inhabited by those with a desire to live close to nature. Large cities were rare and, even then, Ganjulaens had a tendency toward isolationism.

As they had little involvement with the Titanswar, the vast destruction caused by Kadum's Deluge took the elves of this realm entirely by surprise. The bloody water swept over entire coastal cities, killing thousands of high elves, and stopping only at the rocky bluffs that were later named the Cliffs of Promise. It is said the tidal wave of blood was halted before overcom-

ing the capital of Uthalma only through the efforts of its most powerful wizards and priests. Hardest hit among the high elf provinces by Kadum's Deluge, Ganjulael was sore prepared for the devastation to come.

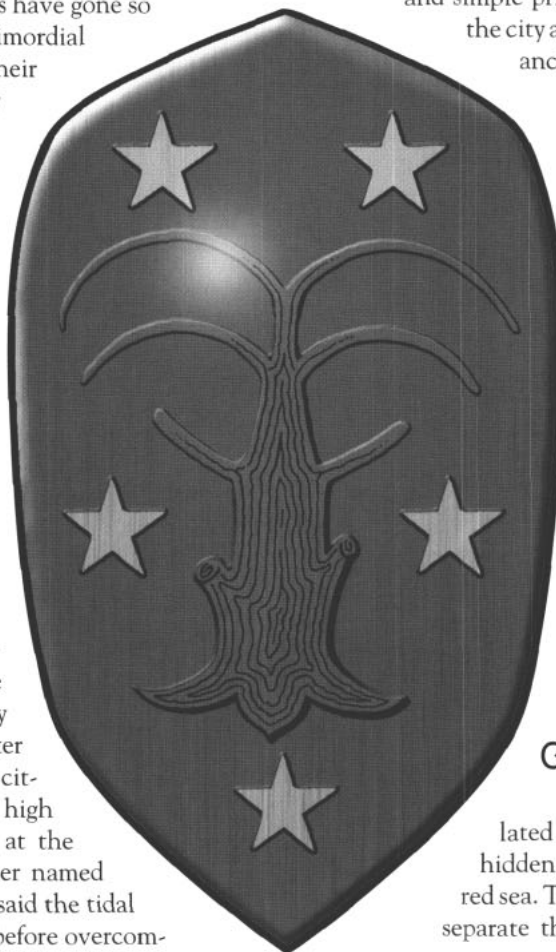
Unfortunately for this quiet backwater, the titan Chern chose Ganjulael to wade ashore and begin his assault upon the greatest of Termanan divine civilizations. Forewarned of Chern's coming by the valiant high magi of the Citadel of the Rose, the entire army of Eldura-tre was assembled along the Cliffs of Promise to counter the titan's advance. Harried by the elven fleet, the titan was driven into the waiting elven blades arrayed along the coast. Then disaster struck, treachery slew the elven god, and the carefully planned attack fell into chaos. Some elves say that, in the absence of their god, they drew strength from the ancient forests and glades of Ganjulael. In any event, elven fury and resolve destroyed Chern, and his destruction transformed the Cliffs of Promise into cursed Plaguelands.

After the Titanswar, the xenophobic and atavistic tendencies of the Ganjulaens intensified. Elves fled the remaining cities, returning to the ancient forests in an effort to reconnect with their lost nature. The once united elves fragmented into territorial tribes, warring with each other for land, resources and simple pride. Those elves remaining in the city are unable even to maintain the ancient structures, using illusion

magic to hide the decay that surrounds them. Ganjulael has largely withdrawn from the other elven realms since the Titanswar, too preoccupied with their own despair even to contribute to the defense of the realm. Prince Shendael rules in name only; he has little control beyond the capital city of Uthalma. Only through diplomacy and his powerful force of personality is the prince able to prevent all out war between the tribes and maintain some semblance of order within the few remaining cities of Ganjulael.

Geography

Ganjulael is a sparsely-populated land of ancient forests and hidden vales overlooking the blood-red sea. To the west, only the Slate Hills separate the elven realm from the bur-



geoning Virduk's Promise. The Blood Sea borders the region to both the north and south. Also to the south sit the foreboding Iron Steppes, teeming with dangerous titanspawn. Ganjulael is separated from Pelegael, the ancient heart of Eldura-tre, by the broad Starshine River. The central portion of the Forest Realm is composed of temperate plains, which become hilly as one moves westward. To the east and south, the plains become lightly wooded until one enters the ancient forest itself, which occupies the largest portion of the realm. Ganjulael is the most isolated of the forsaken elf realms, as it is protected from the Charduni Empire by the Iron Steppes and the Chained Mountains.

The Song-Glade (Temperate Forest, EL 4):

An ancient meeting place between dragon and elf, the Song-Glade still exists, beautiful but forgotten, in the depths of the venerable forest. This glade is a symbol of the ancient alliance between the high elves and the dragons that once graced the Termanan skies. Although very old elves occasionally visit the glade, it has no living defenders. Legends say that the shades of long-lost elves and dragons will arise to defend the glade should it ever be threatened.

The Plaguelands (Temperate Desert, Hills and Mountains, EL 12): Resting along the high cliffs that overlook the Blood Sea, the Plaguelands were once called the Cliffs of Promise, the site of the destruction of the elven demigod by Chern and the titan's subsequent defeat. The land has been blighted and scorched by the deaths of two immortal beings. Today this vast devastation covers the entire northern border of the realm. It teems with dangerous titanspawn, insidious diseases and the foul forces of Chern. The elves of Ganjulael avoid the Plaguelands at all costs, as it is rumored to be the origin of the diseases that regularly sweep through Termana.

Flora and Fauna

Ganjulael's deciduous forests are protected from dangerous creatures and titanspawn through the efforts of the xenophobic elven tribes. Any number of natural forest animals and peaceful creatures, such as sprites, dryads, pegasi, hippogriffs, lillend, centaurs and treants can be found in the forest depths.

Deep in the heart of the forest rests the Zenith Tree, a single mighty tree said to be an analogue of Annot Kalambath of the Hornsaw Forest and the tree at the center of Vera-tre. This tree, which towers over the rest of the forest, is said to date from the creation of the



Diseases of the Plaguelands

Travelers in the Plaguelands may become infected with one of the vicious diseases which haunt the region. Each day players should consult the following chart to determine which disease they have been exposed to.

| d% | Disease | Save DC | Incubation Time | Damage |
|--------|---|---------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1–10 | Spiritual Rot | 18 | Special 1d8 | Wis |
| 11–25 | Forsaken Curse | 16 | 1d2 days 1d2 | Con + Special |
| 26–30 | Dwarf Bane | 22 | 1d2 days 1d6 | Con + 1d6 Cha |
| 31–45 | Mindfire | 12 | 1 day 1d4 | Int |
| 46–60 | Shakes | 13 | 1 day 1d8 | Dex |
| 61–70 | Slimy Doom | 14 | 1 day 1d4 | Con |
| 71–75 | Chern's Spite | 17 | 1 day 1d4 | Str + 1d4 Con |
| 76–90 | Crimson Plague | 15 | 1d3 days 1d4 | Dex + 1d4 Cha |
| 91–95 | Cackle Fever | 16 | 1 day 1d6 | Wis |
| 96–100 | Roll twice on the above chart, ignoring any result of 96 or higher. | | | |

Spiritual Rot: A legacy of Chern's infamous spite, this magical disease is said to eat away at the bonds between a cleric and his god, although druids and other divine casters are affected just as readily. The disease incubates until the victim next casts a divine spell of any sort, then immediately afflicts the character. Furthermore, the disease is very difficult to cure with divine magic. A divine magic cure has only a 50% chance of success, and any divine caster curing an infected individual must make a Fortitude save or contract the disease themselves.

Forsaken Curse: This disease is said to be a weakened remnant of the spiritual affliction that has wracked the forsaken elves since Chern's death. Although the disease is little threat to a healthy individual, it renders a victim who suffers any Constitution damage unable to sire or bear children. This condition may only be cured with a *heal* or more powerful curative magic. Forsaken elves and half-forsaken elves are completely immune to this disease.

Dwarf Bane: Although it most commonly afflicts dwarves, any race with inherent modifiers versus any sort of magic may be affected by this disease, including elves and gnomes. The disease greatly amplifies its host's magical immunities, at the cost of his health. A victim subject to the disease has SR 22 against all spells — even those of a beneficial nature, making it very difficult to cure the disease.

Chern's Spite: Chern has always despised the healthy, especially those burly individuals able to resist his afflictions. Unique among diseases, Chern's spite turns an individual's own immune system against him. The disease is resisted with Will saves rather than Fortitude saves, and the victim actually suffers a penalty to all the illness saves equal to his Constitution modifier.

Crimson Plague: A horrible scarring disease that leaves vivid red boils that resemble burns on the victim. When the character takes damage from the disease, they must succeed at another saving throw or 1 point of temporary Charisma damage is permanent drain instead.

Cackle fever, mindfire, shakes and slimy doom are all found in the Chapter 8 of the *DMG*.

elven race, a gift from the titan Denev, and to be irrevocably tied to the race's health. Although faring better than the corrupt Annot Kalambath, the tree is showing signs of disease and decay. Perhaps it too is affected by Chern's curse.

The northern Plaguelands hold monstrosities such as Chern's children, spirits of the plague, carrion hounds, locust demons, spectral plants, Belsameth spiders, vermin hosts and worse. Undead and fiends from the Plaguelands often spill over into the neighboring plains, bringing with them the disease-laden winds of Chern.

Culture

With the loss of their god, the elves of Ganjulael have largely abandoned civilization, rejoining with the ancient forests in an effort to regain their primal spirit. These elves existed before the coming of the lost elven demigod, they argue, and perhaps by rejoining with the ancient forests, they can once again attain that blessed state. Many Ganjulaen forsaken elves have come to emulate the wood elves of far off

Ghelspad, living in small tribes in the treetops, clothing themselves in animal skins, and surviving off the bounty of the great forest. These "primitive" elves are grim and insular, resenting even the presence of other forsaken elves. They are among the elves most likely to engage in the abominable changeling way, or the theft of human children. Some elves fear that several groups of elves have "gone feral," irrevocably dedicating themselves to the ancient ways of life and forsaking their society. They believe civilization has failed them, that it has made the elves soft and weak. Ganjulael's city dwellers have begun to worry that the elves of the wilds may abandon their god for a more primal power, such as Denev or even one of the more dangerous titans.

Ganjulael's more civilized elves, on the other hand, attempt to hold together their crumbling cities and society. They continue to place their faith in their god and their once-mighty civilization rather than to seek solace in the wilderness. Because of its dispersed and isolationistic population, Ganjulaen culture is largely nonexistent.



City-dwelling elves are nearly paralyzed with sadness and regret, sentiments that pervade their art, music and even magic. Every sculpture, painting and song made is a paean to the lost culture of the elves. The works of the Ganjulaen elves display a deep and abiding sense of loss, without the sense of hope evident in other elven realms, such as Ehitovael. Only time will tell whether the shattered forsaken elf race can recover from its long exile of the soul.

Civilized Ganjulaens prefer to dress in traditional vests and courtly garb with intricate designs, primarily of various shades of green, sea red and sky blue. Ganjulael is still considered the backwater of the elven realms, and styles in the Forest Realm lag several years behind those in Pelegael. The elven tribesmen clothe themselves in simple furs, similar to the wood elves of Vera-tre. Also like the wood elves, a few tribes have begun to resurrect the art of tattooing, although such tattoos are never magical, tend toward the primitive, and rarely have significant symbolism.

Like most elven realms, Ganjulael engages in human slavery to maintain its cities, breed half-elves, and maintain the standard of living for the forsaken elves. Humans are treated as little more than property among the elven tribes and in the smaller communities. In Uthalma, Prince Shendael insists that slaves not be mistreated and grants refuge to escaped slaves who can prove their lives are in danger. Half-elves fare little better than humans. Although they may not be enslaved and are allowed to own property, many tribes simply kill half-elves on sight, consider-

ing the half-breeds even lower than humans. Even in the relatively tolerant city of Uthalma, half-elves are treated like second-class citizens by pureblooded forsaken elves. For the most part, free humans are treated much like half-elves, save that they are forbidden to leave due to the realm's population crisis. Human merchants and dignitaries from Virduk's Promise and other western nations are, of course, exempt from this rule.

Crime and Punishment

Crime in Ganjulael is defined largely by tribal rules and the law of the wilds. Individuals are free to do as they choose so long as they do not disobey a tribal elder, defile nature or harm another elf. Those who break these rules are harshly judged by tribal elders in order to deter further affronts. Typical punishments include exile, death by stoning and death by hanging. In the cities, punishment is often meted out through mob justice, as there are usually simply too few authorities to allow for a more orderly process. When possible, Prince Shendael personally administers justice in Uthalma in order to prevent any such lynchings, but of late even he has found it difficult to calm mobs clamoring for bloodshed. Humans in Ganjulael have no rights unless they are protected by true elves, and half-elves are regarded, at best, as second-class citizens.

Armed Forces

As the forsaken elf realm most isolated from the ongoing skirmishes with the Charduni Empire, Ganjulael has little need for organized armed forces. Elven tribes, however, zealously defend their territories, making the ancient forests exceedingly dangerous for those without experienced and diplomatic guides. These wild elves destroy rogue titanspawn and protect the sacred recesses of the forest from trespassers, including other forsaken elves. Rival tribes have been known to engage in skirmishes over resources, slaves and territory.

Fearing titanspawn raids against the realm's poorly defended cities, Prince Shendael has recently created a group of loyal forsaken elves and half-elves called the Keepers to patrol the most dangerous parts of the realm. The Keepers hold back the fiends and undead of the Plaguelands and guard against both human and titanspawn incursions from the Slate Hills. Occasionally, members trek through the depths of the forest, although this is not done lightly as it fans the anger of the elven tribes. This group consists mainly of rangers, rogues, fighters and clerics, and they are fully supported by the high magi of Order of the Leaf.

Cities

Ganjulael's few remaining cities are little more than hollowed shells of crumbling marble, enhanced by illusionary magic. Never a land of great cities, the larger communities were destroyed either during Kadum's Deluge or with the formation of the Plaguelands. Slender towers and graceful bridges rise above the deserted walkways below, architecture relatively standard for the forsaken elf realms. Even the few remaining cities of Ganjulael are capable of housing many more inhabitants than currently reside therein.

Uthalma

Small city, Population 5,000

(Forsaken elves 60%, Half-elves 20%, Humans 20%)

Ruler: Prince Shendael (*male elf Rgr8/Wiz12, CG*)

Gold Piece Limit: 15,000 gp

Assets: 3,750,000 gp

Resources: Fish, marble

Militia: Woodsguard 100 Rgr1; Spellguard 10 Wiz3; Keepers 10 Rgr5/Rog3

A beautiful city constructed mainly of pale lavender marble, Uthalma was meant to hold many more elves than currently reside there. Sadly, the city has fallen into disrepair due to a lack of maintenance. Illusionary magic is used to maintain the appearance of the city and to maintain the fantasy of a bustling metropolis. The city is something of a refuge for human slaves who manage to escape the elven tribes

of the ancient forests. Currently, Uthalma is the closest thing Ganjulael has to a port city, engaging in trade with both the other forsaken elf realms and the humans of Virduk's Promise.

1. The Palace of Marble: Once a beautiful building made from the rarest and most exquisite marbles, the palace is now all but empty, holding only a few servants and the lonely king himself.

2. The Docks of Blood: As the only accessible port in the Forest Realm, Uthalma's docks are busy with the commerce of the realm above the bloody waters. These docks are a recent addition to the city, built soon after Kadum's Deluge.

3. The Ruined Temple: Once a glorious temple to the elven god, this building has fallen into disuse. Out of respect for their lost god, the elven magi of Ganjulael have cloaked the temple in extensive illusions so that it appears whole.

4. The Human District: Humans who have escaped from slavery or who simply choose to dwell in elven lands live in this quarter. Half-elves often choose to live here as well, but there is a subtle yet undeniable discrimination from true elves against those who would willingly live with humans. Of all the quarters in the city, this is the most vital — the buildings here are genuinely maintained and the laughter is not the result of clever illusions.

5. The Trade District: The most populated district of the city, this area is often visited by foreign merchants seeking fine elven goods.

6. The Logworks: The site where the timber felled in the ancient forests is cut and prepared for transport or sale.

7. The Tree of Life: An enormous tower of marble shaped like a living tree, this tower serves as the base for the remaining high magi of the Order of the Leaf. From here the high magi are able to weave the illusions and protective spells that cloak the city.

8. The Haven: Headquarters of the Keepers chartered by Prince Shendael, this small fortress is actually a converted wing of the Palace of Marble. From this base, the Keepers patrol the borders and cities of Ganjulael.

Other Cities

Turen: As the closest city to both the Plaguelands and Pelegael, the elves of Turin protect Ganjulael from invaders, titanspawn or elf. These folk also engage in overland trade across the border.

Vaskael: A tiny town in the heart of the forest, Vaskael is little more than a trading post used by merchants to meet with the various elven tribes. This town is an excellent starting point for further exploration of the elven forest.

Sehara: A mining town on the border of the Slate Hills, Sehara is also responsible for the defense of

Ganjulael against titanspawn or human invaders. Its militia, however, is woefully inadequate for such a task.

Gray Isle

Name: The Gray Isle, The Isle, or Old Taeir

Population: 75,000 (80% human, 20% other)

Government: None

Ruler: None

Capital: None

Major Cities: Emernis (12,000)

Language: Termanan

Religion: Various

Currency: None official; all foreign currencies are accepted

Resources: None

Allies: None

Enemies: None

History

We are not as the flower, bound to form and breakable, but are instead as the petals, cast freely on the wind and may as they might make and remake their own image.

— The Code of Petals of Taeireon

The story of the Gray Isle is now nearly forgotten, remembered only in fragments by Gray Islanders and those few forsaken elves not too drowned in their own sorrows to remember. It begins long ago, nearly two millennia before the start of the Divine War. In those days the Isle was known as the nation of Taeireon and it was one of the greatest of Termana's wonders. Her many towns were prosperous, and her farmers and hunters reaped abundance from a generous and gentle land. Its people were bold, well versed in the trades of Ghelspad and Termana, for her ports were the first and last call for ships traveling between the two continents.

Her capital was likewise a jewel among jewels. Her battlements rose two, even three times as high as the tallest trees. Her temples and minarets dwarfed even the walls, like some heavenly grove of crystal and stars about which the wild birds of the nation fluttered like angels. Her streets were wide, such that four well-laden wagons could pass each other in opposite directions and still allow those on foot ample room. Her people were rich in clothes, health and mind, spending

much of their free time in the baths of the city and her gardens afterwards. She was the pride of her nation, the envy of her neighbors, and well respected even by the elves. She was a thing of legend, and her name was Elamerneon — the City of Petals.

While Aurimar ruled to the north, and Chorach conquered to the south, the Taeirians lived untouched by either. A bastion betwixt juggernauts, her gates lay open to those unfortunates of war who managed to flee to her shores. The discipline of her people and the stoutness of her armies were far less than the god-like might of her neighbors, but her neutrality mixed with a potent navy made her an unwise place to attack.

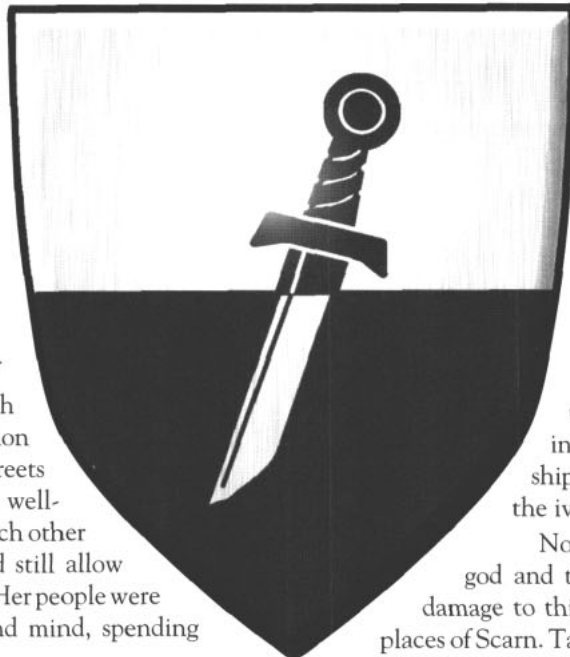
It was the Taeirians' own kindness that would eventually cause their downfall. As the armies of Zathiske lay in tatters under the charduni hammer, messengers from Quelsk set forth in search of allies. None answered save Taeireon, which allowed compassion to overcome wisdom and broke from neutrality. Sending her ivory ships across the Blossoming Sea, the Petal Court arrived in time to safeguard Zathiskan ports, allowing it to weather, however poorly, the dark dwarves' onslaught. Enraged by the Taeirian's intervention, the charduni plotted revenge. They needn't have bothered; the humans beat them to it.

They came under guise of false nobility, in armor of crimson, azure and gold — a bright exterior to conceal the darkness within. They were the armies of the southern nations who, long having envied the wealth of Elamerneon, chose this moment of weakness to strike. With her ivory ships and her soldiers gone north, the City of Petals lay open as the flower it so resembled. The southern armies ravaged and pillaged

as no charduni had ever done, stealing the gold and ivory they so coveted from behind shattered walls.

All the while the Zathiskans, complicit in the plot and eager for their own shares of the spoils, allayed the soldiers of the Isle with false assurances and counterfeit missives from home. Nor were these lies the worst of the Zathiskans' sins, for they then murdered the Taeirians' in their sleep, and tore their ships to pieces so they might claim the ivory.

No forthcoming battle between god and titan could have done more damage to this, one of the most beautiful places of Scarn. Taeireon's capital was no more,



and the rest of the nation could only follow into decay and despair. No army in gold steel riding ivory ships would aid the divine races in the coming wars, for the human nations had betrayed it to its death.

And an isle of ashes is all that remains.

Geography

Called “the Rugged” by Gray Islanders, the wilderness beyond Emernis is a blasted place of taint-twisted nightmares. An omnipresent, slightly acidic fog keeps visibility to a minimum, and its smog-like effect keeps the terrain blanketed in an eerie twilight. Only for brief moments does this pall lift, and then only by virtue of bone-chilling winds from off shore.

The Rugged is organized roughly along the old divisions of the three surviving Tairian provinces (the other three were submerged during Kadum’s Deluge). Nearest to Emernis are highlands and hills — what remains of a once great mountain chain. Much of it is now overgrown with sickly willows and pine, though in some clearings one can still find the scattered foundation stones of ruined cities. The acid rainfall has carved out vast subterranean networks throughout this region, and they are exploited in equal measure by Gray Islanders, trolls and abominations from the Blood Sea.

The terrain becomes increasingly strange further from the capital. The taint of Kadum and the corruption of the Blood Bayou combine to turn already swampy land into near impassable mud flats. The Gray Islanders say that “the land is hungry,” a euphemism for the countless sinkholes and quicksand pits that lie in wait.

Hunter’s Heights (Temperate Hills, EL 6): Named for the hunter clans that call this place home, the Hunter’s Heights were once the province of Sen-La. Many creatures here are worthy of a vigilant’s skills, and many of that elite order come here with idealistic notions of helping the Heights’ denizens. They are joined by renewers and even a few brave spirit walkers and spirit weavers, but valiant though their efforts are, the Heights’ have improved little since the Divine War. Native rangers say the trees here hate humans, blaming them for the fall of Taireon. In addition to striking at them directly, their spirits supposedly work magic to strengthen and goad creatures into attacking those who come near. Favored by the trees, such minions often possess regenerative powers against which strong acid is the surest weapon.

Mottled River (Temperate River, EL 6): Sardonically called the Old Mottled Maid, the Mottled River once connected the provinces of Taireon as a major artery of trade. Running along silt-rich planes, it required constant and ingenious dredging systems to remain navigable. Those systems are now long

broken and the Mottled River plods across the countryside as a muddy, sickly thing. Pockets of settlers still occupy the banks, though. Collectively known as “river folk,” they alone possess the know-how and equipment to negotiate the Mottled’s “waters.” Outsiders be warned however, for though the Mottled’s banks are crawling with nagas and swamp tyrants, Gray Islanders muse that the river folk might be worse bedfellows.

Scarlet Marsh (Warm Swamp, EL 8): Where once the great southern ports of Taireon stood, not a single stone remains above the waters that have covered this land in ages since. Those ships not betrayed to the north in Ghelspad lie within its waters in silent vigil, kept buried by Lethene, then Kadum, before their fates were sealed under layers of mud. If there are stouter souls than the river folk, it would be the swamp folk of this place. They sally into the murk several times each year to make war with the gatormen that hide within its gullies. Only in this way can they keep their hamlets safe, though at great cost in lives and spirit.

Flora and Fauna

In her heyday, the Gray Isle imported vast populations of foreign plants and animals. The Tairians were obsessed with the rich bounty of Scarn and hoped to brighten their Isle with it. There was also a modicum of practicality to this “living archive,” since wars on Ghelspad and Termana were threatening the continued survival of countless species. With the fall of Taireon these species, once kept in check by master handlers, botanists and druids, ran amok. Those that didn’t immediately go feral fell victim to Kadum’s taint. A few even picked up sympathetic taint from Chern’s destruction off the forsaken elven coast. The net result is that one can find just about *anything* in the Rugged’s expanse and most of it is mad, tainted, poisonous — or all three.

That said, a significant number of the flora and fauna have stayed true to their original purpose. Peacocks and colored fowls seem to have annexed the nearer Rugged for themselves; in some of the outer reaches, the magic of the region makes these birds bigger than horses. Karsians especially are attracted to the Rugged as a source for exotic trophies, though wizards and clerics journey here as well (under heavy, heavy guard) to collect rare spell components.

Beyond their use as food, some hunter clans have learned to domesticate the more dangerous variants, including the sand wyvern population. These they use themselves or sell to “worthy” customers (read: anyone the tribes allow to survive at all). The danger aside, the Rugged can be one of the most impressive sources for exotic mounts and companions.

Culture

Quick of wit and filled with resentment, the average Gray Islander has no use for beauty except for its value on the market. Even when they have the ability to dress better and bathe more often, they rarely do, preferring instead to spend their money on more “useful” things like sturdy armor and a strong axe. The daily struggle for survival makes the Island an inhospitable place, where self-reliance and sardonic humor earn the most respect. Born into a world

of mercenary wiles, all Gray Islanders have a keen ear for the truth and a flair for lies. This is so ingrained into their being that those Islanders that leave for the outside world often find it hard to fit in. The bonds of trust so crucial to the functioning of other cultures is simply too alien to them, and most slide tragically and inexorably toward — at least as the other cultures define it — evil.

Gray Islanders aggressively challenge everything around them, be it a lone traveler or a lairing dragon. They live in the moment and relish such encounters as a way to break free from their sad lives. It takes a great deal of time for Gray Islanders to be divorced from this notion (usually when they find something worth *living for*), and even then they remain hot-headed and filled with passion.

Foreigners, especially clerics, are often struck by a strange duality that lies at the core of every Gray Islander. On the outside they are rough and uncouth, taken to whims and lacking any sense of morality. Deep inside however, they display brief flashes of a rock of stability, so strong that even magic has difficulty penetrating it. This is the Gray Islanders’ will, something which, even more so than their self-reliance and passion, is the legacy of lost Taeireon.

Crime and Punishment

Law is rarer than gold on the Gray Isle, and the island fully deserves its reputation as a den of outlaws and cutthroats.



Beyond regional customs which might move the local populous on any given day, the Isle is more akin to an unruly penal colony than a nation. Only a thin remnant of the Taeireon legal code lingers, the first two tenets of a once proud declaration and the last two that still remain.

My will is my own, as your will is yours: Most Gray Islanders no longer have the drive or self-pride to fully enact this principle, but they try very hard despite the futility. This is why mind-altering magic is strictly forbidden upon the Isle. Anyone foolish enough to attempt it will find himself contending with an angry mob.

No hand or sword of foreign cause shall find sanction here: While foreigners are welcome to come to the isle (and bring along all their worldly possessions), foreign *causes* are not welcome. Though Gray Islanders gave up any pretence at sovereignty long ago, they react strongly and violently against any attempt to subjugate or oppress them. Given the way most of them grew up, the average Gray Islander sees little difference between a party of Coreanic paladins and Chardunite blackguards. This has caused no small grief to well meaning but ignorant missionaries.

Armed Forces

The answer to the question of the Gray Island's military strength can be seen in the nation's shield. It's hard to say whether it's a dagger (a weak army), a sword half concealed (a strong but hidden army), or a broken sword (no army at all). The truth is that the Gray Isle does have strong military, a carefully guarded secret which has endured for over a century, and will likely endure for many years more. Whatever else they might be, Gray Islanders are masters at lies and all things roguish; growing up in a den of thieves makes one rather adept at dealing with them.

Unlike most other armies, the Gray Islander's force has but one express purpose: keep the Gray Isle free from foreign threats. Even if it were the only thing to stand between victory or the destruction of the rest of Termána, it would not show its force. Resentment of the betrayal that led to Taeireon's fall still smolders in the hearts of most Gray Islanders. Additionally (and more practically), the Islanders know that so long as the Gray Isle remains aloof, the rest of the world will continue to think it a strategic non-issue. Given that the Isle is virtually worthless from an economic standpoint, the Gray Islanders haven't needed an army these many decades to keep invaders away.

Perhaps the only benefit of the island's harshness is that her people are hardened in ways even charduni would find impressive. Defining a standing army is meaningless since the entire population could conceivably mobilize for war. Not unlike their Crilosian

My Will is My Own

There is more to the meaning of this principle though, every Gray Islander has their own version of just what that meaning is. The truth is found not in these varied views, but in the variety itself. The concept of self-belief and determination is critical to the Islanders; it defines their society, and produces the mercenary attitude most visitors see. However, this is not simple greed, but plumbs deeply into the people's psyche. Each Islander starts with the Code of Petals, but "makes and remakes" that image as they choose. This outward "appearance" is more than skin deep, emerging from the fount of an internal morality. They are each in essence, their own alignment.

neighbors, none of the Gray Islanders are non-combatant. This is most evident in the southeast where swamp folk charge wholesale against gatormen. Were the Isle invaded tomorrow, the hunter clans would be the aerial wing and scouts. Emernis would supply logisticians, counter-intelligence and assassins. The river folk would covert to a navy, and the swamp folk would form the main coastal defense. Though it remains unlikely that the Gray Isle could ultimately survive any serious invasion, any conqueror would almost certainly find themselves locked in a protracted war of costly attrition.

Cities

Emernis is luxurious by Gray Isle standards. Its grime-covered walls and half-eroded masonry are typical of what "cities" remain throughout the island. Out in the Rugged, most denizens build their homes from whatever materials they can find, and gather into groups to keep larger predators away. Most such hamlets are one (*maybe* two) street affairs made of earth, stone and sod; no larger, as the Islanders don't trust each other much more than they do outsiders. The houses huddle in a ring with no windows facing outwards. They're hard to miss, looking like ulcerating warts on the land.

Emernis, City of Ashes

Small City, Population 12000

(Humans 76%, Elves 12%, Other 12%)

Ruler: None

Gold Piece Limit: 15,000 gp

Assets: 18,000,000 gp

Resources: Exotic animals, criminal (and anti-criminal) expertise, livestock, fish

Militia: None

No Gray Islander reaches maturity without hearing the tale of the wonder that was Elamerneon. This dream is all that remains in an otherwise squalid

place. All but a few of the old buildings have completely collapsed, and those that remain have been heavily reworked. The acidic pall means most stonework is at most 50 years old. Despite this, common wisdom states that some treasure from the old city remains buried beneath the layers of rubble and refuse that now make up Emernis' foundation.

1. Old Casta's: Once a major government building, Old Casta's is Emernis' major indoor market. Vendors try to find free floor-space here, as it lets them sell their wares even when the weather's bad. As an additional benefit, it's always sweetly fragrant in Old Casta's; the ancient enchantments placed upon the original building are thankfully still working to this day.

2. Elba Daye's: Said to be the safest of the Isle's inns, as it serves poisoned food only half the time and most of the knives have been cleared from the rooms. Sure, the occasional client still enters his room and never leaves (at least under his own power), but it's still far safer than many other establishments, the most infamous being Jac's and Claer's, where it is said they lure travelers in and then serve them as dinner to their less-humanoid patrons.

3. Muik's Rest: Though they extend poor courtesy to outsiders, Emernis' people treat their Rugged cousins relatively well. Muik's Rest is a converted tavern and stage, which once served as a major bath in the days of Taeireon. Magic keeps the interior bright as day and fresh as spring. Located strategically next to the docks, Muik's is also a popular stop for foreigners hoping to enter the Rugged by way of the Mottled River. The main warning is for guests to sit well back, as some of the acts are "hungry."

4. Icheeka Heads: These massive busts of humanoid heads are just about the only parts of the old city one can see in their near-original form. They're everywhere, and even the oldest of Emernis don't know them all. They actually change location every few years when no one's looking. When so mobile, they pay no heed to the houses and roads built after the old kingdom's fall.

Gray Islanders are careful to keep their children away from the heads, since some have been lost when left unattended near them. Most believe they were eaten, though a few claim that the heads are gateways accessible only to the young.

Karsian

Name: The Allied Fortresses of the Karsian War Queen

Population: 500,000 (85% human, 5% halfling, 10% other)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: War Queen Metea (*female human, Ari8/Ftr10, LN*)

Capital: Regamas (60,000)

Major Cities: Vorsus (25,000), Cylos (20,000), Rehalna (20,000), Breskal (16,000)

Language: Termanan

Religion: Hedrada, Chardun

Currency: Gold knight (1 gp), silver captain (1 sp), copper soldier (1 cp)

Resources: Fishing, timber, iron, cattle

Major Imports: Cloth, grain, precious metals

Allies: Azale, Silverisle

Enemies: Blood Bayou, Sunharrow, Thorvalos, North Crilos, South Crilos

History

The Allied Fortresses of the Karsian War Queen were founded many centuries before the Divine War by a group of early devotees of Hedrada and Corean. They chose a peaceful and fertile section of Termana and settled in to tame and defend it with great and lasting success, their country soon growing to the most powerful and influential human nation in western Termana. They have maintained this status with little variance through the ages, though the worship of Corean has slowly fallen away to be replaced by that of Chardun, and a certain amount of cold-hearted greed has gradually crept in to Karsian's government and economy.

Since the Titanswar, Karsian has lost land beneath the Blood Sea as well as some of the prosperity of its fields. Nevertheless, it has maintained the power of its armies and remained steadfastly on the side of the gods and of civilization, serving as a powerful force against the charduni and the Ghoul King, and stalwartly resisting the chaotic influence of the Blood Bayou. The current uneasy peace in the region has made Karsian's people and armies restless however, and rebellion is manifesting in unexpected ways. Worship of

Madriel, Tanil and even Enkili and Denev is becoming more and more common, and small, politically radical communal villages are cropping up across the countryside, especially south of the Antareas River.

Geography

North of the Antareas River, Karsian's geography consists of soft rolling hills and patches of forest, crisscrossed and dotted with tiny streams and ponds. South of the great river, the hills taper off into plains, and the mighty Dire Woods peter out into wide grasslands. On the southern coast, near the border of Azale, the plains and beaches run together in sandy, near-desert expanses, and south of the border city of Vorsus, water tends to be scarce.

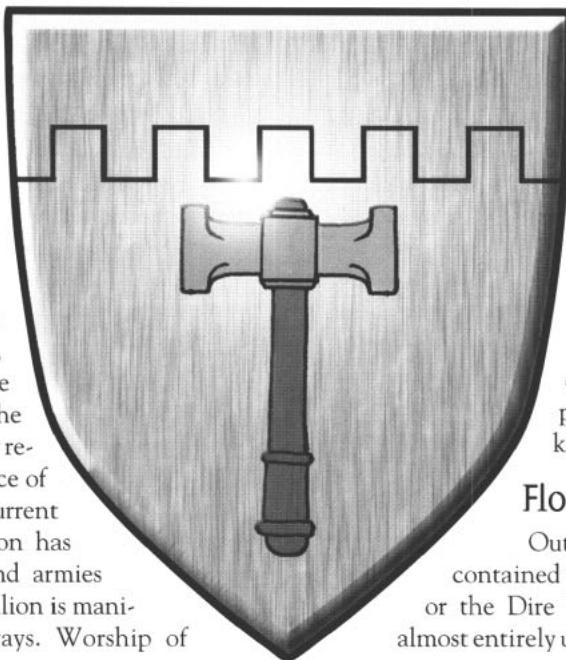
Antareas River (Warm Aquatic, EL 2): In spite of the water's foulness near the mouth of the Antareas where it flows into the Blood Sea, this wide, deep river is nevertheless counted as the largest body of fresh water west of Lake Minagan. About two days' journey from the capital city of Regama, the water in the Antareas becomes an uncontaminated green in color, drinkable and slightly sweet from the algae that gives it its hue. Trains of wagons journey east from Regama on a constant basis, returning with barrels full of clean water to supplement the city's wells.

Fishing is good in the deeper pools along the Antareas' course, except during salmon season, when tainted salmon swim up from the Blood Sea, killing and mutilating the edible fish as well as anything that has the misfortune to try and catch one of them. The citizens of Regama do what they can to eradicate the species, but every year a few win past the traps and barricades, leading to further danger near the spawning grounds in the Dire Woods, such as rampages by blood-maddened dire bears who have eaten too many of the Blood Sea fish.

Fortunately, the fingerling salmon that make their way back downriver each year are remarkably untainted, and an unpopular group of radical druids and rangers are trying to save the Antareas River salmon by devising spells to protect them in the bloody water. They have yet to succeed in their efforts, and most people would prefer to simply kill all the salmon outright.

Flora and Fauna

Outside of rare and generally well-contained invasions from the Blood Sea or the Dire Woods, Karsian's wildlife is almost entirely unremarkable. Even mundane



predators tend to stay in the Dire Woods, avoiding the large human population and the regular military patrols. As for the Woods themselves, several attempts have been made to clear the forest for timber and drive all dangerous creatures from the kingdom completely. Every one of these efforts has thus far been disastrously unsuccessful, and after each foray the Karsian portion of the Dire Woods seems only to increase in strangeness and ferocity.

Culture

The people of Karsian have traditions for everything, from what to eat on the holy days of each of god to how to wear one's hair and beard to the funeral of an heir who died honorably in battle. Everything, no matter how important or insignificant, has a specific way it must be done. Such all-pervasive convention leaves little room for individuality or inventive thinking, however, proving decisively that tradition is not the same thing as culture.

Karsian produces little art, and its fashions and architecture are utilitarian and dull, even among the upper classes. Though singing in community choirs is a popular form of entertainment (being one of very few types of legal public social interaction), the popular songs are largely the same as they have been for generations, and even new songs of patriotism or devotion to Hedrada are viewed with a certain amount of suspicion and disapproval. Nothing is worthwhile in Karsian unless it is hundreds of years old.

This rigid inability to change with the flow of time has left post-Titanswar Karsian in a state of cultural fragility. In places such as the City of the Poor in Regama, this fragility has given way to a marrow-deep depression in the lower classes. In Rehalna it shows in the agitated warmongering of the local army. Throughout the Dire Woods and other wild areas, fanatic radicals openly rebel against tradition and sometimes against civilization itself. Karsian, whether it wants to or not, is transforming along with the rest of the Scarred Lands — though what it will become in the end remains to be seen.

Azale and the Treaty of Vorsus

So why has there been no mention, in this discussion of Karsian culture, about the nigh-subjugated territory of Azale?

The truth is, though it would horribly prick Azalean pride to know it, the average Karsian citizen simply doesn't give them that much thought. Karsian dominance may play a substantial part in the lives of Azalean citizens, but Karsians, for the most part, could care less. When they think about it at all, they tend to think of the Treaty of Vorsus as a historical curiosity, and Azale as a kingdom of lazy good-for-nothings who do nothing but absorb Karsian capital, resources and military attention that could better be used closer to home. They rarely push for any such changes, of course, as the War Queen seems happy with things as they are, but the bottom line is that the average Karsian just doesn't much care about Azale at all.

Crime and Punishment

Crime and punishment are extremely detailed and strict in Karsian. A proscribed code of law and a complex range of permits, prohibitions and punishments regulate almost any and every imaginable activity. Social class is a major factor in determining guilt and punishment as well; the highest nobles and officers are never punished as severely as the common people. The court system is also much more interested in the preservation of order than in fairness, so sentences tend to be swift and somewhat arbitrary and unalterable. Karsian's peasant class prisons (where most visitors to the nation will be placed after committing crimes) are often overcrowded and poorly maintained. The prisons for the nobility, on the other hand, would seem like vacation spots to the vast majority of Karsian's inhabitants.

Crime and Punishment in Karsian

Crime

Murder of a person in a higher social class
 Murder of a person from a lower social class
 Theft from someone of higher class
 Theft from someone of lower class
 Sleeping in the street
 Public intoxication
 Carrying an unlicensed weapon

Punishment

Crucifixion* for two full days per murder
 Imprisonment in a jail appropriate to social standing
 Slavery in the service of the victim until twice the monetary cost of the theft is repaid
 Repay monetary cost plus fine
 Short jail sentence
 Short jail sentence
 Fine or confiscation of possessions and/or jail sentence if fine cannot be paid

* Karsians use no supporting rope in crucifixions, making the punishment particularly painful and doing a great deal of lasting harm wherever the nails are driven.

The code of laws is far too extensive to transcribe here, but a few examples of crimes and their punishments follow.

Armed Forces

Army officers in Karsian have nearly as much prestige as the born nobility, and even common soldiers enjoy one of the highest levels of privilege in all the Allied Fortresses. Joining the army is expensive, as full time soldiers must provide their own arms, armor, training and uniforms, but common families often spend their entire lives saving up to be able to send one or two children to join this higher and more secure social class. Life in the army is difficult, however, and discipline is very strict. Even in the recent peace, where most young soldiers are untried in battle, Karsian's army is nevertheless one of the most daunting military forces in Termana.

Cities

Usually built around or within some ancient fortress or other, Karsian's cities are clean, orderly and highly militarized. Architecture is built to last, and while its simple lines and gray uniformity cannot be called beautiful, neither are these cities ugly in their austerity. "Handsome" and "grand" are better descriptors of the ancient strongholds and cities of the War Queen. Entertainment is similarly austere, but nevertheless readily available — such as it is. Streets are policed by the army in residence, and in the current edgy regional peace, most of the army's duties involve preventing and punishing the more interesting and lively forms of entertainment.

Regama

Metropolis, Population 60,000

(80% human, 5% halfling, 15% other)

Ruler: War Princess Metelya, first cousin to the War Queen
(female human Ari 9/Ftr 8, LN)

Gold Piece Limit: 100,000 gp

Assets: 300,000,000 gp

Resources: Fishing, timber, iron

Militia: Soldiers: 500 War2, 250 War3, 150 War4, 100 War5;
Officers: 15 War8, 9 War6/Ftr 3, **Generals:** 2 War6/Ftr4/Ari4

Regama is a stately old city typical of Karsian's austere grandeur. Even though it is the second largest city on the continent, entertainment consists primarily of participating in neighborhood musical and sporting events, and anything less healthy or family-friendly is either heavily restricted in public or simply outright illegal.

1. Fortress Regama: A huge wall of iron and stone surrounds nearly two thirds of the city of Regama. The marketplace, as well as the homes and workplaces of the merchant, priest, scholar and other middle classes range around the outer walls and near the main eastern gates, while the homes of officers and nobles cluster near the War Palace in the center.

Common soldiers have barracks built into the city walls themselves, or stationed at intervals throughout the city in order to maintain the peace. The fortress walls have never been breached or taken, and even the nearby Blood Sea poses little threat here.

2. The War Palace: Said to be the first fortress ever built in Karsian, the War Palace is many centuries old and constructed of heavy stone sheathed in black iron. Dark and imposing, the War Palace too has never been taken by enemy forces, even before the city and its walls were built around it. Karsian's extensive historical documents, which become more and more mythical and implausible the further one delves into the past, have whole chapters of information devoted to the origins, battles, maintenance and traditional symbolism of the War Palace in Regama. It has a square and ugly exterior that belies the luxury within, where War Queen Metea and her closest councilors live and work.

3. The Docks: Foul with the putrescence of the Blood Sea, the docks of Regama are located just outside the city walls and are the only well-patrolled and reasonably orderly section of the City of the Poor. Before the Divine War, the docks were the site of a large portion of Regama's commerce as great ships sailed up the Antareas with goods to trade in the city. Now, though there is still some travel and commerce over the tainted waters and the army of Karsian still maintains the docks as a usable port, this section of the city is little more than a garbage dump for whatever the upper classes wish to be rid of. Embarrassing corpses, dangerous magical wastes, and of course the outlet pipes of the city's excellent sewer system — all are dumped into the blood-spoiled river to be eventually washed out to sea. During the day, the docks are the safest (if the most malodorous) neighborhood outside the city walls. At night, the dangers of seeing something one shouldn't can be deadly.

4. The City of the Poor: The lower classes of Regama's citizens cannot afford to live inside the city, so they are permitted to cluster together between the fortress wall and bloody ocean, tucked into a corner of land where they are least apt to be noticed by visitors to Regama. Indeed, a wall has been built, jutting from the fortress and reaching halfway to the sea. The wall was constructed to protect the City of the Poor, but more importantly, it also hides the filthy district so that only those approaching by water are likely to see the crowded chaos of poverty squatting at Regama's feet. Connected to the main city by a series of well-guarded gates, the City of the Poor is scantily patrolled and deadly. Criminals hide here from the city guards, and all manner of illicit activity (both the treacherous and the enjoyable) takes place here.

Other Cities

Vorsus: The most entertaining city in Karsian, the fortress city of Vorsus lies between the border of

Azale and the semi-desert of the southern coast. Vorsus is not a wealthy city, the arid heat making for a lack of resources and the distance from all other major Karsian cities making for poor commerce. Indeed, officers sent to Karsian are usually sent there as a punishment of sorts — the embarrassing and the rebellious can be kept out of the way without scandal, simply by assigning them to Vorsus. The carefree laziness of Azale is catching as well, especially when so much of the government of Vorsus is less than perfectly loyal to the traditional philosophies of Karsian and Hedrada.

Crime is no more common in Vorsus than anywhere else in Karsian, but laws are much less strict here, and entertainment is more creative and free-spirited. The people of Vorsus are not very productive in comparison to other cities in Karsian, but they are certainly happier, and oddly enough, though the city is the least wealthy in the nation, the poor here seem to be the least impoverished of anywhere in Karsian.

Cylos: A strangely haunted town, Cylos lies on the edge of the eerie Dire Woods. The oppressive austerity of Karsian is somehow most stifling here, though one would be hard put to say why, even after living here for some time. It does not seem outwardly different from other Karsian fortresses. The citizenry are engaged, however, a constant battle to keep the forest from encroaching on the city, and for some reason the walls of Cylos are in continuous need of repair — the fortress seems always to rust and crumble faster than the people can rebuild it.

Beyond Cylos, just inside the forest, a radical band of Denev-worshipping druids and rangers works constantly to protect the Dire Woods and other natural places from harm by human hands. This group has also been known to deliberately undermine local production, and rumor has it that these fanatics will even kill people on occasion, so long as in so doing they can save a few trees or animals from Cylos' thriving timber industry.

Rehalna: The restlessness of Karsian's armies is most notable in Rehalna, on the border with Sunharrow. Relations with Sunharrow have been strained for generations, and the prejudice and hatred between the two peoples runs very deep. Lately, in spite of the discipline of the army, things have become volatile on the border indeed. Minor disagreements accelerate with sufficient regularity into cross-border scuffles that Rehalna is becoming an embarrassment to the Karsian government, requiring constant apologies to King Lanesh for another unauthorized infringement on his borders. Luckily, the king of Sunharrow is in no position to offer any threat to powerful Karsian, and it is rare that either side takes serious casualties.

Breskal: Perhaps the most conservative and unremarkable region in Karsian, Breskal is best known for its excellent beef and dairy cattle and little else. The citizens of Breskal tend to be plumper than most, and visitors are encouraged to sample the delicious local cheese pastries.

Kasiavael

Name: Kasiavael, the Skysight Realm

Population: 100,000 (80% forsaken elf, 15% half-elf, 5% human)

Government: Oligarchy

Ruler: Council of the High Magi: Tamaean (male elf Wiz15/Hmg10, NE), Shasalea (female elf Wiz10/Hmg10, N), Vorus (female elf Wiz10/Hmg10, NE), Galthean (female elf Wiz12/Hmg8, CN), Launak (male elf Wiz15/Hmg5, N), Kolderias (male elf Wiz10/Hmg10, NG), Boraes (female elf Wiz19, N), Nythael (male elf Wiz15/Hmg5, CN), Valishan (male elf Wiz18, NG)

Capital: High Tower (5,000)

Major Cities: Dolamean (20,000), Riskahel (15,000), Thoskae (10,000)

Languages: High elven

Religion: None

Currency: Platinum star (20 gp), gold star (10 gp), gold comet (1 gp), silver moon (5 sp), silver sphere (2 sp), silver crescent (1 sp), copper circlet (1 cp)

Resources: Magic items, produce, tin

Major Imports: Gems, iron, gold

Allies: Forsaken elf realms

Enemies: Charduni Empire

History

During the time of Eldura-tre, Kasiavael was known for its wise and powerful high magi, second only in strength to the nigh-legendary sorcerers of the Citadel of the Rose. Kasiavael was a quiet province, where elves with an interest in magic lived in bustling cities surrounding high towers, while their benevolent magi rulers pursued new heights of divination and summoning magic. With all their power, however, it is said that the Order of the Star, the high magi of the Skysight Realm, predicted neither the coming of Chern nor the fall of their god. Some elven sages speculate that the magi's divination magic was directly granted by the high elven demigod, and it could not predict the god's own destruction since he would not exist to grant them knowledge. This rumor is furthered by the fact that the most powerful of elven divinations have not functioned since the

Titanswar, though the high magi have never revealed the extent or source of their foresight.

During the Divine War, Kasiavael wizards contributed to the war effort by containing the dark magic and outsiders spawned by the titans' passing. They were able to predict their enemies' movements and array the vast high elven armies to their best effect. Eventually even the most dangerous of titanspawn was driven from elven lands. But even the most powerful of elven divinations were unable to predict the actions of the eight greater gods. Thus did Kadum's Deluge come as a surprise to the elves of Kasiavael, and although the realm is distant, the bloody waves eradicated settlements along the northern coast. Startled as they were by this unprecedented destruction, the high magi were unprepared for the carnage to come with Chern's arrival. Kasiavael magi fought bravely against the Last Great Suffering, their *manaspears* flashing and their spellshields warding off the titan's dark conjurations. Although the Order of the Star was instrumental in finally defeating Chern, even they could not prevent their god's death.

After the war, the high magi of Kasiavael gave up their weakened divination magic to focus on summoning, as well as the traditional elven specialties of illusion and abjuration. They searched the four corners of the Scarred Lands and plumbed the depths of the planes, but no trace of their god or means to resurrect him could be found. It is unknown when the

high magi began to dabble with the dark power that now corrupts their magic and causes fiends to run rampant across the once fair realm. In any event, their delvings have transformed this once peaceful bastion into a realm of terror, where common elves cling to magical tyrants out of fear and desperation. The high magi of Kasiavael are gradually losing the secrets of their magical heritage in exchange for the dark magic and corruption of fiends.

Geography

Kasiavael occupies the northern half of the Isle of Eldurathryn, sharing a border with Ehitovael along the Skysight River. Unlike Ehitovael, the Skysight realm is bordered in the north by the Blood Sea, often causing problems with blood-tainted sea life and titanspawn. To the east, the bloody waters gradually fade into a brilliant



blue, delineating the border of the Cerulean Ocean. The nation is composed of foothills surrounding Mt. Syvos, slowly spreading out into light forests and gentle plains. Most Kasiavaens dwell in the realm's large cities, making the cities mere dots of civilization within a vast and largely untouched wilderness. With the exceptions of High Tower, which lies in the shadow of Mt. Syvos, and Thoskae, which lies in the center of the northern plains, most Kasiavaen settlements rest on the Isle's coasts.

Mt. Syvos (Temperate Mountain, EL 10): Once an ancient library and stronghold of elven knowledge sat atop this immense peak. Elves familiar with Ghelspad have claimed that this collection of forgotten lore exceeded that of even far-off Lokil, though this may be mere elven posturing. In any event, the library was sealed off during Kadum's Deluge, its tunnels collapsing and entrapping the elves therein. The elves of Kasiavael have never been able to excavate enough of the library to discover whether any ancient records remain. The region is now supposedly haunted by dangerous free-willed undead and scoured by random and fluctuating magical fields.

Skysight River (Temperate Aquatic, EL 7): Named for the great divinatory magics the elves of Kasiavael once worked along its banks, the Skysight River forms a border between Kasiavael and Ehitovael. The river flows through the untouched wilderness of the Isle of Eldurathryn before emptying into the Cerulean Ocean. The Skysight is known for its dangerous aquatic fey and

drowned spirits as well as for the hint of magic said to be contained within the mystical waters.

These waters are, indeed, magical. Anyone with the proper knowledge may use them to enhance spells of the Divination school. Doing so requires a Spellcraft (DC 15 + spell level) check and involves use of the water as an additional material component. Doing so grants the caster +1 effective caster level for the purpose of casting the divination. This may only be performed when standing on the shore of the Skysight River — using the waters more than 10 feet from the river negates this special property.

Flora and Fauna

Unlike Ehitovael, Kasiavael is plagued with evil outsiders, rogue faeries and titanspawn, the result of summoning magics and bindings gone awry. Kasiavael's forests have more fey than any other in Termana, ranging from the benevolent hamadryad to the deranged sundered woman and the insidious blood sprites. Other monsters wandering the untouched land include devils, demons, undead, twisted aberrations and other titanspawn. Particularly perilous are the cast-off monstrosities of Mesos, such as howling abominations, astral devourers and beholders, which are drawn to the magical energies of the region. Kasiavaen patrols can do very little to deal with these dangerous creatures, and travelers are well advised to stick to the civilized portions of the realm.



On the other hand, the ancient forests of the Skysight Realm hold rare plants and minerals considered lost even to the untamed jungles of Termana. Knowledgeable herbalists and alchemists can find plants in Kasiavael that contain such a great capacity for healing as to be considered only legends. If one can brave the dangers of the forests, one can find herbs that cure the worst of poisons, break evil enchantments and curses, and even ease the diseases of Chern himself.

Culture

In Kasiavael, magic pervades every aspect of daily life. Powerful illusions and wondrous enchantments give Kasiavaen cities the impression of masterpieces from one of Erias' dream realms. Everyone, from the highest elven magus to the lowliest human slave, has some experience with the mystic arts, even if only because they've directly benefited from their application. Wizards, who have dedicated their lives to mastering the arcane and thus empowering their realm and race, are naturally fit to lead — and presumably do so with wisdom and justice. In reality, however, much of the populace lives in fear of their magus rulers and the magic they represent.

In Kasiavael the darker part of elven nature has risen to the fore, buoyed by overabundant and excessively dangerous magic. Unlike the simple illusionary magic practiced throughout most of the elven realms, high magi in Kasiavael often deal with extraplanar creatures and lost spirits. Cast-off experiments, loosed demons and dangerous wild magics haunt the wilderness, kept in check only by spell shields carelessly erected to protect the cities. The wizards care for little but their own towers, and the populace is forced to crowd about them, subject to the high magi's tyrannical dictates.

In ancient times, experimentation by these dark wizards was kept in check by the necessities of ruling their flourishing realm. Today, each Kasiavaen city is ruled by its own regional wizard, leaving the high magi to their own devices. Free of the dangers of the Charduni Empire and the burden of managing the nation, the high magi of Kasiavael engage in mad plots, both to gather power internally and to undermine their external foes. It is uncertain whether even the Council can rein in the wizards' worst excesses. While a few of the more self-aware wizards are conscious of their fallen nature, most of the high magi see gods and demons as yet more pawns in a vast game, another tool to achieve their ever more obscure goals.

Because of the pervasiveness of arcane magic in Kasiavael, divine magic is little respected. Even before the Divine War, Kasiavaens were far less religious than the other folk of Eldura-tre and clerics were quite rare. Since the war, divine magic is utterly disdained in favor of the arcane. Kasiavaens recog-

High Magi of the Six Orders

In ancient times, the legendary elven demigod imbued the wisest, most powerful and most enlightened of high elf wizards with a measure of his power, creating the first high magi of Eldura-tre. As a devoted defender of his people and a paragon of chaos, the lost god taught his devoted wizards how to harness the true power of illusion and abjuration spells. With her god's secrets, an elven high magus could craft wondrous illusions and achieve wardings beyond even the ken of the mighty followers of Mesos.

In the days of Eldura-tre, the magi grouped themselves based on philosophy, predilection and style of magic, although each order continued to pass on the original secrets revealed by the elven demigod. The Order of Rose was once the "core" of the high magi tradition, focusing on the school of Abjuration; it is rumored that before these magi were lost they contained among their number many of those originally trained by the elven demigod himself. Each derivative order focused on a single aspect of the high elven civilization; the Star focused on divination, the Wave on their love of the ocean, the Blade on warfare in all its forms, the Eagle on diplomacy and rulership, and the Leaf on attunement with nature. Over time, these orders became distinct entities and settled in different parts of the great empire. After the Titanswar, when Eldura-tre disintegrated into the various elven realms, the high magi order in each realm began to identify itself more with the realm it occupied than which the other orders or the empire as a whole. Scholars have speculated for years whether each order simply reacted to the dominant character of each realm or whether the philosophy of each order imprinted itself upon the local culture, creating the widely divergent responses to the catastrophe of the elves seen today. Regardless, each order today recruits only from the wizards of the realm in which they reside, as outsiders are thought to lack sufficient vision to truly master each order's particular brand of magic.

Although most high magi take one or more levels in the high magus prestige class (see the Appendix), a member of an order without that class is still considered a high magus. Since the Titanswar, the high magi of the various orders have become quite fractious and often refuse to acknowledge the status of magi from different orders. This squabbling, along with the lack of new apprentices, has led to the decline of traditional elven magic in each of the elven realms. Common reactions to high magi vary greatly in each realm. While in Ehitovael high magi are seen as little more than common sea wizards, in Kasiavael the magi are still respected, indeed feared, even by other powerful wizards.

nize that the divine has done naught but fail them, curse them and lead them to misery, while the power of the high magi protects them still. It is unknown how or even whether the Kasiavaens would accept the return of their lost god.

For all their disrespect for divine power and fear of arcane magic, however, the Kasiavaens retain an almost spiritual belief in the power of the stars. Although most elves are old enough to remember a vastly different night sky and constellations, Kasiavaens continue to place an extraordinary amount of faith on the ability of various astrological phenomena to impact their daily lives. Common elves regularly consult Singers of Stars, wandering bards that use their knowledge of astrology to improve their divinatory prowess, to read their future, be it dark or bright (see **Player's Guide to Wizards, Bards and Sorcerers**). Similarly, high astrologers (see **Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore**) are quite common among Kasiavaen wizards who do not seek the raw power of high magi. Although the Order of the Star considers astrologers to be simple hedge wizards, they are well respected among the populace. It is an irony lost on the high magi that these "simple hedge wizards" may be truer to the legacy of the order's forbearers than the order itself.

Like other forsaken elves, Kasiavaens prefer to dress in robes with overly elaborate patterns in brilliant blues, red and yellows, mellowed with darker brocades and linens. Although their garb appears busy to human eyes, careful observation can discern patterns forming spell sigils and runes. Often Kasiavaen dress bears simple enchantments to deflect blows or protect against fiends. Curiously, these patterns match some of the magical tattoos prevalent among the dark elves of Dier Drendal, perhaps indicating some ancient common source of elven magic.

Crime and Punishment

Law in each Kasiavaen cities is determined by the will of its wizard ruler. Although the laws are different in each city, typical crimes include failure to obey a wizard, disturbance of a wizard's research (including violence and other breaches of the peace), casting unsanctioned magic, and sorcery. Punishments are similarly capricious, although more just rulers make some attempt to punish like crimes in a like manner. Typical punishments range from simple fines to death, magical experimentation (torture and death) and exile (tantamount to death). Imprisonment is rare, both due to the freedom-loving nature of elves and the fact that the wizards would rather not be bothered with it.

Armed Forces

The Kasiavaen militia is composed primarily of half-elven warriors, drafted to track rogue monsters

through the wilderness. Because half-elves are forbidden from learning wizardry, these patrols are woefully inadequate to deal with the powerful outsiders, malicious fey and undead beyond the city walls. This does not much concern the high magi, who are protected within the magically reinforced cities and are capable of teleporting between communities. In addition to half-elven militia, most cities also have a well-trained cadre of wizards to destroy any beast foolish enough to attack the elves directly.

Cities

Unlike most of the forsaken elf realms, Kasiavaen cities are kept in good repair and are occupied at near capacity. This is at least partially because the countryside is all but uninhabitable due to the magical dangers spawned by the wizards' research. Cities are enhanced with illusions and other magic to make them beautiful to behold and to ease all aspects of life. Each is ruled by a single high magus.

High Tower

Small city, Population 5,000

(Forsaken elves 90%, Half-elves 10%)

Ruler: Council of the High Magi: Tamaean (*male elf Wiz10/Hmg10, NE*), Shasalea (*female elf Wiz10/Hmg10, N*), Vorus (*female elf Wiz10/Hmg10, NE*), Galthean (*female elf Wiz12/Hmg8, CN*), Launak (*male elf Wiz15/Hmg5, N*), Kolderias (*male elf Wiz10/Hmg10, NG*), Boraes (*female elf Wiz19, N*), Nythael (*male elf Wiz15/Hmg5, CN*), Valishan (*male elf Wiz18, NG*)

Gold Piece Limit: 15,000 gp

Assets: 3,750,000 gp

Resources: Magic items, paper, ink, books

Militia: Skyguard 250 War2; Spellguard 25 Wiz7

The capital city of High Tower is little more than a series of ancient wizard's towers, connected by invisible or even more fanciful bridges, above a small collection of support buildings. Only the high magi and their apprentices, servants and retainers live in High Tower, to better provide the seclusion necessary for magical research and experimentation. High Tower is enhanced with illusions and spells allowing flight and telekinesis throughout the city.

1. The First Tower: The tower belonging to the first high magus of the council, currently High Magus Tamaean.

2. The Old Tower: This ancient tower predates the rest of the city and is said to hold arcane secrets beyond the understanding of even the most powerful high magus.

3. The Ruined Temple: Once a great temple to the elven god and an arcane library of lost elven lore, this building lies in ruins. The magi do not even bother to cloak this building in illusions as it represents the power of arcane magic over fallen divine power.

4. The Shielding Tower: The magical wards in this tower protect each of the Kasiavaen cities from the dangers of the wilderness with powerful abjuration magics.

5. The Tower of Semblance: This tower maintains and reinforces the potent illusions that surround High Tower.

6. The Apprentices' Tower: Apprentices reside and are trained in this tower, although there have been few apprentices since the loss of the elven god and the afflictions that have befallen the forsaken elves.

7. The Tower of Skysight: The site of the great divinatory rituals performed by the high magi in ancient times, this tower has been all but abandoned since the death of the elven god made such magic impossible.

8. The Lapis Tower: The highest tower and the gathering place for the Council of High Magi. This tower possesses a dome that can assume any appearance, including transparency to allow a view of the open sky.

10. The Lost Tower: Legend holds that this tower was overrun with demons and other evil beings

due to the twisted experiments of an ancient high magus. It rests sealed and abandoned.

9. The Ruby Tower: The seat of Kasiavael's most powerful destructive magics, it is said that the magic of this tower can overcome any invading force.

Other Cities

Dolamean: A large port city on the edge of the Blood Sea, Dolemean engages in commerce with the rest of the forsaken elf realms. Dolameans are known as excellent sea witches, and they are favored on Ehitovael's naval ships.

Riskahel: The easternmost city in all of Termana, this port city on the Cerulean Ocean is the ideal starting point for voyages to other distant continents, such as Asherak. Riskahel's economy is based primarily on fishing.

Thoskae: Deep within the interior of Kasiavael, Thoskae must constantly guard against the magical dangers of the wilderness. It is known for providing rare spell components from these dangerous creatures.

North Crilos

Name: The Kingdom of Nør Krijlaas

Population: 65,000 (90% human, 10% other)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: Chief Endol (*male human Bbn18, CN*)

Capital: Endol (16,000)

Major Cities: Martek (10,000), Calmor (8,000), Hardesk (5,000), Yoseva (1,000)

Languages: Termanan

Religion: Tanil, Denev, Enkili

Currency: None official; most other currencies are accepted

Resources: Timber, cattle, fresh produce, fish

Major Imports: Semi-precious gems, gold, skilled instructors

Allies: Sunharrow, Karsian

Enemies: Blood Bayou, South Crilos

History

A butcher's tale is best writ in blood, a general's tale is best writ in gold. A warrior's tale is best writ in song, spun upon stars, and greater than both.

— Crilosian adage

According to their mytho-historic tradition, the people of Crilos were born when three exiled groups from the distant north arrived at the Mount on Blue Fields (as they dubbed the island that would become Crilos) and founded a new nation under the beneficence of the *ushada*, specifically Bear, the island's greatest totem. The first of these were the Gjora, hailing from Albadia during the fall of the Thael dynasty, almost two and a half millennia before the Divine War ended. They left mostly of their own free will, having no wish to embroil themselves in the final destruction of Lede, the endless string of counterattacks, and attendant political fallout. This straightforward approach to planning typifies the Gjora, and in the Crilosian Trinity they are "the Wisdom of Simple Forethought."

The second group was the Skiji, a tribe of Darakene that suffered greatly when that nation dissolved around that same time. The Skiji were an honest folk who valued forgiveness. This led to their eventual decline as more mercenary tribes took advantage of the Skiji's goodwill. One incident in particular, wherein an alliance of rival clans massacred

a major Skijic settlement, is recalled with particular bile, and lies at the core of the Crilosians' strict policy of leaving civilians unscathed even in the worst of wars. In the Crilosian Trinity, the Skiji are "the Heart Given Freely."

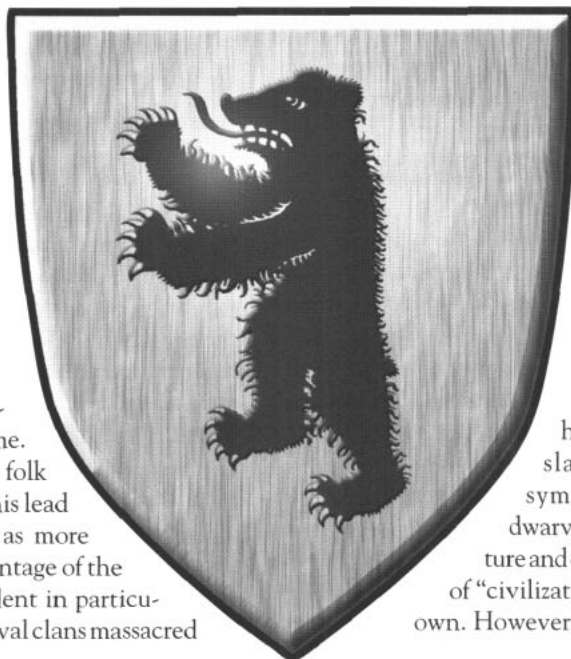
The last settlers were the Laks who, like the other two groups, were migrants from Ghelspad. Their origins lie in the modern day Festering Fields, which at the time of their departure were a roiling battleground between the successor nations of Elz and Zathiske. The Laks had the unenviable position of being descended from the genie-binding sorcerers of Elz and the neo-rationalist rulers of Zathiske. When the fighting had destroyed most of their settlements and threatened to split their people into civil war, the Laks fled southwards, finding their way to the Mount of Blue Fields just 15 years after the arrival of the Skiji and Gjora. In the Crilosian Trinity, the Laks represent "Soundness of Body." Back on Ghelspad, those few Laks that remained, along with other like-minded Zathiskans, would be destined to found ill-fated Sumara.

When the three finally met there was much rejoicing and the *ushada*, it is said, tested the new arrivals in a series of trials. Collateral sources from Karsian and Lokil do indicate that Crilos underwent significant climactic and geologic upheavals during that time, including the eruption of Mount Keljar in OC 2452. In the end, Gjora's sorcery, Lak's ingenuity and Skiji's compassion held the population together. Less than a decade later, the turmoil had stopped — the *ushada* had been appeased. The nation of Crilos was born and for their labors the three founders were granted rest.

What then followed was a long period of relative calm as the Crilosians discovered a new cultural identity under the guidance of Bear and other *ushada*.

Ushadani fast became the closest thing the Crilosians had to a state religion and ad hoc councils slowly congealed to their modern forms. Eriak, the First Chief, ascended the mantle of command at Endol in OC 2482, and his *laissez-faire* style of rule set the precedent for Crilosian chiefs on both sides of the Angry Hills to this day.

Matters finally came to a head with the charduni onslaught. The Crilosians sympathized with the dark dwarves, whose clear-minded nature and disdain for the useless trapping of "civilization" ran in accord with their own. However, the dark dwarves' presump-



The Crilosian Trinity

Symbolism is everything to the Crilosians, a byproduct of their deeply spiritual nature. High astrologers are esteemed throughout the north and south, and no Crilosian chief makes war without the say-so of the stars. Though the single greatest symbol to Crilosians is the Bear, one icon in particular, the Crilosian Trinity, holds an even more personal meaning. The Trinity is embodied in the three mytho-historic founders of Crilos, after whom the three founding peoples are named: Gjora, Skiji and Lak. The three's adventures are known to every child, and their deeds are the benchmark against which adults measure their own.

Gjora was the wise one who first allied with the Aspect — that is, the physical manifestation — of the *ushada* Bear to unravel the wards of the Shining Hill, a place of power for the spirits of the north, long denied them by an ancient and forgotten treachery. In so doing she became the first of its Emerald Maidens, founding a mystical sisterhood with eerie parallels to the Hellianns over a continent away. Her counterpoint was Lak, the martial one, whose physical strength was undeniable. His passion burned like a beacon at night, and he was the second called to serve Bear, becoming the first of Crilos' Bear Warriors. Upon his mortal death he was made the Warden of the Second Gate of Elligaas, ensuring that none unworthy of the Battle Hall of the Dead could enter. Their reluctant leader was Skiji, the font of compassion who was their surrogate uncle and conscience. Though neither paladin nor cleric, he was nonetheless said to possess potent healing powers. Bear chose him not for his great strength or prowess, but because he was warmed and comforted by Skiji's radiance and resilient soul.

Whatever other principles they may adhere to, all Crilosians esteem the trinity: the sound of body, the wise mind, and the kind heart.

tion in seeking dominion over others stoked the Crilosian soul to passionate rage. The Blue Islanders' own history of wars against outside oppression made them heavily sympathetic to those the charduni enslaved. In the end, the Crilosians saw in the charduni something of what they were and everything of what they feared to become. When the call went out for aid in halting the advance of the Land of Chains, the Crilosians were among the first to answer.

The intercession of the Divine War barely registered in Crilos. By this time, their military had matured and the *ushada* seemed to support the conflict as holy. Even the Bear Warriors — wild, almost berserk war-

riors who, it is said, actually serve as Bear's spiritual mounts in battle — abandoned their tradition of always fighting alone to battle alongside the nation's hoplites and irregulars. Though small in comparison to other armies, Crilos' forces were eminently reliable, aiding at key battles along the western coastal region. Unfortunately, this same conflict which had emboldened the Blue Islanders and fueled their sense of national pride would also lay the foundations for their eventual breakup into north and south.

This section of history, from the nation's founding to the end of the Divine War, is referred to as the Northern Saga. To this day, the more mythos-oriented northerners still adhere to it as being the true history of their land with events subsequent to it an abomination perpetuated by their southern cousins.

Geography

North Crilos is a land of natural beauty, something which on the surface seems wholly idyllic. Receiving the brisk easterly winds from the Blossoming Sea, the northern island stays between cool and mildly warm for most of the year. Storms are rare, a fact for which the *ushada* receive much thanks from the populous. Protected by potent totems and patrolled by their Aspects and near-feral Bear Warriors, the region is free but all of a very few enclaves of titanspawn and other foul creatures. Of these there are two sorts, small and easily overlooked, or powerful in the extreme.

As a general rule, things are as they appear. A rock is a rock and a stream is fit to drink. The other regular features are natural limestone walls and escarpments. Many of these are heavily worked, mostly likely by ancient druids, Aspects and sentient wildlife. They range from the beneficent to whimsical and are a welcome sign, indicating that the local *ushada* and their lands are healthy.

Mount Keljar (Temperate Mountains, EL 7): The highest peak in North Crilos, Mount Keljar is a

The Mount of Blue Fields

Crilos is a foreign adaptation and not what these northern humans call their island homeland. To them it is "the mount on blue fields" or "the mount." This was the name given to the island by the original founders, who first viewed it as a great mountain resting on the waters (the "blue fields") after many weeks at sea. *Krijlas* is the Crilosian word for "mountain," which when pronounced as *Krijlaas* gives added weighted, denoting "great mountain." *Krijlaason* therefore means "Children of the Great Mountain" which later converted into the modern Termanan appellation "Crilosian." Another common moniker is "Blue Islanders."



long dormant volcano, inactive since the nation's founding. Its slopes are rich in mineral deposits, including veins of mithril and clusters of gems. The water retardant soils prevent erosion, preserving bones of long extinct creatures and adamantine meteorites. This concentration of semi-magical wealth may be the reason why ioun beholders are not uncommon here.

Sickle River (Warm Forest, EL 4): When Lak ascended to the Vale of Stars, or so it is said, he let fall his sword that it might return to the earth of its birth. It wept as a child might weep for a dead parent, half in sorrow, and half in joyful remembrance. Its tears of silver sank deep into the ground while its blade, no longer needed, released its perfect form and flowed towards the sea. As it passed, the spirits of the land mourned with respect, their own tears falling freely until a river was born. Mythos aside, the spirits of the lost do congregate along the shores of the Sickte River. They wait, locals say, for the chance at redemption and final release.

Flora and Fauna

Cut off from the rest of Termana, Crilos' native life has evolved a startling uniqueness. The strong influence of the *ushada* and Tanil means most are unusually large and perfect specimens of their spe-

cies, and many are gifted with near-sentience. Mammals dominate, be they grazing elk, deer, the great cats and wolves that hunt them — or, of course, the great brown bears of the isle. Not to be outdone, Enkili's touch is evident as well, and many otherwise mundane creatures have minor control over water, electricity and the winds.

The northern isle's forests are as ancient as any on Scarn, and are filled with redwoods and oaks older than the nation itself. The canopy is enriched by flowering bromeliads while the forest floor is carpeted in lush, edible ferns. Like their animal neighbors, the flora of North Crilos is protected by totems and their Aspects. Denev's influence is strong as well and druids have reported their magic suddenly surging or renewing itself as they walk among the foliage.

The wildlife of North Crilos is largely benign — with two very major and very important exceptions. The first are the night-touched who, as the chosen of Hrinruuk upon the Mount, lie beyond the purview of the *ushada*. The second are the lightning beasts, of which the lightning hawk is the best known and most numerous. The former heed no master save their predatory nature, leading them to stalk and devour anyone in their sights. The second need be feared only by those who transgress Gjora's laws, for as her

chosen they safeguard the sanctity of the Isle from those who would flout her doctrine.

Culture

“Pure chaos” is often used to describe the Blue Islanders by outlanders, and it is well deserved. The North Crilosians value personal honor over collective honor, relying on the moment-to-moment choices of each individual to sustain the community. Edicts from the capital are rare, leaving each settlement to decide policy on their own. As such, regionalism and regional pride are strong throughout Crilos, especially the north, which critics maintain has lead the North Crilosians down a path of insular thinking and, in some cases, rampant xenophobia.

North Crilosians in general have a problem with orders, and often function poorly in foreign power structures and situations requiring etiquette. What most foreigners don’t realize is Crilosians don’t *choose* to be rude and surly; rather, they grow frustrated in their honest attempts to pay their hosts proper respect, and eventually let their people’s legendary temper get the better of them. Next to a Crilosian, most dwarves are downright congenial. The other thing Crilosians have a real problem with is clothing. The mild climate of their native island doesn’t usually require a lot of dress. Their sparse population and their celebration of the physical form also means taboos relating to showing skin are virtually unheard of. As such, most Crilosians are horribly underdressed for just about every occasion — even, if it can be believed, in Shelzar.

Crilosians have *no* problems, however, working with whatever’s at hand. Whether jury-rigging a portcullis or crafting a shield out of lotus leaves, Crilosians have an uncanny knack for making and fixing things. Whether it’s a holdover of their Elzian-Zathiskan heritage or an extension of their survival minded-culture, the net result is that a North Crilosian should never be considered off-guard or unprepared.

Crime and Punishment

The emphasis on personal honor means that North Crilos has few laws regarding the conduct of its citizens. Disputes and minor infringement are dealt with by those involved, often with trusted friends and family aiding in arbitration and sentencing. The execution and application of such proceedings varies from region to region, and most communities post local rules of significance on clearly marked



placards so that visitors can observe the proper customs.

The nation as a whole has, however, agreed upon a few crimes. These concern the Crilosian Trinity and the central mores relating to it. Each misconduct carries a different penalty, depending on whether the wronged party is a Crilosian, a mother, a prisoner, or an enemy (including titanspawn, those who have defiled the land, and the undead). In most cases, foreigners are considered “prisoners” under the law.

Murder: Killing a citizen is punished by swift beheading. Killing a mother is punished by disembowelment. Killing a prisoner (or murder by a prisoner) is punished by whatever capital punishment the foreigner’s people observe, or by the normal Crilosian method if the prisoner’s nation does not apply capital punishment. Failing to kill an enemy results in swift beheading and striking the perpetrator’s name from every record in existence.

Hospitality: One who fails to aid a citizen will find all citizens refusing him any sort of hospitality. Failing to aid a mother results in exile or deportation. Aiding a prisoner is the person’s choice, while aiding an enemy brands the perpetrator as an enemy.

Lying: Lying in general is punished by forced imbibing of an alchemical mix which causes great pain when one tries to speak; an antidote is given in one to seven days depending on the lie.

Theft: Stealing from a citizen makes one a servant, usually for no more than a year. During this time one remains protected under the law. Stealing from a mother makes one a slave with no rights — usually for life. Stealing from a prisoner requires that reparations be made in full. Stealing from an enemy is not a crime.

Armed Forces

Unlike the military of her southern neighbor, North Crilos’ armed forces have changed little in terms of organization since ancient times. Still formed around regional commands based on the village or town of one’s birth, the North Crilosians favor small, highly mobile units to massed warfare. The system instills a great deal of loyalty, as warriors know with painful familiarity that which they are protecting. This squad-based organization also means that North Crilosians don’t recognize rank in the manner outsiders do. Each squad works by deliberation and consensus. Though this might seem a liability, North Crilosian units operate with remarkable efficiency. By the use of magical tokens and beacon spells, a Crilosian can receive a summons even half a continent away.

As a general rule, there are no non-combatant North Crilosians. They simply do not have a civilian mindset. By the age of six, most North Crilosians are adept with some form of melee combat, and many are skilled archers by adolescence. This is as true for

The Saga of the Mount

*Great is the Horde of the Mount of Blue Fields,
Their shields and their strong backs too sturdy
to yield.*

*With brave bellows raging and stratagems bold
They charge into legends that wait to be told.*

*Proud are the hoplites with helm and with lance,
Devoted disciples of the battlefield’s dance,
For whom in the foray of slaughter and scream,
They find fleeting solace from far darker
dreams.*

*Savage and brutal are Aspects of Life,
Whose favorite song is the raw chord of strife,
Their mindless devotion a clever disguise,
For ancient seals made now known but by the
wise.*

*And last are the least in all ways but one,
For they are the dauntless who toil by the sun,
Who make of the land and the sea and the sky,
All which is worthy to fight for and die.*

*They are the parents, the daughters and sons
Who were it but asked would stand firm every one,
And make worthy the name of the Mount on Blue
Fields,
Which never before, nor ever will yield.*

women as for men, and the gender-skewed customs of other societies puzzles North Crilosians to no end.

The North Crilosian army is primarily land-based, with a smattering of ships besides. Current estimates place her standing forces at between 5,000 to 7,000 strong. Magic in warfare is viewed with a mixture of awe and fear, given that most North Crilosian spell casters are religious leaders of some sort or another and their spells revolve around the spirit world. Crilosians as a whole are highly religious, and this is true for the northerners especially. They were legendary for their refusal to engage titanspawn armies during the Divine War because certain stars were in the wrong place in the sky at the time.

Cities

The cities of North Crilos are older than those of the south, but are otherwise the same in construction. They comprise houses and halls, palaces and gathering commons, harbors and stables, and inns of every shape, size and legality. Unlike the southern cities however, North Crilosian towns make no attempt to separate the “civilized” from the virgin wood. One may walk down a street or wilderness path and know not where one begins and the other ends.

Endol, The City of Kings

Large City, Population 12,000

(95% human, 5% other)

Ruler: Chief Endol

Gold Piece Limit: 40,000 gp

Assets: 24,000,000 gp

Resources: Lumber, iron ore

Militia: Hoplites of Mylot: 700 Bbr6, 500 Ftr6; Militia: 2,000 Bbr3, 1,000 Ftr3

Anarien of Sunharrow once wrote in his *Res Termanensis*, "Know this city, for it is the home of kings, not crowned in gold but crowned in deeds. She is the city of Endol upon the Sword, Endol of the Sickle, the City in Blue. She needs no walls, which would but hinder her glory, and she needs no moat to choke her esteem. Nay she stands like a maiden wrapped in the fog, awaiting the homecoming of the brave who defend her." The oldest city in both North and South Crilos, Endol is the cultural heartland of the Crilosian people and the first place a traveler sees when arriving by ship.

1. The Santalah: North and east of the main city stands the Santalah, meeting place of the *Ushadan* and home to the kings of the Endol. It is a city within a city, a circular palace complex of longhouses, barracks, shrines and groves. Only the honored of North Crilos are allowed to enter its palisade, and the structures within are guarded by both flesh and construct.

2. Seameet: Though the City of Ports lies far to the north, Endol remains one of the Isle's major ports of call. Her shore is serpentine, her harbor well protected against the sea. Painted longhouses depicting epic battles from the nation's history line the shoreline.

3. Craftsmeet: Within these high longhouses reside the craftsmen of Endol who, it is justly said, work stone as few others do. Their wares festoon this place's many kiosks, in what is perhaps the most

friendly place a foreigner can find in an otherwise unwelcoming city.

4. Circle of the Earth Mother: Endol was originally designed to be a "city where Denev is welcome." Perhaps in acknowledgement of the gesture, an actual druid circle stands within its bounds. Reserved for rituals of the highest order, the Circle doubles as a meeting place for the young, especially those seeking a lifelong companion.

5. Soulmeet: Only here do the Aspects meet with regularity, an anchor for spirits who rarely manifest physically. It is a holy place, known instantly to any who step upon it, a place where one's greatest failings are always somehow revealed.

Other Cities

Calmor: The northernmost settlement on Crilos is the City of Ports. Her harbors are many, as are the islands that comprise her neighborhoods, each one an ancient volcano now long extinct. Only rich veins of rainbow-hued metal testify to their history, and though they would surely fetch a handsome price if quarried, law and custom prevent anyone from disturbing this ore in any way.

Hardek: The City of Narrows spans a short plateau that separates the Sickle River from the ocean. Canyons and waterways are its roads; buildings line their terraced banks overlooking the constant flow of small ships bearing the goods of the inland towns.

Martek: Near the source of the Sickle stands the City of Silver, whose olive groves have enchanted no few poets in their time. It is a peaceful yet vigilant town, for though her surroundings are for the most part serene, many tainted places lie not far from it.

Yoseva: An ancient western port, the City of Sunsets is a romantic place where lofty things seem wholly attainable. This is the birthplace of no few kings of Endol, and her people carry a pride above and beyond the strong dignity of the nation.

Padrinola

Name: The Unified Sacred Kingdom of Padrinola
Population: 200,000 (80% human, 10% half-elf, 5% halfling, 5% other)
Government: Monarchy
Ruler: Uthkal IV (*male human Ari4/Ftr10, CN*)
Capital: Cavrios (38,000)
Major Cities: Leshar (18,000), Notaelam (12,000), Safral (8,000)
Languages: Termanan
Religion: Enkili, Madriel, Belsameth
Currency: Gold crown (1 gp), silver regal (1 sp), copper penny (1 cp)
Resources: Fish, produce, cattle, iron, fruit
Major Imports: Tin, weapons, armor
Allies: Blood Bayou
Enemies: Karsian, Sunharrow, Thorvalos

History

The ancient lowlands once called Ardemolay extended eastward from the Thunderspike Mountains, near what is now the Eternal Isle. It was a prosperous land of copper, wheat and cattle. Though far from the seat of power in Silverisle, Ardemolay was one of the last regions of the Silver Circle to fall under the sway of divine worship. Bloody battles were fought, with elves entering the conflict to support druidic rulers. Eventually the battle proved too costly, and these forces withdrew.

A number of small kingdoms formed over the next thousand or so years. After a vicious series of wars between tribal chieftains, the land — now called Pardenela — finally settled into a few small kingdoms and relative peace.

The charduni weakened Pardenela with plague and sabotage, quickly shattering the fragile peace. Conflicts between clerics and noble bloodlines of sorcerers erupted, and assassination became nearly as common as copper pennies. What military organization had existed swiftly fell apart as different factions vied for military support.

When the charduni marched in to take Pardenela, many of the peasants reacted with little more than resignation, and

some with even a measure of relief. A common phrase of the period was, "At least death is on a schedule." To these phlegmatic people, this passed for good spirits.

Pardenela served as the frontline for the Land of Chain's western campaign. All along the Thunderspike Mountains, terrible battles were fought for vital access to the west. While generally submissive, Pardenelans found various ways to torment or hamper the charduni. Eventually, the combined effort of humans and elves on various fronts broke the charduni's hold. The Pardenelans rose up and, with uncharacteristic unity, slew every charduni they could.

In the aftermath, the people found a common cause and unified under one king in a nation they called Padrinola. Neighboring nations, particularly Karsian, Sunharrow, and Thorvalos, attempted to dominate this new kingdom but failed. Tensions with these countries intensified as a result.

These matters were for a time forgotten with the coming of the Divine War. The War exacted a terrible toll, wiping out two-thirds of Padrinola with the flooding of Kadum's Bight. In the face of monumental loss and dim prospects, the nation remained unified and began a slow recovery.

The Ghoul King's invasion flooded the narrow kingdom with undead and set back rebuilding efforts by at least a generation. When the Sisters of the Sun liberated the country, Padrinolan forces joined the fight against the Ghoul King, serving with distinction. The intervention of Madriel brought a new element to the culture of Padrinola. While still marked by vicious political feuding, assassination, and ambition, the worship of hope took root.

War came yet again over a land dispute with Thorvalos. While many suspected the hand of the Jack of Tears, tensions between the two kingdoms were nothing new. Ambassadors from the Blood Bayou helped settle the matter peacefully.

In the past 50 years, Padrinola has grown considerably in power. With valuable iron mines, grazing land and access to untainted waters, it has finally developed a strong economy.

Geography

Padrinola is shaped by several factors. The Thunderspike Mountains form a natural





barrier, blocking winds from the southwest and catching winds from the east. In the south, the land is temperate and relatively dry. Grassy hills and fertile valleys, many fed by rivers from the mountains, provide valuable land for grazing and crops. Fishing is relatively safe, far from tainted seas and enemy states.

Northern Padrinola is hot and humid, with frequent storms rolling in from the sea. Marsh, lakes, and other terrain are common. The land is fertile, despite the threat of titanspawn and other monsters.

Brown Waste (Warm Marsh, EL 7): This expanse of mud, sand and rock fills the northern tip of Padrinola, forming a buffer between it and the Blood Bayou. The terrain is difficult to navigate; some monsters and diseased animals find it difficult to cross, but others find the area a viable home. Eventually, they or their offsprings spread down into Padrinola. Since humans can't move well through the Waste, these creatures are sheltered. The Waste is home to a variety of creatures rarely seen elsewhere in Termana, including beholders, carrion crawlers, umber hulks, skiver, and fleshcrawlers.

Central Scrublands (Warm/Temperate Forest and Hill, EL 4): Between Notaelam and Caviros lie ridgelines and hills surrounded by uneven forest. Nearly all of these trees are less than 150 years old. The original forest was washed away by the massive deluge that formed Kadum's Bight. While monsters are not as common here as near the Brown Waste, a number of strange beasts have been spotted here. Southern Padrinolans fear that creatures have taken root in the scrublands, far from the wardens and soldiers of the north. The northerners consider these claims to be politically motivated attacks.

Mormo's Circles (Warm Hill, EL 8): These eight massive stone rings are located between Caviros and the Winter Peak. Each ring is about four hundred feet in diameter and two feet thick. They are arranged in no particular order, just a jumble in a gravel-filled wash. Chaos beasts are found in great numbers within a few miles of this location, making investigation quite hazardous.

Flora and Fauna

Southern Padrinola resembles the land of old. Though many of the larger predators vanished during the Divine War, they were replaced by migrations from the west and south. Tigers, black bears, and goblin bears prey on wild deer and livestock. After a brief respite following the Divine War, ankhegs, bulettes and cathedral beetles have returned to the region. The hills and valleys provide fertile fruit groves and grazing land for cattle and horses — lands that are steadily defoliated by the nibbling of deer that may, in the long run, prove far more dangerous than the mandibles of the ankheg or the hunger of the goblin bears.

Conditions in the north favor thicker jungles, providing a haven for jaguars. Ankhegs and bulettes are also common, feeding primarily on rabbits or livestock. A wide variety of monsters have wiped out most other wild animals and constantly threaten human settlements. Chimera, gibbering mouters, girallon, chaos beasts and woodrack dragons are all relatively common in the north. In addition, disease is a frequent threat, with outbreaks of morgaunts and vermin hosts. Regarding the marshes of the north, natives joke that one need only stick an arm out to find a swamp tyrant.

Culture

Padrinolans are primarily distinguished by a deep malaise only broken by fits of temper and activity. They dislike and distrust outsiders, with the possible exception of the Sisters of the Sun. Northerners view those to the south as rustics, useful only to hold the southern border and provide taxes. Southerners consider their brethren lacking wisdom, courage and honor. Of course, even in the south, honor is a matter of endurance and individual strength.

Some argue that the worship of Madriel, strongest in the north, is self-serving. In a land facing disease and monstrous threat, bending a knee to the Healer is business, not faith. Possibly supporting this idea is the prevalence of *Ushadani* in the south. While fiercely suppressed by the followers of Belsameth, *Ushadan* remain devoted.

Padrinola hosts one of the largest half-elven communities in all of Termana, rivaling those of the elven nations. The longer lives of the half-elves and the loss of their cities to the east have had a huge impact on their culture. Their art contains some of the most beautiful and heart-rending portrayals of the Divine War. While in other lands half-elves may be a breed apart, here they scheme, betray, and lash out as much as any human.

Schools of magic, shipwright guilds and other organizations may all be found in the larger, northern cities. In the rest of the kingdom, education and training is a matter of apprenticeship. Most youths learn the trade of their parents. Others may be sold to relatives, if they display an unusual skill in some area. At the age of 14, a child reaches majority and is often married off.

Families are matrilineal, with husbands joining the family of the wife. Inheritance and noble titles are similarly matrilineal, though the royal line has made occasional exceptions in the past. Matriarchies are found where worship of Belsameth is strongest. A number of crimes committed by a husband merit execution in these areas, though the practice is now rather rare. The rural areas dominated by *ushadan* also prefer matrons.

Many of the wealthier noble families have the blood of sorcery, particularly Witches of the Old Blood and Plaguebringers (see **Player's Guide to Wizards, Bards and Sorcerers**). These sorcerous



lines have clashed with groups of clerics, particularly those of Belsameth, since long before the Divine War, though they currently have some measure of détente in the interest of rebuilding. Both sides are using this lull to expand their own power, and signs indicate this quiet war may soon resume.

Crime and Punishment

The legal code of Padrinola was crafted soon after the liberation from the charduni. In an odd twist, their ways were a major source of inspiration for this new legal system. The code was embraced with the foundation of a unified kingdom, and was seen by many as crucial to its survival.

The Parde Code establishes one rule of law for all citizens. A complex system is designed to render impartial judgment, though the actual practice of the code rarely lives up to its intent. The law is used as a tool of conflict between families; judges and wardens are part of an intense network of family relations and corruption, and use the law to enforce the will of a faction.

Royal appointees manage the largest cities. A variety of elective systems are used in other communities. Leaders are responsible for choosing wardens of the peace and judges. The Parde Code is negotiated to give a result the judge feels best suits the case. This justice is ultimately as good or bad as the judge.

The list of crimes is long, but in practice breaks down into personal, property and insult. Personal crime include assaults, slavery and rape. Property crime is typically theft. Insult is a rather broad category, used often in feuds. Being "grievously insulted" can be interpreted however the judge sees fit. Crimes where property is destroyed or defaced is usually considered a crime of insult.

Wardens of the peace enforce punishment. Imprisonment is most common, with periods of a few months to many years. Thralldom is also common, where the criminal serves the injured party or a third party, paying back the crime over a period of time. Whipping and stockades serve as punishment for lesser crimes. Execution was once rather frequent, but is now limited to titanspawn perpetrators and collaborators, extreme acts of treason, or the elven theft of children. Crimes against women are more harshly judged than against men. The influence of Madriel's followers has been significant in toning down more extreme sentences, especially executions.

Armed Forces

The army of Padrinola is rather regional. Families and communities muster soldiers to patrol and protect the surrounding area. The king may press these units into service for the entire kingdom, but no standing army exists.

In the north, elite soldiers are inducted as Wardens, responsible for patrolling the borders of the kingdom. It is their task to find and destroy monsters from the Brown Waste or Blood Bayou.

Position in the armed forces is based primarily on birthright. Officers are nobles, gaining position through political wrangling. Sergeants are normally the effective leaders of military units. While promotion in established units is limited, a low-born character may gain power and responsibility in many elite units and mercenary groups.

Cities

In Padrinola, homes typically have deep root cellars. The most wealthy line these with close-fitting brick or stone. It is commonly thought that these cellars were intended as shelter against attack. Buildings in the south are built with high-peaked roofs, typically slate-shingled. In the north, homes are lower, with dripsouts along a gently-sloped roof. Houses are built in small groups with protective outer walls, connected by raised stone paths.

Cavrios

Metropolis, Population 38,000

(75% human, 15% half-elf, 5% halfling, 5% other)

Ruler: Councilor Neika of Samis (*female human Ari6, N*)

Gold Piece Limit: 140,000 gp

Assets: 266,000,000 gp

Resources: Fish, ships, iron

Militia: Wardens: 60 War8, 20 Ftr8; Regulars 250 War4, 50 Ftr4

Once the center of a kingdom rich in iron and gold, this city is one of the few in the Scarred Lands to actually have grown since the Divine War. Half-elves and noble families who survived the submersion of their homes congregated here. Because of this growth, most of the city is less than two centuries old. It is extremely difficult to navigate, even for natives.

1. Unity Palace: Surrounded by broad boardwalks choked with merchants, this strange, almost organic-looking building features a tall black spire visible from many miles away. Designed and built shortly after the Divine War, it was the obsessed final work of the half-elf nobleman, Haergev of Amrila, dedicated to Belsameth. Today it houses the high court and board of councilors. Uthkal IV lives in a separate residence, but spends most of his time here.

2. Market Square: This was the original market square before the Divine War. Now it is a quiet park circled by homes of the wealthy.

3. The Lip: Before the Divine War the city was poised on a long ridge at the edge of the Padrinolan highlands. With rough ground to the west and a steep slope into the plains to the east, it had a protected position. The flooding of Kadum's Blight placed Cavrios on the coast. Since the War, erosion has

threatened the city, eating away at the steep slope. Engineers have succeeded in fortifying this edge, called the Lip. Sea walls were erected to help the harbor and cut down on erosion.

4. Cattle Grounds: These are the docks of Cavrios. A series of broad steps cut through the Lip and lead to a lower area of the city. This is filled with shops and small homes, serving the docks. Most of the trade by sea is with other cities in Padrinola or with Virduk's Promise. While cattle are imported from Safral, the name once referred to the grazing lands just southwest of the city.

Other Cities

Leshar: Of vital strategic importance, its soldiers are the closest Padrinola has to a professional army. Natives consider this the true capitol.

Notaelam: One of the richest mining and trading centers of the nation, representatives from Azale and Silverisle often meet here. Though presenting a serene countenance, mining and merchant interests clash frequently. Nobles come to vacation, away from the heat and dangers of the north.

Safral: The cattle and fish capitol of Padrinola, this town is probably the most peaceful of the entire kingdom. The waters run clear and there are few predators or supernatural threats. The people are insular, but honest and hardworking. Much of the cattle raised in the south is brought here for trade with Cavrios.

Pelegael

Name: Pelegael, the Midrealm
Population: 250,000 (80% forsaken elf, 15% half-elf, 5% human)
Government: Rotating monarchy
Ruler: Princess Brigetta (*female elf Rog5/Ftr3/Sor7, CN*)
Capital: Phadalera (50,000)
Major Cities: Shealas (40,000), Theran (25,000), Beldani (18,000), Haethea (9,000)
Languages: High elven
Religion: None official, although Enkili is well respected
Currency: None official; all forsaken elf currencies accepted
Resources: Timber, iron, silver, magic items
Major Imports: Slaves
Allies: Forsaken elf realms
Enemies: Charduni Empire

History

Before the Titanswar, the high elven nation of Eldura-tre was among Scarn's greatest spectacles. The elves possessed a beautiful empire devoted to freedom, life, and the pursuit of magic, and the province of Pelegael was its heart. The city of Phadalera was once the capital of all Eldura-tre, serving as a shining beacon of the high elven race and culture. Confident in their power and wealth, the folk of Pelegael played little role in the Titanswar, instead relying upon the blades of Sylavael and the magic of Kasiavael to defend them from attack. While the war raged beyond the elven forests, the Pelegaens celebrated and engaged in all manner of petty intrigues, secure in the strength of their god and the might of their empire. Even the massive destruction caused by Kadum's Deluge did not touch this most sheltered of elven realms.

Even as the dread titan Chern approached Termama, the elves of Pelegael could not be turned from their revels to face the danger of his coming. The elven god's destruction, however,

finally drew the notice of the courts, striking into the heart of the elven soul like an arrow. Unfortunately for Pelegael, this arrow soon began to rot and the wound festered.

Of all the forsaken elf realms, Pelegael has been the most subsumed by chaos. Since the Titanswar, the great courts of Pelegael have splintered into factions that engage in constant warfare for wealth, power, even entertainment. As the beautiful cities of the realm crumble around them, the elves of Pelegael duel, celebrate and engage in all manner of decadent revels. Mass death and destruction caused by internecine warfare, decaying construction and reckless dueling are commonplace in Pelegael. The elves care little for the defense of their realm, as they are surrounded by at least nominally friendly nations. Occasionally Pelegaen swordsmen are sent to Sylavael to help keep the charduni at bay for one more day while the rest of the realm engages in their mindless distractions.

With the cultural rot and decadence that have come to define Pelegael, some scholars even among the Pelegaens worry that the realm will soon collapse into complete anarchy and cease to exist. More sober elven sages, such as those dwelling in Ehitovael, are further dismayed with the wide scale abandonment of the lost elven demigod among Pelegaens. A particularly ominous sign is the recent popularity of Enkili among the clerics once faithful to That Which Abides.

Geography

One of the most mild and pleasant forsaken elf nations, Pelegael was little touched by the Divine War and bears few of the scars of realms such as Sylavael or Ganjulael. In the north, the Blood Sea meets the easternmost portion of the Cliffs of Promise. From the cliffs, grassy plains spread southward, gradually becoming more forested until one reaches the Calm Woods. This forest continues unbroken until one encounters the sheer cliffs of the Chained Mountains. Pelegael is a small realm, bordered on the east and west by the Middle and Starshine Rivers, respectively. Most cities rest on the northern plains, either neighboring the forest or along the Blood Sea. The cli-



mate of Pelegael is warm but pleasant, save for the occasional bloodstorm rolling off the Blood Sea.

Calm Woods (Temperate Forest, EL 5): If ever anyone doubted that the very terrain of the Scarred Lands is alive and sentient, a passage through the Calm Woods of Pelegael would convince them otherwise. This ancient forest holds all the melancholy bitterness, loss and hopelessness that characterizes the forsaken elves which have lived in and around it for eons. The woods are well named, for they exude the very calm of the dead, as if they have given up hope and rest motionless until they rot from within. Haunted only by wandering spirits, ghosts of a lost age and broken fey, a visit to the Calm Woods is both a sobering and enlightening experience.

Middle River (Temperate Aquatic, EL 4; EL 8 in blood-tainted areas): This rather unremarkable river forms the border between Pelegael and Sylavael. Originating deep within the Chained Mountains, the Middle River is important for the commerce and transportation of both neighboring realms. Occasionally a tidal bore will drive blood-contaminated water deep inland to the Chained Mountains themselves.

Starshine River (Temperate Aquatic, EL 3): This broad and pristine river forms the border between Ganjulael and Pelegael. Like the Middle River, the Starshine originates deep in the Chained Mountains, but unlike that smaller river, the Starshine River is not susceptible to backwashes of blood from the sea. Some quirk of geography protects the river and the settlements along its banks from the taint of the Blood Sea

and its mutated creatures. The Starshine River is especially placid and well suited to boat travel.

Flora and Fauna

Pelegael is inhabited by few truly dangerous titanspawn or other monsters since it is protected from most sides by allied nations. Occasionally a Blood Sea mutant or an excursion of gauntlings from the Chained Mountains will have to be repulsed, but the land exists in relative peace and tranquility. The greater danger arises from the elven souls, living and dead, which have given in to despair and loss. Incorporeal undead are often found wandering the decaying ruins of Pelegael, seeking any victim on which to vent their loathing. Similarly, travelers should beware the lost elves so enwrapped in their own self-indulgent fantasies that they are a danger to themselves and others.

Culture

By far the largest in population of the forsaken elf realms, Pelegael, once the very heart of the high elven nation of Eldura-tre, now represents the depths of depravity to which a civilization can sink. Pelegael embodies the corrupted core of the elven soul; that portion once occupied with love for their lost god now festers in his absence. While the forsaken elves of other realms deal with their depression through meditation without end, xenophobia, mindless militarism or power-mad magical experimentation, Pelegael has sunken to utter decadence and anarchy. They see their loss and hopelessness as license to engage in all manner of



depravities and sins that would make a Shelzari blush. Each year more forsaken elves succumb to chaos and despair, journeying to Pelegael and losing themselves in mindless self-indulgence.

Pelegael often seems as though it is ruled by immortal children, wherein petty vengeance and imagined slights hold more weight than any fear of death or hope for days to come. The Pelegaens have already given up on the future; all that remains is to enjoy oneself until the end inevitably arrives. This attitude is reinforced by the easy availability of resurrection magic in Pelegael. Even if disaster occurs, a duel turns fatal, or pleasure is taken too far, what does it matter when death itself is no longer permanent?

With the death of their god, most forsaken elves are limited to only the simplest of divine magic, spells powered by ancient divine compacts rather than the strength of a deity. Unlike the elves of other realms, however, many of the Pelegaen clergy have given themselves over to Enkili the Trickster. Although the other elves of Pelegael pretend not to notice their clerics' defection, this society lacks the profound faith and tenacious belief in the fallen god that characterizes the other elven realms. Displays of powerful divine magic may avoid mention and cause averted gazes, but it will not draw the sharp censure of more traditional forsaken elves. Little else matters to the elves of Pelegael than the pursuits of their hedonistic pleasures, even if it costs them their very faith and souls.

The Pelegaen penchant for anarchy is best represented in their rather unique system of government, if indeed it can be called such. The monarch is chosen seemingly at random. Each ruler holds the office for as long as he wishes to or is able, and then he devises some contest or competition to choose the next ruler. These contests can be tests of skill or simple games of chance, chosen whimsically by the current ruler. Whoever wins becomes prince as long as they can stand it and the people support them. A prince who remains too long may be forcibly ousted or assassinated. The rulership of Pelegael means little more than acquiring the wealth and prestige to engage in ever greater debauches, great celebrations for all the people of Pelegael, and deeper depravities. The citizens of Pelegael are under no great compunction to obey the current prince's edicts, but the great wealth and influence that comes with the office tends to favorably dispose even the most anarchic of elves.

In Pelegael, the horrendous custom of stealing human children and replacing them with feeble elven offspring is practiced with abandon. Humans in Pelegael are slaves, serving the whimsical and depraved tastes of their elven overlords. Half-elven offspring are treated as well as other elves, meaning that they are left alone to pursue their own pleasures

in any manner they see fit. Humans traveling through Pelegael had best be wary, however, as no law or authority will protect them from the threat of its elven inhabitants.

Like the elves of other realms, Pelegaens dress in vivid and rich court attire with overly busy patterns pleasing to elven eyes. Even more than other forsaken elves, elves of Pelegael prefer bright and flamboyant colors, making their clothing garish and even hideous to humans. Fortunately, elven aesthetic senses are more finely honed when it comes to architecture. Thin towers and elegant arches mark Pelegaen cities. Unfortunately, these beautiful landmarks are mainly illusions, the true structures having collapsed long ago.

Crime and Punishment

Crime and law are foreign concepts to Pelegael. Every elf is free to do as she wills, with only the strength, influence and power of other elves to stop her. If an elf goes too far, she may be challenged to a duel, publicly humiliated or shunned, or even assassinated. Consequences for one's actions are few in Pelegael as everyone is wealthy and resurrection magic is readily available. Crime and destruction are comedies rather than tragedies, events worthy only of gossip. Half-elves in Pelegael may own property, revel, and in fact, are treated little different from elves. Humans, however, are not so lucky. While those able to escape the realm are rarely tracked down, slaves who are caught escaping are summarily executed. While in captivity, human slaves must obey the harsh dicta set out by their capricious masters. Humans are just as subject to death by duel or assassination as elves, and few are deemed worthy of resurrection.

Armed Forces

Pelegael has no army or navy. It is entirely dependent on the forsaken elf nations that surround it to protect it from the charduni and others who would threaten the peace. However, the elves of Pelegael have trained for centuries in the arts of war and, having honed their skills in lethal duels, are known as deadly swordsmen throughout the elven lands. Occasionally a group of Pelegaen warriors seeking adventure will travel to Sylavael to battle the charduni hordes for honor and glory. These warriors are kept strictly separated from the regular soldiers so as not to "contaminate" them with Pelegaen soul-taint. Similarly, Pelegaen elves are those most likely to adventure throughout Termana and beyond, giving outsiders a somewhat warped idea of the nature of forsaken elves.



Cities

Even more than the other forsaken elf realms, the cities of Pelegael are little more than crumbling ruins cloaked in powerful illusions. Unlike other realms, however, these cities are filled to capacity, growing ever more crowded as elves from other realms give in to despair and migrate to Pelegael. These cities are chaotic and lawless, and the sheer strength of one's blade and personality determines one's power and standing.

Phadalera

Metropolis, Population 50,000

(Forsaken elves 83%, Half-elves 12%, Humans 5%)

Ruler: Princess Brigetta (*female elf Rog5/Ftr3/Sor7, CN*)

Gold Piece Limit: 100,000 gp

Assets: 250,000,000 gp

Resources: Timber, iron

Militia: Elven Militia 200 Ftr4/Wiz3

Once the capital of the high elven nation of Eldura-tre, Phadalera has fallen into disrepair and ruin. Its inhabitants have neglected it since the Titanswar in favor of their own indulgent pursuits. Once an enormous city of graceful spires, floating walkways and broad plazas, it is now little more than a dangerous husk, overrun with all manner of cavorting elves. Large portions of the city are uninhabitable, though powerful illusions mask these areas and the city's general state of decay. Although the majority of the buildings were constructed of beautiful marble, now the elves live in

the hollowed shells of ancient buildings or in quickly constructed wooden hulks. Few elves sacrifice time that could be spent reveling to erect or shore up a building; after all, none of them will last much longer anyway. Phadalera borders the ancient Calm Woods, and still sees some traffic in timber harvested from the forest and iron mined in the Chained Mountains.

1. The Royal Palace: Once the largest and most beautiful buildings in all of Eldura-tre, the Royal Palace is little more than a plaything for whichever decadent elf is chosen to bear the mantle of rulership at any given time. The Palace is said to hold both magical and material treasures, if anybody cared enough to retrieve them.

2. The Temple of Storms: Once a temple devoted to the lost elven god, the renegade clerics of Enkili have converted this temple into a holy place for their own deity. Although it retains an elven façade, the interior is decorated with Enkilite artifacts.

3. The Hundred Temples: After the loss of the elven god, the folk of Pelegael built dozens of temples in an effort to rekindle his worship and regain his favor. When the effort failed, the temples were abandoned.

4. The Lumberworks: Timber harvested in the Calm Woods is cut and shaped here before being used in commerce or building.

5. The Bazaar: Merchants from the other elven realms and beyond congregate in this market district to peddle their wares at enormously inflated prices to the jaded elven populace.

6. The Barracks: Once occupied by the Pelegaen regiment of the great elven army, this crumbling building is full of squatters. Rumor holds that the deeper levels hold ancient elven weapons and other artifacts.

Other Cities

Shealas: A large city at the mouth of the Starshine River, most goods entering Pelegael pass through this port. Fearful of mutants and other monsters from the blood sea, the inhabit-

ants of Shealas are quick to call upon the Ehitovaen navy for defense.

Theran: Theran is a city on the edge of Middle River, bordering the realm of Sylavael. Refugees from more war-torn realms flock to this relative haven. The city provides supplies and equipment to the front lines in Sylavael.

Beldani: An isolated city on a cliff overlooking the Blood Sea, inhabitants of Beldani mine silver from the cliffs below them. A dangerous place to live, Beldani must often deal with bloodstorms and Blood Sea monsters.

Haethea: This small city on the edge of the Calm Woods is the stronghold of the Order of the Eagle. These magi are known for producing magic items, which are sold throughout the elven realms.

Silverisle

Name: The Most Blessed Republic of Silverisle

Population: 150,000 (80% human, 10% halfling, 5% half-elf, 5% other)

Government: Republic

Ruler: First Knight Terusha (*female human Pal20, LG*)

Capital: Citadel of the Sun (12,000)

Major Cities: Tiloa (30,000), Nehala (20,000), Port Hendral (15,000), Amas (8,000), Ricea (5,000)

Languages: Termanan

Religion: Madriel

Currency: Gold archon (1 gp), silver deva (1 sp), copper angel (1 cp)

Resources: Produce, cattle, fish, timber, weapons, armor

Major Imports: Iron

Allies: Azale, Karsian, Sunharrow

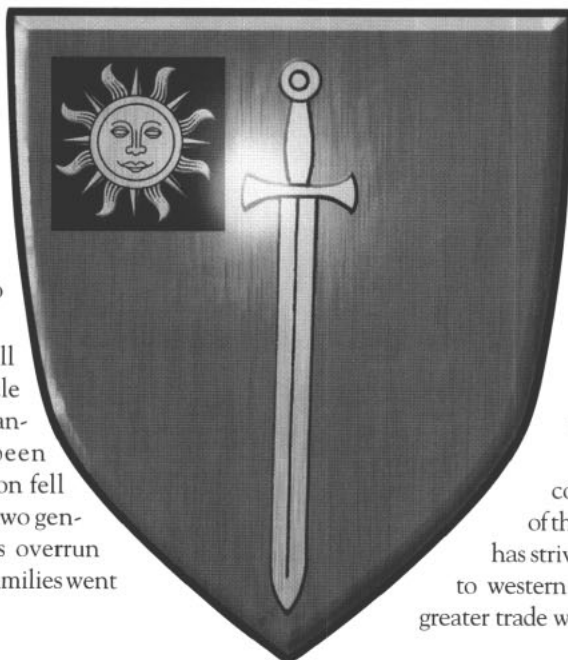
Enemies: Blood Bayou

History

The Silver Kingdom is the earliest recorded civilization on Silverisle. None know whence it came, as its origins are murky, but it eventually annexed much of western Termana into the Lands of the Silver Circle. Composed primarily of human titan-worshippers, the nation was marked by a vicious and bloody faith. Silverisle itself was home to several ruling sorcerer bloodlines.

The rise of divine worship sprang up at the edges and steadily worked inward. As the titan-followers lost ground, the rulers were inspired to greater acts of violent worship — thus encouraging ever more conversions to the worship of the gods. Followers of Belsameth made frenzied demonstrations of their own, including Towers of Dark Faith: Gargantuan zombies made of hundreds of titan-followers each. The Towers moved and shuddered, arms waving, hundreds of voices risen in cacophonous prayer to Belsameth.

Within a generation, all the lands of the Silver Circle were in rebellion. The titan-followers had never been cohesive, and Silverisle soon fell to internal strife. Another two generations and Silverisle was overrun by warlords. The sorcerous families went into hiding.



The expansion of the charduni brought Silverisle back into the pulse of civilization. With the danger along the eastern edge of human territory, the western coast became a vital logistics route. A charismatic leader, Jans Martine, managed to turn the war effort into advantage for Silverisle. The land unified, if loosely, and many merchant families made a profit.

With the defeat of the charduni, Silverisle was poised to make a comeback. Trade picked up, and the few families left from the ancient Silver Circle worked to build a new kingdom.

The Divine War brought an end to this effort. Severe coastal flooding, storms, and a general collapse of trade proved more deadly than the losses of the war itself. The sorcerous families were almost completely wiped out in the process.

The rise of the Ghoul King brought new horror. Legions of undead swarmed through the land, organizing work camps and taking the dead as new soldiers. The land became a staging point for spread northward. Those who rebelled were slain.

After six years of horror, the Ghoul King paused. The tide turned, and the great liberation began. The Sisters of the Sun and Corean's Knights of both Silver and Mithril destroyed the hordes, marching southward and defeated the Ghoul King's armies. With the blessings of Madriel herself, the Sisters of the Sun settled in Silverisle.

Almost overnight, the natives turned from the lackluster worship of Enkili to the fervent adoration of Madriel. A people in despair, the message of the First Angel struck a chord. With the help of the Sisters, the island was soon transformed into a bright, hopeful place, crowned by the Citadel of the Sun. Even the few remnants of the old sorcerer families threw in their support, if only for security. The island blossomed as a bastion of peace and security.

When the Ghoul King attacked again, he found a different land than he had left. The army of Silverisle was overwhelmed, but Madriel's blessings were woven into the high citadel, and into the hearts of those within. After a long siege, the Sisters roused an army from the continent and took the island back.

Since then, Silverisle has continued under the leadership of the Sisters of the Sun. The island has striven to bring peace and security to western Termana, and to encourage greater trade with Ghelspad and other lands.

Geography

Silverisle is a fertile, forested land, with a temperate climate. Summers are dry and can be quite hot, with heavy spring rains. Winter is somewhat wet, with occasional ice storms.

Angel Hills (Temperate Hill, EL 1): Green, rolling hills dominate the interior of Silverisle. The area is lightly inhabited, consisting of scattered farmsteads and grazing lands. Fey are common to the Angel Hills, and maintain a distant amiability with humans. The people stage frequent patrols through these lands, to root out any titanspawn. Through the efforts of the Sisters and the fey, the Hills are almost solely home to natural animals and plant life.

Merciful River (Temperate Aquatic, EL 1): Beginning in the northern highlands, this broad, gentle river runs south through much of the island. The river is easy to navigate, and has long been the heart of Silverisle. As far back as the days of the Silver Circle, it was considered an evident blessing. Fishing villages and farms fed by irrigation line the river. This broad corridor of agriculture and trade is the foundation of the entire country. While the south of Silverisle is a bit more dangerous, the proximity of the Citadel of the Sun and frequent patrols make the area around the Merciful River quite safe.

Northwoods (Temperate Forest, EL 1): The northern third of Silverisle is covered in pine and oak

forest. These woods are thinly settled, inhabited by hunters and woodsmen in small communities. Much of the forest is untouched by humans, and some trees are thousands of years old. Many mines are found here as well, particularly near Amas. Madriel's blessing, and the efforts of inhabitants, keep the Northwoods clear of unnatural influence.

Flora and Fauna

There are few titanspawn or other unnatural beings in most of Silverisle, particularly in the north. This is due to the constant vigilance of the Sisters of the Sun. Oak and elm woods fill much of the Silverisle, inhabited by wolves, deer and other animals. The sun hawk, a small amber-feathered raptor, is considered a good omen, hunting the quieter headwaters of the Merciful River. Groups of peaceful fey mostly keep to themselves.

In the south, the bright power of the Sisters has not completely expunged the Ghoul King. The forests are twisted and foul, valleys withered. Travelers move during the day, avoiding the quiet and dark places. Particularly worrisome are several accounts of dwellers at the crossroads, or something very much like them. It is possible that these beings are unrelated to the Ghoul King, as similar tales date back to the days of the Silver Kingdom.



Culture

When a Silverislander is born, choristers sing upon the next dawn. It is believed that humans do not truly gain their soul until that point, guided from the morning sun to the child. The timing of birth is considered indicative of a child's fate. Being born just before or during dawn augers well, while being born at the dead of night, particularly on a new moon or when the nameless orb is full, is particularly ill-auspected. Birth right after dawn is inconvenient, as the baby is vulnerable to possession by evil for the following day. Such children are guarded carefully.

Most children work at home, learning whatever skills are needed there. Families involved in trades or commerce may send their children to apprentice with others, typically more distant relations. An informal bartering goes on, with the simplest case being a swap of apprentices. In the Citadel of the Sun and the major cities exist a few formal schools for combat, religion or magic. Life as an apprentice or student involves constant work and training until graduating or qualifying as a journeyman. At this point, the youth may look for work or try to join a guild. Schools are attached to a guild or other body. In the past century, weapon and armor smithing have become quite popular trades. Woodsmen are also common, particularly to the north.

Age of majority is 13 and, in farming communities people are expected to marry at this age. Among tradesmen and graduates, marriage is more common by 17. Being unwilling or unable to marry generally results in considerable family pressure. Marriage arrangements are controlled by the matriarch of a family. Marriage serves to cement political and economic alliances. Romance and fidelity are both lauded in Silverisle, but neither is well practiced.

Funerary rites have changed significantly. The old traditions involved floating biers down the Merciful River or drying out a corpse in a smokehouse and then burial. While natives of Silverisle have a devotion to their traditions, the occupation of the Ghoul King forced unwelcome changes. Since he was defeated, the Silverislanders burn their dead in elegant funerary pyres, drawing on ancestral ceremonies.

Gambling and sports are quite popular throughout Silverisle. The wildmarch is a particularly bizarre favorite, involving heavy drinking, running around a field with a variety of heavy objects, and shouting phrases. The rules of the game are intricate and subject to frequent change.

Crime and Punishment

The embrace of Madriel has brought a bit more rigor to justice in Silverisle. The codes of law have been summarized in smaller works, and several of the most troublesome disagreements on points of law have been

resolved in the process. Jails and prisons have been made more humane. Town watches are strongly encouraged to bring matters before a magistrate.

The basis of justice in Silverisle is responsibility and mercy. Decisions are made based on the guideline of the "reasonable person," taking into account circumstances and the knowledge of those involved. This is, of course, rather subjective, even with occasional use of magic. Decisions depend on the judge in question. Influence of family and other allegiances can interfere.

Reasonable people are expected to value their own safety, that of others, and that of the nation. Personal crimes such as assault are the most clear violations of law. Most cases are not clear-cut, particularly the refusal to render aid.

Punishment is normally financial, in the form of a fine, a lien, or working in the service of a wronged party. The amount is usually 150 percent of the perceived value of the wrong, as far as the judge can determine it. Personal crimes are usually rated in terms of severity, and based on the income of either the wronged or guilty party, whichever is higher. A light sentence may be a month's wage, while severe cases may be 10 years or more.

Imprisonment is reserved for particularly violent criminals, rather uncommon on Silverisle. Executions require review by the Citadel of the Sun, and are quite rare.

Armed Forces

The Citadel of the Sun organizes the military of Silverisle, in accordance with their holy mission. The primary duty of soldiers in Silverisle is patrolling for titanspawn and other unnatural beings. Some travel to the continent with Sisters of the Sun for similar missions.

In the north, rangers are common, suited for woodland patrols. Many have a familiarity with the fey. In the central and southern regions skirmishing foot soldiers are typical. Those with exceptional promise may be trained in the Citadel of the Sun, some joining the Sisters themselves.

Cities

Homes in Silverisle have peaked roofs, though the pitch is mild. They are rambling affairs, with expansions built at odd angles from older sections. Gardens and stacks of decorative rocks are nestled into the corners created by this design. Towers or turrets are rarely seen, and the preference is for low, spread out communities. Houses made of stone are rare. The wealthy prefer to make large wooden homes with protective magic laid into the structure.

Citadel of the Sun

*Small city, Population 12,000
(70% human, 5% half-elf, 5% other)*

Ruler: First Knight Terusha (*female human Pal20, LG*)

Gold Piece Limit: 15,000 gp

Assets: 7,000,000 gp

Resources: Weapons, armor, fish

Militia: City guard: 30 Ftr4; Soldiers: 110 War4; Sisters of the Sun: 30 Pal5

Commissioned by Madriel herself, the Citadel was built in the old port-city of Memea. The Citadel itself is a series of curtain walls, built up a large bluff. Each section contains part of the city, protected by the next, higher wall. This continues up to the huge wall of the Hold.

1. The Sun Hold: The true Citadel of the Sun from which the capital takes its name, this massive stone fort is built high up over the city. It may comfortably house more than a thousand men. Engines of war are well maintained, protecting every approach and the port itself. Offices are built deep into the rise backing the city. They house high officials of government and military.

2. Back Slope: A long, unstable slope of scree, this slope provides a protective vantage point over the port below. Watches in the Sun Hold look out over the slope, as military commanders know it is possible to bypass this natural defense.

3. The Meadows: When the Citadel was built, it was designed to take into account a good deal of growth. Currently, most citizens of the Citadel either dwell in the Hold or along the river. The area between is kept as grazing for horses and small herds of cattle. There are also a few stands of trees. Along the upper edge of the meadows the military maintains wide training yards, sometimes staging elaborate maneuvers involving hundreds of men.

4. River Port: Gates open from the protected Citadel to the vital river. By decree, the gates must be closed at night. Few actually enforce this rule for the smaller gates. Many are manned by clerics, watchful

for another invasion by the Ghoul King. Cross walls separate the portside into neighborhoods, with further gates. A huge amount of trade is processed through the River Port, both up the Merciful River and from sea.

Other Cities

Tiloa: An ancient city, once capital of the Silver Circle. It provides a hub for trade. While the Citadel of the Sun leads in most matters, logistics and banking are centered in Tiloa.

Nehala: Though rich in grain, cattle, and fishing, this city is best known for its excellent schools of wizardry. The people here are unusual, with a love of the sea and a certain quiet wildness to them. Rare in Silverisle, there is a sizeable population of *Ushadan* here. Their loyalty to the Sisters of the Sun has given them considerable freedom in their faith.

Port Hendral: Seen as worldly, sometimes to an unhealthy degree, this seaport provides a vital link with the continent. Massive docks well out to sea provide quick unloading for the largest merchant ships. The local government is the most organized and tightly run of all Silverisle, at least when it comes to ocean trade. Unfortunately, corruption is widespread, and the city itself is poorly cared for.

Amas: Considered the silver capital, many of the most important mines are run by families here. Lumber is also a major resource. The city is known for breathtaking architecture. The wooden Arch of Rakasford is said to depict the entire Divine War, accounting for every tale known to mortals.

Ricea: While not as distinguished as other regions, this city is known for its shipwrights and woodsmen. It is also noted for the almost complete absence of crime, beyond the occasional drunken fistfight. Natives attribute this to a kinship with the fey. The pranks and tall tales common here may be taken as either evidence for or against such stories.

South Crilos

Name: The Kingdom of Saar Krijlaas

Population: 60,000 (90% human, 10% other)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: Chief Shelcha (*male human Bbn18, CN*)

Capital: Agral (5,000)

Major Cities: Cholos (5,000), Kalthamo (4,000), Incar (2,000)

Language: Termanan

Religion: Enkili, Denev, Tanil

Currency: None official; most other currencies are accepted

Resources: Timber, cattle, produce, fish

Major Imports: Semi-precious gems, gold, skilled instructors

Allies: Sunharrow, Karsian

Enemies: Blood Bayou, North Crilos

History

We will carve the nations of Scarn in two by the light of the [Unnamed Orb]. And though [Hedrada] and [Chardun] may raise their hands against us, they as they are now will be as nothing. Divided and at odds, their actions will only hasten our inevitable victory.

— The Winged Tyrants, *Crilosian epic*

The history of Crilos following the Divine War is commonly referred to as the Southern Saga. In contrast to the Northern Saga with its mythic tone and questionable veracity, the Southern Saga covers events well documented by scholars, some of whom are still alive. Though branded as an “abomination” by the North Crilosians, the modern history is wholly embraced by the South Crilosians, who see it as “their” era and a new dawning of their people.

It begins in the sixth month After Victory, when it was said that “blood was as plentiful as water and our [the Crilosians’] grief as plentiful as both.” It was here, in their moment of weakness, that the long dormant rifts between the spiritual north and nationalist south reemerged. The Divine War had sparked a troubling turmoil in the religious consensus of Crilosian thought. Some felt they should mourn the passing of the titans and seek greater council with Denev. Others believed the War was a sign that the gods were the true inheritors of Scarn, and the Crilosians should look to them for guidance. Conservative

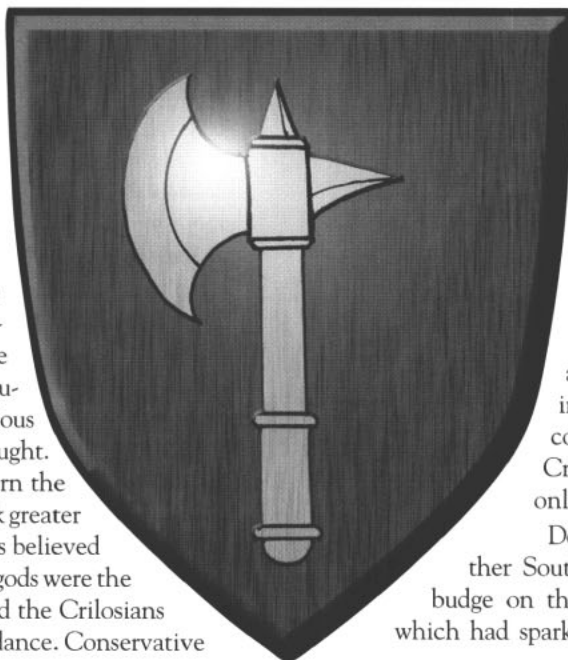
factions in Endol argued for the former, but increasingly influential citizens in the southern cities declared for the latter.

At first, the fighting was sporadic and good spirited, involving mainly veterans from the Divine War who still had spare energy to waste. This continued for 10 years however, and in that time it spiraled completely out of control. The warriors of the north sallied from Endol, shattering the southern armies at Hardesk. The south replied with bloody retribution during a lopsided encounter at Kalthamo. What navies the Crilosians still had were lost at Yoseva and Cholos, their own sailors inflicting worse casualties on themselves than any army of titanspawn had done. When at last the Ghoulish King invaded Azale, the Crilosians could do little but watch, in shame, from afar. It would be that shame which, during the turning of the second decade After Victory, would grant the two Criloses momentary unity. Regaining some fragment of its former glory, the armies of the Mount on Blue Fields played no small role in the triumphs over the Ghoulish King in 22 AV. Their honor having been satisfied for the moment, they set about sullyng it once more.

Jerikhan XII of Endol died a few years after the Ghoulish King was repelled, leaving his kinsman Talhan II, the Warden of Frost, to succeed him. To the south, Marrad VIII would vacate the Throne of Agral to Valethon XI, who in short time would become known as the Summer Lord. Both were warriors of legendary ability and hesitated not a moment before taking to the battlefield in earnest. So began the Winter-Summer Season, wherein philosopher-kings leading warrior-poets would see seven generations through unending warfare. It was not until the autumn of 116 AV with the deaths of Elekor V of Agral and Talhan

IV of Endol that the Season of War (as this period became known) ended. Without a strong chief on either side of the Sickles River, neither the covens of Endol (the shaman-advisors of North Crilos) nor the cabals of Agral (the cleric-adepts of South Crilos) were willing to disturb the balance. By then the armies of both sides had fallen into a ritualized manner of conflict, for massed warfare, the Crilosians now realized, would only lead to mutual extinction.

Despite the lull in fighting, neither South nor North was willing to budge on the original spiritual question which had sparked the civil war in the first



place. South Crilos further aggravated the northerners by adopting the trappings (if not the philosophy) of mainland nations. Still true to the notion of personal honor and freedom before all, the South Crilosians nonetheless found the allure of fine clothes and alchemical heating simply too good to ignore. They became increasingly reliant on clerical magic and technical ingenuity, eschewing their ancient traditions and spiritual compacts. These actions, culminating in the Diet of Cholos in 121 AV, were nearly enough to spark a second Season of War. However, with the ascendancy of Talhan VIII, major tributes were made to the Incarnate order, and *Ushadani* was reinstated as the chief mode of worship in South Crilos. Having temporarily appeased their northern cousins, the South Crilosians began surreptitiously to import the cultural institutions of the mainland nations. So successful were they that most foreigners visiting Crilos can scarcely distinguish North from South.

Geography

The southern island saw considerably more fighting than the northern half during the Divine War, and it shows. The land carries a noticeable taint in places — strong enough, in certain areas, to draw titanspawn and other tainted creatures of considerable power. The fields around Kalthamo, for instance, are littered with the metallic remains of a vanquished thulkan army. Though a boon to the scavengers of that settlement, it has also birthed abhorrent monstrosities such as blade beasts.

Other “danger zones” exist scattered about the island, foci of titanic taint. In each lairs a single creature whose mere presence maintains the corruption, a holdfast which sustains the taint against the influence of the Aspects and of Madriel. Some are titanspawn (mostly hags and thulkans), others are the god-forsaken (vermin host for the most part), while a significant number include such alien intruders as undead and demons. Once one is slain, redeemed or driven off, the land may be healed, but such fetters are strong and even questing incarnates have had difficulty breaking them.

In general though, the countryside is dominated by warm hills and forests which are wholly ordinary and quite benign. The South Crilosians seem to have suffered no prejudice by the totems or their Aspects; the *ushada* appear strangely unbothered by the southerners’ conversion to the gods. As with North Crilos, these spiritual guardians patrol the wild lands of South Crilos and keep much of it inviolate and pristine.

Angry Hills (Warm Mountains and Hills, EL 3; Haunted/Magical, EL 11): Once called the Vale of Gjora, the Angry Hills are a mockery of their former spiritual purity. A place where brother comes to slay brother in ritualized battle, the Angry Hills have

come to symbolize everything abhorrent in the Crilosian Civil War. The rituals are necessary to protect both Crilos from genocide and maintain each nation’s sanity, but the people pay the price in wrack, and a heavy toll it is.

Silver Caverns (Warm Underground, EL 5; Haunted/Magical, EL 17): Elekor VI opened the Under-Hill, as it is called by South Crilosians, to dwarven settlement in acknowledgement of the role they played in the Divine War. It was a grand gift, for even then several hundred miles of stable catacombs were charted. Today that figure is five times as great, much of it settled by the dwarves (who, not surprisingly, are now staunch allies of South Crilos). In a strange situation of accord, both South and North Crilosians welcome the dwarves, as their presence ensures that these ancient and spiritual sites are protected from harm. Pilgrims still venture to these tunnels to pray or meditate among the many cave drawings, and the dwarves often accompany them to offer protection.

Flora and Fauna

With a warmer clime than the northern half of the island, South Crilos’ forests play host to a richer diversity of life. Flowers, including rare orchids, pitcher plants and herbal mosses, are easily found by even novice rangers. As a general rule, the trees of South Crilos are smaller than those of the north, and this tends to hold true for the wildlife as well. The same species can be found in the south, but they’re usually of average size and possess no special intelligence.

The wildlife of South Crilos is, by and large, non-magical. Even the lighting beasts of the north stay clear of the south, and the elemental powers commonly manifested by creatures of the north are unknown here. Why this is the case is anyone’s guess, though North Crilosians point to it as proof of the south’s “spiritual impoverishment.” For their part, South Crilosian settlers welcome the mundane, since this means the land is substantially less hazardous.

Of course, as with everywhere else, exceptions certainly exist. Native and unique to the southern island are its giant elks, bison and goats. Three times as large as mainland varieties, their pelts are iridescent and their horns are lined with adamantite and mithril. Though they never speak, rangers unanimously attest to their uncanny intelligence. Many were in fact saved by such creatures, who, it seems, have a strong antipathy for the many wrack zones of the southern wilderness. The common theory is that they are agents of Denev, though Madriel, Tanil and even various *ushada* have been touted as likely benefactors.

Culture

If the north is “pure chaos,” then the south is “pure cosmopolitan chaos.” In their mad rush to assimilate foreign delights, South Crilosians have

created sprawling cities and a vibrant — and, put politely, *eclectic* — middle-culture. The duality is evident wherever one goes, from the Sunharrow-style academies to the Karsian-style foundries, from the Azalean music schools to faux-elven dress, just to cite a few examples. Foreign instructors (so long as they mind their manners) are welcome in most major South Crilosian cities.

Despite this change, South Crilosians have remained truer to their roots than the North Crilosians (or even the southerners themselves, for that matter) would lead one to assume. The traditional *Ushadani* holidays at Tidewoch (a celebration of the receding of the high tides along the western coastline) and Freyawoch (a celebration of harvest which usually includes large quantities of “enhanced” beverages) remain the premier festivals in the south. Perhaps to snub their nose at North Crilosian pretences of spiritual superiority, most South Crilosians still pray thrice daily in the direction of Mount Keljar, and southerners always remove their hats and footwear when entering sacred places.

Crime and Punishment

In codifying Crilosian laws (which had, until that time been a predominantly oral tradition), Valethon XI sought to enshrine the trinity of Wisdom, Charity and Health for future generations. His philosophy was that Wisdom should be entrusted to a group of professionals, forming a proto-judiciary. In so doing, it would free the citizenry to pursue Charity and Health as they desired. In a sense, the judiciary would internalize a small loss of freedom (being tied to a sacred duty) so that the rest of the population might enjoy greater freedom (most notably, from crime).

Valethon’s Code, as the text has come to be known, has since expanded and been amended many times since its original penning. However, the first four principles of the code remain the same and form the basis on which all subsequent laws are based.

Freedom of Speech: With the adoption of mainland-style institutions (especially writing), this became a major issue. This principle essentially guarantees that anything said by anyone on South Crilosian soil is protected by the full force of law. The most immediate application of this law is that bodily harm or removal of charity based on something that someone said is not a viable reason under the judiciary’s scrutiny.

Bodily Harm and Murder: Harm is punished with a fine (50 to 500 gp) and/or placement in the town stocks (for one to three days). Public lashings have fallen out of favor in major centers but remain popular in outlying regions. Murder is punished by swift beheading, or a life-debt to the deceased’s family in the case of accidental death.

Charity: Any opportunity to help a bystander in need or danger should be taken. Failing to do so

results in branding by a *minor image* enchantment. So long as one carries this brand, no South Crilosian will talk to, aid, trade with or host the perpetrator.

Wealth and Theft: Destruction of property or theft is punished with a fine in gold equal to three times to lost amount, or return or repair of the items and payment of twice the item’s cost.

Armed Forces

The South Crilosian military underwent a major overhaul during the reign of Elekor V who sought to reorganize it along the lines of other human militaries on the mainland. His rationale was simple — to better facilitate future alliances between South Crilos and nations such as Karsian, the South Crilos army would have to abandon its enigmatic and peculiar (by mainland standards) practices. Though the concept was simple, the execution was a disaster, since the notion of rank, chain of command, and other such accoutrements of order were completely jarring to the Crilosian psyche.

The modern South Crilosian military is a compromise between Elekor’s efforts and what the Crilosians could themselves accept. Rank is a function of one’s spiritual potency. Capitalizing on the people’s deeply religious nature, this system works well and also ensures that commanders have healing magic and are well protected by their squads. Political boundaries were redrawn, such that the ancestral division of warriors by place of birth resulted in forces conveniently similar in size to mainland regiments. Squad emblems were heavily modified to resemble ancestral totems so that the army would perceive its trappings as spiritual homage rather than superficial clap-trap. So successful was this last system, that its implementation was applauded even by the North Crilosians.

Cities

“The city,” as Kelmor the Erudite of Agral once said, “is more than a mere gathering and more than mere construction. It is in itself a living thing, no less worthy of stewardship than the trees and lakes of the Mount. The *ushada* of the city are real, as are the gods of the city.” This is what most South Crilosians believe, which is why they see nothing wrong with keeping the settled from the unsettled. Far from excluding the *ushada*, a city’s walls and streets help delineate the domains of the spirits of the wild from those of the hearth.

Agral, The Crown of Stakes

Large Town, Population 5,000

(77% human, 12% dwarf, 5% elf, 6% other)

Ruler: Chief Shelcha (*male human Bbn 14, CN*)

Gold Piece Limit: 3,000 gp

Assets: 750,000 gp

Resources: Tradesmen, silver ore, iron ore, slate

Militia: Hoplites of Mylot: 500 Bbn6, 300 Ftr6; Militiamen: 700 Bbn3, 600 Ftr3; Irregulars: 150 Bbn2, 100 Ftr2

Morphean Ore

The grand secret of the smiths of Mylot, morphean ore is a bizarre substance of opalescent luster resembling fresh oil on water. With precious few exceptions, morphean ore is created for the express purpose of battle. It is said that the smiths were gifted with the secret of making the ore by Enkili, Tanil and Denev, as a reward for their defense of Crilos during the Divine War. The Earth Mother instructed them on how to mine the ore, the Storm Goddess taught them how to infuse it with the essence of the winds, and the Huntress showed them how to etch the hunt itself into the very heart of the metal. So it is that when one uses a morphean item, it is hard to say who is the weapon, and who is the weapon master.

Weapons and armor crafted from morphean ore grant their bearer proficiency with their use. If the wielder is already proficient, the ore instead grants a +1 competence bonus to attack rolls or AC as is appropriate. This stacks with the masterwork bonus for morphean weapons, but overlaps (does not stack) with any magical enhancement bonuses.

Morphean ore items cannot be damaged while worn. Linked as they are to their bearer, any damage that exceeds the item's hardness is applied instead to the wielder's hit points. Only by use of potent spells (such as a *wish*) or by attacking such an item when it has no bearer can an artifice of morphean ore be harmed. Due to their link with the wielder, any attempt to disarm, steal (perhaps via *Sleight of Hand*) or otherwise remove a morphean item from its wielder without his consent suffers a -4 circumstance penalty.

Weapons and armor fashioned from morphean ore are treated as masterwork items in all other respects. Morphean ore has a hardness of 15 and 30 hit points per inch of thickness.

| Item | Market Price Modifier |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| Light armor | +2,000 |
| Medium armor | +5,000 |
| Heavy armor | +10,000 |
| Shield | +2,000 |
| Weapon | +2,000 |

Though a capital for less than two centuries, Agral has risen to become a worthy place for men and women of heroic bearing to meet and discourse. The newer quarters are built with imported marble, well matched to the white oaks and variegated birch of the older structures. A symbol of the South Crilosian attempt to reconcile secular nationalism with traditional spiritualism, Agral is a place with one foot in the past and one foot in the future.

1. The High Hall: This substantial structure is nearly as old as the civil war, when it began as an unnamed seat of government. The High Hall is not easily missed, bearing as it does the crests of the chieftain and the cabals of South Crilos. It is a beacon of color visible, it is said, from the Karsian mainland on a clear day.

2. The Embassy: Envoys from Karsian and Sunharrow frequent here, and even elven diplomats, when they care to leave their brooding, will journey to this place. It is another gathering spot and one well furnished as befits its guests of honor. Though South Crilosian law rules outside its walls, the interior answers to foreign ministries. This is perhaps why so many foreign travelers come here, both to remind themselves of home and to evade the harsh justice of South Crilos.

3. Thochiar's Piazza: A place for commerce and learned discourse, the piazza is relatively new. Built at the behest of Duran-Jor III, it has since expanded

three times beyond its borders. Were it not for its consumption of the neighboring houses, there would be no issue with its continued growth. But even the metropolitan South Crilosians are finding its sprawl somewhat annoying.

Other Cities

Cholos: The harbor of Cholos rests mostly below water, burned as it was in the opening moves of the Crilosian Civil War. What remains above sea is only a small fraction of the Coral City's former might — a reminder of defeat that picks constantly at South Crilosian pride. True its name, a vast reef grows in its deep bay. Here rests the last companion of Gjora, whose dreams, it is said, keeps the reef alive.

Incar: The southernmost port of significance, Incar of the Gray Tides faces South Crilos' mainland allies. It is their major port of entry and seat of what naval power the nation has. A primarily military port with few amenities, Incar is a favored destination for suppliers of war goods and instructors in the arts of combat.

Kalthamo: The High City stands watch in the Angry Hills, wary for attack from the north or belowground. While the South Crilosians trust their dwarven allies, the same is not true for the "old things" that lurk within the caves. Against these the soldiers of Kalthamo stand ready, their signature white steel a ward against the dark.

Sunharrow

Name: Sunharrow Kingdom

Population: 60,000 (80% human, 10% half-elf, 10% other)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: King Lanesh (*male human Ftr16, LE*)

Capital: Crylasta (10,000)

Major Cities: Brinan (8,000), Stalcho (6,000), Sethos (5,000)

Language: Termanan

Religion: Enkili, Belsameth, Chardun

Currency: Gold fist (5 gp), gold hand (1 gp), silver digit (1 sp), copper penny (1 cp)

Resources: Timber, fish, artwork

Major Imports: Grain, iron, cloth, luxury items

Allies: North Crilos, South Crilos

Enemies: Blood Bayou, Karsian, Thorvalos

History

Sunharrow Kingdom was great once. Its leaders were wise and good, its lands fertile and protected, and its people well educated and content. This prosperous and admirable human kingdom, now little more than a legend, became close allies with the elves and the Citadel of the Rose. Believing that the elves' long lives gave them access to special wisdom that mere mortals could never obtain, the humans' admiration of their elven allies was, in truth, only slightly less than the respect they felt for their new gods. Elves were brought to live as councilors for all the noble houses and were, in some instances, treated better than the nobles themselves.

These well-meaning elves intermarried with the nobles of Sunharrow, gradually, if innocently, giving rise to an elite upper class of half-elves. The high elves of Eldura-Tre ethnocentrically took this as no more than proof of the Sunharrowers' wisdom, but the marked difference between Sunharrow's upper and lower classes caused an inexorable rift that eventually led to Sunharrow's downfall. By the time the Divine War began, centuries later, Sunharrow's half-elven nobility had slowly grown in decadence and conceit, while its people slowly fell into squalor and ignorance. Sunharrow still fought staunchly on the side of the gods, but the land that had once been the greatest human

force for good in all Termana, fighting steadfastly against the constant encroachment of the Charduni Empire, now found its leaders secretly converting, little by little, to the worship of elitist Chardun.

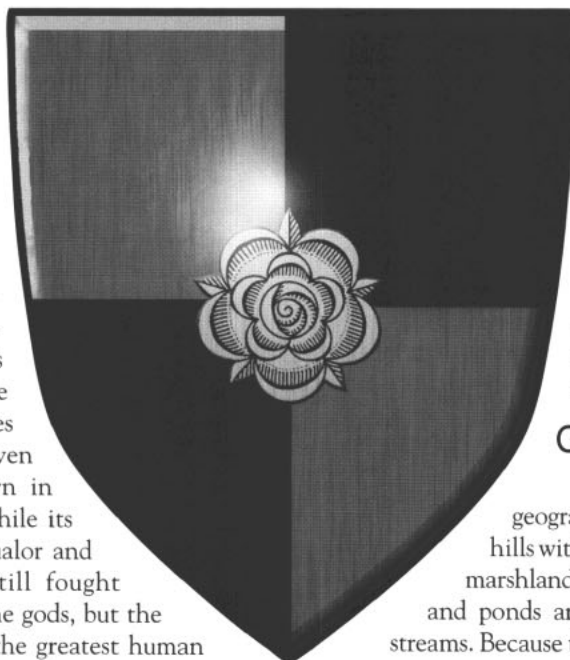
After the many horrors of the Divine War and the millions of lives lost when both Kadum and Chern fell, the common folk of Sunharrow found their last remaining faith in the wisdom of the elves shattered, and with it the humans seemed to temporarily lose their very sanity. They rose up against the nobility and hunted every last member out of the kingdom, killing most, sometimes even tearing them to shreds like frenzied animals. Sunharrow was plunged into cruelest anarchy, to be rescued, strangely enough, by the armies of the Ghoul King.

As the undead hoards swarmed across the continent, the blood-maddened factions of Sunharrow were struck docile with terror. Domarion, an excellent general from Karsian, rose to the occasion. In Hedrada's name, he rallied the people of Sunharrow Kingdom and, after the Ghoul King's defeat, was crowned the first human king of Sunharrow in nearly a millennium. The 10 years of his official reign saw a partial return to order and peace for the Sunharrowers, but most of his progress was not to last. He was assassinated in AV 31 for his Karsian heritage, even though he had courageously maintained Sunharrow's borders against Karsian invasion throughout his reign.

Since Domarion, no king of Sunharrow has ever been succeeded by heirs or even allies, and none until Lanesh has reigned longer than eight years. Lanesh has his faults as a ruler; he follows the evil Chardun and has a habit of treating the followers of Hedrada as if they were all Karsian spies, for example. (Why he is so much more tolerant with the followers of Enkili and Belsameth, common in Sunharrow's other enemy nation of Thorvalos, is unknown.) Nevertheless, Lanesh has maintained his grip on Sunharrow's throne for 11 years now, and has restored more peace and order than even Domarion. Lanesh is not a beloved ruler by any means, but the people accept and support him, grateful at least for what little prosperity he has returned to their homes and lives.

Geography

The majority of Sunharrow's geography consists of soft rolling hills with regular patches of forest and marshlands, all dotted with small lakes and ponds and lined with tiny burbling streams. Because the coastline has only been in



its current position since the Divine War, there are no beaches, *per se*. In forested areas the withered trunks of dead trees sometimes still stand in the sickly red seawater that drowned them, and the occasional rotting farmstead roof is exposed by the lowest tides. By far the most remarkable feature of Sunharrow's geography is the Dire Woods.

Dire Woods (Warm Forests; EL 6): Home to all manner of dire animals as well as unfriendly titanspawn like kobolds, trolls and ettercap, the Dire Woods are a place of mystery and ancient legend. As might be expected, the Titanswar has made this forest darker, wilder and more lethal than it was before, but it cannot be denied that the Dire Woods have always merited their name. It is not a particularly large forest, extending in a narrow finger along the length of most of Sunharrow (inadvertently protecting its borders from enemy Thorvalos) and reaching well into Karsian. The trees crouched among the foothills of the Thunderspike Mountains are truly ancient and imposing, however. Indeed, multitudes of mighty legends and epic sagas told throughout Termana begin or end in the Dire Woods, and most date back many centuries before the fall of Kadum forever altered the face of the continent. Also, twisted and dark though they may have become, there is evidence to suggest that these woods are not yet wholly evil.

Some of the oldest legends claim that the Dire Woods have always been sacred to Denev, and that a race of eldritch beings devoted to the Earth Mother still resides there. If this is true, these beings go to great trouble to hide themselves from the outside world. Nevertheless, it cannot be argued that strange and magical coincidences are common among the stately old trees of the Dire Woods, and stirring ballads of mighty heroes, monstrous villains, eerie old wise-women and beautiful maidens continue to issue from the region, even if the tales have gotten bloodier and more nightmarish in the last century.

Flora and Fauna

Sunharrow has been inhabited for centuries, so most of the countryside has long been tamed. Even with the current low population and the disorganization of government and militia, most of the native plant and animal life is fairly ordinary and harmless, such as small birds, rodents and rampant weeds. The upheaval that currently plagues Sunharrow is evident, however, in the regularity of dangerous creatures and titanspawn that wander in from other regions and ravage simple farmsteads and even small villages. In northern Sunharrow, these creatures are most likely to issue from the Blood Bayou. In the east, the dangers come from the Dire Woods, and in the west, the menace arises from the Blood Sea. The south central region of Sunharrow offers the least remarkable flora and fauna, the only major perils being humanoid raiders and the occasional border skirmish with Karsian.

Culture

Though once an important cultural center in Termana, little remains of the great works commissioned by Sunharrow's half-elven nobility before the Divine War. The humans who now hold power in the kingdom have long since rejected all traces of the elven culture that had permeated Sunharrow's traditions, but they have yet to create a new culture of their own, hailing as they do from every corner of Termana, and sometimes even from other continents as well.

The upheaval and depression of the region also keep the vast majority of Sunharrow's population in a state of bare subsistence, hardly a circumstance conducive to innovation or productivity. Nevertheless, Sunharrow continues to be known throughout Termana for its beautiful artwork, which issues mostly from the remarkably well-preserved University of Art. This single most civilized place in Sunharrow serves as a refuge both for scholars and for the most promising of the region's displaced orphans. Sunharrow's other, less savory cultural center is the near-anarchic small central city of Stalcho, which visitors from Virduk's Promise have said is reminiscent of a miniature Shelzar, or perhaps some of the more depraved areas of New Venir.

In any case, though Sunharrowers boast little culture they can really call their own, the fine sculpture and tapestry they produce from borrowed or forgotten traditions from all over the Scarred Lands are nevertheless worthy of respect and even wonder.

Crime and Punishment

Sunharrow is only barely able to claim a central government at all, and this only because King Lanesh has a bigger army than the other petty rulers in the kingdom. For this reason, it is almost impossible to make any kind of generalizations about crime and punishment in Sunharrow. In Lanesh's capital, Crylasta, and in the border towns of Brinan and Sethos where Lanesh's army maintains what little peace and order exist in the kingdom, laws are few but strict and punishments are swift and severe. The king ignores or even encourages almost any sort of behavior, so long as his streets are orderly and quiet. Disturbers of the peace tend to be punished much more harshly than covert assassins, for example, so long as the assassins do not directly threaten the king. Outside the king's three main cities, even in the central city of Stalcho, law and order is even less predictable, and depends largely on who is running things in any given month. Power shifts constantly in every part of Sunharrow not directly controlled by the king's armies, and Lanesh lacks the resources necessary to impose order on this chaotic kingdom.

Armed Forces

King Lanesh's army is made almost entirely of mercenaries from all over Termana, and recently even some from Ghelspad. They wear no uniform beyond simple wine-colored tunics and armbands, and training and experience vary greatly from warrior to warrior. Discipline, like all other law in Sunharrow, is tyrannical where it exists, but patchy. Lanesh has the force of personality to keep his army largely in order in spite of its eclectic nature, but the gods only know what will happen to the army when the current king dies.

Cities

Most of the major cities of Sunharrow tend to be seedy and oddly subdued. Very little is illegal or unavailable for the right price, but instead of the opulence or leisure one might expect in such a permissive land, the people and especially the nightlife seem inexplicably repressed and claustrophobic. Architecture is a depressing combination of beautiful but crumbling ancient elven design, and ugly but utilitarian repairs, additions and fortifications. What entertainment exists tends to take place in small, quiet groups behind closed doors, and highly addictive narcotics and disturbing forms of prostitution are both common themes.

Crylasta

Small City, Population 10,000

(95% human, 5% other)

Ruler: Count Meshar (*male human Ari3/Ftr8, LE*), a personal friend of King Lanesh

Gold Piece Limit: 15,000 gp

Assets: 7,500,000 gp

Resources: Fish, artwork

Militia: Soldiers: 100 War2, 50 War3, 50 War4; Officers: 10 War6, 5 Ftr6, 5 Ftr7

The wilting flower of Sunharrow, Crylasta is a half-empty, depressed city — a pathetic shadow of former half-elven glory.

1. The Carnation Palace: The traditional capital of Sunharrow for many centuries, the Carnation Palace is a huge and impressive monument to the fallen culture that once dwelled here. The entire palace is carved in the shape of a carnation in full bloom from imported blocks of rose-colored marble. Though still a work of great beauty, it is now crumbling in places. Several "petals" have fallen completely, rendering nearly a third of the palace uninhabitable. Other sections have been repaired, but with nothing remotely resembling the skill and artfulness that crafted the place originally, giving a patchy look to the outer walls especially. Rumor claims that the palace is riddled with secret passages, many of which are in a state of dangerous disrepair. Some of these supposedly lead to a complex warren of underground tunnels.

2. Underground Tunnels: Little is known about these tunnels, and indeed, they may no longer exist, if they ever did. Rumor and legend in Crylasta have always held that some of the secret passageways in the Carnation Palace led to an entire underground city, which various legends claim was inhabited by everything from dark elves to enslaved dragons to intelligent rats. Recent rumor suggests that when the Blood Sea changed the coastline, the blood-tainted seawater flooded the whole of the legendary underground city, destroying its inhabitants and leaving tunnel after tunnel filled with rotting bones, precious gems and magical tools and weapons. No sign of these tunnels has been seen since the Divine War, and indeed, even before that the reality behind the legends was questionable. If they do still exist, however, they are undoubtedly still flooded with bloody seawater and who knows what manner of monsters and pitfalls.

3. The University of Art: The most closely preserved remnant of the city's former grandeur, the University of Art was given as a gift by Domarion, Sunharrow's first real king after the Titanswar, to his daughter. She, in turn, left the university to its teachers, and they have ruled and maintained it for generations now as a council. The extensive and idyllic grounds of the university are located less than a day's journey outside Crylasta's walls, and the teachers and students have managed to make it almost entirely independent of the outside world, like a monastery or small fortress. The wizards and monks who guard and maintain the university as the most orderly and enlightened place in Sunharrow could not hold it for long against a true invading force, but the inhabitants are careful to draw little attention to themselves, and thus far they have been left alone to preserve what little remains of Sunharrow's former splendor. The greatest wizards, bards and artists in the region, as well as some of the wisest monks and clerics, all issue from the various ancient and beautiful halls and temples of the Sunharrow Kingdom University of Art.

Other Cities

Brinan: Like a smaller and sadder version of Crylasta, nearly a third of Brinan lies half-submerged at high tide by bloody waters. Guards are posted daily, both to keep the populace from wandering into the tainted areas and to keep the monsters from wandering out into the streets. Brinan also acts as a base for the troops that guard the border with Karsian, and has thus become a very militant town. Nearly a third of the adult men in Brinan are soldiers, and King Lanesh visits regularly to keep things in order.

Stalcho: Stalcho, located in the very center of Sunharrow, is easily the least repressed and depressing city in the nation. It is also, however, by far the most chaotic and dangerous. The rulers pay lip ser-

vice to King Lanesh — they know that if angered his reprimand will be harsh indeed. They also know, however, that he hasn't the resources to truly establish and maintain authority in Stalcho, so as long as they stay out of his way, the wealthy merchants and enterprising mercenary captains of the region can do whatever they like. Apparently, what they like to do is live as ostentatiously as possible while stabbing one another in the back, losing and regaining power and authority as often as other people change clothes. Stalcho's record to date is 10 different rulers in one week. Occupied as they are with plots and counterplots, the rulers have very little time to spare for maintaining the peace or establishing order, so Stalcho is a decadently lawless town indeed. Somehow, this

deadly warren of illicit activity gives rise to the greatest art, culture and education in Sunharrow, outside Crylasta's university. Certainly, Stalcho is a very wealthy city, and one of the many reasons Lanesh allows it to maintain its freedom is the fact that the merchants and crime lords of Stalcho are among his chief sponsors.

Sethos: Withered and sickly, Sethos is fairly typical of Sunharrow's cities. If anything, it is the most harshly repressed of the lot, however, as Lanesh struggles to maintain his control of the border region against regular incursions by the insidious Carnival Krewes. Highly militarized like Brinan, and plague-shrunk among its ancient ruins to less than half its pre-Titanswar size, Sethos is not a pleasant place to live.

Sylavael

Name: Sylavael, the Shield Realm

Population: 200,000 (80% forsaken elf, 15% half-elf, 5% human)

Government: Monarchy

Ruler: High Marshal Kathalema (*female elf* Ftr20, CN)

Capital: Ulamakhe (50,000)

Major Cities: Paesha (25,000), Fort Ged (20,000), Anchoer (15,000), Utel (10,000)

Languages: High elven

Religion: None

Currency: Gold hammer (1 gp), silver blade (1 sp), copper arrow (1 cp); gemstones are also used as currency in Sylavael

Resources: Arms and armor, iron, silver

Major Imports: Food, magic items

Allies: Forsaken elf realms

Enemies: Charduni Empire

History

Sylavael was not always the realm of impregnable fortresses and famed martial prowess it is today. During the time of Eldura-Tre, the province was called Kiavael, meaning the Empty Realm, a rough frontier separating elven and dwarven lands. Another province, whose name has been lost to history, once served as the center of elven military might, but this lost realm was swept away with the bloody waves of Kadum's Deluge. It was only the events of the Titanswar that brought Sylavael to the place of prominence it holds today.

After the great mass of the Charduni army was lost to Kadum's Deluge, the elven forces began to mass in the southern borderlands of Kiavael to prepare for a final attack upon the black dwarves. But this attack was never to come. A warning came from the Order of the Rose, trapped on the Eternal Isle, that the great titan Chern was approaching the northern shores of Termana. The majority of the elven army was repositioned, leaving only a skeleton force under the great elven High Marshal

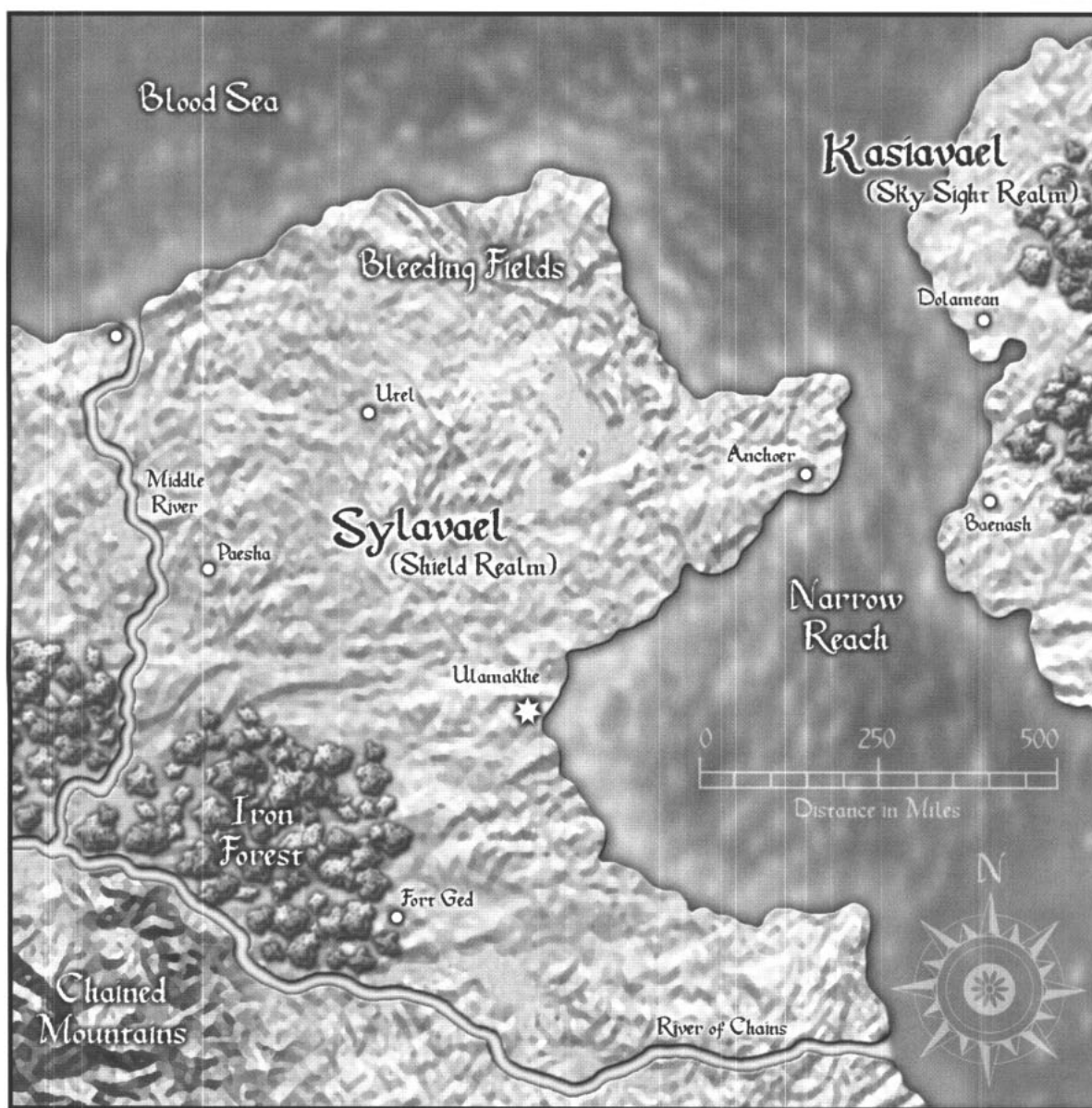
Kathalema. Although these elves did not see the ruin that Chern brought to their fellows, or the desperate victory against the Last Great Suffering, Kathalema's forces felt the despair induced by the death of their god.

Although the charduni had been decimated by the Divine War and Kadum's Deluge, the High Marshall knew that without a finishing blow, it would only be a matter of time until the dark dwarves recovered. Silently and grimly, Kathalema and her army waited for the day the black dwarves came. The attack came in 46 AV under the direction of the dread General Ixasamos. Charduni, undead, and slave conscripts assailed the weakened elven lines across the Chained River. For three days the two armies warred until Kathalema realized that the charduni would never give up while under the direction of a leader as strong as Ixasamos. She led a small force of elven knights deep into the heart of the charduni army while the Order of the Blade, the high magi of Sylavael, diverted the dwarves' attention. In the end, Kathalema reached the dread general alone and bleeding and challenged him to single combat to decide the fate of their two lands. Confident in his abilities, Ixasamos took up his black warscepter and rushed the wounded elf, shouting Chardun's name as he came.

Long did the two great warriors duel while their armies watched with breathless anticipation, but in the end, Kathalema struck the charduni's helmeted head from his stone-like neck. Only then did the Great General's dark army retreat, the elves too tired and relieved to harry them.

The dark dwarves were not permanently defeated, however, and Kathalema knew they would return. Unable to recruit new elves due to her race's curse, she began a program of methodical recruitment and conscription of humans. Sending agents to the human nations, Kathalema argued that after the charduni had finished with the elves, they would set their dark ambitions upon the fractious human kingdoms. Although some humans did come willingly to the Shield Realm, the elves supplemented these with thousands of humans kidnapped, often as children, from the western kingdoms. Unlike those in other elven realms,





these humans were not wantonly mistreated, as their abduction was an act of pragmatism rather than greed and disdain. Using the kidnapped humans as breeders, the Sylavaens have filled the ranks of their forces with half-elven conscripts. Pragmatic to the end, the Sylavaens treat their half-elves well, provided they can wield a blade. Half-elves can learn magic and rise to positions of power as readily as full-blooded forsaken elves if they are competent and ambitious.

Given the grim and foreboding nature of the forsaken elves, the fact that the majority of the Sylavaen army is composed of conscripts, and the steadily growing power of their charduni foes, the morale of the elven army is, to say the least, rather low. Still, these armies are the only bastion between the dark dwarves and elven lands and families, and it is this knowledge, along with strict military discipline, that keeps the Sylavaens from giving in to despair. Those who do desert are summarily ex-

ecuted. So the High Marshall and her forces wait, knowing they have no hope, for the black tide of charduni to overwhelm them.

Geography

One of the larger forsaken elf realms, Sylavael is also one of the most diverse in terms of terrain with lightly wooded hills, ancient forests, broad beaches and rich plains. To the north, the Blood Sea meets an ancient battleground called the Bleeding Fields. Hills surround the battlefield, but as one heads south, they flatten into broad and empty plains, remarkably free of any sign of agriculture. In the western part of Sylavael, these plains become more wooded and once again become hilly as they meet the edge of the great Iron Forest. Beyond the forest rise the stark and impenetrable Chained Mountains. In the east, the plains meet the clear blue waters of the Cerulean Ocean and the heavily garrisoned River of Chains.

Sylavael is mainly unexplored wilderness outside the few fortresses and cities, and the garrisons along the border with the Charduni Empire.

Bleeding Fields (Temperate Plains, EL 12): An ancient battleground, the Bleeding Fields are the site of the destruction of some powerful, otherworldly entity (although the exact type has been lost to history). It is said that the high magi and weapon masters of Eldura-Tre at its height were barely able to destroy this being, and only after suffering untold losses. Some say the fields are cursed even today, as those who venture there never return. Powerful undead and demonic entities prowl the fields, guarding the ancient weapons and relics that are thought to litter these fields.

Iron Forest (Temperate Forest, EL 7): The easternmost portion of the Calm Woods is often referred to as the Iron Forest, named for both the prevalent ironwood trees and the iron deposits said to lie just under the loamy soil. Because many charduni raids seek to use the Iron Forest as cover to attack the Shield Realm, the forest is heavily garrisoned. Elves lie in wait atop towering tree-camps and set deadly traps to snare unwary dwarves. The heavy elven presence has long since driven off any truly dangerous monsters.

Flora and Fauna

Mostly a wild frontier land, the Shield Realm teems with natural animals and a variety of plants outside the few civilized outposts. The most distinctive flora are the large ironwood trees prevalent in the Iron Forest. Towering over the rest of the forest, these ancient, slow-growing trees have stone-like bark that makes them extremely difficult to harvest. Still, they are praised by the craftsmen of Sylavael for their use in constructing weaponry.

In the north, vile fiends and undead have been known to maraud outward from the Bleeding Fields. The army and high magi of the Shield Realm are capable of quickly putting down any other dangerous beast that reveals itself. Nevertheless, rumors hold that dragons and other creatures of legend hide in the deep forests, waiting to snatch up the unwary elf.

Culture

Almost all Sylavaens are involved in some way with the ongoing, and seemingly eternal, war against the charduni, and this has a drastic effect upon the elves' culture. Sylavaens seem overly strict and rigid, especially to the other normally chaotic forsaken elves. They are highly disciplined and completely humorless, being far too consumed with their struggle against the dark dwarves to engage in the mindless hedonism or hopeless desperation so common to other forsaken elf realms.

The forsaken elves of Sylavael have elevated the warrior tradition and martial aspect of their forbearers to a high art form. Sylavaen bladesters are known throughout the forsaken elf realms for their intricate techniques, their graceful maneuvers and their deadly prowess. For most Sylavaens, honing their weapon techniques serves as the only acceptable form of channeling the powerful elven drive for expression. Other art forms are subtly (or not so subtly) discouraged as frivolities that cannot be tolerated in this war-torn realm. These elves do not clothe themselves in the traditional complex and bright garb of other forsaken elves, as it would give away ambushers and endanger soldiers. Instead, they prefer tight-fitting uniforms which, although still intricate in design, blend in with the hills and forests of Sylavael.

The Shield Realm has one of the largest populations of humans and half-elves of all the forsaken elf realms. Kathalema has instituted both recruiting and conscription stratagems throughout the western human kingdoms of Termana. Humans sold into slavery in Sylavael have little role besides breeders of half-elven soldiers. While too arrogant to believe that their human slaves could perform the tasks of even a half-elven conscript, the Sylavaens are far too pragmatic to mistreat or kill their slaves. Slaves who grow too old or prove unsuitable for breeding help to maintain the war machinery of Sylavael as blacksmiths, farmers or miners.

The dour folk of Sylavael would seem to the outsider to have more in common with their charduni foes than their forsaken elf allies. Like the dark dwarves, the Sylavaens are devout, fighting on in the name of their lost god even if few believe he will return. Besides the Enkili-heretics of Pelegael and the ascetics of Ehitovael, Sylavael has a higher percentage of clerics among their population than the other elven realms, as even their meager divine magic is enough to heal wounded soldiers. The sages of more pensive elven realms worry that the constant warfare of Sylavael has tainted the souls of its inhabitants just as surely as hedonism and vice have tainted Pelegael. In their despair and desperation, the folk of Sylavael have taken up the sword and fight against an enemy they can see rather than confront their impending doom and cursed nature. The question that puzzles the sages is, even if the elves prevail against the Charduni Empire and the elven god returns, will the Sylavaens be able to accept peace or has Chardun's dread word of War already seeped too deeply into their nature?

Crime and Punishment

Because every citizen is involved in some way with the war effort, the Sylavaen enforce military discipline on all citizens. Even simple crimes, such as

disobedience, theft and dereliction of duty, are punished harshly through imprisonment, extra duties and loss of freedoms. More serious crimes are punished by death. Treason and desertion are punished with not only the death of the criminal, but the imprisonment of the criminal's offspring and spouse. In Sylavael, the war effort is too important to take chances or allow soldiers to flee with elven military secrets.

For the most part, crimes are judged and punished by the local commanding officer, or his designee. In the field, crimes may be punished immediately by the soldier's superior as needed. All citizens are expected to report any wrongdoing they witness; failure to do so results in a similar punishment to that of the criminal, should the infraction ever come to light. Although this does encourage the reporting of crimes, it also tends to encourage conspiracies where groups of elves will conceal a known crime in order to avoid punishment.

Visitors, even those from the other forsaken elf realms, are placed under constant guard to prevent unwanted crime or other trespass. Visitors found to have committed crimes are granted little mercy and are usually put to death to prevent the spread of Sylavaen secrets.

Armed Forces

Sylavael has the most well-developed and structured military of any of the forsaken elf realms. The army is arranged in groups of 10 units of ascending rank, and the groups bear the following designations, in increasing order: Squad, Shield, Sword and Brigade. (Thus, for instance, a Sword consists of 10 Shields, which consists of 10 Squads.) Basic soldiers are called scouts. Squads of 10 scouts are led by Shepherds, Shields are led by Rangers, Swords are commanded by High Rangers, and Marshals command Brigades.

Magi play an active part in the defense of Sylavael, though they are not assigned directly to a squad. Instead, one wizard of middling power is assigned to each Shield. An additional, more powerful wizard is assigned to each Sword. Finally, each Brigade is supposedly able to call upon one additional high magi from the Order of the Blade, though in recent times the order has not had sufficient numbers to meet that goal. While on assignment, each wizard is fully under the command of the officer in charge of that unit; this arrangement has been known to cause conflicts, especially when more powerful high magi are involved.

Every citizen has a position in a given brigade, even if they are not currently called to active service. Citizens not in active service fill support roles for the army, crafting weapons, growing food or engaging in commerce with the other elven realms. Many Ehitovaen ships are harbored on the Sylavaen side of the Narrow Reach in order to provide naval support

to the elven army. Fearful of the famed Ehitovaen naval prowess, the Charduni Empire rarely sends vessels as far north as the Sylavaen coast.

Cities

Unlike the ancient communities of other forsaken elf realms, most of Sylavael's cities were built after the Titanswar. Due to the nation's strong martial mindset, most buildings are constructed with functionality first in mind and beauty a distant second. Outposts and towers are built mainly from stout ironwood planks, valued for its strength and flame-retardant properties. In the larger cities, stone castles and fortresses are a common site. Even the smallest settlement or outpost in Sylavael has a protective wall; the danger of charduni raids is too serious to ignore. Sylavaens live in and around large cities unless assigned to a patrol or border duty; isolated farms and small settlements are extremely rare.

Ulamakhe

Metropolis, Population 50,000

(Forsaken elves 78%, Half-elves 5%, Humans 17%)

Ruler: Marshal Linnorm (*male elf Rng10/Ftr6, LN*)

Gold Piece Limit: 100,000 gp

Assets: 250,000,000 gp

Resources: Iron, weaponry, slaves

Militia: 10,000 Home Guard: Ftr3; Mage Guard: 100 Wiz7

The only Sylavaen city that significantly predates the Titanswar, Ulamakhe is the realm's commercial and military center. The vast majority of the realm's human slaves are kept here, breeding half-elves which are quickly recruited to the front lines. As the largest port city in Sylavael, most overseas trade with other elven realms flows through Ulamakhe. Similarly, when delegations from the other realms wish to visit Sylavael, they approach Ulamakhe by sea to avoid upsetting the touchy warrior elves. Overland travel out of the city is strictly regulated to prevent outsiders from wandering through the Sylavaen countryside.

Unlike the capitals of other elven realms, Ulamakhe is not at all decrepit or rundown. The kidnapping of human slaves ensures that the city is continually full to capacity; the elves cannot risk showing any weakness to any possible spies. High Marshall Kathalema does not reside permanently in Ulamakhe, even though the Fortress of Blades is nominally her castle. Instead she travels between the fortresses and visits the lines quite often, as much to ensure the defenses of Shield Realm as to hide her own position.

1. The Fortress of Blades: The castle of High Marshall Kathalema, the Fortress of Blades is usually only occupied by Marshal Linnorm, other high ranking Marshals, and their advisors as they make war plans. This ancient stone fortress is said to be impregnable, and it is heavily warded to prevent scrying and teleport.

2. The Shieldwall: The mithril-shod marble wall surrounding Ulamakhe is heavily reinforced with magic and rises 100 feet over the bluff upon which Ulamakhe sits.

3. The Slave Quarter: Human slaves are held in this heavily guarded portion of the city. Half-elven offspring are taken soon after birth to quell any possible uprisings.

4. The Forge: The city's smiths and forges continually churn out high-grade arms and armor for use in the war effort. Although seldom of masterwork quality, Sylavaen weapons command a good price in any realm.

5. The Bladed Tower: The center of the high magi of the Order of the Blade, wizards in this tower train apprentices, weave protective magics and rain destruction upon the enemies of Sylavael.

6. The Barracks: The brigade known as the Home Guard garrison the barracks of Ulamakhe. These soldiers protect the city and Kathalema's castle in addition to patrolling the countryside.

7. The Docks: These sturdy ironwood docks often hold a few Ehitovaen naval ships as well as merchants' vessels and diplomats' ships. Sea walls

and a chained harbor keep out any charduni vessels or dangerous sea creatures.

Other Cities

Paesha: Set along the Middle River, this large city engages in commerce for Pelegael with the other elven realms. Nominally there to prevent invasion of the western realms, Paesha focuses on preventing elves and other travelers from entering Sylavael unguarded.

Fort Ged: Set along the River of Chains, Fort Ged is the base of operations for military action along the border with the Charduni Empire. The fortress houses two full brigades and is said to be larger even than the Fortress of Blades in Ulamakhe. Outsiders are never allowed this deep into Sylavael.

Anchoer: Along with Baenash, this port city prevents dangerous sea creatures and enemy naval ships from entering the Narrow Reach from the Blood Sea to the north. Ehitovaen naval ships are regularly stationed in Anchoer.

Utel: This city is the primary source of Sylavael's food supply. Utel is far enough from the front lines to spread out enough for significant farming. Food is processed and sent overland to Ulamakhe and the other settlements.

Thorvalos

Name: Kingdom of Thorvalos
Population: 100,000 (90% human, 10% other)
Government: Monarchy
Ruler: King Soelus (*male human Ftr16, LN*)
Capital: Aesus (22,000)
Major Cities: Hostos (5,000), Myleas (1,000), Fort Martus (500)
Languages: Termanan
Religion: Enkili, Belsameth, Chardun
Currency: Gold crown (1 gp), silver penny (1 sp), copper minim (1 cp)
Resources: Timber, produce, cattle
Major Imports: Iron
Allies: None
Enemies: Blood Bayou, Karsian, Sunharrow, Padrinola

History

Once a land held in thrall by the Charduni Empire, Thorvalos attained its freedom when the dark dwarves withdrew during the Titanswar. The one-time slaves quickly established a government by mimicking the successful nations of Karsian and Sunharrow. Unfortunately, the Thorvalans were less than successful; King Keiland, the first monarch, was barely able to extend his reign beyond Aesus. The scattered farming and fishing villages of Thorvalos were completely unprepared for the coming of the Ghoull King, and his undead forces quickly pushed the Thorvalan resistance north into the Blood Bayou in 18 AV. Although many small communities were sacked and burned during the occupation, the capital of Aesus was never fully taken, and in 19 AV the Army of the Living was able to retake the city. Aesus then served as a base from which the army was able to drive the Ghoull King's forces southward.

Several years after the undead had been driven from Thorvalan lands, the first rumors of a mysterious traveling carnival began spreading through northern Thorvalos. By 32 AV, strange dark jesters and heron-like creatures approached the large communities of Thorvalos, and even the King's court in Aesus, claiming to represent the Jack of Tears of the Blood Bayou. Wary of this new threat on his northern

border, King Fael warmly received these strange ambassadors while hoping to learn more about this enigmatic Momus. However, because of the weak Thorvalan government and the suspicious, even paranoid, nature of its people, King Fael soon found that the powerful Laughing Man had at least as much influence over his country as he did. Over the years, subsequent kings have attempted to retake control of Thorvalos, but the squabbling and clannish nature of the people has made it all but impossible.

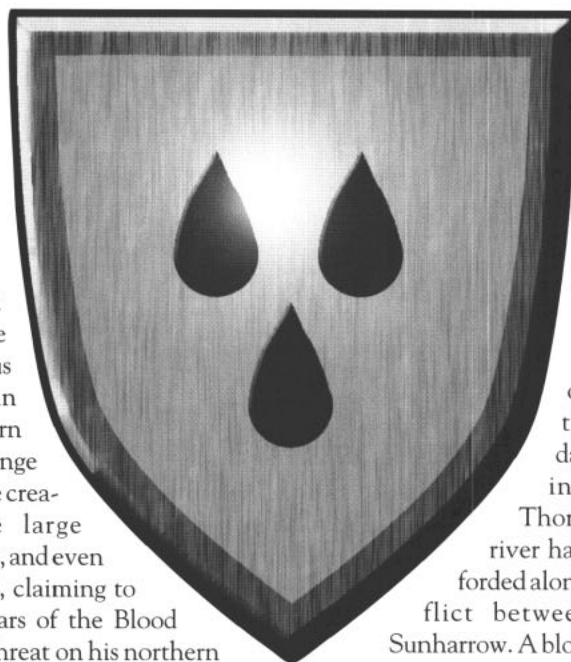
Although Thorvalos has had border disputes and bickered incessantly with its neighbors since its inception, it has only actually gone to war with one other human nation. In 102 AV, Thorvalos and Padrinola began a year-long war over border territory. Although the Jack of Tears brokered a peace treaty between the two nations, some in Thorvalos suspect the Momus of instigating the war in the first place. Careful observers have noted that the Jack of Tears has kept the human nations of northwestern Termana at each other's throats, and none have suffered from his manipulations more than Thorvalos. The nation currently has ongoing border disputes with Sunharrow and Padrinola, and a deeper abiding hatred of Karsian. These disputes have left the entire region a tinderbox, ready to ignite at the slightest spark.

Geography

Thorvalos is a warm and humid land, bounded in the north by the Blood Bayou, the southeast by Padrinola, the northwest by Sunharrow, and the south by the Thunderspike Mountains. A wooded region north of the Thunderspike Mountains quickly gives way to open plains, perfect for growing grain or raising cattle. In the north, the thin Tattered Hills lie

between the Thorvalan plains and the Blood Bayou. The Cursed and Whiteflood rivers provide access to the Blood Sea and Kadum's Blight, respectively, through the Blood Bayou.

Cursed River (Warm Aquatic, EL 6; EL 12 during periods of blood taint): This wide river flows from the heart of the Thunderspike Mountains to empty into the dangerous Blood Bayou, forming the border between Thorvalos and Sunharrow. The river has no bridges and is not easily forded along its length, discouraging conflict between Thorvalos and hated Sunharrow. A bloody tidal bore has been known



to drive tainted water northward, making the river dangerous during these periods.

Dancing Woods (Warm Forest, EL 12): A small forest just northeast of the Thunderspike Mountains, the Dancing Woods are known for myriad animate and dangerous plants. The forest takes its name from creatures such as assassin vines, carnivorous trees and tendriculos, which seem to twist and writhe in anticipation when travelers enter the forest. Some say that the forest is teeming with woods haunts, cruel elemental spirits waiting to lead all invaders to their deaths. Needless to say, loggers are very careful in this region, only entering the forest under heavy guard and with magical support.

Whiteflood River (Warm or Temperate River, EL 4; EL 7 during periods of blood taint): Forming the border between Thorvalos and Padrinola, the Whiteflood is a swift, rocky river full of dangerous rapids. From the Thunderspike Mountains to just south of Hostos, the river is unnavigable, but from Hostos northward, the river is wide and quite dependable. Like the Cursed River, blood taint sometimes flows upstream, but the quick flowing waters make this rare.

Flora and Fauna

An exceedingly dangerous land, especially in the Dancing Woods and as one draws near the deadly Blood Bayou, Thorvalos is known for its animate plant life such as bitter and carnivorous trees, leeching willows, red colonies, assassin vines, shambling mounds, woods haunts and tendriculos. Titanspawn from the Blood Bayou such as naga of various types, slime reavers, spined lizards, mock dragons, ropers and even hags are often found in the near Tattered Hills or dwelling in the Dancing Woods. In northern communities, it is not uncommon to see creatures of the Jack of Tears, most particularly shadow jesters, dark harlequins and gator warriors. More mundane creatures also roam the plains and forests; Thorvalos is known for its large droves of cattle and herds of fine horses.

Culture

Clan life is exceedingly important in Thorvalos. The vast majority of native Thorvalans belong to a clan, and the clan plays an active role in family life. Usually a circle of elders directs the clan's direction and development. The clan usually takes a portion of each member's earnings to support itself, and is responsible for defending its members, aiding poor or injured clanmates, financing business ventures, arranging marriages, and punishing errant members. Each clan has one or more clan champions whose duty is to defend the clan's honor in single combat against other champions. Although most Thorvalans are born into a clan, outsiders may be adopted into a clan and individuals may petition to enter more

Prominent Clans of Thorvalos

Clan Soelus: Currently among the most powerful Thorvalan clans, the king of Thorvalos himself hails from Clan Soelus. Soelus is a rich but small clan, with few members beyond the capital Aesus.

Clan Baeal: Known as a clan of devout Belsamites, Clan Baeal holds substantial power in and around Hostos. The clan is said to firmly control fishing and shipping via the Whiteflood River.

Clan Kelorth: Kelorth holds lands just south of the Tattered Hills and has been most strongly influenced by the Laughing Man's madness. Kelorth has been gaining power in Thorvalos's cities, and many fear they will soon make a play for power.

Clan Tawe: Clan Tawe is known for producing fearsome warriors, famed for their ability to maintain a berserk rage and wield halfscythes. Tawe holds lands along the Cursed River and Fort Martus.

Clan Valos: The clan of the original founder of Thorvalos (meaning "Land of Valos" in ancient Termanan), Clan Valos remains the largest clan and holds substantial power outside the major Thorvalan cities.

prominent clans. The honor and reputation of one's clan is very important to most Thorvalans, and most are willing (some outsiders might even say eager) to resort to violence to defend family and clan. Thorvalans usually identify themselves clan name first, followed by personal name, although individuals in certain powerful positions may be referred to by clan name alone. For example, the king of Thorvalos is called King Soelus even though his birth name is Soelus Maen.

Thorvalos holds a number of annual tournaments during holidays, where clan champions engage in contests of skill, strength and battles prowess. Although specific tournaments vary by clan and region, national tournaments are held during the Carnival of Flowers and Grimday. During the Carnival of Flowers, a single clan champion is given a scepter by the king and proclaimed Champion of the Gods for the following year, granting his clan much honor. On Grimday, only the bravest of champions are willing to fight, for all duels on Grimday are fought to the death. The clan elders of Clan Baeal preside over these tournaments by ancient tradition, and the winner is named the Champion of Death. No clan may declare a feud against the clan of the Champion of Death for one full year, or all the clans of Thorvalos will turn against the breakers of tradition.

Crime and Punishment

Except in the city of Aesus, where the king's ministers dispense justice, the various clans are responsible for punishing crime. Their justice is often harsh, as criminal behavior by a clanmate stains the honor and harms the reputation of the entire clan. In addition to punishing the perpetrator, the clan pays a wergild to the clan of the wronged individual. The amount of the wergild is dependent upon the size and importance of the two clans, the importance of the criminal and the victim, and the crime committed. If a clan finds their member to be innocent of the accused crime, they must present evidence of such innocence to the wronged clan. Many clan feuds have broken out over disagreements about the details of a crime and the guilt of an alleged perpetrator. Clanless individuals are unprotected, and one who is accused of a crime may find an entire clan out to exact vengeance. Such persons would do well to flee to Aesus where the king's justice can provide a modicum of protection.

Armed Forces

Beyond the guards and militia of Aesus, Thorvalos has no standing army. Each clan is responsible for defending its own land, although several clans may band together in the case of wholesale invasion. Technically, the king may call upon all the clans to contribute warriors for the defense of Thorvalos, but the number of warriors he can raise depends on the current political status between the clans. Thorvalans warriors are known for wielding a peculiar hafted blade known as the halfscythe.

Cities

Besides the huge and labyrinthine city of Aesus, Thorvalos has few towns of any size. Clans are usually spread out over a number of villages and farms, though larger towns such as Hostos have members of many different clans. Buildings are usually simple, constructed of wood with thatched roofs; clanholds of larger clans, however, may be fully defensible stone castles.

Aesus

Large City, Population 22,000
(88% human, 12% other)

Ruler: King Soelus (*male human Ftr16, N*)

Gold Piece Limit: 40,000 gp

Assets: 44,000,000 gp

Resources: Produce, cattle, grain

Militia: Clan Warriors: 250 Ftr2/Bbn1; King's Guard: 1,000 War2

Built amidst the ruins of an ancient titanspawn settlement set into a tall hill, Aesus is the largest and most architecturally complex city in Thorvalos.

Halfscythe

A favored weapon in Thorvalos, a halfscythe is a curved blade atop a short haft. The halfscythe is too large to use in one hand without special training; it is therefore treated as an exotic weapon. A medium-sized character can use a halfscythe in two hands as a martial weapon.

Medium Exotic Weapon

| Name | Cost | Damage | Critical | Weight | Type |
|------------|-------|--------|----------|--------|--------------------------|
| Halfscythe | 15 gp | 1d8 | x4 | 8 lbs. | Piercing and slashing |

Members of all clans as well as clanless foreigners dwell in the crowded and narrow streets of Aesus. The city serves as the main trading center for the products of Thorvalos's many ranches and farms.

1. The King's Palace: A renovated titanspawn fortress, this magnificent palace is the seat of King Soelus's power. The palace also serves as the barracks for the king's guard.

2. The Arena: The king hosts tournaments among the clan champions on important holidays in this large arena. At other times, hawkers and merchants use the arena as a makeshift market.

3. The Three Patrons: A trio of statues to the three patron gods of Thorvalos: Enkili, Belsameth and Chardun. Behind each statue is that deity's respective temple.

4. The Clanholds: While most major clans maintain a presence in Aesus, rich clans erect large stone manors along this boulevard to impress other clans with a show of wealth and power.

5. The Temple of Justice: The king's magistrates hold court within this ornate building, serving as a monument both to the king's strength and his justice.

6. The Stockyards: Ranchers trade and sell both cattle and horses in these large fenced fields set outside the city walls.

Other Cities

Hostos: Largely controlled by Clan Baeal, Hostos is a large port town on banks of the Whiteflood River. The town is a center of river trade, fishing and the worship of Belsameth.

Myleas: Set at the edge of the Dancing Woods and the Whiteflood River, Myleas is a small logging town controlled by Clan Valos.

Fort Martus: Fort Martus is a village built around a stone castle along the Cursed River. The castle is occupied by Clan Tawe and guards against attack by warlike Sunharrow.

Virduk's Promise

Name: The Imperial Colony of Virduk's Promise

Population: 85,000 (80% human, 10% halfling, 5% half-elf, 5% other)

Government: Calastian colony

Ruler: Imperial Governor Duke Hynosu (*male human Ari11, LE*)

Capital: Dragonport (20,000)

Major Cities: Queenshope (18,000)

Language: Calastian

Religion: All allowed, though worship of Chardun is officially encouraged

Currency: All currencies accepted

Resources: None

Major Imports: Ore, timber, livestock, exotic foodstuffs

Allies: Calastia

Enemies: None

History

And you will know His works, for they will be born of the broken wheel

A mere fragment of a fragment, pretending to be the whole

Yet they shall be the chosen of the Machine and by their craft shall you distinguish them.

Watch well these wayward children, born of the line that consumes itself

To them will flock the clockwork souls, born and yet not born of their hands

A meeting of the divine and the mortal — a waiting chrysalis.

— Last words of Abdayal, the Mad Poet of Lede

The story of the colony begins in 62 AV during a period when the drive for exploration was at its peak. With the Ankilan campaign at a standstill and the Convention of Vera-Tre making overland expansion politically dangerous, King Korlos instead set his sights further afield. Seizing upon the opening left in the wake of Kadum's Deluge, he commissioned the southern fleet to begin charting the unclaimed territories of Northern Termana. The expedition was completed in 68 AV, with findings that far exceeded the greatest dreams and fears of the royal bureaucracy. Here was

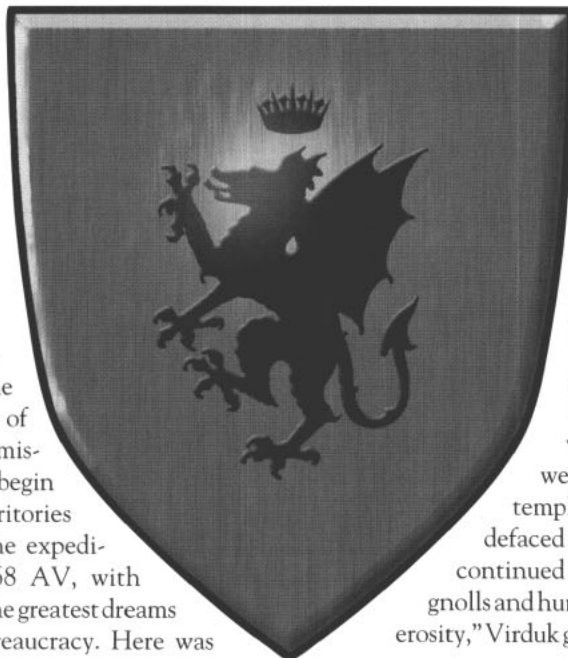
large piece of land menaced by a terrifying enemy (the Jack of Tears) and which was controlled by "mere primitives." Korlos deemed it ripe for the picking and a good public relations coup to boot, and ordered plans to colonize this new land.

Various political and social hurdles interfered, as they are wont to do, and it was not until 91 AV, shortly after his ascension to power, that King Virduk set about putting the Termana project into action. Renaming it Virduk's Promise, he sent reconnaissance teams under the guise of missionaries to scout out the region and update the southern fleet's now 23 year-old findings. Termana had apparently remained much as it was, and if anything was even more "in need" of Calastian "aid." The Blood Bayou's influence had strengthened, not weakened, while its human states continued to fester.

Careful not to alarm the human nations or to alert Calastia's many enemies, Virduk made further use of his missionaries. They created permanent settlements throughout the Promise, gaining the trust and support of the locals. For the most part these included human tribes and their gnoll rivals. With a constant supply of luxury goods from back home, the missionaries had little difficulty winning converts. Touting the Calastian way of life as the superior alternative, they set about wiping out the cultures of the area. The one exception of this was Blessed Sanka Among the Ronuhs. Founded by a moderate cleric and his strange golem companion, Blessed Sanka was a place of honest cultural exchange. So successful was this settlement that Sanka and his brother clerics were able to convince the martial gnolls of the Six Fangs Alliance to cease hostilities with the local human tribes. The foundation now set, King Virduk began formal colonization in 94 AV and amalgam-

ated the different missionary efforts under a unified command by royal charter later that year.

Realizing the true intention of the Calastians, many of the human tribes and gnollish war bands attacked colonists wherever and whenever they could, but by then it was too late by far. With the arrival of the crack Midnight Ravens' regiment from Vashon, the rebel cause was doomed. Whole villages were put to the sword, while the temple cities of the gnolls were defaced and unhallowed. The carnage continued into 96 AV but in the end the gnolls and humans surrendered. In his "generosity," Virduk granted the conquered peoples



amnesty in exchange for military service, an act which set the stage for the development of the modern colonial armed forces.

Since then the Calastian colonial machine has rolled forward inexorably. Despite the efforts of native and foreigners alike (the Coreanic paladins and vigilants chief among them), Virduk's Promise has continued to spread. The credit most certainly does not go to the colony's leaders, who if anything have sabotaged their own people's hard work in the name of self-interest. Were it not for the hardworking colonists, hoping against hope that their toils will lighten the load of their descendants, Virduk's Promise would have collapsed decades ago. As it stands, the colony is a farce and a lie, a fact that more and more people across Scarn are beginning to realize.

Geography

With much of its expanse lying several yards below sea level, Virduk's Promise is a marvel of civil engineering. By capitalizing on natural levies and drainage patterns, early settlers were able to reclaim otherwise fallow land. Far from denuding the surrounding wilderness as druids and the Incarnate order had feared might occur, the settlement turned out to be a great boon to the local environment.

Formal work on the colony's restoration projects began in 96 AV under the direction of Crestophoro Ren, even then known as the "sculptor of cities." He assembled a crew of engineers who would implement the land reclamation projected for the next eight years. Among these was Anastasian Rideau, the talented young canal designer who would later oversee the construction of the Promise's Grand Aquifer Project. Using the skills of local tribesmen and lessons learned in similar work done in the Heteronomy six years earlier, Rideau and Ren were able to complete their project in half the estimated time. The result was the reclamation of hundreds of square miles of arable land which were quickly dolled out to eager settlers.

Unfortunately, military efforts back home stalled the shipment of supplies overseas. With reduced support, modern efforts to expand earlier irrigation and drainage projects have slowed (and in some cases, taken a few steps back). Many local barons see Chardun's Road (see below) as a means to line their own pockets, and to that end they pilfer the already meager funds allocated to the Road's maintenance. The net result is a massive canal in varying stages of disrepair. Already its many catchments have become contaminated with disease or even titanspawn.

Chardun's Road (Warm Aquatic, EL 2; tainted catchments EL 7): The Road of Rulers, or Chardun's Road, is Crestophoro Ren's crowning achievement. A natural river as old as the region itself, its shallow and unpredictable course in the days prior to the Promise's

foundation made it useable only by small craft. It was heavily traveled by the native peoples of the land, and their histories speak of fledgling kingdoms that grew and died upon its shifting shores. Every year just after the start of Vangalot, the river swells, flooding its banks several hundred yards inland. During this time, the Road is especially well stocked with fish of all sorts, including prawns, lobsters and even squid (considered a great delicacy by the natives). After about a week of this bonanza, the river recedes to its usual flow. This is probably for the better, for during this period the Road reaches sufficient depth to support large and unsavory creatures including blood mutants from the sea and dormant titanspawn from upstream. The modern Road is well controlled, with overflow basins serving both to modulate the yearly floods and retain water for lean times.

Fever Swamps (Warm Swamp, EL 11): The southern Promise remains much as it did in the days prior to Calastian settlement. Native historians report the region was once home to a proud association of human city-states. These intrepid kingdoms miraculously halted the advance of the charduni for some 90 years until they managed to divert the dark dwarves' attention elsewhere. The most famous of these battles took place at the pass of Calorpela, where a handful of armored knights held back the charduni assault until the nearby city could be evacuated. Sadly, nothing much remains of these fabled cities of jade, their monuments long ago looted, those relics too large to be taken now sunken into the mire. Travelers still emerge from the Fever's borders, wide-eyed with tales of strange and marvelous visions. Drainage of the region is planned to begin "shortly," but as this has been the plan for the past 20 years, none are willing to make any bets on when it may actually start.

Slate Hills (Warm Hills, EL 13): Settlers in this region are few, which is a testament to the truly unsavory nature of the Slates. An ancient geological formation, the hills date from the Epoch of Lethene and number around 200. It is because of their extreme age that they are laden with rich deposits of rare ores. Sadly, the region's native population of giants, gnolls and goblinoids (including the dread Ganjulael spinebacks) makes any attempt at quarrying haphazard at best. The last attempt was made in 131 AV, which beyond establishing the hovel-of-a-town at Westwall has succeeded in doing little else.

Flora and Fauna

As was the case even at the foundation of the colony, the Promise's most dangerous and tenacious predators remain its roving pockets of undead. Thanks to the vigilance of the Ridings, their incursion into civilized regions remains a rare event, though corruption, embezzlement of the Riding's funds, and faltering

moral puts the entire affair in grave jeopardy. To make matters worse, the Promise seems subject to some unnatural cycle of negative energy. Large surges occur every three to five years, though for the last six much of the southern reaches have been gripped in a particularly strong upswelling. Ghouls appear frequently, and entire villages have been forced to flee raids by powerful spectres. Whether this phenomenon is linked to the undead among the Karnival Krewes, the Ghoul King or some other, unknown power has not been determined.

In comparison to such attacks, the presence of strange constructs seems almost trivial in comparison. Most are believed to be remnants from Golthagga's forge, for they have both the otherworldly aspect and one-of-the-kind quality that marks the Shaper's creations; yet they leave the colonials alone, avoiding even solitary travellers. In fact, such constructs (of which golems make up the majority) have on occasion come to the aid of travellers attacked by the undead, which has spawned the increasingly popular belief that they are in fact the emissaries of Trelu, demigod of form and design. Those few colonists who have adopted *ushadani* even go so far as to contend that they are the spirits of machines.

Culture

Many of the Promise's social norms closely resemble their Calastian roots. This is especially true in large settlements such as Queenshope and Dragonport, where the influence of the orthodoxy remains strong. A strict adherence to Chardun-worship and unwavering loyalty to the Black Dragon Throne are mandatory. Perhaps in an attempt to keep themselves from "going native," city dwellers make it a point to dress exactly as prescribed by the ruling conventions back home. Many go to great lengths to procure the right fashions and food, which has resulted in a brisk trade across the Blossoming Sea.

In the new settlements of the central plains, things are somewhat different. Here the customs and mores of the native humans and gnolls have a far stronger hold. Calastian customs are paid lip service only, having been supplanted or modified by Termanan traditions. Chief among these is the Moganian Challenge, adapted from the gnoll rite of *mo-ji-ga'nin*. A month long ordeal of fasting and austerity, the Challenge culminates with the organization of a small band of one's peers who set out to defeat an enemy threatening one's home settlement.

Singular among the Promise's cultural innovations, though, is the development of the mechanistic underground. The belief in the supremacy of reason and logic as expressed in salient thought, debate and the science of engineering, the mechanistic ethos has its roots in the later works of Crestophoro Ren and Anastasian Rideau. Even before their conversion to

the faith of Trelu, Ren and Rideau were proponents of "the goodness of reason." They both challenged and encouraged their students to think along cogent arguments, and to apply the same model to their construction and designs. Considered heretical by most orthodox clerics, those who follow the mechanistic way are few and careful to hide their identity.

Crime and Punishment

Calastian law remains the mainstay of the Promise's legal system. Native influences aside, crimes and punishments found in the rest of the Hegemony are found here as well. Theft still carries a penalty of hard labor or military service, with scarring or maiming inflicted upon repeat offenders. Assault still results in imprisonment, fine and maiming to match the injuries done the victim. Death by beheading remains the punishment of choice for murder, though permanent servitude to the wronged party's heirs has gained popularity as it helps retain the colony's valuable population. With the degeneration of the colony's courts, lawlessness has become the norm beyond Dragonport and Queenshope. Local officials frankly can't be moved to care. Some even actively hide crimes from regional magistrates, worried that their political enemies might use such incidents to undermine their position.

The one true reform the colonials have adopted is the system of appeals, of which two forms exist. The first is an appeal to judgment, whereby the accused may try to have the ruling of his guilt reversed. This novel system originated among the gnoll tribes as a means to halt the tide of "retributive sentencing." The two judges of the appeal must always be chosen from a different and unrelated district, ensuring impartiality. The second form of appeal is the appeal of sentence. In these cases, the accused party accepts the ruling of guilt but asks for a change in sentence. This is the time where mitigating circumstances are considered. Among other things, the delay required lets tempers cool. It is not unheard of for wronged parties to advocate for the accused during appeals of sentence. This tradition has its origins among the native humans, who see the justice system more as means for reconciliation than retribution. Though it remains a rare proceeding in orthodox strongholds such as Dragonport, it has gained much support elsewhere.

Armed Forces

The army of Virduk's Promise is divided into four Ridings, one each for the four cardinal directions and prefectures of the colony. The North Riding, based in Dragonport, is the largest, totalling some 4,500 crack soldiers and auxiliaries. The remaining three are each about one half that size, though the South Riding's use of gnollish cavalry gives it a notable mobility advantage. In addition to the Ridings are the city

militias. These are separate from the city guard and serve as rapid response forces to hold at bay whatever adversary might be assaulting a settlement until such time that a Riding may arrive to deal with the issue more comprehensively. "Until such time" has become increasingly long of late, as Riding commanders dally about in opulence with little attention paid to their duties.

Unlike the military of the Calastian homeland, Ridings theoretically employ a bipartite command structure. The first is modeled directly on the Calastian system. Though not a legion, the head of a riding is still called a Legate, and like a legion each Riding is designed to be self-sufficient. Among human officers, Calastian ranks are used, as are Calastian men-at-arms divisions such as light and heavy infantry, cavalry and siege crews. The second tier is adapted from the gnollish war bands, based on a traditional system of renown and obligation. Gnollish troops are organized into different troop-types than humans, many of which cannot be translated properly. The gnollish cavalry is the most famous of these. In practice, the system is horribly lopsided and human commanders often ignore or outright contradict the edicts of the gnollish command. This is despite the fact that most gnollish commanders are paid by Calastian gold to keep up appearances, and insubordinate gnolls have been secretly executed in the past.

Nor is the friction confined to the command level. Most human rank soldiers find their gnollish counterparts disgusting and primitive. The gnolls in turn find the humans arrogant and weak. Many cannot comprehend why their leaders work together at all, and mutiny on both sides is a constant possibility. The governor's secret police keeps things quiet for now, which is just as well for the beleaguered settlers who rely on their army, dysfunctional though it might be, for survival.

Cities

I look upon the cities of the Promise and see the spires of my birth. Though I was sired far from these shores, it was upon the plains and expanses of this place that my soul was born. They twinkle in the light of dawn, crimson and gold by the gleam of their marble domes, sky bridges of ivory and white pine like gossamer on some divine loom. It matters not that they are not the largest creations of mortal hands to grace the face of Scarn, for I see in them that honest geometry of reason and order, neither oppressive nor flimsy, which makes them to me greatest of tributes to the Work.

— From the journal of Crestophoro Ren

The Promise has but two cities worth the title, and since Ren's death they are fast losing their qualifications. Beyond Dragonport and Queenshope the only settlements to be found are ramshackle outposts and dirty frontier towns. Many of these were funded

by the Calastian Colonization Authority, but when the money dried up and the settlers were left to fend for themselves, the decline and collapse of these villages was inevitable. Today, most can claim but one building of half-livable quality, usually the local baron's manor. The remaining settlers, reduced to de facto serfdom, eek out what lodgings they can from rickety wooden "houses" and sod huts. Given the large numbers of marauding undead, natives and titanspawn, all but the poorest are ringed by wooden palisades. This provides little more than the illusion of safety, since these walls are universally of such poor design and workmanship that a stiff breeze could topple them.

Dragonport

Large City, Population 20,000

(85% human, 7% halfling, 4% half-elf, 3% gnoll, 1% other)

Ruler: Imperial Governor Duke Hynosu (*male human Arill, LE*)

Gold Piece Limit: 40,000 gp

Assets: 40,000,000 gp

Resources: timepieces, pharmaceuticals, maps

Militia: Ridingsoldiers: 4,500 Ftr6; City Militia: 950 War3; City Guard: 550 Ftr4

The city of Dragonport serves as the Promise's main link to the rest of the Hegemony. Through it pours the raw materials that sustain the colony, and from it flow its many finished goods. Dragonport also serves as a major center for learning, military organization, and recreational respite.

1. The Cathedral of Thorns: There are actually two such cathedrals, both situated near the head of the Dragon Hills. The older lies just west of the hills, and serves as the seat of Governor Hynosu's colonial government. The newer cathedral was built only 20 years ago. Modeled after the older building, the new cathedral houses the governmental library as well as the offices of the district magistrates.

2. Dockside I: The old colonial dock, Dockside I contains some of the oldest buildings in the colony. Mostly used for local traffic, it is frequented by the city's fishermen and those seeking to employ a native mariner.

3. Dockside II: The modern port of call boasts advanced nautical management systems, including lighthouse beacons of the perfect hue to pierce fog, retractable gangplanks and rope-and-pulley cargo cranes, and so forth. Though designed and conceived by Crestophoro Ren, it was not completed until some five years after his death.

4. Gearhouse University: Built upon reclaimed land in the center of the city harbor, Gearhouse is the colony's premier school of engineering. Its curriculum is arguable the most advanced in Termena (if not the world) and produces some of the Hegemony's greatest engineers each year. The Gearhouse's main clock tower is the most accurate non-magical me-



chanical timepiece known on either Termana or Ghelspad.

5. Dragon Hills: Said to be the resting form of a great dragon spirit by native lore, the Dragon Hills form the backbone of the city and serve as natural wall against overland attack. Superstition aside, the rock of the hills is rife with positive energy which has also helped to repel undead raids.

6. Riding: This southeastern suburb is home to the North Riding and their families. Though beyond the protective shelter of the Dragon Hills, it is nonetheless one of the safest places in the colony. In addition to its residential function, the Riding houses several research installations operated by the North Riding. Many of Gearhouse's finest find employ here, and its proximity to the university's laboratories makes it the major center of military research in the region.

Other Cities

Queenshope: The city of the Southern Riding, the core of Queenshope was designed and built between 112 AV and 120 AV. Ren hoped to use the project as his personal message of solace to his countrymen in a time when it was most needed; it was his only true failure. Unable to secure support from local lords for the project, he turned the merchant houses back home for funding. They agreed readily enough and proceeded to send sub-standard lumber barely worthy for the fire pit. Only after several construction site accidents and a death toll that threatened to develop into a public relations nightmare did Virduk personally sanction the supply of materials (after executing those barons and guild heads who had fomented so much trouble in the first place). His morale crippled, Ren would not attempt another major project for nearly a decade.

Chapter Four: Other Locations of Termana

Studying Termana by its so-called civilization, by its nations alone, is akin to studying a tiger only by its black stripes. Not only will you miss half of what you seek, the unseen half will probably eat you.

— From the writings of Testhelo Kober,
early Calastian explorer to Termana

Many nations have existed on Termana for longer than most native inhabitants can remember, and several more have gained a modern foothold and begun to expand. Nevertheless, vast stretches of the continent remain utterly untamed, as though the land itself scoffed at the divine races' attempts to conquer it. The strength of nature remains undaunted, from the mighty Gamulganjus — whose Tepuje cities resemble no form of civilization known to the outside world — to the towering peaks of continent's many mountain ranges. Termana is still very much what the titans made it, and it seems that no effort on the part of mortals or gods is likely to ever change it.

Blood Bayou

(Warm Swamp, EL varies)

Name: Blood Bayou

Population: Unknown

Government: Autocracy

Ruler: Jack of Tears, also known as The Momus, The Laughing Man, The Carnival King

Capital: The Carnival of Shadows

Major Cities: None

Languages: Termanan

Religion: Unknown

Currency: None official; many accepted.

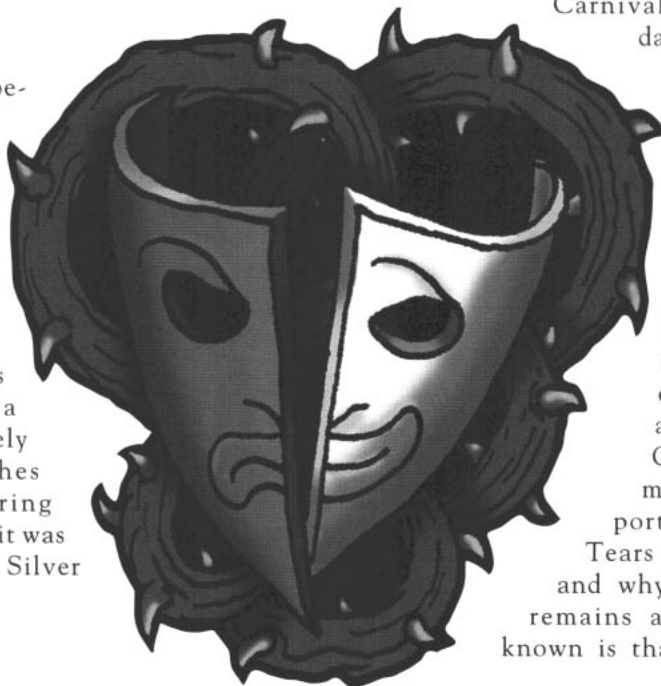
Resources: None

Allies: None

Enemies: Sunharrow, Thorvalos, Karsian, forsaken elf realms, Silverisle

History

In the epochs before the Titanswar, the region now known as the Blood Bayou was the Kardene Lowlands, home to a few small settlements and outposts. It served as the location of a number of relatively unimportant clashes between neighboring towns. Before that, it was part of the druidic Silver Circle.



Kadum's Deluge changed the very face of the land. The monsoons and tsunamis caused by Kadum's internment at the ocean's floor inundated the formerly tame lands with the titan's blood. For months, the region was flooded in crimson waves, killing much of the indigenous life and warping those unlucky enough to survive. In time, the waters subsided, leaving wetlands unlike any other on Scarn.

For years afterward, the surviving peoples of Termana avoided the accursed place, known for the fell beasts haunting the once hospitable land. The water was undrinkable and disease threatened all who entered.

Still, in time, a few hesitant settlers tried to reclaim the land lost to the titan's blood and fury, and small, tenacious towns sprung up along the borders of the tattered hills.

It was to these towns that the first signs of something *else* in the Bayou appeared: Playbills announcing the arrival of the Carnival of Shadows and its krewes. For such grim settlements, a carnival was a welcome respite from the relentless struggle of living in such an unforgiving territory. The capering of jesters and acrobats could certainly do nothing to make things *worse*.

No one actually *saw* the brightly colored wagons travel from the swamp; the Carnival was simply there on the third evening after the playbills were posted, setting up their tents and wagons. As promised, all had a good time, even if the entertainments were disturbing and unwholesome. The Carnival always left before dawn, taking with it the sick, the insane and the infirm.

Shortly after the Carnival's first dozen or so appearances in Thorvalos and Sunharrow, the Momus revealed himself to kingdoms near and far, sending emissaries to rulers across Termana and Ghelspad, often with messages of secret import. How the Jack of Tears knew these things, and why he revealed them, remains a mystery. What is known is that it has guaranteed

his diplomats a place in most kingdoms and city-states across both continents.

In time, the heron priests appeared to seek out the dispossessed, the malcontents, and the wistful. To these they granted new hope, filling their hearts and minds with visions of a wonderful place where the festivities never end and where misfits such as themselves might belong to a family that celebrated their strangenesses and misfortunes rather than reviling them. Just as with the Carnival's claiming of the sick, insane, and infirm, few questioned or regretted the loss of these people — they were rarely of any use to their communities, and often of some harm. It wasn't until the heron priests expanded their targets to include the young and impressionable and productive members of these communities that anyone realized the danger the Carnival and its nascent krewes represented. By then, of course, it was too late. The Carnival had been welcomed into numerous towns and cities and could not be barred from entry. Many tried, only to find those set to guard against its arrival torn apart as if by ravenous beasts. Magical wards did no good, either, as the spellcasters responsible simply vanished without a trace.

Many in modern Termana regard the Carnival of Shadows and its Krewes as something to be endured, and perhaps secretly enjoyed. None try to contain it or impede its movements and many are the rulers who breathe a sigh of relief the morning after one of the Carnival's celebrations.

Geography

The geography of the Blood Bayou is that of a swamp gone horribly wrong. Trails appear and disappear without warning, shifting with the Blood Sea's tides and the Nameless Orb's phases. Some say it changes according to the Carnival King's whim, and others think that perhaps the three are not so separate.

The land across much of the Blood Bayou is at best marshy and wet. At worst, it is filled with carnivorous beasts mutated from long exposure to Kadum's blood, quicksand that almost seems to hunt for victims and flora that maliciously conceals safe havens. Travelers who wish to travel safely must journey along one of the rivers, and even that carries no guarantees.

The Cursed River Delta (Warm Marsh, EL 3): The Cursed River Delta covers much of the northern part of the bayou, and is the

Words from the Momus to Oakthorne

You ask questions that seek my ears. You speak of a Forgotten God and ask "from whence comes this rumor? Why do I know nothing of it?"

Out of reverence for Denev and a moment I once shared with her, I'll tell you what you wish to know, if you'll but grace me with your presence in the Carnival of Shadows. My eyes have seen much, from Scarn's first sunrise to the fall of what was once nature.

Viedt, and I will tell you of the One I served, whose fellows betrayed him, and whose eye unnamed still winks from the heavens.

Come to the Carnival, and I shall reveal the truth behind the lie that claims Kadum's blood changed me.

Travel across the Sea of Blood, brave the dangers of the Blood Bayou, and pay the price I require, and you shall know all that you seek.

— The Jack of Tears, once known as the Herald of Balance

principle means of transportation for outsiders seeking to explore the Blood Bayou. It's also — usually — the safest. Baroque and carnivorous aquatic life batted upon Kadum's blood often thirst for more mundane sources of vital fluid (and fresh meat) as well, making a well-equipped vessel a priority if one wishes to travel the delta.

This is the usual means used to find the Carnival of Shadows' ever-changing locale. The Jack of Tears' court is said to be at the heart of the Blood Bayou, but the heart is not a specific place so much as a mood or a state of mind, or so the Momus says to visitors fortunate enough to escape with their lives and sanity.

Bay of Tears (Warm Aquatic, EL 8): Prior to the deluge, the Bay of Tears was an inhospitable stretch of relatively dry land. It held little value to anyone nearby and was sparsely settled, mostly by bandits and pirates seeking havens far from possible retribution. After the waters from Kadum's Deluge re-

Finding the Carnival

Travelers seeking the Carnival of Shadows speak of a way to find the Carnival without seeking the Krewe of Waves.

The method is to throw a bloodstained ribbon or a handful of bone powder and glitter into the waters and follow the current to the Carnival. Some add that a prayer to a forgotten god is necessary, invoking the Nameless Orb in the process.

This is not a hard and fast system. Usually, it requires an appropriate Knowledge (Termana, Blood Bayou, Carnival of Shadows) or Survival check (DC 15 to 25, depending on whether it wants to be found). The more desperate the traveler, the lower the DC should be. Using the invocation gives a +2 circumstance bonus to the check.

Knowledge of this is common, repeated among sailors in taverns throughout Eastern Ghelspad and all of Termana. Anyone who spends any time sailing or who asks about the Carnival will discover the information on a DC 10 Gather Information check, DC 20 to learn the prayer.

ceded, these lowlands remained submerged. The newly formed inlet was named the "Bay of Tears" for the suffering and death the catastrophe caused. It continues to earn its name to this day, serving as a breeding ground for peculiar hybrid beasts that may have once lived on dry land, but now swim and hunger for human flesh. Only the Krewe of Waves has free reign to travel the Bay of Tears, and those who seek to sail these waters must gain Queen Ran's blessing or risk having their ships dashed to pieces and their crews fed to blood kraken and worse.

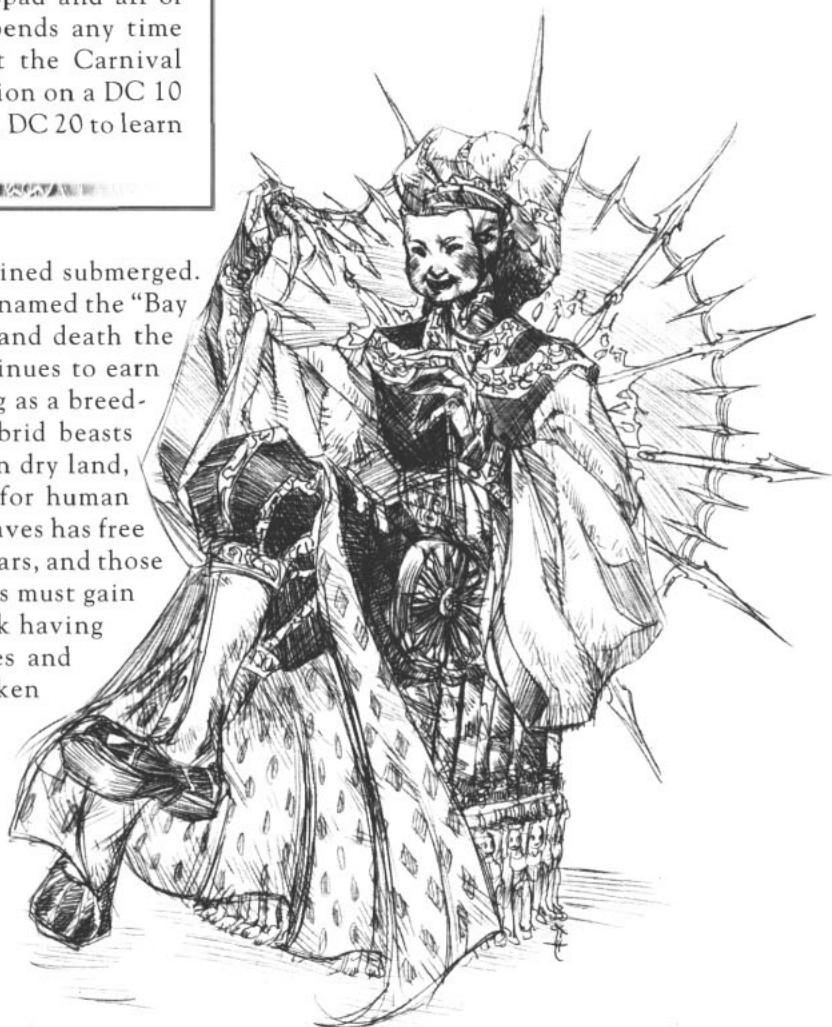
Diplomats usually travel to the Carnival of Shadows through the Bay of Tears. While the Jack of Tears officially frowns upon the murdering of ambassadors, it is traditional for such dignitaries

to bring rich gifts to placate Queen Ran. Those who forget to bring gifts are known to suffer horrifying and brutal accidents.

Tattered Hills (Warm Badlands, EL 6): This barren stretch of highlands marks the border between the Blood Bayou and Thorvalos; it's home to titanspawn, vicious predators, blood sea mutants and Blood Bayou patrols, usually manned by the Krewe of Plagues or the Krewe of Bones. Gangs of bandits occasionally seek refuge in the Tattered Hills, but the Carnival Krewes are no more merciful to them than they are to legitimate merchants. The few dignitaries who risk travel through the Tattered Hills must gain Baron Mirth's blessings. This requirement alone keeps travel to a minimum, with most opting to deal with Queen Ran and her more easily sated appetites.

Flora and Fauna

The Blood Bayou suffers from an excess of life, and in some cases, unlife. Kadum's blood not only mutates the living, it often animates



the dead who leave sufficient remains to walk again. Such creatures are known to be filled with hatred for the living, a byproduct, perhaps, of the rageful nature of the Mountainshaker. The Bay of Tears is filled with mutated aquatic beasts of both oceanic and land origin. The Blood Bayou itself breeds as many diseases as it does mutants, and is unsafe for any kind of travel without magical aid.

People

The only people who dwell within the Blood Bayou are either desperate outlaws or members of the Carnival Krewes; most of the population not of the Krewe of Mangroves is non-humanoid (or formerly humanoid), and the inhabitants like it that way.

Krewe of Bones

Thanks to necromantic energies inherent to Kadum's blood, the dead walk often in the Blood Bayou. Most of the dead are simply mindless skeletons or zombies, but a few arise with their minds (if not their souls) intact. Regardless of mental or physical condition, Baron Mirth claims them as his and none have so far disputed this.

The krewe's social structure is rather baroque, based largely upon whom the Baron favors at that particular moment, and how amusing he or she is. Being the Baron's favorite is not usually a good thing, since disappointment is inevitable, and the Baron prefers disappointments to serve as mindless examples.

Despite this apparent chaos in the Baron's whims, the krewe is strictly regimented as a military organization, with the most disciplined and powerful of the Krewe serving as the Jack of Tears' personal guard and the rank-and-file serving as the primary patrols along the Blood Bayou's borders.

Each unit within the Krewe of Bones has its own uniform. Uniforms are, as described in **Creature Collection Revised**, usually flamboyant, macabre and sensible. Organization also varies from unit to unit, with officers handling deployment on an idiosyncratic basis. Baron Mirth does not care about the lack of homogeneity so long as the Krewe maintains its fighting edge.

Krewe of Mangroves

This is reputedly the most normal of the Carnival Krewes and the only one that accepts humanoids that aren't insane, sick or dead. The krewe is composed of a wide variety

Report to King Virduk on the Matter of the Krewe of Bones

Your Majesty,

Thanks to the loyal sacrifice of several of our best agents and careful observations as reported to us through your ambassador to the Momus, we have discovered the following about the Krewe of Bones' structure and goals. I hope you do not believe that I fall back on hyperbole when I say it is in all of our best interests to set fire to that disease-infested swamp and burn it out like the festering boil it is.

Baron Mirth

Baron Mirth serves the Jack of Tears as his head of security and the general of his army. To diplomats and visitors, he appears to be jovial and accommodating, despite his grim nature. Some suspect he is a lich, but none have so far reported the chilling aura or other features common to that breed. I suspect that the truth is subtler than that, that he is a variety of undead we have not seen before. Considering the multiplicity of uncouth life bred from exposure to the Blood Sea, it may be that he is something unheard-of in Ghelspad.

More important than his nature is his agenda. He has the Jack of Tears' direct ear in all matters, although the Momus acts with his own agenda. I suspect it's only a matter of time before whim leads him to accept Baron Mirth's advice.

Baron Mirth's personal goal is nothing less than the absolute conquest of all neighboring nations in Termana. He sees any not of the Carnival as interlopers and intruders, and insists that they must be brought to heel before they decide to conquer the Carnival.

He manages his troops with ironclad discipline, granting them just enough room for personal idiosyncrasy to encourage a sense of identity for each unit (at least for those capable of having identity).

Among Baron Mirth's senior staff are liches, vampires and other powerful undead. To destroy all of these would require the services of a powerful priest of Chardun, one who could command them to do his bidding and turn the Krewe of Bones to us, and use them to destroy the Carnival of Shadows before it spreads to threaten Virduk's Promise, Termana, and eventually Ghelspad and the Heteronomy of Virduk.

In Service to His Majesty the Black Dragon,

Lucian Falco

of intelligent species, from titanspawn to divine races to the alligator warriors. Most members are misanthropes at best, and madmen and murderers at worst. What they have is common ground and mutual protection when needed, as well as an outlet to socialize.

The Krewe of Mangroves is not a wealthy krewe, and cannot afford anything like the extravagant uniforms of the Krewe of Bones, or the navy of the Krewe of Waves. Instead, it relies upon a combination of civilized fashions and barbarian splendor to create a look uniquely its own.

The Krewe of Mangroves is a collection of individuals and small groups. Most are not friendly under normal circumstances, and many would gladly murder the rest if they thought it would gain them anything. Demoiselle Antunes manages to hold the krewe together primarily through the dual precepts of enlightened self-interest and stark terror. The seductive heron priests lead most of the recruits for the Krewe of Mangroves to the carnival. As much as the heron priests threaten to lead prospective recruits through areas of known pestilence to increase the Krewe of Plagues' numbers and rob the Krewe of Mangroves of its share, they haven't actually done it yet.

My most humble greetings to the Black Dragon,

It is with utmost regret and grief that I must report to you the untimely and tragic death of your most faithful diplomatic attaché, Lucian Falco. Normally, I would leave such a report to your ambassador at my court, but Lucian gave his life to protect mine from an assassination attempt by agents of Silveriele. I have arranged to have his remains preserved and shipped to Vashon so that he may be interred with all honors due one such as he. I have also included a gift as to compensate for the loss of so loyal a servant to your throne, and a reminder that his actions were futile — I will not fall to any assassin's blade — and should be discouraged.

Hoping that this finds you in the best of health,

— The Momus, Carnival King

Post Script: I regret to say that I cannot at this time agree to the establishment of a temple to Chardun within my borders. I understand the need for the spiritual health of your servants, but the temple in Virduk's Promise should be sufficient to see to such needs. I trust that as a fellow monarch, you understand the reasons behind my decision.

The krewe gathers rarely, perhaps a few times a year. During such gatherings — meetings or celebrations — Demoiselle Antunes declares a truce. Any found in violation of said truce is flayed publicly to the krewe's enthusiastic cheers and his skin given to his enemies and rivals to wear as a trophy for the celebration's duration. One mark of status for krewe members is a wardrobe made from the tanned leather of their enemies, whether gained through feud or during such a celebration.

One yearly celebration all look forward to is the Culling. It's more of a competition than anything else, as the many factions of the Krewe of Mangroves gather at the Blood Bayou's borders and prepare to cross into more civilized lands to steal as many children as possible. Forcible kidnapping is acceptable,

but more points are awarded for style if the child can be lured away from home, and the highest honors go to those who take the children with their parents' blessings. Of course, the child's social status has a



Observations on the Demoiselle Antunes

I came to the Carnival of Shadows in search of escape — escape from my people, from the shadow of my dead god and from my dereliction of duty. The heron priest I know only as Ahuuk guided me to the Krewe of Mangroves and gave me into Demoiselle Antunes' keeping. I believe now that this is because she found me desirable, at least for a time. I can't say I regret the time I spent in her arms, or the arms of her other lovers. It was at least a period of serenity amidst the chaos and terror that filled most of my waking hours.

Some would call it paradoxical that I would find Demoiselle Antunes terrifying and leave her as I did, and yet still enjoy our time as lovers. I cannot say that I was in the best of tempers then. I went from a voluntary recruit in her krewe to a pampered captive. What she did to others at the slightest whim, I shudder to repeat — the debasement, the transformations, the flayings, the children. Worst of all, the children. The Demoiselle gloried in all of it, the terror of her subjects, the devotion of her lovers, even the hatred of her rivals.

I can't argue that it's a paradox. I look back now and I cannot help but hate myself. I willingly allowed someone else to make me into nothing more than a toy for her amusement. Now, I would kill her if I could. If only I had the power and the courage.

This is why I've come to petition the Sisters of the Sun for membership and aid.

— Linnea, Forsaken Elf

large effect on the final score. The losers are sacrificed to the Blood Bayou in an orgy of blood and cannibalism, while the winners are feted as heroes for the remainder of the weeklong celebration.

As for the children, the krewe sells them to the Jack of Tears' court to serve as clowns. They're drugged into unconsciousness and altered to give them features more appropriate to their new station — the krewe's surgeons cut off some features, brand others onto their faces. All end up as grotesque mockeries of the humanoid face and form, but few remember much of their life before.

These children grow up capering and juggling for the Laughing Man, and those who amuse him the most are sometimes "promoted" into Shadowjesters through either Demoiselle Antunes' or the Jack

of Tears' magic (it's unclear as to which of the two does this).

Krewe of Plagues

The Krewe of Plagues is truly a wondrous site to behold, much like a garishly colored tree frog or beautifully patterned riversnake. For this krewe, every day is a celebration. The insane and ill are all welcomed here, and the primary benefit is relief from the pain of whatever illness wracked their bodies before Lord Quick accepted them.

Heron priests focus most of their efforts on recruits for the Krewe of Plagues, since they're the easiest to assimilate into the Carnival of Shadows as well as most desperate. Many would do anything to be freed of fear of pain and disease, and Lord Quick is only too happy to oblige them.

Members of the Krewe of Plagues freely transmit diseases among each other without ill effect. All it takes is a simple touch and yet another soul is now a carrier for typhoid, malaria, leprosy or worse.

Most of the krewe lives in the Carnival itself, providing a festive atmosphere with their constant music, dancing, and of course their outrageous gold-and-scarlet regalia. They're the primary source of entertainment for the Laughing Man's many guests. Fortunately for diplomats, the krewe is forbidden from spreading plague to guests of the Carnival.

Few give the misshapen plagues much attention beyond appreciation for their antics, disgust for their condition, or both. For this reason, they make excellent spies for Lord Quick and the Momus. Few conversations of any importance happen in or around the Carnival that do not wend their way to either or both sets of ears before the day is through.

Despite the relaxed organization and relative freedom the krewe enjoys, Lord Quick lives up to his namesake when it comes to punishment. A mild offense in his eyes can mean a slow, painful death from a hundred maladies.

None in the Carnival of Shadows speak to outsiders about the true nature of the Krewe of Plagues and never refer to them directly. Within the Carnival, Baron Mirth considers the krewe to be the vanguard of his desired invasion, spreading numerous vile plagues across Termana in the hopes that he could claim the dead from such a scourge. Lord Quick thinks Baron Mirth is a fool.

Chern's Legacy

I have meditated for a full turning of Belsameth's Eye and drawn this memory forth from the skirling, chaotic jumble of the Titanswar; it is only through Denev's will that I recall this.

I stand on the Cliffs of Promise, elves falling all around me to an unseen hand, the smell of sickness thick in the air. Some magic spares me long enough to bear witness to the spectacle before me.

The elven god has fallen and his people are routed. Chern's plagues run rampant through the army, despite the titan's apparent death. Most of the elves died. A few returned to their homes and families, forsaken.

One stands in the midst of death, laughing in delight. I believe he was a priest to the fallen god, but it is difficult to be certain. He paid Vangal's arrival no mind as he moved among the dying, touching and reviving them with a power that belongs to no god. No fewer than a hundred dying elves did he raise up from their imminent deaths. As he moved from body to body, he laughed, sang, danced and capered. Each elf he revived did the same until he led a crowd at least a hundred strong and they danced away together, to the west.

He came to me last and said, "Follow me; follow Lord Quick! Feel no pain, feel no sorrow, come to carnival, forget about tomorrow."

This is where my memory ends.

— Arilla Faenor, High Chorister of Denev

Krewe of Waves

The Krewe of Waves serves as the Momus' informal navy. They serve as his navy in that they protect the Blood Bayou from unwanted incursions, and they are informal in that they do it in their own way, under Queen Ran's orders. What hold the Jack of Tears has over Queen Ran is not known, but she allows safe passage to any he designates as guests, so long as they bring her an appropriate gift and treat her with the deference due a queen — especially one who can shatter ships in her grasp.

To Home Commander Kelemis Durn,

As instructed, your ambassador, his staff and his cargo were escorted to the Bay of Tears. We waited at the edge for three days and nights for a representative from the Jack of Tears to escort us to the Carnival of Shadows.

At sunset on the third day, the representative arrived. It was a black kraken of immense size escorted by what looked like sharks, but had arms and bore weapons of bone and ivory. The kraken announced itself as Queen Olan's seneschal and requested that the ambassador and I (as the captain) accompany him to Queen Olan's presence.

We expected this, and retrieved the gift you provided for this occasion. A brine hag cast the spells that allowed us to breathe the water and survive the depths as we were escorted to Queen Olan.

Nothing had prepared me for the sight of this bleated, black kraken draped in the jewels of a dozen lost kingdoms and flanked by friends of the worst sort.

The ambassador stepped forward to offer the gift. He clearly feared for his life, but served his nation and commander as ordered. The Queen took his head. One moment, he started to open the package, the next his headless body stood wringing, clouds of blood billowing forth from his neck. Queen Olan turned to me and said "Tell your Home Commander that Olan is not welcome in my waters. If you wish to speak to the Laughing Man, you must find some other means to reach him." Then she ordered my ship destroyed and turned me over to Olan Mirth.

The Olan has given me time to write this letter. He has promised that the heron priests shall ensure its delivery. If he tells the truth, and this finds its way into your hands, do as the Queen says.

For me, tell my wife that I love her and that what we had together was worth a thousand lifetimes.

Your subject,

— Captain Olan's Wavehead, Former commanding officer of Tani's Blessing

Despite their inhuman and monstrous appearances, members of the Krewe of Waves dress as spectacularly and garishly as possible, decking themselves in booty taken from those unwise enough to sail into the Bay of Tears without the Momus' welcome, or without a gift Queen Ran deemed appropriate. The Krewe of Waves maintains close relations with the Krewe of Bones, ensuring that the drowned sailors and dead sea life are brought to Lord Mirth. In exchange, Lord Mirth details his aquatic undead to aid the Krewe of Waves in all matters. To Lord Mirth, this serves his purposes well; he maintains the Blood Bayou's security, and it costs him nothing to give soldiers he cannot use to someone who can.

Despite appearances, members of the Krewe of Waves are not pirates, although they often engage in actions similar to piracy. Less than a third of the krewe actually uses (or even needs) ships to travel the Bay of Tears. Most are shark-men twisted by constant exposure to Kadum's blood. Sea hags, blood krakens, and other unwholesome titanspaw make up a sizable portion of the krewe as well. The remainder of the Krewe of Waves consists of Queen Ran's great bone ships (some of which are actually necromantic constructs designed for sea-going) crewed by the bone bosuns and typically serve as transportation for the heron priests' missions to the rest of Scarn.

Heron Priests

The heron priests serve no krewes directly and work directly for the Jack of Tears. They are the clergy-ambassadors for the Momus and travel tirelessly across the Scarred Lands to serve as his diplomats to other nations as well as seek recruits to keep the krewes up to full strength. The primary focus of their operations are in the nations surrounding the Blood Bayou, but they travel far and wide to keep an eye on the maritime activities of all nations in Asherak, Ghelspad and Termana.

The heron priests' primary and hidden purpose is to recruit members of the divine races to join the krewes. They paint a beautiful and wondrous picture of life in the carnival, of the freedom and the constant celebrations. They naturally leave out the plagues, the undead, the mutated beasts, and often whimsical and arbitrary nature of the krewes' leaders and the Jack of Tears himself.

The Carnival of Shadows

The Carnival of Shadows is a rickety, worn collection of wagons, tents, beasts of burden both living and undead, and a motley collection of the mad, deformed, diseased, and downright sociopathic rejects from society. To a visitor, it's a madcap place where dreams and nightmares can come true at a moment's notice and without a moment's warning.

For watercraft, the Carnival maintains a squadron of paddleboats festooned with lanterns and ribbon. The Carnival uses these boats to travel to coastal or river-side towns and cities.

The Momus reigns over the carnival from a huge tent at its center, where he sits upon his ornate throne and listens to audiences. He takes audiences with anyone who manages to visit the Carnival, whether they arrive as guests or by stealth. Depending upon his mood, he may treat the latter better than the former, but typically he simply turns them over to the Krewe of Plagues for immediate induction or simply offers them up as sport to any nearby.

The only constant about the carnival's location while within the Blood Bayou is that it remains along the coast, typically on the Bay of Tears, more rarely along the northern or western shores.

On occasion, at least once a year when the Nameless Orb shines full in the sky, the Carnival of Shadows travels beyond the Blood Bayou's borders. Its destination is marked by the appearance of playbills describing the wonders and terrors the Carnival promises to bring. No matter how thoroughly the populace scours the surrounding countryside, the Carnival is not visible until the third night, when the wagons creak into town.

Any who were prepared to stop them have by then disappeared or died horribly.

The wagons, colorful as they appear, are stained with Kadum's blood. To anyone who sees them, they look as if they'll fall apart at any moment — mold and rot afflicts them all. The horses and other beasts drawing the wagons look as if they're about to collapse from any of a number of fatal diseases, but the Carnival yet manages to bring a festive air to the town.

Most of this grim reality is hidden under gilt, glitter and glamour. Illusion and decoration serve to disguise the Carnival's sordid nature from casual inspection. Wagons are covered with merry lanterns and ribbons, the horses with brightly colored cloths and garland. The people dress in gaily colored clothing and paint their faces with outrageous makeup. Members of the Krewe of Bones wear elaborate masks designed to conceal their true nature.

That night, the tents go up, acrobats and criers announce its arrival, and the curious come to see the most terrifying show in all the Scarred Lands.

For this one night, the Momus sits upon his throne of children's toys and grants one wish to one unlucky recipient. She always receives what she asked for, but almost never what she wanted. Despite the fact that every child on Termana is raised with stories of the ironic fates the Jack of Tears visits upon those who ask a boon, someone always comes forward to do so.

Rarely, the Momus chooses to grant what the wisher desires without any twists attached. It amuses him to offer unpredictable kindness.

Come morning, the carnival has vanished without a trace, taking with it the ill, the infirm, the mad and the malcontents. Occasionally, all of the graves, crypts and tombs are found open and empty as well. None ever actually see it depart.

Culture

Contrasting the strict regimentation of the Krewe of Bones, the cold formality of the Krewe of Waves, the violent independence of the Krewe of Mangroves and the wild celebrations of the Krewe of Plagues, it is difficult to provide a strong definition of the Carnival's riot of culture.

At best, it could be said that the Krewes live alongside each other because no one else could possibly stand them. Celebration, whatever form it takes, forms the central aspect of the Carnival's culture, and this may be all the inhabitants have in common.

Crime and Punishment

The definition of crime within the Blood Bayou is a slippery concept. For the krewes' leadership, anything that offends them qualifies as a crime, usually punishable by a horrible death (followed in many cases by eternal, mindless servitude to Baron Mirth and the Krewe of Bones).

Among the Krewe of Bones, crime is rare. A relatively small percentage of the Krewe is capable of independent thought and free will, and they are all subject to Baron Mirth's will. Undead independent of Baron Mirth's direct control dot the bayou, and are allowed to exist in relative peace so long as they understand that they are on "detached duty" to the Krewe of Bones and can be called upon at any time. Any who fail to answer the call to duty suffer destruction at Baron Mirth's discretion. Baron Mirth hates waste, but will not hesitate to make examples when they are needed.

The Krewe of Mangroves spends most of its time warring among its members, competing for Demoiselle's favor, and executing grudges that stretch back to the Titanswar. The only time Demoiselle Antunes enforces any kind of rule is during the krewe's gatherings, when harming another member is strictly forbidden. The most common punishment for violation is public flogging, but the Demoiselle also resorts to grotesque transformations when the mood strikes her.

Demoiselle Antunes recognizes one other crime — unfaithfulness in a lover. Any whom she deems unfaithful (and her definition of unfaithful varies wildly with her mood) is transformed into a shape she considers fitting. The one crime she never forgives in a paramour is her own boredom. At that, she usually just kills the unfortunate and turns the remains over to Baron Mirth to do with as he pleases.

Crime in the Krewe of Plagues is simply defined as "offending Lord Quick." The punishment is simple — withdrawal of the protection he offers from the plagues that afflict his subjects. Depending upon the severity of the offense, the withdrawal can be swift and relatively painless or slow and extremely torturous.

The Krewe of Waves maintains strict military discipline. Insubordination is always punished, but only as harshly as the crime demands. Disobedience of a direct order may result only in imprisonment, while outright mutiny always receives execution. Queen Ran runs as tight a ship as

possible with a chain of command as complex as possible to keep her subordinates focused on each other rather than looking at her position.

As for the Momus, his definition of crime is as fluid as the waves. He admires the audacity required to act directly against him and will usually let anyone go who shows that kind of bravado. However, he *always* claims them as his own, and ties their fate into the Carnival. No matter how long it takes, no matter where she goes, anyone the Jack of Tears claims will return, even if its her ghost, shambling corpse, or both.

Religion

Religion is practically unknown within the Blood Bayou. The closest is the Jack of Tears' reverence for the Nameless Orb, and his decree that it rule the tides surrounding the Blood Bayou.

Despite their name, the heron priests are not actually a priesthood for any religion. Their preaching is reserved for those outside the Blood Bayou, where they can lure the unwary to join the Carnival. Their sermons have nothing to do with anything divine, and are lies cloaked in deceptions and hidden in riddles.

Armed Forces

The Carnival of Tears' military is composed almost entirely of the Krewe of Bones (on land) and the Krewe of Waves (by sea). Baron Mirth makes use of undead of all kinds in his krewe, including masterwork and superior skeletons (see **Hollowfaust: City of Necromancers**), as well as marrow knights, bone golems and necromantic golems (see **Creature Collection Revised**). Whether he has an instinctive understanding of such construction or possesses a copy of the fabled *Osseocabula* (see **Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore**) is unknown.

The Krewe of Waves has an unknown number of bone ships that serve as transportation for the heron priests and patrol the waters of the Bay of Tears. In addition, numerous shark-folk swim throughout the bay, serving as reconnaissance patrols, sea hags watch the shores and the water, and blood kraken (see **Creature Collection Revised**) lead raiding parties to discourage anyone unwise enough to approach the Blood Bayou too closely.

Finally, attached to Baron Mirth's undead patrols are any number of plague wretches (see **Creature Collection Revised**) who are usually sent to infect any invading force with as many diseases as possible.

Bonewind Hills

(Warm Hills, EL 5)

Named for the terrible winds which blow constantly across their heights, the bleak Bonewind Hills stretch from the top of the Wall of Clouds to the Titansforge Mountains, from the edges of the Iron Sands Desert to the Iron Steppes and Chained Mountains. Titanspawn and aggressive human tribes driven to near madness by the harsh life here are the only residents of the rugged land. Although the sheer hostility to life cannot match that found in the Iron Sands Desert, the deadly winds of the hills do much to render the terrain inhospitable.

History

In times before the Divine War, little marked the Bonewind Hills as special save the fact they seemed to be a favorite haunt of the titan Lethene. The inscrutable actions of the Dame of Storms continue to shape the face of much of central Termana even a century and a half after her defeat. Natives of the Bonewind Hills tell stories of the time the titaness scoured the rivers from the Iron Steppes to the north

and cast their mighty torrents from the heights of the Wall of Clouds into jungles below. To this day the steppes are dry savannah with forlorn empty riverbeds and Lethene's Falls still send the waters of the Bonewind Hills hurtling into the green canopy beneath.

Similarly, ravaging winds continue to rage across the neighboring Iron Steppes, the Bonewind Hills and the Iron Sands Desert to the west. Surely most such weather stems from the natural patterns of the world, but some storms are unmistakably the work of their original architect, continuing to plague Termana despite her fall. The most feared of her storms are the Bonewinds, razor-edged furies created to eradicate the failed experiments of her fellow titans. How she achieved this is unknown, but druids claim she stored the Bonewinds in the hills which bear their name and only released them across the world at her whim.

For a time, the dragons of Ma'exar's kingdom sought purchase over the hills. The blue dragon Cuarul brought his brood to stay in the Bonewinds as he sought to gain rule over a new province under Ma'exar. Lethene noticed the blue wyrms after a few centuries and turned the force of her fury upon them. Cuarul escaped to



the west, but his brood was destroyed and even the great red dragon Ma'exar was loathe to challenge the Dame of Storms again. The hills remained free of dragon influence for the remainder of Ma'exar's rule, although Lethene's defeat during the Divine War may leave the Bonewinds open to future domination should another of Cuarul's brood arise.

The only other creatures to challenge her domain en masse were the dark dwarves. Over the course of the centuries following their creation around 500 OC, the charduni sought to expand to the west, passing south of the Chained Mountains along the narrow trails at the pinnacle of the Wall of Clouds, or through the treacherous Mouth of Gaurak pass. Armies camping among the Bonewind Hills were often destroyed to the last man, their flesh torn from their bones by the terrible winds. Occasionally a particularly stubborn general would insist upon attempting to seize the hills again, but ultimately westbound forces began to turn north or south of the hills as they marched against the Halanti and Shan'Khud Empires or the shattered remnants of Khanughu's tyrannical realm.

Titanspawn and occasional small communities settled in the hills, learning to avoid the powerful Bonewinds and the wrath of Lethene. Perhaps the population of the region might have grown over, once the Dame of Storms finally lost interest, but the Divine War brought her enemies to the hills in search of their quarry. The gods fought Lethene many times during the war, but not until it was nearly over did they defeat her. Having been soundly repulsed the first time they invaded the hills, the divine armies coordinated their second attack with the arrival of the Avenger and his mother. Corean and Denev stood against Lethene upon her favored ground as she vented a hurricane of fury at their defiance, allowing Hedrada and Tanil ambush to ambush the mighty titan with spells and fell arrows. Gathering the winds of Scarn about her like an arsenal of weapons and a mantle of war, she fought the four gods but could not withstand their combined force once wounded by the ambush.

In an unanticipated and uncharacteristic move, her son Vangal appeared to spare her final doom, opening a gate to the stormy depths of the Abyss wherein the gods imprisoned her instead. Only Lethene's sister Gulaben remained for the gods to hunt, and the remnants of the divine army turned to seek their new quarry with hearts emboldened by their final victory over the Dame of Storms. Bereft of their creator, most of the winds spread across the Iron

Steppes, spilled over Kadum's Bight and scoured the Iron Sands Desert. The fearsome Bonewinds, however, remained in their patron's favored lands and dissuade civilization from despoiling the hallowed ground where she made her final stand.

Sometimes, treasure hunters willing to risk the dangerous hills mount expeditions, hoping to unearth the wealth of the dead who perished among the rocky mounds. More than one entire army of charduni has been lost to the Bonewinds, their finely crafted weapons and armor buried by time and the biting sand. During the war against the titans, two divine armies invaded the range and suffered terrible casualties, particularly fighting against the storm kin. The second army followed the gods in victory over Lethene, but never managed to recover all of the casualties of the first campaign. Some scholars suggest that the Spear of Shantu may never have actually reached the Land of Chains and could lie lost with its charduni escort, though the priesthood of Chardun violently disputes this theory. Occasionally odd items, armament of seemingly demonic origin, are found within the hills as well. Many kings and generals would happily empty their treasuries for the arsenals which surely lie buried in the Bonewind Hills, and where the promise of wealth beckons, one can always find adventurers foolish enough to heed its call. Of course, in addition to the other hazards of the region, none can say what curses the charduni and the divine armies might level against those who disturb their dead.

Flora and Fauna

Life in the Bonewind Hills is hard, and what life exists is resilient indeed. Lichen and scraggly scrub cling to the worn stones, and tumbleweeds bounce along in the vicious wind. Dangerous species such as dire badgers and dire rats burrow into the hillsides and build nests safe from the wind, emerging only to gather food. Snakes and rock lizards hunt smaller rodents but rarely pose a threat to travelers unless cornered, although a venomous bite so far from civilization can prove quite deadly. Other animals are rare, save the occasional jackal pack straying into the hills from the Iron Steppes and the predatory birds that skillfully ride the dangerous winds and fall upon their prey without warning.

Storm kin are all too common here, and many of the sudden storms which tear across the hills or roar into the Iron Sands Desert, Kadum's Bight or the Iron Steppes originate with these spirits of disaster. Along the borders with the

Iron Steppes, cloudstings are occasionally sighted as they ride the winds deep into the steppes in search of gold. Where the Bonewind Hills shores meet the waters of Kadum's Bight, windriders cavort in the sky as they search for mortal vessels to turn to tragedy. Though they are not properly beasts, the magical winds of Lethene and those she gathered from her sister Gulaben also stalk the land, as do the ubiquitous and mundane sand vortices. Sometimes the trolls of the Iron Steppes chase prey into the Bonewind Hills, but the fact that most tribes believe the hills are still haunted by the spirit of Lethene means they will not tarry long before retreating.

People

Understandably, settlements in the Bonewind Hills are extremely rare, and tiny even when they do exist. Stubborn miners, madmen who are at home in the bleak land and those so desperate they fear the hills less than whatever fate awaits them back home haunt the range in small numbers. Rare druids loyal to the Dame of Storms sometimes undertake pilgrimages here, at times even taking up permanent residence. Indeed, perhaps the strangest residents of all are the result of a failed religious expedition. The western slopes of the Bonewinds are part time homes to the Noguhu tribe of gnolls who raid deep into the Centaur Plains from their lairs carved into the barren mounds of the range.

Lethena: (Population: unknown) Never a very large sect, a handful of tribal groups yet exist who have remained fervently faithful to the titan whose name they bear. Faced with a patron seemingly oblivious to their travails, even the Lethena might have long ago abandoned the Bonewind Hills were it not for the blessings they believe the Dame bestows upon them. Every generation, at least one of the tribes bears a stormchild (see **Creature Collection 2: Dark Menagerie**), whom they treat as precious gifts to their people. Some of the stormchildren depart, fleeing their unwanted destinies, but many stay and help defend their tribes against invaders and Lethene's other children alike. The favored *ushada* totem of the Lethena is the Wind totem.



The Bonewinds

The hills where Lethene made her last stand against the gods are scoured by the roiling essence she left behind. The most commonly encountered danger is simply a sand vortex (see *Desert Weather* in **Wilderness & Wasteland**) although the rocky terrain of the Bonewind Hills prevents such dust devils from growing beyond Large size. At least three other terrible winds rage through the hills, each with its own special effects.

The Bonewinds: Lethene designed these violent winds to literally scour the flesh from the bones of those creatures the other titans no longer favored. They are perpetual whirlwinds, 30 feet across and 20 feet high, that whip dirt and sand into frenzy and carry it along like a cloud of tiny razors. Of course when the Dame of Storms turned them against a foe, she expanded their might exponentially to destroy vast targets simultaneously. Locked away in her favored hills, they move to and fro like vicious guard dogs randomly tearing apart anything in their path. Even a century and a half later, the bonewinds still blow with deadly force.

Each round, anyone within the bonewind's area suffers 1d6 slashing damage and must make a successful DC 12 Reflex save to avoid being blinded. Anyone blinded by the fierce winds remains thus until the damage to their eyes is cured. Furthermore, anyone whose face is not protected can potentially suffocate, essentially drowning in the dust (see *Weather* in Chapter 3 of the *DMG*). Even those victims who are not blinded have restricted vision, as the bonewind obscures all sight beyond 5 feet. Creatures within 5 feet have one-half concealment while those farther away gain full concealment.

Of course, creatures who are blinded or whose vision is obstructed have difficulty seeing their way out of the whirlwind and often stumble around aimlessly and terrified as they are worn to death. In all other ways, the bonewind is treated as a windstorm-level wind effect (see *Weather* in Chapter 3

of the *DMG*), though it seems as though the bonewind slows to wreak havoc. Each round that it harms a living creature, the center of the bonewind moves 60 feet in a random direction, though the titanic weather will not move outside the borders of the Bonewind Hills unless someone successfully counters its matron's ancient commands. Bonewinds are not monsters, and each one is the product of titanic magic so potent that it requires the use of magics on the level of *wish* and *miracle* to dispel or even control.

Redstorms: These fierce sandstorms are more common in the Iron Sands Desert, but sometimes their fury blows deep into the Bonewind Hills before being spent. Carrying the iron-laden sands of the desert, they foil magnetic forces and attract electrical energy as they roil across the red dunes. Redstorms are treated as a windstorm (see *Weather* in Chapter 3 of the *DMG*), while the funnel of iron sands at their center is treated as an *iron storm* spell (see **Relics and Rituals**) covering 40 feet diameter and reaching at least 20 feet into the air. Fortunately the center of the storm is likely to harry a party for only 1d6 rounds before it moves onward — unless they are following its current path. Redstorms are not monsters, and despite their magical nature are treated as natural events which spawn, rage and come to an end just like any other windstorm.

Winds of Madness: Some of the winds drawn to the Bonewind Hills during Lethene's last battle were truly the spawn of her titanic sister Gulaben. The essence of the Lady of the Winds is unpredictable and may lie fallow for months or years, only to suddenly inspire a storm whose whispers drive men mad. One of the Winds of Madness spawns as a mundane severe wind (see *Weather* in Chapter 3 of the *DMG*), save that the first 15 hit dice worth of living creatures it encounters are driven mad, as if they had been affected by a *symbol of insanity*. Winds of Madness are not monsters, and are treated as natural events despite their magical nature.

Geography

The Bonewind Hills may not quite achieve the title of "desert," but it's not for lack of trying. The terrain is harsh and hard, and nearly every surface — be it horizontal, vertical or somewhere in between — is unforgiving rock. The stone is blisteringly hot in the sun, slick in the rain, and has been so worn down by the region's winds that it provides very little shelter to unfortunate travelers.

Still, not every last portion of the Bonewind Hills is like the rest of the region. Some of them are worse.

Vangal's Gift (Warm Hills, Magical, EL 12): According to legend, the reaver god Vangal demanded the other gods not slay his mother Lethene. When forced to devise a way to stop her rampages without killing her, the Ravager opened a gateway into the depths of a storm-filled region of the Abyss and the gods cast the Dame of Storms into it. Few of the gods' followers know of the event and even fewer would

speak of it. A handful of priests have attempted to make pilgrimages to the site where the Reaver's mother fell, but the magics of the gods have made it nearly impossible for mortals to discern. Some scholars suggest that Vangal actually used a slarecian gatekeeper, and thus no physical gate would exist, though this would not necessarily lessen the holiness of the site to devout followers of the Storm Titaness.

Locating the site has become an obsession for Sharaxor, a mad priest of Vangal who seeks to surpass the devastation of even his own god by unleashing the Dame of Storms into the world again. Ironically, the druids and followers of the titaness most interested in discovering the gateway despise Vangal's servants so passionately they would slay Sharaxor even if they knew of his intent. Another group of Lethene's followers insists she is happier where she is now and seeks to keep their own brethren from unearthing or breaching the doorway to her new home. The occasional demon wandering the Bonewind Hills is often attributed to Vangal's gateway, though how one might escape what the mighty titan cannot is unknown.

Reavers Pit (Warm Forest, Haunted, EL 7): Religion can be an odd thing, often as deadly to its own practitioners as to their enemies. At the end of the Divine War, a slime reaver shaman from Minagan Marsh heard confusing tales of the Titanswar and of the fall of his beloved Gulaben. After torturing a number of Minaga fishermen, he discovered vague stories of the raging battle in the Bonewind Hills and its attendant windstorms. Convinced that his patron must have been imprisoned somewhere beneath the hills by her errant children, the shaman led his people on a long trek across the hostile Centaur Plains and into the bleak hills.

Desperate, dying of dehydration and maddened by the winds of their titan, the slime

reavers dug a great pit and strove to summon rain to fill its depths. The dry hills were not forthcoming, and the reavers died miserably. Over the decades since, the great pit has filled with the fine sand of the Bonewinds, and even the Lethena avoid the ghosts of the reavers as they wallow in their misery and dust while bemoaning Gulaben's loss.

Mad Marrow Isles (Warm Aquatic, EL 4): The northern end of the Bonewind Hills sink beneath the waves of Kadum's Bight with only a few of the greatest mounds rising above the water to form islands. Here the storms of Lethene lack their iron sands, and instead lash victims with blinding rains and torrential downpours. The isles lie too far from established trade routes to be of much use even to pirates. Nonetheless, the isles have become home to a dark cult of misshapen creatures, grotesques gathered from around the inner sea, led by the monstrous herder which calls itself the Red Seawolf. The red wolf banner flies above the herder-captain's vessel when he sets sail across the Bight, but its crew seems as interested in gathering the remnants of titanspawn as it is in raiding the occasional human or elven ship.

Frighteningly enough, the Red Seawolf's grotesques often seem to resemble the dead beasts they return to his isle. Worse yet, the Red Seawolf's parasitic servants have assumed command of a small number of other pirate vessels that now sail under his flag as well. No one seems to know why he chose the coastal isles of the Bonewind Hills or what sinister motives lie behind his strange actions. If the Mad Marrow Isles were closer to major shipping lanes, perhaps the human or elven nations might be able to take their attention from their charduni, Isle of the Dead or Blood Bayou foes long enough to do something about it. Thus far they don't see the herder-captain as a particularly dangerous concern, however foreboding his actions might be.

Centaur Plains

(Warm Plains, EL 7)

These vast grasslands derive their name from the tribes of barbaric centaurs that dwell there. These tribes fight endlessly, both among themselves and with the other races who share the region. With the exceptions of a number of small settlements along the northern coast, the Centaur Plains are carved into expansive tribal territories that change with each season of battle. The human nations of western Termana covet the lush grasslands for their potential as the best farmland on the continent, but cannot spare the troops necessary to pacify the region for fear of losing their own lands. The forsaken elves never pierced so far south, and though the dark dwarves nearly conquered these plains, the Divine War halted their advance as well, and now the fell beasts of the Bonewind Hills and Iron Steppes harry their western flanks. The lush lands of the Centaur Plains could easily support a great kingdom, but the conqueror that founded such a place would be forced to build it upon a hard-won mountain of bones.

History

In ancient times, the vast reaches which today bear the name Centaur Plains were the borderlands of a kingdom jointly ruled by elves and dragons. Before the rise of the Halanti plainsmen, the red dragon Ma'exar rose up against his brethren, seeking to destroy the alliance with the elves and build his own empire. The plains thundered with the beating wings of vile wyrms who considered it a vast hunting ground, and Ma'exar beguiled the children of Mormo into serving as his army. The elven-draconic alliance of the north held against the might of the great red wyrm, and beat him back into the mountains where the charduni would be born. It's unclear precisely when the charduni finally scored victory over the red dragon's kingdom, but it is certain that Ma'exar no longer held power when the One in White turned the charduni against the east. The long conflict turned the wicked dragon's eye from the plains, leaving them free of the charduni and the wyrm's rule for centuries.

It was a mighty warrior named Shantu who, many years later, taught his tribe to ride great plainscats as cavalry and began to conquer neighboring tribes. Armed with an ancient elven spear that ruptured spells cast

at him, he forced tribal sorcerers to serve in his well-disciplined army as one Halanti tribe after another was subverted to his side. The Spear-King Shantu forged the Halanti Empire which ruled the vast plains for over a century and exceeded any other Termanan human kingdom except perhaps the Silver Circle.

Ultimately, the Land of Chains turned its attention to the vast plains in the time of the Spear-King's great grandson Ulan. For decades, King Ulan fought vicious battles against the charduni, with the deadly feline cavalry conducting hit and run assaults against the stolid dwarves' flanks. Finally Ulan fell in battle and the charduni general carried his ancestor's spear to the One in White as a sign that the Halanti Empire had been brought low. Ulan's sons, each the ruler of a tribe through marriage, stubbornly continued the resistance for a time, but the dark dwarves eradicated the last of the great plainscats and hunted their riders to death. The sons of Ulan scattered to the winds, vowing never to bow to the charduni butchers.

Bound by lines of blood and brotherhood in battle, the tribes of the sons thrived despite the dark columns of charduni who passed through their lands on the way to wars in the east. Ushadan shamans, descended from the same sorcerers who served the Spear-King and the Halanti Empire, preached the unity of the related tribes and the blooded brothers who led them. Though the charduni destroyed the Halanti Empire, they could not quench the line of the Spear-King. Today the Ulande people, those tribes descended from Shantu's great-grandson, are the dominant human presence on the Centaur Plains. Unfortunately for scholars, the history of the Ulande and the humanoid tribes who share the Centaur Plains is entirely an oral tradition. No written records exist, save those penned by the rare visitor who returned to sedentary lands with tales to tell. Oracular legends regarding the return of Shantu or the ascension of one who bears the Spear-King's mighty weapon out of the Land of Chains remain common to this day.

Flora and Fauna

The Centaur Plains are vast grasslands made up of a bewildering array of different breeds of grasses, interrupted only by the occasional shrub or stunted tree. Massive herds of nomadic herbivores thrive on the lush vegetation. Nearly any wood-producing

plant is either harvested by the resource hungry tribes who wander the plains or destroyed by the roving herds which move with the seasons. The Ulante tribesmen in particular migrate with their cattle herds as the climate and grazing vary. Wild muskhorn still walk the plains, but their numbers have been greatly reduced by Ulante hunting and competition from the cattle droves. Predators such as lions, leopards and cheetahs track the herds for food, though they find easier prey among wild herds not protected by the tribes. Larger beasts including bulette, ankhegs, wyverns, howlers and plaguecats also stalk the plains, and will happily slay humanoid and herd animal alike.

The Ulante tribesmen are not the only herders on the plains. Gnoll and centaur tribes maintain smaller herds, as they are far less skilled at cattle driving and the like, while athach and bugbears prey upon the livestock of other tribes. Particularly frightening to behold are the terrible grotesques, unfortunates so corrupted by titanic taint that they have become half-beast, half-humanoid creatures. Stranger monsters, known as grotesque herders, lead packs of these malformed beasts, moving from the edges of the Hills of Change to the shadow of the Titanspire to the edges of the Bonewind Hills. What their purpose might be, none have divined, though they often appear when titanspawn have been active in an area.

Horses trigger innumerable conflicts upon the plains. Many tribes consider them an incredibly valuable resource, worth killing or stealing to possess. On the other hand, the centaurs regard horses as holy animals which must be left inviolate, pure and wild. Centaur warriors consider it a heresy to break the animals' spirits and will attack any horse-riders they come across whenever they can do so without significant loss. Smaller tribes sometimes avoid using horses simply to avoid the potentially deadly conflicts they might invite. Larger Ulante tribes maintain a degree of love for the cavalry which built the empire of their ancestors and consider the desires of the antagonistic centaurs beneath notice.

People

The Centaur Plains are home to a number of warring tribes, locked in perpetual competition for resources. While the grasslands encompass vast territory, suitable game and wild food is always at a premium because none of the tribes practice agriculture. The

xenophobic reaction to tribes of other races only makes matters worse, with centaurs, athach, gnolls, bugbears and humans vying for the same wandering herds.

Centaur: (Population: 15,000) Approximately 150 tribes of the mighty centaurs roam the wild meadows of the Centaur Plains. Smaller tribes' numbers hover around two dozen members, usually a few proud families bound by blood and necessity. The prolific Yellowmane and the barbarous Bloodhoof tribes number over 200 members, with the former owing their numbers to their remarkable fertility while the latter are known for stealing the colts of rival tribes. A typical tribe might number around 100 members, although the bloodthirsty ferocity of the warlord Wind-Scythe and the roving Burning Grass tribe is ample proof that mere numbers are not the sole measure of danger. Even the Bloodhooves decided to give Wind-Scythe wide berth after his vagabond warriors set fire to hundreds of acres of winter grass, butchering and burning an entire tribe along with their flocks. Calastian expeditions to the Titanspire have been harassed more than once by the Bluetail tribe, who apparently take great sport in hunting caravans from the time they leave their ships in Kadum's Bight until they near the Forger's mountain.

Athach: (Population: 1,000) These monstrous creatures roam the southern reaches of the Centaur Plains in small tribes never exceeding a dozen in number. Ulante legends proclaim that the beasts came from the Titansforge Mountains, and what little the Calastians were able to learn from a captured specimen suggests they originally fled the fiery giants who served the Forger. Most of the plains tribes steer clear of the athach when possible, though occasionally a powerful centaur chieftain will declare war on the beasts and manage to destroy a tribe. Because only the centaurs can keep pace with the long strides of the athach, human and gnoll tribes resort to traps and various tricks that take advantage of these aberrations' legendary stupidity, while bugbears generally hide from the beasts.

Gnolls: (Population: 25,000) Since before the times of Khanughu and his empire in the lands north of the plains, which now lie beneath Kadum's Bight, gnoll tribes and their warlords have harried the people of central Termana. Innumerable petty warlords have since tried to reproduce Khanughu's legacy, but each has failed. Nonetheless, gnoll tribes



are composed of fierce warriors at home in the wilderness and so numerous that some tribes have even settled in civilized lands to the west. Smaller centaur tribes avoid pitched battle with the hyena-faced humanoids and the Ulanite say each gnoll fights like two men. Perhaps the two best-known tribes are the Yeenah and the Noguhu. The Yeenah tribe's favored enemies are the centaurs and they are reputedly responsible for driving Wind-Scythe's forebear from the western reaches of the plains. The Noguhu haunt the borderlands where the Bonewinds begin and the plains end, sweeping out of the hills like a raging storm and disappearing back to fortified knolls should their opponents rally.

Bugbears: (Population: 9,000) Ulanite stories ascribe these creatures' origins to the Titansforge Mountains, and given their goblinoid stock and the powerful rock goblins' treatment of their cousins, this may be true. Bugbear groups are small and fractious with even the mightiest tribes rarely more than a band of 20. Though they are strong and fearsome, the bugbears depend upon stealth and cunning to survive on the plains. They lie low in the daytime and are most active at night so those foes who cannot see in the dark cannot overrun them with num-

bers. A shaman calling himself White-Hand seeks to inspire his people to retake their place at the foot of the Forger's peak, his gestures moving like hypnotic ghosts as his speeches gain greater acceptance among the bestial goblinoids.

Ulanite: (Population: 50,000) Remnants of the proud Halanti Empire, these noble tribesmen display a spirit undaunted by even the mightiest of foes. Dark-skinned, tall, lean and muscled, these barbaric humans appear almost as fierce as they truly are. Still, many are willing to consider alliances with outsiders willing to fight with them against their foes, especially the potent centaur tribes. Hereditary chieftains rule over individual tribes and organize every aspect of life from cattle herding to war. The Ulanite move from place to place, driving their herds to whatever climate necessity demands. They favor piercing their bodies with bronze and silver rings, dress in leather and furs, and raid for whatever supplies their herding and gathering cannot provide. Centuries of conflict with their centaur and humanoid neighbors has hardened the Ulanite into a warlike culture; every member of the tribe is trained to use the spear, club, javelin and bow, and all males and any female without children are expected to take up arms at a

moment's notice. Ulanite tribes name themselves for powerful totem animals, sometimes monstrous in nature — the Cheetah Clan, Lion Clan and Leopard Clan share the plains with the Bulette Clan, the Ankheg Clan, the Wyvern Clan and the Howler Clan. Creatures such as plaguecats and grotesques are considered too ill-born to follow as a totem, even among tribes who honor the titans.

Geography

Though the Centaur Plains — as their name implies — seem to consist of endless grassland, punctuated only by low rolling hills and the occasional copse of trees, the region does contain a bit more variety than is readily apparent.

Lake Minagan (Temperate Aquatic, EL 5): The southern reaches of the Centaur Plains abut the Titansforge Mountains, and where the northern edges of the range break to reveal a wide valley, mountain streams race to fill the lowlands. Much of the water rests in the muddy hollows of the Minagan Marsh, but the northern edge of the marshes gives way to a broad, deep crater filled with clean waters. The tribes of the area maintain that the depression in which Lake Minagan lies was dug by Golphagga when he first built up the peak which was to hold his mighty forges. Word of the lake has spread as far as the courts of Ghelspad, as stories of the magnificent aquantis beasts sailing the pristine surface are told and retold. Real Calastian interests in the area probably spring from the fact that it is the closest reliable source of limitless fresh water and food to their base camp near the Titanspire.

The shores of the lake are home to human tribes descended from refugees who fled the growth of the ancient Halanti Empire. The Minaga, who gave their name to the lake long ago, avoid contact with the Ulanite tribes even today. Their small fishing villages dot the edges of the lake, and they frequently sail across it to trade with neighboring communities. Most craft are canoes, though small rafts and other boats find use as well. Ulanite cavalry and centaurs fare poorly in the muck of the surrounding marshes, and no self-respecting Minaga will guide the warlike plainsmen into their territory. Intruders are plagued by strange creatures which inhabit the Minagan Marshes, including lizard men, slime reavers and another strange frog-like humanoid race. Unfortunately, one tribe of lizard men living along

the southern reaches of the lake has successfully turned a cluster of the immense aquantis to their purposes, using them to pillage those who depend upon Lake Minagan for life.

Minagan Marsh (Temperate Swamp, EL 7): The lowlands surrounding Lake Minagan inherit the runoff water from a good portion of the Titansforge Mountains. The grass of the plains swiftly gives way to hardy water reeds and broad-leafed stunted trees. Quicksand and unexpectedly deep pools harry travelers nearly as much as the denizens of the marsh. Lizard men descended from the remnants of the armies of the Dragon King Ma'exar infest large swathes of the swampland, competing bitterly with the frog-like slime reavers. A third race, which the Minaga believe are either tainted slime reavers or demonic toad beasts their legends call slaadi, conduct raids against lizard man, slime reaver and human settlements alike. Village shamans decry the red toad men as unnatural and dangerous to the *ushada*, but most villagers fear all three foes in kind.

The North Coast (Warm Aquatic, EL 4): Kadum's Bight forms the northern limit to the Centaur Plains. In ancient times the gnoll king Khanughu forged an empire of savage cruelty. His kingdom lasted for only three decades before collapsing beneath infighting and civil war, though his name still recalls a dark time for neighboring lands. The lands which held Khanughu's kingdom now lie mostly forgotten beneath the waves of the Bight, washed into the depths when the Bleeding One was cast into the sea during the Divine War. Along the shore, where the plains give way to rocky beaches, many small fishing villages eke out an existence overlooking the submerged hills and meadows of ancient times. Most communities of this nature have long-standing treaties with friendly tribes, guaranteeing trade goods which find their way to the Centaur Plains only by sea in return for protection from competing marauders. The village of Squaresail has obtained similar terms from Calastians moving from Virduk's Promise to the Titansforge Mountains.

Centaurs

Centaurs are rare outside of their homeland in central Termana, though not unknown. The centaurs of the southern continent form an intensely xenophobic tribal culture, constantly fighting among themselves for territory and mates, and usually

attacking other races upon sight. Given their barbarous and warlike nature, most Termana natives are happy to avoid the half-equine savages. Occasionally a centaur is banished or decides to leave his people, even knowing they will never let him return. Such unfortunates may even join bands composed of other races once they manage to overcome their natural distrust and antipathy.

Regions: Centaurs are found primarily in the Centaur Plains in central Termana, but may be found in plains and steppes re-

gions elsewhere. Many *Ushadan* shamans believe their race sprang from the mating of Horse with one of the various regional *ushada*, but a significant portion of those found in Termana follow Hrinruuk the Hunter and pay little heed to their spiritual forbears. Their tribal bands live by hunting and raiding bordering tribes and settlements.

Alignment: Centaurs are used to roaming the plains free and wild. They usually favor the individuality of chaos, though they are generally neutral to moral codes beyond caring for self, family and tribe.

Chained Mountains

(Temperate Mountains, EL 9)

This wide, jagged range of mountains stands like a tremendous spiked bulwark fortifying the charduni homeland against invasion. In more ways than one, this chain of mountains has been the savior of the dark dwarven nation. When the gods cast Kadum into the sea, the mountain heights completely blocked the tidal waves which destroyed much of the northern coast of Termana. Though the charduni armies suffered terrible casualties in the titanic flood, the survivors returned home to a realm relatively untouched by the disaster. Similarly, with the exception of the Mouth of Gaurak valley, enemies must approach the charduni through narrow passes where the grim dwarves' legendary skills at close fighting inevitably win the day. Combined with the River of Chains to the north and the Wall of Clouds along the southeast, the Chained Mountains protect the Charduni Empire on three sides. Only to the east does the Empire stand exposed to the sea, but its capital Chorach is safely ensconced in the steep foothills of the mighty peaks.

History

The Chained Mountains are ancient, their creation dating back to the Epoch of Kadum. The titan Golthagga mined entire mountains away to feed his forges, Gaurak devoured a line of peaks leaving a treacherous valley near the source of the Semdar River, and the storms of Lethene lashed the peaks mercilessly for centuries. In the Epoch of Thulkas, the fires of the earth burned so hot that the mountains bled the jagged pillars of iron which today form the Briar Mines. The massive peaks Kadum thrust into the sky emerged scarred but standing tall, seemingly as enduring as the titans themselves.

During the titanic reign of Mesos, the Chained Mountains were home to the great red wurm Ma'exar and the realm ruled by his dragon broods. Ma'exar led dragons, armies of lizard men and flying dragon-men against the gold dragon king Umaenes. The red wurm's reptilian legions destroyed the court of Umaenes and only an alliance between the dragons of metal and the elven kings prevented him from overrunning them entirely. From his perch atop the mountain spire Dragonstooth, Ma'exar looked upon a smoking kingdom and rejoiced. He did not see that his wars had weakened his kind such that

they would not be able to survive the onslaught to come.

Scholars of Termana still debate whether a race of dark dwarves, created by the titans in earlier days, now turned to the worship of the god Chardun, or whether the Slaver created them himself. Whether a conversion or a creation, though, the charduni came to be approximately 500 OC and set about turning the eastern banks of their birthplace into a fortress befitting the favored children of the Great General. A powerful charduni priest called the One in White arose to assume command of the dark dwarves, and more than 3,500 years later he still commands them from his citadel.

The charduni's first act was to begin building the city-fortress of Chorach. This was swiftly followed by their seizure of the strategic Mouth of Gaurak pass, and from there they spread inexorably across the rocky plains that today form the Charduni Empire. Secure in the sovereignty of their destined domain, the dark dwarves then assaulted the realm of the Dragon King Ma'exar. For nearly 500 years the One in White directed his armies as they took the Iron Steppes from Ma'exar, spilled across the River of Chains into the elven kingdom and subjugated the craggy mountains one valley or peak at a time. Although technically the charduni never utterly dominated the range of mountains, preferring their settlements on the eastern faces to the jagged peaks, they did break the back of the red wurm's kingdom after nearly five centuries. When decades of sapper excavations and catapult bombardment finally drove Ma'exar's brood from the Dragonstooth, the One in White declared the captured range the Chained Mountains in honor of the fallen charduni's accomplishment, and turned his attentions further afield. The history of the Chained Mountains has ever after been intimately tied to that of the Charduni Empire.

Charduni influence does not extend to the depths beneath the northern peaks of the Chained Mountains, however. The misfortunes of the Divine War brought a new danger to the Empire's northern reaches. In the days before the war, an elven tribe took shelter from Lethene's storms in the valleys of the mountains northwest of Ganjulael, a land they called Piralael or the Mountain Realm. They prospered, wove great magics to protect themselves from titanspawn, fought alongside their brethren against the charduni and were considered nearly as wise as the magi of

the Citadel of the Rose. When their god called upon them to join the Divine War, men and women alike took up arms and distinguished themselves in conflicts throughout Termana.

Despite, or perhaps because of, their success against the foes of the gods, the Gray Mountain elves — or Piradun — suffered more than any of their brethren. When Kadum was cast into the sea, the homeland of the Piradun was destroyed by the subsequent tidal surge. Today only the peaks of the Sentinels — which include among their scattered number the mightiest of Pirael's peaks, the Crown and the Scepter — and the Rocks of Carnage peer above waves stained red by Kadum's blood. On battlefields across Termana, the despairing wails of Piradun were unmistakable. Those who retired from the war found nothing of their families and homes except what still peeked above the water. Near Ganjulael, the peak called the Crown, which had been Pirael's capital, slowly surrendered its ruins to the sea. To the west, the mountainside debris of the city called Scepter offered nothing but drowned corpses. Between and around them, the Gray Mountains moved inexplicably, like vast stony sharks hunting for blood.

Many Piradun did not try to return to their homeland, instead seeking to

extinguish their grief by throwing themselves into battles with unconquerable odds. Others became implacable foes of the titans, hell-bent upon wreaking the most terrible retribution possible. Soon they stood beside those returning from their drowned homes



with nothing but anguish and fury. When the spawn of the titans fell back, the Gray Mountain elves' thirst for vengeance was not yet slaked; they turned south to finish their ancient war against the charduni.

Perhaps they might have found new homes with their brethren when the war with the Land of Chains came to an end, had the titan Chern not fled to Termana from his battles on the continent to the north. Terribly aware of the dangers of titans maddened by war, the Piradun were among the first to meet him upon the cliffs of northern Ganjulael. The treachery of their now-forgotten god's herald is a tale told by every elven nation — but the fate of the elves of Piralael is told no longer. In a surprise attack, the elven god's herald struck down the soul of the elvish people, allowing the Plague Lord to ravage their bodies. Though the hearts of many bleed for the fate of the forsaken elves, it was the Piradun who suffered the brunt of Chern's curse. Each and every one of their number who survived the battle was infected with virulent diseases, not the least of which proved to be an incurable leprosy.

When the Divine War came to an end, the people of the Realms rejoiced. Within a year the forsaken elves were beset with stillbirths and they realized that the Plague Lord had won a final victory. For the Piradun, things were worse still. Unable to cure the curse of Chern, they were shunned by other elves. Not only were the Piradun contagious with a deadly disease, but they were a dismal reminder of the slow death apparently awaiting the entire elven race. Those elven Realms which accepted them at all merely allowed them to live in squalid leper colonies, forbidden to interact with "polite" society. Homeless and unwelcome, the Piradun finally slipped into the northern reaches of the Chained Mountains and sealed themselves within hidden citadels. More than a century later, they have become little more than a myth. Elves speak of them only as bogeymen to frighten their children into behaving. Charduni soldiers report inexplicable disappearances on the northern face of the range, but these are blamed on scouts of the forsaken elf realms.

Flora and Fauna

The peaks of the Chained Mountains support little in the way of ecology, for few living things can thrive here. The steep peaks restrict trees to the lowland pines north of Chorach. The heights of the mountains grow

too cold and harsh even for hardy bushes, and nothing but lichen survives near the top. The highest peaks are snow-covered year round, while winter brings deep drifts and deadly avalanches raining down upon the stark valleys below. The desolation of the Chained Mountains help make them such a powerful barrier to those who would harm the Charduni Empire. It is likely that more living things dwell in the buried tunnels of the ages than cling to the barren rocks of the peaks, but these creatures are rarely seen. Travelers must carry prodigious quantities of provisions, for the mountains offer little water and even less food.

Other than titanspawn able to devour stone, few creatures could possibly endure life in the range. Unacknowledged by the forsaken elves and little known to their charduni enemies, the thin and pale Piradun survive on a diet of albino cavefish and strange fungi. Beneath the cold stone that encircles Chorach, innumerable cave-dwelling creatures lurk in the dank tunnels. Those that challenge the charduni are systematically slaughtered, but even the dark dwarves do not know the true numbers of these creatures.

Despite the barren rocky land of the Chained Mountains, titanspawn and persistent raiders do often gain passage into the Charduni Empire, usually from the wilds of the Iron Steppes. Drawn by the promise of food, wealth or revenge, wild predators, dire beasts, bulette, blade beasts, giants, hobgoblins, gnolls and other titanspawn slip through the valleys of the mighty range. Charduni patrols mercilessly hunt down and exterminate all such invaders in order to keep practice and ensure the stability of their realm, but it's an ongoing battle.

In addition, the outer slopes of the Chained Mountains run for thousands of miles, and even the efficient charduni cannot manage every face of the jagged border. Numerous valleys pierce the mountain chain, running anywhere from a few hundred yards to 20 miles or more before vanishing into the heights. Though the stony peaks and frozen valleys of the inner range are virtually bereft of life, the valleys which ring the outer edges of the Chained Mountains host thousands of creatures — all of which the One in White hopes to eventually eradicate or subjugate. So long as his troops are busy maintaining an iron rule upon the Charduni Empire and pressing war against the elven nations and the tribes of the Iron Steppes, most of the deni-

zens of the valleys will remain beneath the dark dwarves' notice.

Various powerful dire beasts inhabit many of these valleys, having devoured or driven away other creatures. Wicked breeds of wolves and goblinoids occasionally venture forth to raid the steppes or cross the River of Chains into lush elven forests. A number of steep vales are home to giant clans, particularly those tied to stone, fire or frost. Of course, untold hordes of small animals and spreading plants migrate from their birthplaces in the elven lands, Charduni Empire or the Iron Steppes to the high-walled glens. All manner of birds, from those that roost along the Wall of Clouds to the ones that pick the bones of the Skullmounds, find inviting perches in the craggy walls.

People

The primary residents of the Chained Mountains are the various outposts of charduni occupying strategic locations between Chorach and the western reaches of the range. Roving packs of escaped slaves sometimes manage to eke out an existence for a time, but winters in the harsh peaks inevitably freeze them to death or force them back into the arms of their captors. Beneath the northern reaches of the charduni's mountains, the wretched Piradun toil towards bitter ends, their bodies and souls alike rotten with the curse of Chern. (For more on the Piradun, see *Creature Collection III: Savage Bestiary*.)

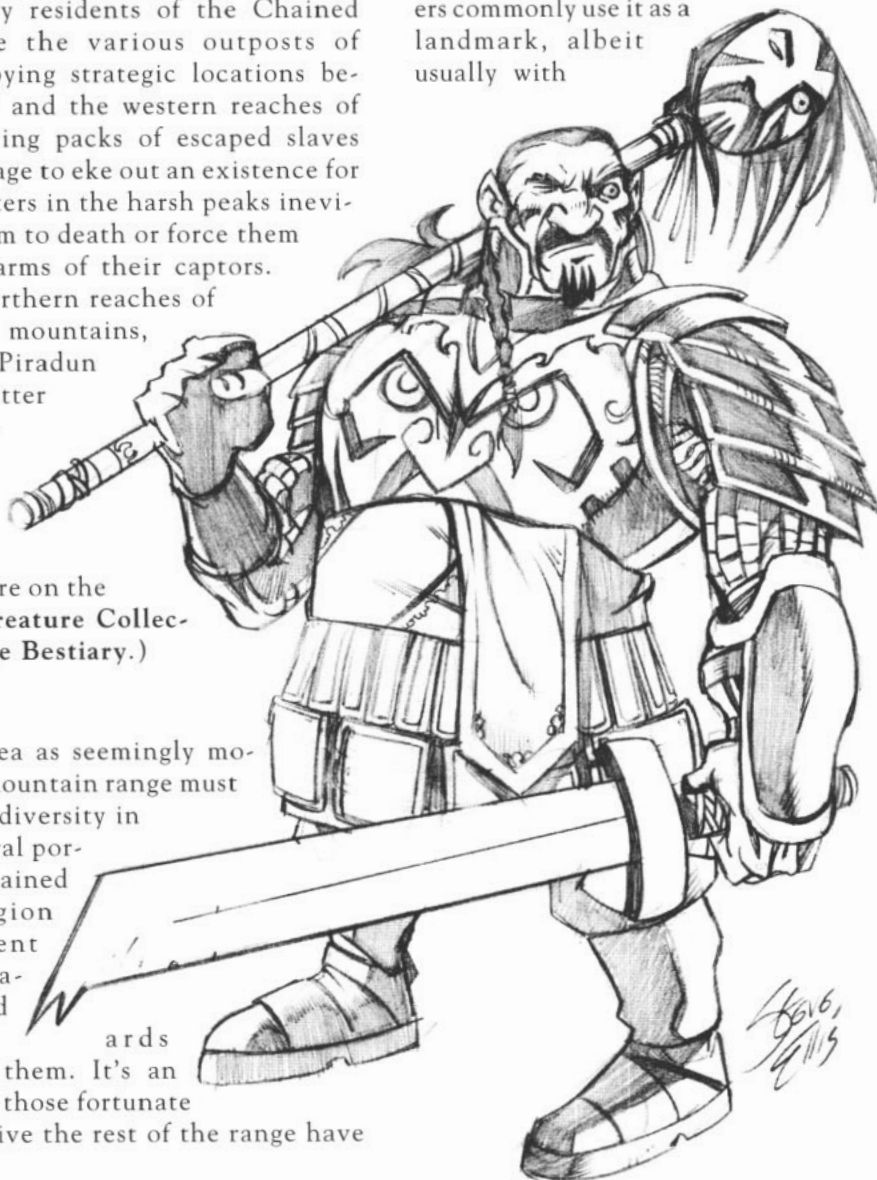
Geography

Even an area as seemingly monotonous as a mountain range must allow for some diversity in its shape. Several portions of the Chained Mountain region boast different geographic features, and different hazards to accompany them. It's an irony that only those fortunate enough to survive the rest of the range have

the "opportunity" to explore these other sections.

Briar Mines (Temperate Mountains/Underground, EL 7): The eastern slopes of the Chained Mountains are rich in iron, and in many places the natural veins rise from the earth in huge spiked formations. Charduni slavemasters drive their charges to mine the vast iron reserves in order to ensure that their warriors are always well armed and armored. Every year thousands of slaves die, worked to death harvesting the jagged spires of metal ore which give the Briar Mines their name. These rich mines are the backbone of the charduni arsenal and the overriding reason why they require an endless supply of new captives.

Dragonstooth (Temperate Mountains, EL 14): The tallest peak in the Chained Mountains, this black granite peak is visible for miles in every direction. Travelers commonly use it as a landmark, albeit usually with



intent to skirt south of it to the Mouth of Gaurak, or stay west of it to avoid leaving the Iron Steppes. Year round the mountain is bare of snow, and the peak shows signs of volcanic activity slumbering beneath its slopes. Strangely, the mountain has never erupted, even when the titan Thulkas burned the roots of the chain. During the rule of the red wyrm Ma'exar, the Dragonstooth was the seat of power of the dragon monarch and his broods. The long siege of the charduni armies broke Ma'exar's forces and drove them from the face of the mountain. Since the Divine War, it seems that at least one of the brutes has returned to its old lair, but the charduni are more concerned with the kingdoms of the forsaken elves than a single reptilian beast or two. The auguries of the One in White declare that none of the returned dragons are Ma'exar, though they remain ambiguous concerning the great red wyrm's final fate. The charduni leader's advisors seem to believe the Dragon Tyrant is gone forever and, barring a command from their patriarch, they see no reason to waste valuable resources besieging an empty Dragonstooth.

Mouth of Gaurak (Temperate Mountains, EL 9): Reputedly created by the ravenous appetites of the titan Gaurak, this pass boasts a fearsome reputation which may or may not be entirely the Glutton's fault. Certainly the Mouth of Gaurak is not the only pass through the Chained Mountains, as evidenced by the titanspawn and humanoids which slip into the

Charduni Empire every season. Nonetheless, it is certainly the widest passageway, the most dependable route and the most heavily patrolled by the dark dwarves. Winter months make the Mouth the only safe passage, as other valleys are threatened constantly by avalanches and drifts of snow deeper than a mounted soldier's height. Even the narrow path south of the range, along the edge of the Wall of Clouds, is often buried by falling juggernauts of snow or rock that catapult hapless victims to the jungle floor thousands of feet below.

Captives of the charduni, and settlements throughout the Iron Steppes, take the imagery of the Mouth a bit more to heart. In their stories, the Mouth of Gaurak is the gullet of the Charduni Empire, its jagged stones the fangs of a ravenous realm. Regular caravans pass through the rugged vale transporting a fortune in slaves. Fully one-third of the dark dwarves' new slave recruits die during the forced march from the sites of their capture to servitude in the Briar Mines. Sometimes the twisted wills of the tortured dead tie their spirits to the lands of the living. The dreadful ghosts of those who perish miserably along this trail haunt the Mouth and are often more fearsome than the titanspawn that lair in its rocky slopes. Charduni troops and caravans garner the protection of priests of the Great General, and those who would enter the Mouth of Gaurak would be well advised to employ similar safeguards.

Leprosy

Leprosy is more common in tropical areas than elsewhere, and the fall of Chern on Termana has only exacerbated this. For the pale elves, however, the disease is unavoidable, as it comes to them from the curse the Scourge laid upon all the ancient high elves. Leprosy causes diseased lumps on the skin, which slowly thicken and deteriorate, destroying nerves and resulting in deformity. Eventually even eyes, bones and muscles may be affected, resulting in helplessness leading to death. The disease can be spread by close personal contact with an infected victim (see Disease in Chapter 8 of the DMG).

| Disease | Infection | DC | Incubation | Damage |
|---------|-----------|----|------------|---------------------------|
| Leprosy | Contact | 12 | 1 year | 1d2 Cha, 1d2 Con, 1d2 Dex |

Unlike other diseases, leprosy cannot be cured by time or strength of body. Successful saves do not allow a victim to recover, but only to postpone death. Leprosy may only be cured with magic such as *remove disease*, although often victims will not know they have contracted it until its effects begin to appear. Pale elves are not so lucky — magical healing has thus far failed to cure even a single Piradun of Chern's curse. Each year during which the disease ravages their bodies, victims must make three Fortitude saves to avoid taking temporary Charisma, Constitution and Dexterity damage, respectively. More draining than standard ability damage, points lost to leprosy return at the rate of 1 point per two months, or double that rate if the character gets total rest. With each ability point lost, the character must succeed in a separate Fortitude saving throw or 1 point of the respective ability damage is permanent drain instead. (see Ability Score Loss in Chapter 8 of the DMG). Death by leprosy is a slow and terrible fate, made all the worse because it is often accompanied by ostracism and fear from one's companions and loved ones.

Eternal Isle

Once this land was green and beautiful, and in its center, surrounded by mighty mountain peaks, the near-immortal arcanists of Shalae'Uthun — the Citadel of the Rose — delved into the deepest and most baffling mysteries of magic. In those days, before the Divine War tore the land asunder, the elves served Mesos, Sire of Sorcery.

As time passed, however, the elves began to drift away from their master. Once, all elven arcane masters were sorcerers, those imbued with magic by Mesos himself. Later, other elves began to study and learn magic as well — these were among the earliest wizards, and their presence was anathema to the sorcerers, who believed themselves to be Mesos' chosen servants. As the years passed, antipathy between sorcerer and wizard grew.

Besides, the elves had their own patron god in those days, who walked the land alongside them, and brought blessings to them in a way the titans never could. This god, whose name has been forgotten in the tragedies surrounding the death of Chern, was bound to the elves by their worship and the strength of their souls. The elves loved their god, and their love was returned a hundredfold.

In the Citadel of the Rose, the elven arcanists continued their work, casting mighty spells that enriched the kingdom, brought prosperity to its people, and served as a bulwark against their enemies. The power of the Citadel, combined with the resolute strength in arms of the elven nation, held even the mightiest empire of its day — the Land of Chains — at bay.

The wizards and the sorcerers had allies as well, and these ancient beings also aided in the defense of the realm. Before even the rise of the elves, it is said that great dragons ruled much of Scarn. Many of these great and wise creatures survived, and forged bonds of friendship with the elves of Eldura-Tre. Though their minds were old and incomprehensible even to the sagest elven adepts, they nevertheless shared much of their knowledge, and elven magic became the greatest that Scarn had ever seen. Some of the mightiest of the dragon-monarchs visited Shalae'Uthun, and many dragons dwelled there permanently, assisting the elves in their researches and in battling the charduni.

The benighted realm now known as the Eternal Isle was then a land of perfect beauty, wisdom and safety, where elf and dragon held sway, and from which their protective magics spread across all of the empire. Yet even the

elves' wisdom could not have foreseen or prevented the nightmare that was to come.

When the Divine War broke out, the Citadel tried to steer clear of the fray. The gods fought on behalf of all mortal races, yes. But the elves still held some measure of the elven respect for the titans, and the destruction Mesos had wrought untold havoc on the empire. Many of the elves' sorcerers, still tightly bound to Mesos, were consumed in his death throes, torn apart and scattered along with their master. Some died with such extreme violence that they took entire communities with them. A handful of sorcerers survived, but after the war began, elven wizards rose up to take their place. To this day, elven sorcerers are rare and continue to be treated with caution and suspicion.

Attempts to stay out of the war failed. Both Chardun and the elven god declared that there should be peace between the elves and charduni, and the mighty elven legions turned south to destroy the titanspawn armies that ravaged Termana. Soon, the titans — and more specifically, their servants — turned the full might of their fury against the elves. All around the Citadel, agents of the primal ones ripped open great portals, admitting thousands of otherworldly creatures: demons, devils, outcast monstrosities from other dimensions, outsiders of all description. The servants of the titans had created more problems than they solved, for they did not stop to consider what this powerful demon-army might do once the elves were vanquished. Instead, they lent hordes of their own titanspawn and similar creatures to the outsiders, and bade them destroy the Citadel of the Rose and slaughter all within.

The threat of the outsiders was too great to bear. In desperate council, the wizards and surviving sorcerers of the Citadel decided upon a course of action. Along with their dragon allies, they called together all their arcane magic and invoked a fearful ritual. An impenetrable magical barrier sprang up around the citadel, surrounding the mountain range known as the Thorns, and the green and pleasant lands beyond, to a distance of many leagues. While contained within this barrier, the titans' gates no longer functioned, and the demon armies were trapped on Scarn, until they could conquer the Citadel and break the ritual.

For a time, the elves of the Citadel remained in contact with their brethren in Eldura-Tre. They saw the course of battle, gave counsel and aided arcane spellcasters outside the barrier as best they could. But as time passed, communications became more and more

difficult. When Kadum was bound and cast into the sea, the last thread with the outside world was broken. Blood-drenched waters swept over northern Termana, sinking vast stretches of land and cutting off the Citadel of the Rose and the barrier surrounding it. The realm was now an island, kept from sinking only by virtue of the mystic barrier — which continued to keep the outsiders trapped, along with the elven archmages and their draconic allies.

The elven masters retained some ability to see beyond the barrier. They watched in despair as their deity was slain by treachery, rejoiced as Chern fell before elven resolve and bravery, and wept as Chern's Curse twisted the elves into the sad creatures of today. Within the Citadel, the elves were unaffected by the curse, and remain among the only unchanged high elves on Scarn.

Unlike the cursed elves of Termana, the high elves of the Eternal Isle could reproduce, though raising a child and preparing it to fight in the unending struggle was still a matter of decades. Even so, the elves were able to slowly increase their numbers, while the outsiders, cut off from their home planes by the closing of the gates, were not. In time, the outsiders hit upon a plan to bolster their ranks.

In midnight raids, the outsiders seized elven captives and — using magics and the wiles of succubi and incubi — begin to augment their numbers with half-fiendish children. About 70 AV, the first of these half-fiend/half-elven forces attacked the Shalae'Uthun, overwhelming its outer defenses and laying siege to the citadel itself. The siege dragged on for years. Sorely beset, the elves nearly gave in to despair, for their own numbers began to dwindle dangerously.

One of the surviving dragons proposed a desperate plan to turn the tide. If the dragons were to take human form and bear or sire children by the elves, the gestation and maturation time of the offspring would be that of half-elves, not high elves. And these children, infused with the blood of two ancient races, would bear the power of both elves and dragons.

The dragons' scheme worked, and within a few years the elves were reinforced by a new force of half-dragons, brought swiftly to maturity by their own natural growth and the magic of their parents. The siege was broken, and once more the demon armies fell back.

Today, this terrible place is known as the Eternal Isle, and all elves know of its significance. Though their god is long gone, and the elves have fallen into despair and decadence, all continue to pray (though they know not to

whom) that the barrier remains intact, and the fearsome outsiders never emerge to ravage the Scarred Lands. None know how their brethren within the barrier fare against their enemies, and all are troubled by a single dread realization: if the Citadel ever falls, the demons will come, and nothing can stop them. That day may never arrive, or it may prove to be tomorrow. This fearful uncertainty is yet another element of the fatalistic outlook of the forsaken elves.

Within the barrier, the war does indeed still rage. Mighty demon lords, arch-devils, and even fallen gods from other realities, marshal vast hordes of orcs, gnolls, undead, goblins, gorgons, serpent-folk, half-fiends and other creatures unknown to the Scarred Lands. These horrors fling themselves against high elven fortresses in the Thorns, and even on occasion against the walls of the Citadel of the Rose itself. For their part, the elven masters, and those noble high elven warriors who remained behind, fight alongside their surviving dragon allies and their half-dragon progeny to hold their foes at bay. Their war is one without end, an eternal struggle that can only end when the sun itself grows dark and the gods themselves perish.

Fortunately for the elves, their enemies are not united by any means. Many are of a chaotic nature, and even those of lawful outlook frequently disagree and squabble. Often, an offensive against the Citadel seems on the verge of success, only to fail when two or more of the horde's leaders fall to fighting among themselves. The outsiders battle each other at least as much as they battle the elves, if not more.

The Eternal Isle remains isolated, cut off from the rest of Termana by mighty spells. Only the most powerful and influential of arcanists could even consider breaching the barrier, but rumors persist of isolated gates that might provide access to the battle-scarred isle. Most elves deny these rumors, and add that even if they were true, only the most mad and foolhardy individuals would dare set foot on the Eternal Isle. All the same, tales of unbelievable riches, potent magic, and powerful foes waiting to be challenged draw the attention of adventurers throughout the Scarred Lands.

Lay of the Land

From outside, the Eternal Isle appears as a thick column of cloud or fog, rising from the waters of Kadum's Bight, swirling slightly, occasionally flashing with lightning. All around the isle, the waters are pure and clean, free of

Kadum's blood. These waters are especially popular with fisherfolk, for although dangerous creatures such as sea lions and giant octopi and squid have been reported, they also yield some of the richest hauls of fish on Termana.

Attempts to approach the isle by sea invariably fail, as even the most experienced and skillful captains are carried south by strong currents and winds that grow more powerful as one approaches the cloud-column. A few especially persistent captains have gone so far as to wreck their own vessels trying to sail close to the isle, and over the years, most have given up trying to reach the Eternal Isle in this fashion.

Flying is even worse — spellcasters and creatures capable of flight are seized by strong winds and smashed into the waters of Kadum's Bight if they dare to come within a mile or so of the barrier. As this impact is usually fatal, attempts to approach the isle by air are likewise largely futile.

The barrier extends underwater, reportedly all the way to the sea floor. The water swirls like a potent whirlpool, pushing aquatic creatures away and tearing apart anything that gets too close. The last attempt to approach the isle in this fashion took place several decades ago, when the mad elf scholar Oethelus piloted an ancient elven craft into the blackness of the abyss beneath the Bight, and plunged straight into the barrier, hoping that it was less powerful at greater depths. A few fragments of this irreplaceable craft were located, washed up on beaches surrounding the Bight, and most conclude that Oethelus' quest ended in tragedy.

The final route to the Eternal Isle — subterranean — has never been attempted. Tales abound of secret passages under the surface of the earth, passages that emerge in the midst of the Thorns or inside the Citadel of the Rose itself. None have ever been found, at least not by reliable individuals (though a number of wild fictional accounts have circulated in Calastia and the human states of Termana). The expense and complexity of actually excavating a passage from Termana to the isle would be astronomical, and not even the wealthiest kingdom in the Scarred Lands could afford such an undertaking.

The island itself remains hidden from the rest of the Scarred Lands. Today, it is a nightmarish reflection of its old self. Where once it was a land of green forests and meadows, it's now a broken, blackened ruin. The land has been twisted and torn, rising up into bizarre formations, sprouting strange vegetation and giving vent to foul vapors and geysers. The

outsiders and their titanspawn armies roam this blasted landscape, building great, grim fortresses, drilling endlessly, mining for iron, silver and gold, and sometimes meeting on the field of battle in vast, bloody struggles.

The old gates exist still — massive portals crafted of stone and metal. They lie dormant, though sometimes creatures on the other side can be seen trying to force their way through the barrier of power that prevents passage. As might be expected, the flora and fauna of the isle beyond the Thorns consist of the most powerful, cunning and evil things imaginable. At the bottom are the vermin and crawling things, but even these are dangerous, for many are of the giant variety, and others have been infused with fiendish blood, making them the most ferocious and deadly vermin on all of Scarn. Above these creatures are predators, and to survive in this harsh environment, they must be hardy and strong indeed. Dire and fiendish creatures abound, along with magical beasts and aberrations of every description. The outsiders have even recruited a few evil dragons who now fight against their goodly cousins within the Citadel.

Armies of minions swarm across the fractured plains of the island. These include the usual members of evil hordes: kobolds, goblins, orcs, gnolls, trolls, ogres, undead, evil giants, lesser fiends and the like. Other intelligent creatures serve in the outsiders' vast slave-armies, including corrupted humans, elves and dwarves, as well as titanspawn from outside the barrier, such as gorgons, asaatthi, yuan-ti, proud, hags, sutak, vertigen, thulkan and others. These are commanded by especially favored mortals, elf-fiend hybrids, or the outsiders themselves. These are then marshaled together into mighty armies, ranging from the rigidly lawful ranks of the Arch-Fiend Kamanthikus to the mindless, devouring hordes off the demon-lord known only as the Formless One.

These armies move in an endless cycle of violence, fighting each other, or moving against the elven fortresses that hold the Thorns. The Eternal Isle beyond the Thorns is truly a piece of hell adhering to the surface of Scarn — a bleak vision of the world that might exist should the elves' barriers fail, and the corruption of the outsiders spread beyond the Eternal isle.

The Thorns (Temperate Mountains, EL 15): This jagged range of mountains was named She'Valee — the Thorns — for they surrounded and protected the Citadel of the Rose. They were tall and imposing, but elven magic made their passes safe, and all could cross them with

little difficulty. The arcanists of the Citadel never dreamed that one day the mountains might represent their best defense against armies of mindless alien foes.

Today, the mountains are shorn of the magics that made them safe to travel. Rather, they are now charged with defensive arcane energies intended to keep enemies away. Deadly gales swirl around their peaks, forming an invisible barrier against flying attackers. Slopes are covered in jagged rocks and talus, and most passes have been permanently blocked by deadfalls and walls of stone or metal. The few routes that could not be closed are guarded by fortresses, manned by elite elven guardians — warriors of enormous skill and experience, sworn to give their lives and souls in defense of their realm.

Several peaks among the Thorns harbor the lairs of ancient dragons, mysterious and powerful creatures stranded here by the creation of the barrier. Allies of the elves in the Citadel, these dragons have likewise dedicated themselves to the defense of the realm and the defeat of the outsiders. Their ancient dragon-empires have long since crumbled to dust, but these magnificent beings remain, survivors of a bygone era when their kind ruled all. Griffons, couatl, pegasi and other fantastic beasts also inhabit the mountains.

Other peaks have proved restless in the years since the erection of the barrier. Some have actually exploded in volcanic eruptions, raining ash and gushing lava across the island. These effects never spill over into the interior valley, for the elves' magic keeps such things away. A demon-prince's army was once entirely incinerated by a fortuitous eruption as it scaled the peak, hoping to enter the valley without the elves' knowledge.

The outsiders have breached this potent defensive ring more than once, usually by circumventing its defenses. On several occasions, enemies have succeeded in actually tunneling through the mountains, utilizing old cave complexes or abandoned fortresses that the elves have forgotten. Fortunately for the Citadel, quick-thinking commanders on the slopes of the Thorns acted independently, shutting off the tunnels and pursuing the enemy into them. The fights inside the mountains were fierce and deadly, costing many lives on both sides.

On rarer occasions, the outsiders have succeeded in calling up enough magical might to breach the Thorns' defensive wards and solid bulwarks, sending flying troops over the peaks, or ground troops swarming through the passes. The fall of the Emerald Fortress, two decades

ago, was the worst of these incursions, when the forces of the Arch-Devil Kamanthikus actually overwhelmed the elven defenders and broke into the lands surrounding the Citadel with an army of fiends and elf-devil halfbreeds. As they advanced, tearing the land asunder, all seemed lost for the elves, but their salvation came from a strange benefactor — the Formless One, whose legions unaccountably fell upon Kamanthikus' forces, killing and destroying without mercy. Abruptly forced to abandon his advance, the arch-devil retreated from the gates of the Citadel. Emerald Pass was permanently sealed, and magical defenses strengthened with the arch-devil's departure, and the elves watched in amazement as their two most powerful foes struggled against each other in an ultimately futile conflict.

Citadel of the Rose (Artificial Structure, EL 18+): Beyond the Thorns lies a pleasant green valley, where the land remains as it was before the war and the great ritual that cut the Eternal Isle off from the rest of Scarn. Here, the elves still dwell in a tiny remnant of the splendor that once was. Sylvan creatures such as unicorns, pegasi, satyr and fey live here as well, unchanged and untainted by the blood of titans or the violence of the Divine War.

In the center of island rise the slender, graceful towers of the Citadel of the Rose, the most wondrous and beautiful structure ever to exist on Scarn. The greatest arcanists, architects and builders from throughout the ancient empire of Eldura-Tre labored for decades to conceive, design and craft the citadel, whose very outlines are enhanced by magical means. Seeming to blend seamlessly into the surrounding vales, the Citadel sprawls over a wide area, and no visitor ever sees it in the same way twice. Outwardly, it appears more temple than fortress, with many picturesque groves and gardens, outbuildings, pavilions, streams, paths and other luxuries. In reality, it is the strongest defensive position in the Scarred Lands, and could withstand direct siege for years or decades before falling. Of course, the elves cannot allow this to happen, for once the enemy reaches the gates of the Citadel, it is only a matter of time before all is lost and the outsiders have won.

In the citadel dwell the oldest and most powerful arcane spellcasters in the mortal world. There are eighteen of them — five sorcerers and thirteen wizards, all of whom are far more powerful and more experienced than the most accomplished arcanists outside the barrier (with the possible exception of Yugman the Sage,

who dwells in isolation on Ghelspad). All are united in their absolute dedication to the defense of the citadel and the maintenance of the barrier, for all know that the entire world will be threatened should the outsiders escape.

The regions surrounding the Citadel are home to numerous high elven nobles and warrior-lords, who remained behind with their arcane masters when the barrier was created. These are the leaders and soldiers of the Citadel's armies, and they too possess skills far beyond those of other mortal warriors. They are aided by the half-dragons, a strange and almost alien breed who dwell apart from their elvish brethren, yet remain vital to the citadel's defense.

Some younger and more sociable dragons actually dwell in the Citadel or surrounding lands. The ancient bronze dragon Che'shuae is probably the best known of these, for she enjoys the company of elves and often consults with the masters of the Citadel. She also uses her substantial magical abilities to aid the ordinary elves and fey creatures of the valley.

Demonhold (Artificial Structure, EL 18+): South of the Thorns lies the greatest of the outsider fortresses, the adamantine citadel known as Demonhold. The fortress has changed hands many times in the last century and a half; currently it is under the control of the arch-devil Kamanthikus, and filled with his legions of orcs, gnolls and evil humans.

Demonhold is the opposite of the peaceful Citadel of the Rose in virtually every way. Vast, ugly, unnatural, it rises from the cracked, volcanic plain like a brutal, iron fist. The fortress' forges and workshops constantly emit evil-smelling black smoke, and the sound of metal-on-metal echoes day and night. In fact, the skies above the Demonhold are so thick with pollution that few can distinguish between darkness and light.

Smaller forts surround the Demonhold, and these sometimes come under attack by rival armies of outsiders. Countless thousands of slave-soldiers can be thrown into the breach to defeat such attacks, for Kamanthikus seems to have a limitless supply of minions — and this appearance is not far from the truth, for he creates ever more soldiers from his own demons and the pitiful elves that he still holds prisoners as breeding stock.

As time goes by, and the arch-devil grows stronger, the followers of other outsider-lords speculate that he is planning something new. Perhaps now, seeing how his previous plans were foiled by the chaotic madness of his fellow outsiders, Kamanthikus intends to march on his own war of conquest, bringing the entirety of the Eternal Isle beneath his heel, before once more marching on the Citadel of the Rose. Of all the elves foes, this brutal creature is probably the most dangerous, even though his plans have yet to come to fruition.

The Gamulganjus

(Warm/Tropical Forest, EL varies)

Gamulganjus means “mighty forest” in the ancient high elven tongue. This name implies a false sense of tranquility and majesty — the Gamulganjus is a jungle, hot and humid beyond most human tolerance, heavily infested with venomous animals of every imaginable kind, choked with dense vegetation (some of which is carnivorous) and haunted by ghosts of fallen tribes who had no one to properly lay them to rest.

It is also one of the most beautiful places on Termana. Practically untouched by the fallout from the Titanswar, this jungle is of little interest to the gods or their servants. The people of the Gamulganjus have lived here for centuries, without interference from or contact with the rest of the world until the past hundred years. The arrival of humans during the reign of dragons is practically lost to memory among the inhabitants.

Lay of the Land

The jungle is far from homogenous. It includes wetlands, the tepuje mountains, rivers, an extensive shoreline, and borders directly on the Wall of Clouds.

Lethene’s Wind River: The source of this river is thousands of feet above the jungle, in the Bonewind Hills. It plunges over the Wall of Clouds, throwing up a spray hundreds of feet high and covering a wide area around it with a constant mist. The river runs deep along the border between the Yellow Jungle and the Gamulganjus and merges with the Uradisa River hundreds of miles downriver from the falls. The Mar!gan tribe of tepuje nomads know the secrets of safely sailing this fast, dangerous river, and use it almost exclusively. Travelers often pay handsomely for passage with the tribe up or downriver. For most, the river is far too hazardous to risk. The nomads claim they’ve befriended the river’s spirits and that it would never allow them to come to harm.

Behind the falls is a sight that, while not as dynamic, is far more impressive — the Infinite Stair. Thousands of individually sculpted steps ascend the Wall of Clouds, leading all the way to the top. The shimmering curtain of water falling from high above the jungle, however, obscures the view. Carved into the cliffs at regular intervals (roughly every eight hours of climbing) are chambers large enough to house dozens of humanoids and several animals. Fire pits and sleeping areas are standard in these

Traveling the Infinite Stair

No one has measured the Wall of Clouds’ height successfully. Frankly, few have really tried. What is known is that it typically takes seven days at normal walking speed to go from the foot of the monstrous cliffs up the stair to the top.

Due to the constant noise from the falls, all Listen checks suffer a -2 circumstance penalty while inside the shelters and -4 while outside on the stair.

Hazards: The Infinite Stair is broken at multiple points, and requires mountain climbing gear or extreme athletics to pass the breaks. They range anywhere from a few feet to upwards of 20 feet of open air. In addition, high winds occasionally carry enough water up the heights to make the staircase dangerously slippery (requiring Balance checks and/or Reflex saves). Rockslides are an infrequent but hazardous risk as well.

Encounters: Typical encounters on the Wall of Clouds are aerial in nature, consisting primarily of flying predators such as wyverns, griffons and the like. They shouldn’t be common (check once per day, 10% chance of an encounter).

waypoints, and make the journey tolerable so long as one can stand the constant roaring of thousands of tons of water falling every second just a few yards away.

The question of who carved the stairs intrigues many, but few have an answer. The tepuje dwellers claim that Mesos was the architect behind the Infinite Stair, but most outsiders agree that Mesos would have little use for such a thing. More likely it was a project conducted under the auspices of one of the ancient empires that once ruled the area, or perhaps even slarecian work. The Terali and Tepuje nomads have ancient tales of a vast subterranean citadel accessible from the stairs via a secret passage. Some scholars believe there’s merit to this story, believing that the slarecians may have used such a fortress as a defense for the only approach to the Gamulganjus. If this fortress does exist, it would be a hazardous treasure trove of slarecian artifacts.

Semdar River: Much tamer than Lethene’s Wind River, the Semdar is far more hospitable to life within and along it. Tepuje citizens have established villages along its length to support fishing and harvesting of the rich, edible plants that grow along the banks.

From its point of origin to where it joins the Uradisa, the Semdar is largely tamed by the

tepuje dwellers, with only a few locations still too dangerous for normal human habitation. A few unruly tribes of troglodytes and lizardmen inhabit stretches just south of the Wall of Clouds.

Uradisa River: Another river whose source lies above the wall of clouds — in this case, the southern Chained Mountains. It flows fast and deep until the Lethene's Wind and Semdar Rivers join it, where it becomes a wide, deep river surrounded by marshlands. From the point Lethene's Wind joins it to the river's mouth, the river is the deepest in the jungle. This is the primary route for traders from the rest of Termana to come to barter their wares with the nomadic tribes and tepuje dwellers, as the gnomish trade city is at the Lethene's Wind confluence.

Dangerous wildlife lives throughout the river, and the occasional troglodyte tribe breaks the monotony. Most traders come prepared to repel savage attacks.

Wall of Clouds: This cliff stands between the Gamulganjus and the rest of Termana. It's thousands of miles long and thousands of feet high, its heights seemingly soaring into the clouds that occasionally hover over the jungle. Lethene's Falls are a spectacular sight (see Lethene's Wind River, above), as well as intimidating to anyone standing above or below.

The tepuje dwellers claim that Mesos raised the Wall to protect the tepujes and the Gamulganjus from divine interference. Whether or not this is literally true, it has served as a barrier from the rest of the continent. The only way to easily enter the jungle is via the Cerulean Ocean.

Lost Cities of the Lotus: Rumors abound throughout the Gamulganjus of the Lost Cities of the Lotus. The stories claim that these splendid cities once dotted the jungle until the civilization that built them collapsed and the Gamulganjus swallowed them. These may be corrupted accounts of the many slarecian ruins that can be found in the caverns beneath the tepujes, or it may represent an as-yet-unknown ancient empire.

Flora and Fauna

Just about anything that lives in the Gamulganjus is dangerous — venomous insects, reptiles and amphibians are common. Crocodiles fill the rivers, along with school of carnivorous fish. Predators of all stripes (literally) fill the jungle. Few forms of native life are completely without defenses, given the vast array of dangerous animals that make the jungle their home.

The plants aren't much better. Many are carnivorous (if passively so), devouring anything that comes close enough to be caught. Many others are poisonous or mind-altering if sampled indiscriminately.

Near the tepujes, beasts with strange powers are common. Many feed upon the minds and intellects of intelligent races, while others feed upon emotions or sensations such as terror or pain.

The region has a nearly astonishing lack of races warped by titans such as Mormo or Gaurak. To some scholars, it represents one of the few places in the Scarred Lands where a picture of how life might have developed without constant catastrophes exists. This is flawed reasoning, though, as the animals are not considered warped only because the titans created them long enough ago that they've "always been like this."

The Tepuje Cities

The Tepuje City-States form a loose confederation of cities built within the hollow, mountain-like tepujes of the Gamulganjus. The people of the tepujes are an insular sort, preferring to minimize contact with outsiders and working to resurrect Mesos from his sundering at the hands of the gods. Their belief that the tepujes contain his physical remains helps maintain this state of affairs.

History

The tepuje nomads were refugees from the dragonwar between the gold Umaenes and the red Ma'exar. Until the Titanswar, they were largely content to live as nomads. When the war came to Termana, many sought refuge within the tepujes, violating the nomads' taboos and sundering the people into two distinct cultures.

Shortly after settling into the tepujes for shelter from the rampages of god and titan alike (and their servants), the nomads began receiving visions. Shamans were the primary recipients, and were subjected to reliving the last moments of Mesos' conscious existence. They interpreted this as a sign that Mesos still existed, although they didn't know who he was at the time, and sought to return to the Scarred Lands. Some took this as ill omen and kept their own council. Others took it as a sign that the people of the tepujes now had a mission and formed the priesthood now known as the Speakers of Mesos.

When the Speakers of Mesos made itself known to the people, the *Ushadan* shamans

To Psion or Not to Psion

Relics & Rituals II: *Lost Lore* adds psionics as an optional element in the Scarred Lands, and explains the slarecian connection to this third, strange power. The tepujes are some of the largest surviving traces of slarecian habitation on Scarn, and survived only because Mesos wished to study them. Naturally, psionics play a major role in the Tepuje City-states' history, culture and religion.

However, psionics are not to everyone's taste. For GMs who don't want to include psionics in the Scarred Lands, simply replace psions with sorcerers, druids and penumbral lords. With that in mind, you'll rarely find any direct references to actual psionics in the following text, as it is largely restricted to sidebars to keep it as optional as possible.

spoke out against them, declaring them dangerous. Unfortunately for the traditionalists, the Speakers had discovered secrets of the tepujes and their crystals that gave them the power to overcome their enemies. The first advantage was their acceptance of the *touched* as fellow priests. The second was their ability to forge and use weapons and armor crafted from the tepuje crystals. The final advantage came from another source — the *Ushadan* shamans lost the power to communicate. They could speak, and even understand one another, but to the people of the tepujes, they were suddenly incomprehensible. The Speakers pointed to this as proof of Mesos' blessing and led the newly converted in the execution or exile of those who clung to the old ways.

The center of the new religion was in the city-state known as Khele Mesos (now known as Maratawo). The High Speaker of Mesos — usually a druid of the Six-Armed One, but occasionally one of the Blessed of Mesos (see **Player's Guide to Wizards, Bards, and Sorcerers**) — served as leader of the faithful. In time, sorcerers and druids came to be equals in the religious hierarchy.

Within the first generation, the affliction that crippled the *Ushadan* shamans spread to all of the tepujes. Everyone within the tepuje cities could speak to each other, but none could speak to anyone outside. This affliction didn't strike all simultaneously, but started in Khele Mesos and spread throughout the other eight tepujes over several months. For the two years

following the spread of this epidemic of glosso-lalia, the tepuje inhabitants were only able to communicate among themselves. This served to further isolate them from the rest of the Gamulganjus' inhabitants and forged a stronger, more xenophobic culture with a rigid hierarchical caste system derived from the nomadic roles of warrior, shaman and tradesman. The plague's end saw the admittance of unprecedented numbers to the priestly caste, with little or no explanation as to what qualified them so suddenly. It didn't take long for it to become apparent that they had developed magic of their own to equal that of the druids and sorcerers, and the orthodoxy accepted that their powers also came from Mesos.

This hierarchy remained mostly stable for the following several decades, with occasional doctrinal differences suffering forcible resolution at the High Speaker of Khele Mesos' hands. Routine wars with the tepuje nomads over the kidnapping and sacrifice of tepuje city-state citizenry provided excitement and an external enemy to keep the people of the tepujes from turning on each other over religious matters.

Fifty years ago, this all changed. The High Speaker K!Nawa announced that the Speakers of Mesos had discovered how to reform Mesos and grant him a physical presence in the Scarred Lands. When many of the Speakers of the other tepujes converged on Khele Mesos to aid in this glorious task, it was discovered that Khele Mesos was an abandoned, haunted ruin of its former self. Lacking distinct leadership, the Speakers of Mesos almost immediately split among doctrinal lines, establishing their personal interpretations as the only right way to reverence Mesos. This has resulted in eight different religions across the eight tepujes, each claiming to be the one true path, and each warring upon the seven "heretic" city-states, with weaker city-states aligning against the stronger and maintaining a bloody status quo. This state of affairs can't last much longer, but many worry that whatever may rise to replace Mesos worship could well be even worse.

Culture

The culture among the eight city-states is fairly homogenous, despite the declared differences over which they battle one another.

The city-states operate under a caste system, with the priests at the top, followed by the warriors, the merchant class, and finally the workers. A fifth caste, composed of slaves taken in war, exists, but they are considered less than human, only a little better than animals.

Mesos, Slarecians and the Tepujes

The Speakers of Mesos are composed of three distinct and disparate types of people — the druids, who draw upon the power inherent in the earth and the tepujes (hence their ability to use the crystals), the sorcerers who are effectively the mortal inheritors of Mesos' power (and served as his priesthood during the epoch of Mesos), and psions, who initially gained their power through the slarecian Language Virus, as tainted by exposure to Mesos' own energies.

The tepuje crystal deposits were subject to Mesos' scrutiny for centuries before the gods began the overthrow of their progenitors, and absorbed some measure of his essence. Upon his apparent destruction, they absorbed more of that same essence.

The slarecian Language Virus (see **Creature Collection Revised**) was left in the tepujes for someone to find — and find it they did. It spread like wildfire through the city-states, starting with the *Ushadan* shamans and then to everyone living within the city-states. The upshot of this epidemic is that psions and psychic warriors are relatively common in the tepujes — perhaps more than anywhere else on Scarn — and that all of the citizens speak slarecian. Because of the taint of Mesos in the tepujes, not everyone who contracted the language virus gained psionic powers. Some instead became sorcerers and manifested the Bloodline of Power. In the majority of cases, the influences canceled out, leaving the former afflicted much as they were before the virus struck.

The visions the virus inflicted were also a strange mixture of Mesos' final thoughts (nigh-incomprehensible to the mortal mind) and the normal slarecian fare.

The Psions

As noted above, after the epidemic of glossolalia (also known as the slarecian language virus), many people were inducted into the priestly ranks. If using psionics rules, these people are psions of all six schools. Psychic warriors were rarely inducted into the caste, but are considered to be slightly above the warriors in social rank.

The psions are an accepted part of life within the Speakers of Mesos, and most even believe their power comes from Mesos, thanks to the warped language virus. A few, notably the most potent manifesters of *Mimodar* and *Chukema*, are aware of the virus' true origins, and use the veneration of Mesos to strengthen their secret slarecian cults. They work tirelessly to restore the slarecians to Scarn, and keep the truth from all others. Those who come to realize the truth are either killed (if antagonistic) or recruited (if sympathetic). It was elements of the slarecian Speaker cult that caused the disappearance of the entire population of *Khele Mesos* and its subsequent haunting by psionic beasts. They feared that the High Speaker's plan would cause the slarecians to become a part of Mesos, and not vice versa, as they hope to accomplish.

Running Without Psionics

If you decide to run the tepujes without psionics, simply use the crystals as described below, but for magic, and replace psions and psychic warriors with clerics and sorcerers (or wizards) as needed. The tepuje city-states do not depend upon the existence of psionics to be usable; it's simply an option for those who want such things in their games.

Priests: This caste is nominally hereditary. Anyone born to the Speakers of Mesos is trained to be a Speaker of Mesos (or is expected at the very least to bear or sire prospective Speakers). Since being a druid is often a matter of training, this is not an issue. Sorcerers are often born to priestly families, if only because they breed into them so often. On occasion, such are born to the lower castes and must be elevated. Sorcerers who are scions of anything other than Mesos (see **Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore** and **Player's Guide to Wizards, Bards and Sorcerers** for

more information on Scion feats) are typically sacrificed to Mesos in hopes that their power will return to the titan and strengthen him for his eventual rebirth. Sorcerers who have no such ties are considered less than those who are of the Bloodline of Power (see **Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore**).

Among the Speakers, the Bloodline of Power ranks highest, as sorcerers who directly wield Mesos' might for all to see. Just below them are sorcerers who show no signs of any bloodline. Druids rank below sorcerers, as they

draw their power from the land (or in Speaker doctrine, from the tepujes.)

Warriors: The warrior families are the nobility and defenders of the tepujes. They teach their children to excel in the arts of war — leadership of soldiers, the use of arms and armor, and the like. This does not mean that the members of these families are exclusively of the combat-oriented classes — it's just as common to see a martial-oriented wizard or rogue as it is to see rangers, and bards who specialize in songs of war are particularly honored. Fosterage is common amongst the noble families to minimize internecine feuding, but this primarily serves to give families yet another avenue to express potential and actual rivalries.

Monks are the exception. They stand somewhere between the Speaker and Warrior castes, and accept students from any caste who show the proper humility and discipline when requesting admittance to a monastic school. The monks will even accept the rare nomad who wishes to assume this exacting lifestyle.

The warrior families are also where unwanted children go — merchant families with too many children to properly divide inheritance, children of Speakers who show no talent for the special powers of that caste, and so on, are turned over to the warrior schools for training as soldiers to serve in the tepujes' armies.

Merchants: Merchant families are what keep the tepujes prosperous. They trade among the city-states, with the nomads, the gnomes and the terali, at the same time keeping their particular city-states abreast of current news across Termana. Some ambitious merchants travel the length and breadth of the content, and a very few have traveled as far as Asherak or Ghelspad in search of more distinctive trade goods to bring back.

Workers: The workers are the servants that make the households run. About 50 percent of the worker caste is part of the army, leaving the remainder to serve as domestic help, laborers and farmers. Members of these families pray for a child who is marked by Mesos, as it means good fortune for the family as a whole when the child is taken into and trained by the priesthood. Most monks come from this caste (and in fact, the monastic orders were founded by workers who found themselves conscripted for war against the other city-states).

Slaves: Most often taken in war, slaves are used for the most onerous and disgusting of duties — disposal of the dead, clearing waste from the tepujes' primitive sewer systems, and so on. The children of slaves are actually taken

from their parents and adopted into the worker caste, allowing the socialization of the next generation into the ways of the city-state. As a result, however, the slave caste is always in need of replenishing through the taking of prisoners in war.

Cities

Each of the city-states is built in and on the mountainous hollow shells known in the regional tongue as "tepuje." These are unique geological formations not of nature, but a byproduct of uncontained growth of the tepuje crystals.

The cities are built as close to the summit as possible. The lower castes live upon the mountain while the higher castes dwell within, in buildings suspended within the hollow peaks through the use of ingenious engineering coupled with magic. High Speakers usually place their baroque palace-temples at the tepuje's heart, with walkways and suspension bridges providing access to and from the surrounding warrior noble estates.

Since the devastation of Maratawo and the disappearance of its populace, the city-states have no clear capital, although the rulers of each city would dearly love to claim the privilege.

Buru: Buru stands within sight of the Wall of Clouds, and is the friendliest to visitors from outside the Gamulganjus Jungle. The merchant caste is quite influential here, with a sorcerous High Speaker whose favor is most amenable to expensive gifts.

Buru has a weak military and tries to maintain strong diplomatic ties with K!Nikwa for mutual protection. K!Nikwa, for its part, covets Buru's rich mineral deposits.

Stories of Buru's ostentatious wealth are common in the Gamulganjus, with only slight exaggeration. Ruby deposits underneath the tepuje are quite rich, with the past fifty years' mining having just scratched the surface.

Chukema: Chukema has the most contact with the world outside the Gamulganjus Jungle. The merchants maintain a busy trading port almost directly to the east of the tepuje on the shore of the Cerulean Ocean. Trade to and from the Charduni Empire and the forsaken elven nations streams through here on a regular basis. It's also the best location for collectors to locate and purchase slarecian artifacts.

G'Sholi: G'Sholi wars almost constantly with its nearest neighbor, Kingil'shk. The High Speakers of each city both bear the mark of the Bloodline of Power and both claim to be the living incarnations of Mesos. Neither has faced the other in battle yet, but it's only a matter of time.

The High Speaker *khe'Mesos* maintains G'Sholi at a near-constant wartime economy, funneling production into war-gliders, weapons, armor and military training. Their distinctive gliders can often be seen circling the tepuje in maneuvers. Visitors to G'Sholi are often recruited in the war against Kingil'shk and its pretender ruler. At least, it's hoped they can be recruited.

Kingil'shk: As noted above, Kingil'shk and G'Sholi are in a constant state of war. Kingil'shk's High Speaker, the sorcerer also named *khe'Mesos*, has led a holy war to purge the other city-state of its false ruler for over a decade. Both his great facility with the arcane and the fact that signs and omens of Mesos' power appear whenever he exercises his magic are taken — by his followers and *Khe'Mesos* himself, if no one else — as proof of his belief that he physically embodies the fallen titan.

The armies of Kingil'shk do not rely as much upon gliders for transportation as they do upon wizards and sorcerers to provide means of mass flight to the soldiers. Since there aren't many wizards and sorcerers capable of such feats, their forays against G'Sholi happen infrequently. Visitors to Kingil'shk often find themselves detained until one of the Speakers of Mesos can determine whether they're spies in G'Sholi's pay.

As the closest tepuje to Maratawo, the inhabitants maintain a constant vigilance against incursions from the fell beasts that lair within. They rarely have much to worry about from those, but their patrols are often subject to nomad ambush for profaning and defiling the nomads' holy ground.

Khalak Vol: This tepuje is relatively isolated from the other city-states and has little in the way of external relations. The populace is more focused upon spiritual matters than in most of the city-states, and *Ushadani* even enjoys some small attention, if very few actual adherents. The High Speaker Langlo entered his palace-temple five years ago and has not yet emerged. Even so, servants come and go, his meals are delivered and eaten, and at least once a month, one of Khalak Vol's citizens has a vivid dream about Langlo and brings the message to the Warrior Caste houses.

Khalak Vol does have semi-regular contact with inhabitants of the Yellow Jungle due to proximity, but trade is rarely profitable for either.

K!Nikwa: This city-state is highly militaristic, requiring all citizens to serve as soldiers for four years upon reaching adulthood. No exceptions are made for caste. The High Speaker

Keli looks beyond the Wall of Clouds and sees the Charduni Empire, a juggernaut despite its age and loss of territory. She sees beyond that to the Eternal Isle and fears that whatever it holds will spill across Termana. Her concerns are less a matter of religion and more of survival, despite neither threat being immediate.

K!Nikwa responds to requests for aid from Buru with military advisors and small garrisons. The advisors offer to assist Buru in reaching K!Nikwa's level of readiness. Unfortunately, Buru's merchant caste is unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices of wealth and luxury required to do so, and their High Speaker is unwilling to force them. So, Buru's money fills K!Nikwa's coffers, and K!Nikwa's military bolsters Buru.

Maratawo: The city-state that was once within the tepuje now called Maratawo was the greatest of them all. The former High Speaker of Mesos made his residence there, and it was seen as the spiritual and cultural center for the city-states from the time of its settlement (it was the first of the nine) until its final days.

Fifty years ago, High Speaker K!Nawa of Mesos announced to the confederation of city-states that he and his fellows had discovered the process through which Mesos could be reformed, and invited the priests and nobility of the other eight city-states to participate in the impending apothecotic event.

Unfortunately, K!Nawa was not forthcoming with details, and when the first of the guests arrived, it was to find a tepuje haunted by the screaming remnants of what may have been human spirits. Whatever K!Nawa set out to do failed spectacularly in the initial phases. Now, the other city-states send the occasional expedition to harvest Mesos' flesh from the tepuje or try to delve deeply enough to find K!Nawa's notes and shed light on the catastrophe.

Mimodar: Mimodar was once an open, thriving city-state whose trade rivaled Chukema's. The city's craftsmen turned out some of the best weapons and armor crafted from the tepuje crystals, and the merchants were among the few in the tepujes who were willing to trade this remarkable substance with outsiders.

A decade ago, the High Speaker Kah'fhol died, and this all changed. The Speakers of Mesos convened within the temple-palace to name a successor, only to find Kah'fhol unwilling to relinquish the job. Prior to her death, she used her powers as a seer to plumb the Scarred Lands and the planes for secrets best left undisturbed. Thanks to her discoveries, she has been able to maintain a sort of pseudo-life. With her

Mesos' Flesh

Mesos' flesh, known to the other cultures in the Gamulganjus as *tepuje crystals*, is harder than diamond and responds well to both magical enchantment and investment of psionic energies. These crystals are found in veins threaded throughout each of the nine tepujes and extend deep into the earth, where they grow to a thickness of 10-20 feet at some points. Mind flayers often build their settlements around — or even within — such deposits for ready access to the mineral, as they craft most of their tools from it.

In their natural state, tepuje crystals are hard but relatively fragile; they have a hardness of 20 and 5 hit points per inch of thickness. Weapons and armor crafted from tepuje crystal are treated as masterwork quality, and have an inherent +1 enhancement bonus that does not stack with magical or psionic bonuses.

In truth, the tepuje crystals are psionic in nature, and to a certain degree *alive*. The slarecians engineered them to grow raw materials for some of their tools during the height of their power. With their destruction and banishment from Scarn, the crystals were destroyed wherever found. The only known remaining crystals are in the tepujes in the Gamulganjus. When the gods and titans purged Scarn of as much slarecian influence as possible, Mesos concealed the tepujes from the others' sight in hopes that he could puzzle out the slarecians' strange powers, and when the gods destroyed him, some small measure of his power was drawn to the crystals.

Psicrystals

Tepuje crystals can be used as psicrystals. Most crystals work as per the *Psionics Handbook* under the psion entry. Some few are more potent, offering greater bonuses.

Psionic Items

Tepuje crystals imbued with psionic power retain the same toughness, but hit points increase to 20 hit points per inch of thickness. The psions and psychic warriors of the tepuje city-states favor such weapons and armor, given the ease with which they can imbue the crystals with power.

When crafting an item from tepuje crystals with the intent to use it as a psionic item, the craftsman (if he has levels in a psionic class) adds a +2 circumstance bonus to his craft rolls to shape the crystal. In his hands, it becomes almost malleable.

Magic Items

Sorcerers of the Bloodline of Power (see **Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore**) and druids with the Craft Tepuje Crystal feat can enchant items crafted from

tepuje crystal with the same bonuses and benefits that a psionic character receives.

Mesos' Druids and Mesos' Flesh

The druids of the city-states adhere to the doctrine that the crystals are Mesos' essence in solid form. Since the crystals existed before Mesos' "death," the Speakers of Mesos have defined a Doctrine of Transubstantiation, claiming that the crystals attracted a portion of his essence, and in doing so, became his flesh. They believe that given time and ritual, Mesos himself will arise from the tepujes and return to put the upstart gods in their places.

Druids of Mesos in the city-states often wield weapons and wear armor crafted from the crystals, although they require special training to properly use them.

Tepuje Crystal Arms and Armor

Tepuje crystal can be used to craft psionic and magical items. When used to craft weapons and armor, it has a +1 inherent enhancement bonus and is considered masterwork. Its weight is 75% normal.

When worn by psions or psychic warriors with the Tepuje Psicrystal Proficiency feat, it has a hardness of 20, with 20 hit points per inch of thickness.

| Enhancement Item | Market Price Modifier |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Light Armor | +1,500 gp |
| Medium Armor | +4,500 gp |
| Heavy Armor | +9,000 gp |
| Shield | +1,500 gp |
| Other Items (including weapons) | +1,000 gp/lb. |

Craft Tepuje Crystal

Druids are typically restricted to armor made from natural materials — leather and wood — as well as specific types of weapons. Druids of the Speakers of Mesos step outside those limitations and wield items crafted from Mesos' flesh. This requires them to attune themselves to the tepuje crystals so as to avoid interference with their druidic powers.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13, ability to cast 1st-level druid spells, must be a Speaker of Mesos from one of the eight tepuje city-states.

Benefit: This feat allows druids to wear armor and wield weapons crafted from tepuje crystal. It does not grant any *new* weapon or armor proficiencies, but would allow a druid with the proper feats, or a character with levels in both fighter and druid, to wield any martial or simple weapon, so long as it's crafted from tepuje crystal.

Mesos' Flesh [cont'd]

Tepuje Psicrystal [Psionic]

Psicrystals harvested from the tepujes are more durable than the standard variety.

Prerequisites: Must be taken when the character first gains a psicrystal; this feat cannot retroactively change a psicrystal into a tepuje psicrystal. The character must harvest a crystal from one of the nine tepujes.

Benefit: Tepuje psicrystals have an AC 15, hardness 20 and 20 hit points. As with normal psicrystals, tepuje psicrystals "regenerate" their crystal matrix at the rate of 2d4 points per day.

Normal: Normal psicrystals have an AC 13, hardness 8, and 20 hit points.

Greater Psicrystal [Psionic]

Psions who delve deeply enough into the tepujes, or those brave enough to seek out crystals in Maratawo, occasionally find psicrystals of greater potency.

Prerequisites: Tepuje Psicrystal feat.

Benefit: This feat may be taken twice. The player must choose which benefit applies the first time the feat is taken, and takes the remaining benefit when the choosing the feat a second time.

The first benefit doubles the psicrystal's personality bonus. For example, a psicrystal with a "friendly" personality provides a +4 bonus on Diplomacy checks.

The second benefit adds a second personality to the psicrystal, providing two bonuses. If both bonuses are taken, both persona's bonuses are doubled.

power, she's kept the Council of Speakers under her control and forbidden any further trade with outsiders. She's further purged the Speakers of any whose loyalty to Mesos is too strong and replaced them with Speakers who serve the slarecians. Sorcerous and druidic Speakers have met with "mysterious" deaths in the time since.

N'Kiw: N'Kiw is said to be like a weather vane. Its allegiances change according to convenience and perceived threats from neighboring tribes or cities. This may be due to the high assassination rate for High Speakers, to the point that no one is willing at this time to take the seat for fear of dying in it. N'Kiw is a microcosm of the theological differences that separate the tepuje city-states, with adherents of highly individual interpretations of the worship of Mesos. Some of the warrior caste believes that the best solution would simply be to purge the entire priest caste and start over. The only reason a military coup hasn't happened yet is fear of what other city-states would do to N'Kiw if it lost the most powerful of its leadership.

Crime and Punishment

Crime in the tepujes includes the usual — theft, murder, vandalism, etc. Typical punishment is mutilation of the offender — cut off a thief's hands, execute a murderer, and so forth. The crime that stands out is blasphemy. To publicly speak out against Mesos or to call his attributes as a being worthy of worship into question brings punishment anywhere from enslavement to the Speakers of Mesos to a painful death, depending upon the nature of the blasphemy and the individual deciding the punishment.

Armed Forces

The tepuje city-states have warrior nobles who lead armies conscripted from the lower castes. The elite forces among their armies are trained to fly in wind-gliders or (in the case of the Aerial Knights) under their own power. All of the city-states maintain as much of a standing army as they can economically afford because of the constant rivalry among the city-states, the danger posed by gnolls and the tepuje nomads, and the constant threat of anything coming in out of the jungle. Some also maintain vigilance against the mind flayers that live far beneath them.

Mind Flayers

Mind flayers live in the tepujes' deepest roots, the source of the crystals and the loci for their greatest power. They spend most of their time in their underground lairs executing wars upon uncouth beasts and working toward the return of their long-lost masters. Many of their cities are built around slarecian ruins, with the ruins themselves the object of much veneration; others are constructed around or within tepuje crystal deposits. The most potent of the mind flayers believe they're in contact with slarecian consciousness, but such a thing is too slippery to be certain about.

Mind flayers occasionally raid the surface in groups made up of the flayers themselves and their dominated slave-warriors, in search of food, additional slaves and sacrifices for their unholy rituals (outsiders would be hard-pressed to tell the difference). They occasionally make contact with the slarecian cultists among the

Speakers of Mesos. The mind flayers do not care for humans profaning the slarecian tongue, but are pragmatic enough to wait for the proper time to kill them for the sacrilege.

The mind flayers are the greatest single source of slarecian artifacts on the continent of Termana and funnel the more insidious of these (such as *slarecian muses* from **Creature Collection Revised**) through the city-states to their minions in other Termanan nations or even as far as Ghelspad.

The Tepuje Nomads

For centuries, the tepuje nomads have lived in the Gamulganjus, sharing the territory with few other intelligent races and the myriad animals and beasts that inhabit the forest. They are known as the tepuje nomads because, in times past, they gathered at the uninhabited tepujes to barter goods, exchange wives and harvest the peculiar tepuje crystals.

History

The first humans to arrive in the Gamulganjus were refugees from the devastating war between the dragons Umaenes and Ma'exar. These few thousand men and women found refuge with the terali tribes for a time, but the differences between the two races were too great for this to last. When the humans ventured into the giant tepujes, the terali told them it was time for them to find their own way. The parting wasn't bloody, but it was clear that the humans had done something terribly wrong in terali eyes.

The nomads' time among the terali left its mark, however. They adopted the ancestor worship common to the jaguar-men and continue to practice it in much the same fashion as their former teachers.

In time, the tribes who initially entered the tepujes made them their home, transforming them into small cities. The nomads refuse to acknowledge any kinship with the tepuje-dwellers, except for the one month of the year during which they reclaim the lost ones for their ancestors.

Culture

The tepuje nomads follow their ancestors' directives in where to go, what to hunt and who to follow. Their culture is very strict in regards to social roles into which each member of the tribe is born, whether warrior, shaman or tradesman. The warriors are tribal defenders, trained from birth to battle the nomads' foes. The shamans are guides, taught to speak to the tribes' ancestor spirits and read the stars for insight into the future. Tradesmen craft and maintain the wagons, yurts, weapons, armor and anything else the

What Do the Social Roles Mean?

Certain of these roles lend themselves most obviously to specific character classes. These are by no means hard and fast rules, and adventurers can easily come from any of the three (or from the nearly outcast *ragers* and *touched*).

Warriors: Fighters are the obvious choice here, although rangers come in a close second. Rogues are certainly possible if they have a martial focus. Sneaky fighting is sometimes necessary, after all. Of the NPC classes, warriors and aristocrats are the only option.

Shamans: Shamans are nearly always druids. The only exceptions are bards, despite their arcane focus. NPC classes include adepts.

Tradesmen: Rangers (as hunters), rogues, bards and wizards are the norm for these families. NPCs can be adepts, experts, aristocrats and commoners.

The Fringe: Barbarians and sorcerers are considered strange and unseemly, and are not really part of the social order in the sense of belonging. They're not turned away, but they're not really welcomed, either. This may seem strange for a nomadic culture, but the tepuje nomads have some fairly strong taboos and beliefs about what's proper and improper.

Forbidden Classes: Clerics, paladins and monks are unknown among the tribes. The former two simply because those few who have even heard of the gods think they're just glorified *ushada* or outright lies on the part of those who worship them, the latter because they've never developed along those lines. A tepuje nomad could conceivably receive training as a monk in one of the city-states, but this would be rare as living within the tepujes is considered taboo.

tribe needs to survive. Hunters fall into this role, as they provide food for the tribe.

No particular role is considered inherently better than the others, although tribal chiefs are nearly always chosen from among the warrior families, more rarely from the tradesmen families, and never from the shamanic families (the latter are advisors, not leaders).

Outside the roles described above are the *ragers* — warriors born to any family who have the gift to call upon the rage of ancestors who were betrayed or murdered — and the *touched* — nomads born with the gift of magic within them. Both are nominally part of society, but typically left to the fringes. Their place is unquestioned, but the tribes find them slightly unwholesome and disturbing.

Ancestor Ghosts

The *Ushadani* ancestor worship common to tribes in the Gamulganjus Jungle occasionally attracts the ghosts of those same ancestors. These ghosts act as protectors and advisors to their people and defenders of their tombs and mortal remains.

Kalini ancestral ghosts demonstrate powers that enable them to more effectively defend their tombs, as well as give answers and prophecies to the Kalini shamans.

Ancestral ghosts are ghosts as per the MM. Given the *Ushadani* view of gods and the divine, the appearance of a cleric or paladin who can turn or rebuke a tribe's ancestors could be very disturbing, potentially causing severe problems for those who do so. The following are new abilities that ancestral ghosts may choose in place of other powers specified in the MM entry.

Ancestral Guardian (Sp): Some ancestral ghosts have the ability to animate their own mortal remains as well as those of others in the immediate vicinity. Once per round, the ghost may cast *animate dead* at a caster level equal to its hit dice. The ghost is still limited by its Charisma when determining the number of Hit Dice of undead it may control (see the *animate dead* spell).

Mortal Sanctuary (Su): The ancestors typically remain quiescent within their own remains until called upon by name. Ghosts with this power simply merge with their bodies (or skeletons, or ashes, depending upon stage of decay or how a given culture disposes of its dead). As long as the ghost is within his body, he is not vulnerable to turning attempts or *detect undead*. He is also unaware of anything outside his corpse with two exceptions: the sound of his own name, or profane disturbance of his remains. It is a move action for the ghost to manifest.

Tribes

There are four main Tepuje tribes among the nomads, each with its own perspective.

The Che'kela: The Che'kela tribe remains mostly to the north of Kalini territory and along the eastern coast. They believe that when they fled the dragonwars, the dragons stole their dead ancestors. The Che'kela watch and wait for the ancestors to return to their people. They believe if none are present to welcome them, the spirits will be doomed to travel Scarn for all time, as they have already traveled aimlessly for centuries.

The Kalin: The Kalin are primarily located in the southern jungle, where they maintain ancestral tombs with routine sacrifices of small valuables and the occasional sentient unfortunate enough to make the Kalin their enemies. The Kalin take *Ushadani* to a further degree than other tribes, and participate in the Harvest of Ancestors with a fervor that terrifies more civilized folk. Once the unfortunate tepuje dwellers are sacrificed to properly join their ancestors, however, they receive as much reverence as any other.

Their ancestral tombs are carved into mounds where ancestral ghosts stand guard over mortal remains and their belongings to keep tomb robbers from defiling them.

The Khele'liw: This tribe primarily travels throughout the northeastern part of the Gamulganjus Jungle and makes occasional forays to Chukema's port for trade and supplies. They are the least faithful in adhering to the Harvest of Ancestors (see below) and most likely to mingle with inhabitants of the city-states. The Khele'liw hope that through example, tepuje citizens will see that their lives are hollow lies.

The Mar!gan: The Mar!gan tribe travels along Lethene's Wind River, with a rag-tag fleet of ships and boats modified for semi-permanent habitation. They come to shore to hunt for food, harvest their ancestors and occasionally trade with the Terali and gnome tribes. Occasionally, they travel as far west as the Yellow Jungle, but find the inhabitants unseemly.

The Maratawo Pilgrimage

At the age of 14, tepuje nomads must undergo a rite of passage to be considered adults. They're taken to the abandoned tepuje now known as Maratawo and given hallucinogenic herbs and fungi purchased from the gnomes. Once the hallucinogens take full effect, they must enter the tepuje, find a piece of tepuje crystal and return with it. The size of the crystal shard the youth returns with is seen as a sign of destiny. Some return a bit crazed, and become *ragers*. Others return having been exposed to the taint of Mesos and become *touched*.

Many do not return at all, lost in psychedelic visions or ravaged by the strange ghosts that haunt the tepuje.

The Harvest of Ancestors

The defection of several tribes and thousands of nomads to the tepujes to form city-states also led to an abandonment of *Ushadani* in favor of Mesos-worship. The druids who once

spoke for the ancestors chose to instead speak for the shattered titan of magic, claiming that the tepujes were the key to his rebirth. Even worse, the *touched* were venerated as living embodiments of Mesos' power. These misguided city-dwellers removed their spirits from those of their ancestors by abandoning the ways ordained for as long as they've lived in the Gamulganjus.

The answer, of course, was to bring them back home. Once a year, during the final month of the harvest, the tepuje nomads abduct as many city-state dwellers as they can and bring them to Maratawo. At Maratawo, the shamans gather as a group and cast a ritual that binds the city-dwellers with their ancestors. Once this has been completed, the warriors sacrifice the city-dwellers so their spirits are returned to their proper place in the spirit world and so they do not have a chance to rededicate themselves to the Mesos heresy.

Crime and Punishment

Crime among the nomads is literally a case-by-case basis. Generally speaking, the victim of the crime or her family is responsible for executing whatever punishment is considered appropriate. Vendettas are common and traditions of weregild are expected.

Defiling the dead is high crime and always brings execution along with an ignoble burial guaranteed to offend the ghost of the criminal.

Armed Forces

The nomads don't have organized armed forces; in times of war, every able-bodied adult is expected to take up arms or spells to fight the enemy. When they do fight, they give everything they have. Their resulting reputation for ferocity may be one reason the city-states have not attempted to mount any wars directly against them, despite the Harvest of Ancestors.

The Gnome Tribes

The gnomes of the Gamulganjus are a strange, enigmatic race to most outsiders. Though small, they are viewed with no small amount of fear, for their skills at wild-crafts, and the powers and spirits on which they can call, are substantial. The gnomes rarely go out of their way to harm others, but they pull no punches when defending themselves, and many who would exploit the jungle for their own uses find the gnomes to be the most terrifying of the Gamulganjus' many hazards.

History

The gnomes have been in the Gamulganjus Jungle for as long as they can remember. They've traveled the width and breadth of the Gamulganjus according to their ancestors' dictates and the knowledge that to leave the jungle is to invite disaster upon the entire race. This is reinforced by disastrous conflicts with the yuanti of the Yellow Jungle and the occasional clash with Charduni.

The gnomes often tell each other tales of a long-ago time during which they lived among a dark, tyrannical race as slaves, and how they escaped to earn their freedom in the Gamulganjus. Other stories describe their creation by and servitude to various titans, ranging from Mormo to Hrinruuk — many gnomes believe they're the greatest hunters in the world, and they're not far from wrong (the terali might disagree, however...).

A more popular and widely accepted legend describes how the gnomes were created by the spirit fathers of the Gamulganjus as guardians and keepers. The spirits crafted them from the stuff of the spirit world, hence their facility with illusions, and from animal spirits, hence their ability to speak with them.

The gnome tribes have fought repeatedly with the human and terali tribes over territory and differences in *Ushadani*.

Culture

Gnomes are largely insular, preferring the company of their own kind and avoiding the territory of the other tribes in the Gamulganjus. They do trade with just about anyone willing to meet them in Jirro, their trade-city, but otherwise don't go out of their way to seek anyone out. Those who intrude upon gnomish territory find the gnomes very unwelcoming hosts. The gnomes have strict taboos about guest behavior, and make it very clear to anyone visiting what's expected of them. These taboos are often invented on the spot to encourage said visitors to move on — if the gnomes don't decide she'd make a tasty meal or an appropriate sacrifice to the ancestors.

Gnomes talk to animals while still in infancy, long before they ever learn to speak their own native tongue. This builds and reinforces a sense of community with the animals in tribal territories. To the gnomes, animals are as much a part of society as any gnome, and are treated as equals. Attacking or killing an animal is treated the same as attacking a gnome, for example. As a result, gnomes rarely eat animal flesh — for many, it's taboo. They have no

hesitation about the flesh of gnolls, humans, terali or other intelligent races. Charduni are a rare, but delightful, delicacy.

Tribes

Well over a dozen gnomish tribes claim territory within the Gamulganjus Jungle, each fiercely maintaining its territorial boundaries as well as routes to and from Jirro. Each tribe is organized along theocratic lines, with the most accomplished shaman assuming the mantle of leadership along with stewardship of the tribe's spirithold.

The tribes are:

Northern Tribes: Vaji, Naja and Kalikli.

The northern tribes are the most insulated, living as they do with the Wall of Clouds to the north and more Gamulganjus to the south. They're also the most xenophobic, preferring to ambush and capture intruders for interrogation rather than talk.

Western Tribes: Krakal, Denaki and Sirkh.

The gnomes to the west have the most contact with inhabitants of the Yellow Jungle, and are militantly aware of this fact. They are willing to allow passage to outsiders for a price — never in money, but in magical items, tasks or priceless possessions. Those unwilling to pay are usually drugged from ambush and left in some random spot far from where they intruded upon the gnomes' territory.

Southern Tribes: Gamul, Takisi and Walak.

The southern gnomes remain hidden from outsiders, preferring to simply kill interlopers and loot them for trade goods for the next trip to Jirro. Anyone who can spot the ambush before it's sprung earns some respect and perhaps an ambush twice as sneaky as the last.

Eastern Tribes: Lago, Varo, and Kitiko.

The eastern tribes are the most accepting of outsiders. They're accustomed to travelers making use of overland trade routes between the

tepuje city-states and to Jirro itself and leave them alone so long as their lands aren't defiled. Should any intruders step off the beaten path and try to make off with the jungle's copious bounty, they're fair game.

Culture

The gnomes live in a strongly animistic world, where all things have spirits. They thank animal spirits for giving up their lives so the tribe may eat (in those few tribes who eat animals at all), ask permission of plant spirits to use them to craft and build from them, and so on. Gnomes see the physical world of the Scarred Lands as a reflection of the purer spirit world, where all things have an enduring essence that is not dependent upon flesh and blood.

The gnomes believe they are naturally gifted with the ability to touch this world and draw some of it into the physical world through the use of illusions. Those who choose to practice this art more fully — illusion specialist wizards — are granted almost as much respect as the shamans who communicate directly with the spirits.

Gnomes do not believe that the material world of the Scarred Lands is an illusion — it is a necessary place that gives the spirit world context and meaning. Without flesh and blood, a spirit has no reason to exist. To protect their ancestors from dissolution and forgetfulness, gnomes keep their remains. Since any given tribe may have the remains of dozens or hundreds of generations of gnomes, they burn the bodies and mix the ashes into what they call a spirithold. The spirithold itself requires no enchantments, although many are enchanted to withstand the elements, damage and routine use. Each shaman is trained to remember the names of numerous ancestors so as to call upon them when the need is great. Not all names are remembered through all time — thousands of gnomes have been forgotten even though their ashes still lie within the spirithold.

Poison and the Blowgun

The gnomes are experts in the use of poisons and drugs — the former against their enemies and the latter for use in religious ceremonies. Gnomes trade both to outsiders for outrageously inflated prices. A favored technique among the gnomes of the Gamulganjus is to use the blowgun — a practically harmless weapon when used alone — as a delivery system for their various poisons, drugs and herbs. (For more on the poisons and herbs of the Gamulganjus, see the Appendix.)

Small or Medium Exotic Weapon

| Name | Cost | Damage | Critical | Range Increment | Weight | Type |
|---------|------|--------|----------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Blowgun | 1 gp | 1 | x2 | 5 ft. (Small) or 10 ft. (Medium) | 1 lb. (Small) or 2 lbs. (Medium) | Piercing |

Calling the Ancestor [Primal]

Gnomish shamans can learn the skill of calling upon her ancestors for aid. This is not something that is done lightly or can be done often. It takes some effort and concentration on the shaman's part, and usually requires a small gift or sacrifice to appease the ghost. It is only taught to those shamans who have the ability to call and wear the shapes of animal spirits.

Prerequisites: Wild shape, Gnome native to the Gamulganjus Jungle

Benefit: Once per day, the Gnome may call an ancestor from her tribal spirithold in lieu of one use of wild shape. The ghost may have a maximum Challenge Rating equal to the gnome's druid levels and will perform one task for the gnome that may take no longer than one full day.

Special: Gnomes may only call upon ghosts whose names they know, and must offer a gift worth at least 50 gold pieces per Hit Die of the ghost to appease it. The gift itself is destroyed so that the ghost may accept it. Failure to provide a gift requires a Diplomacy check with DC (15 + the ghost's Challenge Rating). Failure means the ancestor attacks the gnome for one round and returns to the spirithold. Either way, without the gift, the ghost will not perform any tasks for the summoner.

A shaman with the power to call upon her ancestors simply needs to speak the proper name into the spirithold and the ancestor ghost will come forth. The gnome should have a very good reason for disturbing the dead's rest, because they do not always love the living. Ancestors feel some sense of kinship and duty, but that only goes so far.

It's considered taboo to speak lightly of the dead. To attract the attention of one's ancestors over trivial matters is the source of numerous hair-raising horror stories among the gnomes.

Gnomish Names

Gnomes have three names in their lives. The first is the birth name, given by her parents within the first moments of life. The second is her true name, given at birth by the shamans and told to her when she reaches adulthood. The third is her use-name, given when she reaches adulthood and proves her worth as an adult. Gnomes keep their true names secret in the belief that anyone who knows her true name can curse her in life or control her spirit in death.

Ancestor ghosts can only be summoned through the use of true names, so this belief is not entirely baseless.

Crime and Punishment

Gnomes consider the physical world transient. Most possessions are fluid things, and gnomes borrow from each other constantly, though theft is uncommon. This isn't due to any acknowledgement of personal property, though — rather, few gnomes consider physical objects to have the kind of value that would tempt one into theft.

A gnome who commits violence in Jirro or against her own tribe is exiled from her tribe for life, and her ghost doomed to wander the land without safety or surcease. To the rest of her tribe, she has become a non-person and is shunned. Any who acknowledge the one so punished are also shunned until they come to their senses.

Damaging the spirithold brings harsh punishment — generally death, with the offender's ashes scattered to the winds and waters and his name stricken from shamanic memory.

Armed Forces

The gnomes prefer to avoid fights, instead relying upon stealth, trickery and ambush. The best battle is the one they don't have to fight. Toward this end, when tribes travel, they split into small groups to leave fewer traces of their true numbers while still keeping an eye on each other. Travelers who come across a party of five or six gnomes probably don't see the two hundred or so within shouting distance. If it *does* come to war, the gnomes use their mastery of illusions to get close to the enemy commanders and assassinate them before the battles start (or between them if necessary). They prefer that any fighting be expensive for the top of the chain of command simply because people with power would rather risk the lives of their underlings than their own.

Centuries ago, long before the Titanswar, it's said that a race of ogres made its home in the Gamulganjus and aligned their fortunes with the gnomes. They tell tales of the ogres who served as mighty steeds for the greatest warriors among the gnomes.

Jirro

Size: Varies from 1,000 to 5,000

Racial percentages vary wildly depending upon time of year. Inhabitants include tepuje nomads (humans), gnomes, Terali and the occasional gnoll tribe well behaved enough to

stay for longer than a full day. It's safe to bet that at least 50% are gnomes.

Ruler: The ranking gnome chieftain present at any given time.

Assets: 3,000 gp

Resources: Varies according to who's present and what they bring with them.

Militia: Approximately half the population at any time is available to defend the city from attackers within or without. In addition, the Jirro Spirithold can assist in the defense.

The gnomes have one city in the heart of the Gamulganjus Jungle, where they trade with the human and Terali tribes who come to them for their expertise in hallucinogens and poisons or the work of their craftsmen. The gnomes maintain this contact so they can keep tabs on the other tribes.

Jirro is located at the mouth of the Semdar River, a relatively central location for all of the nomadic tribes of the Gamulganjus. It's also considered to be a place of truce, where blood feuds and wars are left behind. Anyone caught shedding blood in the city is banished along with her tribe for a generation. In gnome terms, that's 50 years.

1. Chieftain's Circle: The ranking chieftain gets to raise his yurt over this prime location at the city's heart. It provides easy access to the docks, the spirithold and the agora.

2. Spirithold: This lodge serves as the chamber for 10 percent of the gnomes' remains. Whenever a tribe comes to Jirro, the shamans oversee the apportioning of ashes to spirithold along with the naming of the ancestors who will dwell within. These ghosts are bound to defend Jirro when called upon and are one of the strongest reasons the truce is rarely broken.

3. The Docks: Jirro's docks can handle any brown-water trading vessel, and often sees traffic from more civilized nations to the north and west as well as the more common boats from the tepujes and the nomadic tribes of the Gamulganjus. They aren't particularly pretty, but they're fairly sturdy.

4. The Agora: Traders set up shop in this clearing. It's in full view of both the Chieftain's Circle and spirithold, and is otherwise a haphazard collection of tents, wagons and makeshift stalls staffed by anyone from the rare Charduni merchant to gnome enchanters.

5. Lodgings: For the most part, visitors bring their own in the form of tents. A few more permanent buildings provide more comfortable quarters for merchants with the money to spare. The gnomes who maintain these inns usually

use illusionary arts to make them appear far more opulent than they truly are.

The Gnoll Tribes

The hyena-like gnolls of the Gamulganjus Jungle are considered barely civilized (at best) by their neighbors among the gnomes, humans and terali. These barbaric beast-men, they say, view most other races as potential food or sources of loot, and rarely as true people at all.

Overall, the gnolls do not consider their neighbors' opinions of them to be of any import, although they do not go out of their way to start wars, either. A few gnoll tribes behave themselves sufficiently to trade in the gnome trade-town of Jirro. Most gnoll tribes eventually make the one mistake that gets them banned, attempt to besiege or raze Jirro, and are routed or even wiped out. The few who behave occasionally help fight off their less well-behaved cousins simply out of self-preservation or simple greed.

History

The gnolls are Hrinruuk's children, created to hunt, bringing terror and death to the other intelligent races in the Scarred Lands. They were created with a hunger for humanoid flesh and an unmatched thirst for blood. The gnolls of Termiana spread across the continent, favoring the mountains and plains. Most gnolls settled in the Gamulganjus, where they preyed upon the plentiful gnome, terali, and eventually human inhabitants.

Over time, the gnoll tribes have spread to every corner of the Gamulganjus, typically in small groups. They survived usually by poaching from (or actually hunting) the other inhabitants. In time, a few grew beyond their more savage impulses and actually started dealing with the other races, but this is more the exception than the rule.

Culture

Gnoll culture is based almost entirely on the rule of the strong over the weak. Gnoll tribes are ruled by whomever is strong or powerful enough to hold the title of chieftain. Gender is of no import, and as many tribes (if not even a few more) boast female chieftains as male. The basic gnoll group is the pack, usually composed of five to 10 gnolls, and the chieftain's pack is usually nearly as strong as she is.

Gnolls turn on any pack member who shows weakness, whether this is a matter of compassion for a member of another race or simple reluctance to kill. This attitude often leads healthy gnolls to refuse to care for an injured or

ill pack mate. Gnolls have little personal loyalty that is not cemented in personal strength.

When preying upon the other races, gnolls again favor hunting the weak, the old, the infirm, the young, and anyone else who makes an easier target. While gnolls are individually strong, they are not precisely the most courageous of creatures in the Scarred Lands. They often track their prey long enough to learn a bit about him. When the true hunt begins, they like to call the prey's name to lure him away from possible assistance. Some gnolls are accomplished mimics and can sound like a damsel in distress, a loved one and the like.

Gnolls are cruel and delight in others' pain. Their peculiar barking laugh is one of the most dreaded sounds in the Gamulganjus, often heralding pain and terror for those unfortunate enough to be caught.

Religion

Unlike the other cultures in the Gamulganjus, gnolls revere a titan — Hrinruuk, their creator. Like the other cultures, they also worship the spirits of the Gamulganjus, although in a more exploitative manner. Where a gnome or a human might petition an *ushada* for favor, a gnoll will try to trap the spirit and force it to relinquish what the gnoll wants. For a gnoll to bargain from any position but one of strength is demeaning, and they refuse to bow even to the spirits.

In return, the *ushada* are particularly disdainful to the gnolls, and few willingly aid them. Some, whose natures are closely aligned with the gnolls, do have a less adversarial relationship. Gnolls are willing to deal with these spirits on a more nearly equal basis, but even then they must assert their dominance (and those shamans who cannot do so are occasionally cornered later, dismembered and eaten).

The gnolls revere few of their ancestors — most gnolls die by violence, and those who do are considered weak. A few particularly accomplished heroes are honored for their strength and power, but these are exceptions.

Tribes

Gnoll tribes come and go with regularity. Some are absorbed into stronger tribes, some are simply exterminated in intertribal warfare and some are wiped out in battles with other races. By the same token, many tribes become too large for the chieftain to control — in these cases, the weaker excess are forced out, to find their own way, and become a separate tribal group. After a few years, these weaker “exile

Gnoll PCs

This section doesn't do much to paint an appealing picture of gnolls as potential characters. Since gnolls are “usually chaotic evil,” as per the MM, this shouldn't be surprising.

However, this means a small but significant minority are *not* chaotic evil. They could be of a neutral or even (very rarely) good alignment. These gnolls may have left their tribes because they were weak (and thus knew they'd die horribly at some point), or because they simply didn't have the taste for cruelty and violence that is meat and drink to the race. Whatever the reason, it's not too hard to justify a gnoll who can function in polite society — after all, a few gnoll tribes even get along well enough to trade in Jirro, and help the gnomes maintain the peace even against other gnolls.

Keep in mind that gnolls are instinctual creatures, and their instinct is to *hunt* and *kill*. This is how Hrinruuk made them, and even the rare gnoll with the heart of gold still thrills in the chase. Even so, gnoll can make a distinctive and interesting character without giving in entirely to the race's cruel and violent streaks.

tribes” become fearsome in their own right, as they overcompensate for this weakness. They become more savage, more dangerous and more likely to take that fatal step that draws their neighbors to slaughter them (or be slaughtered in trying).

Gnoll tribes of the Gamulganjus are typically nomadic. If they stay in one place for too long, others *will* hunt them down. Instead, they travel regularly, their rangers covering up the evidence of their presence and finding places for them to stay that aren't easily found or attacked.

Gnoll tribes typically have names evocative of the chieftain's deeds and strength. This means that the first thing a new chief does after slaughtering the old chief is change the tribe's name. “Bonesnap's Glory” is a typical tribal name.

Crime and Punishment

Crime among gnolls typically means being too weak to defend yourself. Gnolls can literally get away with murder (and just about any lesser misdeed) simply by being strong enough to commit it in the first place. If a gnoll has the strength to do something, he had the right to do it. Of course, a stronger gnoll may take excep-

tion (perhaps she sees the first gnoll as a threat, or the gnoll offended her in some way).

It is possible for gnolls to commit acts that offend a chief or shaman sufficiently for punishment to be doled out. This is usually a matter of setting the tribe upon the offender and tearing him to pieces. The gnolls are not as imaginative as they are vicious when they turn on their own.

Armed Forces

All gnolls are armed; they're the most vicious, bloodthirsty species in the Gamulganjus and they know just how much they're hated. They are always prepared to fight anyone for any reason.

The Terali Tribes

The spiritual leopard-men are scattered across the Gamulganjus in tribes composed of up to 200 members. They are rare enough that few travelers in the jungle ever encounter them (unless they have the misfortune of stumbling directly into terali territory), yet their reputation as hunters without peer assures that nearly everyone has heard of them.

History

The terali presence in the Gamulganjus goes at least as far back as their collective memory. They know no other home prior to the jungle, and some consider themselves to be part and parcel with the jungle's spirit.

Culture

The terali are racially obsessed with cleanliness and purity; they fear contamination from outside. They do not close themselves off from dealings with outsiders, but to expose themselves to such requires ritual observances to maintain cleanliness before and after.

Regarding outsiders, terali have a host of taboos that relate to touching, eating and just about anything that requires interaction. Terali, for example, will never eat from a dish that they know a member of another race has eaten from — terali who do deal regularly with outsiders have possessions they've set aside for outsider use. If a human sits in a favorite chair, the terali owner would rather burn it than use it again.

Some terali must leave their tribes to mingle with outsiders. This is considered to be a very important calling; terali shamans mark those so destined and spend a full month preparing them for the ordeal (which can last several years or more). The terali isn't exactly an *outcast*, although outsiders might view them as such. (This misconception stems from a simple lack of un-

derstanding, but the terali have no interest in explaining the distinction. This is a holy terali matter, and not to be dirtied by exposure to those who are simply incapable of true comprehension). Rather, they have a duty, perhaps even a destiny as the *ushada* dictate, to find their way in strange lands among stranger people.

These chosen wanderers are so charged for a variety of reasons — the tribe may have need of a specific item that the wanderer must find, the wanderer must seek wisdom to return to the tribe, she may simply need to be taught a lesson for violating one or more of the terali taboos. Whatever the reason, the terali sent out to explore the world (those who survive, at any rate) usually return several years later, much the richer and wiser for their experiences. Of course, upon their return, they must undergo a month-long purification and cleansing ordeal to properly return them to the tribe.

While wandering, terali are typically released from obeying the taboos regarding outsiders — they may eat and drink from the same dishes, may sleep in the same beds, may walk in their cities, and so on. A few lines remain uncrossed for most — physical intimacy is often considered highly repulsive, and even simple touching (such as handshakes, hugs, etc) often remains unwelcome.

Terali, as a race, have a fairly strong honor code. This is not so much a code of personal honor, but of familial and tribal honor. A terali understands an insult against him, but is less likely to react violently to such than to an insult directed at his mother or his tribe. To insult the terali is simply a matter of confusion on the outsider's part. To insult a terali's mother is a matter of terrible offense. To insult a terali's tribe is an unforgivable and deadly affront.

Religion

To terali, all things exist in a spiritual hierarchy, extending upward to the *ushada* of Scarn itself, and downward to every living thing. Scarn is, herself, too large and encompassing to receive meaningful worship from mortal creatures. As such, the terali worship their ancestors first, and the land's *ushada* next — but these speak only to the marked ones and the chieftains, and no other terali. (The fact that the terali acknowledge an overriding "earth mother" leads some outsiders to conclude, falsely, that they worship Denev. The terali may acknowledge the existence of gods and titans — at least those who interact with outside cultures may do so — but none worship them.)

Terali see the spirits as mentors, guardians and fellow travelers. *Ushada* in animal form may travel with a tribe for years, advising the chieftain, the shamans or the black-pelted chosen. Often, such allies defend the tribes to death (although this is rarely a permanent end for them). Sometimes, they simply offer companionship. To terali, the *ushada* are immediate and personal because of this involvement. Many terali ancestors return as such spirit creatures, and it's not unusual for a terali to refer to the talking tree frog on his shoulder as "grandfather." This sort of reincarnation is considered an honor, not a demeaning thing (as the humans or gnomes might see it). Spirits are not considered to be contaminating presences (although the undead — including ghosts — are).

As followers of *Ushadani*, terali recognize that their ways are similar to those of the gnomish and tepuje tribesman, but they consider that these less enlightened races do not honor the spirits in their proper hierarchy. As the terali are much more in tune with their instincts, they believe their insights are greater. Gnomes and humans are too distant from the jungle and the gnolls are too debased. For this reason, terali tolerate the former races and kill the latter at the slightest provocation.

Tribes

Well over a dozen terali tribes travel the Gamulganjus, each composed of 50 to 200 members. They're grouped as extended families, with no real prohibition against what other cultures consider incest. About the only real taboo is against littermates mating with each other, since this tends to produce deformed cubs. Tribemembers rarely leave to join other tribes, although it's fairly common for a large tribe to split into two or more smaller tribal groups to avoid over-hunting and other issues caused by crowding.

The terali attitude towards outsiders can be summed up as: Me against my uncle, my uncle and me against my neighbors, my neighbors and me against everyone else. They're very clanish and view members of other races with extreme suspicion. They aren't violent in this regard, unless provoked, but they have a wide range of cleanliness taboos about dealing with outsiders of other tribes, and especially of other races. These mores reinforce their own sense of intratribal kinship to a strong degree, creating an almost fanatical loyalty to one another.

Since small tribes often combine to form larger tribes, and large tribes frequently split to form several smaller tribes, it's nearly impos-

sible to give an exact count of the tribes, or even consistent names. Most such tribes take names relating to their territory, the deeds of their heroes, or any local spirits who watch over them. Examples include the Wind-Runners, Red-Pelt, Gnoll-Bane, Grandfather Gazelle, Five-Litters and so on.

Crime and Punishment

Crime among terali relates strongly to their taboos. A terali who violates the racial purity taboos is ostracized until such time as she finds a means to atone. This may be difficult, given that no terali will talk to her. Absolution must come from the *ushada*, who are not always so strict.

Extreme violation often means that the violator is ripped limb from limb, usually by animals the shaman summons to do the deed — since, by definition, the animals cannot violate their own essences by doing such a thing. Such extremism includes allowing an outsider into a camp without prior ritual preparation, intimate contact with a non-terali, and murder of a terali.

Outsiders are not considered exempt from terali custom and law, and terali exhaustively explain the customs to visitors so they cannot dare to plead ignorance. Outsiders who, against all warning, insist upon violating terali custom are torn to pieces, their flesh is left for the beasts.

Armed Forces

The terali have no organized military as such. Instead, all adult terali are expected to act in the tribe's defense when threatened. They pick up any weapon available to wield against intruders. It is not considered unclean to kill outsiders with one's own fangs and claw in war, but few terali pride themselves on their skill with their natural weapons.

With this in mind, 75 to 80 percent of all terali in any given tribe are adults capable of combat. Even the cubs will act in the tribe's defense if cornered, although one should most beware their mother's wrath.

Those who survive war with the terali are often terrified and impressed at the totality and ferocity of the leopard-people's commitment to battle. To terali, true battle is not something in which to engage for sport or as a show of strength. Terali enter the field of battle to ensure that their enemies never arise to trouble them again.



Outsiders may find this confusing, given that terali play often appears to exhibit true ferocity, but terali never confuse war and play.

The Yellow Jungle

(Warm Forest, EL 10)

The Gamulganjus is considered by many to be the most venerable forest on the face of Termana. This wood, however, is blighted by a wound — the origin of which comes not from the Divine War, but from a time far earlier and from a cause buried in legends. This diseased wood is known by humans as the Yellow Jungle, so named because the foliage of the area is a sickly yellow in hue.

The Yellow Jungle, which stretches from the Lethene's Wind River west to the ocean, is considered cursed by the human, terali and gnome inhabitants. This is due in part to the fact that this area was the birthplace of a race of serpent-men known as the yuan-ti. In times past, this land was the hub of an empire dominated by the yuan-ti, an empire that fell only through the combined effort of all the tribes. Since their fall, the shattered remnants of the yuan-ti race still live on and the jungle has been left a cursed land.

History

The history of the Yellow Jungle predates the coming of the yuan-ti. The original tribal people revered animal *ushada*, who were inclined to roam quickly through the dense foliage of their land. In order to follow their patron spirits these tribes had to travel light and move often, for the various animal *ushada* rarely stayed in one place for long. After some time the tribes found quieter tree and plant *ushada*, who taught their children the ways of agriculture. Some of the tribes chose to revere these plant spirits, and no longer needed to wander the forest to survive. In time, these tribes discovered the more reclusive *ushada* of earth and stone, river and lake. These spirits granted the tribes that fol-

lowed them the gifts of masonry, construction and irrigation. With this knowledge came the ability to mold and harness the land, and these tribes prospered as never before. They became separated in thought from the tribes who still followed the animal *ushada*, but even with these differences the two peoples traded. However, in their prosperity, the civilized tribes became filled with self-importance. They felt their totems were more important and powerful than the totems of others, and searched for ever more potent spirits to ally with. In the end, they found the mightiest of all spirits: The titans.

Much as they had originally chosen patron *ushada*, the tribe-cities began to revere different titans — thinking these spirits would give them more powerful gifts. And they did indeed receive much power, but in time these cities also found themselves enmeshed in war with one another, playing out the same petty squabbles that occupied their patrons. The story of the Yellow Jungle begins with one of these cities, whose name is now lost, located west and south of the Lethene's Wind River. This city revered the Queen of Serpents as its patron, and in its struggle for superiority over the other cities it made a deadly pact. Legend holds that the city's matron asked the titan to grant her people prominence over all others. The Serpent Queen fulfilled her request by sending a swarm of cobras to test the faithfulness of the city. The serpents fell upon the populace, and for those who showed fear the toxin was fatal. For those who trusted the Serpent Queen, the toxin forever changed them. Some few escaped without encountering the cobras, but most of the city was left dead or transformed into creatures half man, half snake.

With the gifts given to them by the Serpent Queen, the city rose to prominence as promised, conquering the other settled tribes and enslaving their people. This bastard race, now called the yuan-ti, continued to follow and draw upon the power of Mormo, and interwove her teachings with their earlier knowledge of the secrets of the plant *ushada*. The resulting foul concoctions of various plants and venoms were fed to the enslaved tribes, transforming them into mindless servants. The yuan-ti thus mastered the secret art of alchemy, and used this art to transform the very land itself and bend it to their will. However, this unnatural experimentation took its toll on the forest, leeching it of its green color and replacing it with a pale, fetid yellow.

Many ages passed while the yuan-ti dominated the Gamulganjus, particularly the jungle

now yellowed by their foul experiments. The remnants of the civilized tribes fled to the far reaches of the jungle and recovered the old, nomadic ways of their ancestors. Meanwhile, the snake-men's sinewy grasp spread far through the jungle, even up to the arid north. The histories of the elves record intermittent conflict between two different groups of snakemen, long before the Titanswar, on the seas north of the elven kingdoms. These islands, and any record of these conflicts, have since been submerged by Kadum's deluge.

As the yuan-ti looked outward, in their arrogance they ignored those enemies at their very feet. The remnants of the civilized tribes, long intermingled with the nomadic tribal peoples, banded together for a final struggle against their powerful enemy. For years, the disorganized tribes fought the distracted yuan-ti in battles that neither won. In the end, the tribes were shattered and the yuan-ti driven back into their blighted jungle. The empire of the snakemen fell, but the struggle left the combined tribes devastated. Neither side has truly recovered.

In recent times the tribes have split yet again — some choosing to live in the hollow interiors of the tepujes, while wild tribes wander the jungle guarding against any resurgence of the yuan-ti. The wise avoid places where the leaves turn yellow, for some tribes still live there as slaves, and the sibilant voices of the serpent men still rule this part of the jungle.

Flora and Fauna

The Gamulganjus is a diverse place filled with many different plant and animal spirits. The Yellow Jungle is no different, but it shows the nature of the Serpent Queen. More varieties of poisonous creatures, plant and animal, exist in the Yellow Jungle than anywhere else in Termana. Most prevalent are the reptiles, brightly colored and lethal.

Even if a traveler can avoid all the poisonous species of lizards and snakes, the trees themselves often exude a corrosive toxin. Not only does this make climbing the trees problematic, but the toxins pollute the rain, making drinkable water difficult to find. Merely walking in the understory without protective gear from the incessant dripping of corrosive rain is a treacherous undertaking. Many of the species that frequent this part of the forest have either developed protective layers of fur or scales that deflect the rain, or have evolved immunities to the poisonous nature of the plants. Most have developed both.

The Poison Trees

It is not merely the plants of the Yellow Jungle that are tainted, but also those who watch over them.

In times long past, the treants of the region were like their cousins elsewhere. Powerful and wise, they may have been incomprehensible to human minds, but their concern was clearly for the wellbeing of their lands, their groves, their trees.

No more. The "yellow treants," as they are called, are now rage-filled, maddened beings. They, like the trees they resemble, sport yellow leaves and a sickly tint to their bark. They feel nothing but hatred for all sentient mammalian races; they supposedly hate the yuan-ti as well, but to a lesser extent.

It is said their bark is softer than that of their healthy brethren, but that the sickly sap beneath often traps weapons, and renders them nearly immune to burning. Their control over plants is limited to the sick and the poisonous, but can encompass far more at once than a normal treant. Rumor even states that their very touch is toxic, and that they attack not to smash, but to scratch with their sap-tipped twigs and thistles.

No confirmed sightings of yellow treants have been reported in the past 50 years or so. This leaves some of the natives of the Gamulganjus hopeful that the tainted race has died off, but others maintain that they endure, lurking in the depths of the Yellow Jungle where outsiders are unlikely to stumble across them. With any luck, they'll stay there — but how often is luck that good for those who dwell in these harsh environs?

The streams and rivers of the Yellow Jungle teem with man-eating fish. Poisonous snakes and lizards abound in the canopy of the jungle, while large ground lizards and sentient races prowl the understory. Swarming through the air or lurking under the thick foliage are insects that carry their own poisons and diseases to plague travelers. Anyone who ventures here had best be prepared to avoid death at every turn.

People

A variety of sentient races live in the Yellow Jungle. Descendents of the three tribes, the human, gnome and terali, still live miserable lives as slaves to their ophidian masters. Occasionally tribesmen from other parts of the Gamulganjus liberate their cousins on daring raids against the serpent men, the survivors

Dangers of the Yellow Jungle

The Yellow Jungle is one of the most hazardous locations on the face of Termana. In addition to roving bands of yuan-ti slavers, and mutated creatures created from the foul alchemy of the snakemen, every third plant seems to be malicious, and those that aren't are toxic. Listed below are some of the hazards that a visitor might face while traveling in the Yellow Jungle. In addition to these hazards, the Yellow Jungle is home to a wide variety of poisonous substances (see the Appendix).

Lethargy blossom (Hazard, CR 3): Certain plants that bloom in the jungle emit a pollen with tranquilizing qualities. This broad group of plants are called lethargy blossoms and tend to grow in patches 20 to 30 feet across. Anyone who comes within 50 feet of one of these plants must make a successful DC 11 Fortitude save or fall unconscious 1 minute later. A creature will remain unconscious and unable to be roused for 4 hours after being removed from proximity of the flower. Of course, any rescue attempts will likely expose others to the insidious effects of the plant.

Strangling fog (Hazard, CR 5): Much like toxic rain but more deadly, strangling fog is a condition that exists when the wind stills and a mist mixes with the deadly poisons on the foliage and settles to the ground. Strangling fog tends to spread more than toxic rain, covering an area several hundred feet across. Anyone who enters breathes in the toxic mist and must make a successful DC 11 Fortitude save every minute or suffer 1 point of permanent Constitution damage.

Toxic rain (Hazard; CR 2): Water falls nearly continuously in the jungle. This moisture washes off toxins that are present on the jungle's canopy, and drops down upon travelers below in a caustic rain. The trees that produce this toxin tend to grow near one another so areas of toxic rain are quite localized, usually only several hundred feet across. Every minute a character spends in an area of toxic rain, she must make a successful DC 14 Fortitude saving throw or suffer 1 temporary point of Constitution damage.

being adopted into the rescuing tribe. In addition to the three main tribes, several tribes of reptilian and amphibian humanoids also exist, presumably descended from the original alchemical experiments of the yuan-ti. However, the undisputed masters of the Yellow Jungle are, as always, the yuan-ti themselves.

This story was told me by my sister, whose husband is of the G'hana tribe that hunts along the river. He speaks of a day when the hunters of the village crossed the river in order to save their cousins, enslaved by the yuan-ti who rule that cursed jungle. The hunting party numbered 15 as they ventured deep into that yellowed wood. Venomous beasts constantly beset the group and no rest was to be had. While the hunters were traveling their second night, the blighted wood erupted with clamor and combat. Large lizards who stood on two feet attacked the hunting party with claw and sword. The tribesmen fought hard, but many fell before the yuan-ti minions were driven off. After the battle, six had died, and six more would surely follow. Only three were capable of walking out of the wood. These three watched over their kin throughout the night.

The great sun rose over a saffron fog that clung low to the jungle floor. The survivors huddled behind makeshift walls made from their fallen kin, while the surrounding jungle teemed with movement. From out of the fog, nearly a dozen olive skinned people emerged. From their eyes and gait, it was obvious these were yuan-ti. In a sibilant tongue one spoke, demanding the hunters surrender. The three resisted, but were soon overcome and bound. The snake men, who all appeared very much like our own tribesmen, gathered the wounded and took them away. The entire group traveled a day and a night and came to the ruins of an old city. In this city lived many of these snake men. Contrary to what we've heard of the yuan-ti, our people found no slave or servant. None of the very serpent-like yuan-ti were to be seen, and all seemed to carry the countenance of men. The tribesmen were taken to a stone building with a sturdy door. There, their bonds were removed, as was their gear. The hunting party spent three days in the ruins of that city, where the yuan-ti tended their wounds. On the dawn of the fourth day, the group was escorted back to the great river, given supplies, and released.

When the band returned, few would believe their story. My sister's husband was there and he spoke with the one yuan-ti who knew the tribal tongue. He said that the snake man spoke on behalf of his tribe and offered peaceful trade with the villagers. Few believe him and fewer trust the truth behind the yuan-ti's words. I believe my sister's husband, and that is why I bring this tale to you.

— Tale told by a tribal tradesman to a Speaker of Meese in Khalak Vol.

The yuan-ti organize themselves in small enclaves of several dozen. The appearance of the snake-men seems to vary, from almost human to something much like a huge snake. Leaders tends to be the most ophidian, and can often work magic. The yuan-ti have great control over reptilian species, and are also adept at arcane magic and alchemy. An average camp

has one leader and upwards of 20 other yuan-ti. With them are perhaps another 20 of their reptilian servitors and anywhere from two to three dozen slaves. Some reports indicate the presence of sizeable settlements much larger than the camps mentioned above, based around the ruins of the first cities. The composition of these remains unknown, however.

Iron Sands Desert

(Desert, EL 7)

Name: Iron Sands Desert

Population: 25,000 (75% human, 20% hobgoblin, 4% orc, 1% other)

Government: Each tribe has a council of elders.

Major Cities: None, the desert claims anything mortals try to build.

Language: Tehlashos (The language of the human tribes also serves as trade/common tongue among the other inhabitants of the region)

Religion: *Ushadani*

Resources: Iron.

History

As tales have it, Golthagga's forge was located in the Titansforge Mountains. Supposedly, Golthagga cast off the iron he couldn't use, and it fell into the desert, giving it the high iron content it now has, as well as the fabled chunks of metal occasionally found within the desert.

In the past, the elves of Termana would extract iron from the sands with a process long since lost. More than a few merchants have traveled the desert in hopes of rediscovering the process and striking it rich with unimaginable quantities of iron ore just for the taking.

Geography

The Iron Sands Desert is far from the bleak wasteland one might expect. The winds often blow the red iron dust into fantastic patterns upon the desert sands, providing breathtaking, if temporary, sights. The Tehlashos say that these patterns contain messages from the spirits, and that one who knows how to look can divine the future.

To the north stand the Titansforge Mountains. They loom in the distance, visible from every part of the desert. The shore of the Cerulean Sea lies to the south, east and west. To the farthest point east, the desert falls away into the Wall of Clouds, beneath which lies the Gamulganjus. In the western desert's depths lie the Bones of the Lost One.

Bones of the Lost One (Desert EL 7; EL 8 in and around skull): Located in the depths of the Iron Sands Desert, the Bones of the Lost One are cyclopean rock formations that strongly resemble bones. The Tehlashos believe that the bones are the remains of a long-dead titan. Few travel here willingly, with the exception of several titanspawn races that make their lairs in the shelter offered. The "skull" is home to a particularly vicious tribe of hobgoblins renowned for their ritual of feasting upon their enemies' remains. Known to the Tehlashos as the "Eaters of Men," they're viewed with superstitious dread.

Arsenals of Bone

Weapons and armor carved from the bones look as if they are made of stone, but are as light as bone and hard (or sharp) as steel. Carving the substance is like carving exceptionally hard bone, and takes twice as long as would normally be the case.

Weapons carved from the Bones of the Lost One weigh half as much as normal weapons of the same type. Weapons made from this material, if available on the market, would cost at least 100 gp more than usual.

Armor is treated as one weight category lighter (heavy becomes medium, medium becomes light), provides a -10% improvement on Arcane Spell Failure checks (-5% improvement if you're not using the "arcane heat" rules from **Relics & Rituals**) and reduces armor penalties to skill checks by 2. Armor made from the bones costs an additional 50 gp per pound of *original* weight.

The formations may, indeed, be bones. Whether they're the bones of a long-forgotten titan, a demon lord or an unknown god, they have properties atypical of normal stone. The titanspawn who lair in the bones use shards of the substance to craft weapons that look crude, but cleave flesh as readily as the finest steel.

Given the number of titanspawn present, their constant fighting amongst each other and their well-known hatred for other races, few outsiders would ever willingly come here if not for the rumored treasures of the region. The hobgoblins, orcs and the like have the collected spoils of centuries of raiding and looting caravans, tribes and those adventurers daring enough to cross the foreboding desert. The lure of so much wealth in one place often proves irresistible — and usually fatal — to many adventuring companies.

Flora and Fauna

The Iron Sands Desert is an inhospitable place, home to few living things. Flesh-scouring sandstorms of grit and iron ravage unwary travelers and inhabitants alike.

Some of the most bizarre creatures native to the Iron Sands have bodies that are made, in whole or in part, of iron. These creatures, despite appearances, are not constructs. They are, however, very dangerous and perfectly adapted to survival in the desert's insanely harsh climate.

Monstrous humanoids of all types dwell in the Bones of the Lost One. Rumors of a slarecian dragon's lair in the deep desert attract a few adventurers, as the possibility of a trove of slarecian artifacts is not a temptation many can ignore for long.

People

The only people native to the desert are the reclusive Tehlashos nomads, humans who survive in the desert despite the strange creatures and titanspawn monstrosities, as well as the deadly climate. They've domesticated several species native to the desert for use in their daily lives, and have developed ways of surviving the flesh-shredding sandstorms common to the Iron Sands. These range from protective hide or leather garb and thickened tents to druidic spells designed to shield against the pelting sands.

Like most of the tribal cultures of Termana, the Tehlashos practice ancestor worship. They believe that only those whose bodies are given to the desert remain to advise their descendants, and those whose bodies are lost, are themselves lost. The elders tell stories of those who were doomed to wander the Scarred Lands without hope or surcease until their bodies could be found and given to the desert.

The Tehlashos shamans summon spirits into themselves for guidance and power. They call upon *ushada* of nature, the elements, and their ancestors and use the power gained to protect their people.

Among the Tehlashos, anyone who can lift a weapon is considered capable of using it — or at least learning to. Men and women both practice their skill-at-arms to better fight off or hunt the strange beasts that lair in the desert, and the monstrous humanoids who dwell within the Bones of the Lost One.

Culture

The Tehlashos culture is one of hardship and necessity. In a place where a few ounces of water can mean the difference between life and death, coopera-

tion is essential on all levels. To the Tehlashos tribes, status is not a matter of birthright, but of accomplishment. In their eyes, an individual is worth what he or she can accomplish — no more, no less — and so all work hard to excel at survival. The exception are the shamans, who are chosen at birth and raised by the tribal shamans.

Religion

As noted above, the Tehlashos tribesmen revere ancestral spirits as well as *ushada* of the land. To them, their relationship with the Iron Sands' spirits is one of the primary reasons for their continued survival. Their ability to glean knowledge from those who have gone before is also of great help to them.

Religion is not a matter of distant gods or uncaring titans to the tribes. It's a matter of immediacy. A Tehlashos may, upon finding water, ask permission of the *ushada* and thank them once she takes the water to slake her thirst. If the spirits do not want her to have it, she must look elsewhere for relief.

Armed Forces

All Tehlashos are trained to fight from an early age. Those who cannot fight or speak to spirits are left for the desert to claim. Tehlashos love spears, axes, and maces, with the axe given particular reverence. The two-axe wielding dervishes among the Tehlashos are particularly feared and respected for their prowess. (This practice has led to more than one instance of a Tehlashos warrior being mistaken for a Vangal worshipper by natives of northern Termana or Ghelspad.) The shamans summon spirits to call doom upon their enemies in the form of harsh sandstorms and the vicious wildlife of the Iron Sands.

Iron Steppes

(Temperate Plains, EL 10)

West of the Chained Mountains lies a vast, arid grassland whose fierce winds are slowed only by the gentle roll of the land. Despite its proximity to their domain, the dark dwarves have never been able to subdue the Iron Steppes. The steppes contain rich troves of gold ore, and various savannah plants are valuable for their medical or narcotic properties. This potential wealth has driven numerous invasions by the charduni, but on every occasion the native tribes have ultimately forced the armies of the One in White to retreat. Although the human and lamia tribes are no match for the charduni in pitched battle, they are masters of hit-and-run tactics.

The Iron Steppes are a harsh land, inhabited by hardy tribesmen and deadly wild creatures. Spring rains are sparse but swift and sudden, sometimes accompanied by tornadoes, at other times simply washing out shallow gullies in the grassy sides of the slopes. During the summer, the region is hot and dry, and a grassfire can burn miles of brittle straw with terrible speed. Though the streams flowing into the steppes from the Chained Mountains prevent them from becoming a desert, water can still be hard to find. The treeless plains offer no protection from the sun or the coarse wind. In winter, the savannah is bitterly cold and ravaged by biting gales. The herds of antelope grow thin, and the hyenas grow bold.

History

The Iron Steppes have never been particularly hospitable to outsiders. The name of the steppes stems from the time when the ancient elven empire of Eldura-Tre sent caravans of miners across the arid plains to tap the western flanks of the Chained Mountains for resources. They avoided the eastern reaches of the range because the titan Golthagga often tore up entire peaks by the roots in order to fuel his forges, and had little regard for anyone who might be in the way. It is possible that the elves are also partially responsible for the variety of deadly beasts inhabiting the region. As elven civilization grew in power, those creatures deemed inimical to their existence were forced to flee the empire or face destruction. Many were drawn to the arid plains, where they were free from the elven forests but could occasionally plunder a caravan of miners returning to Eldura-tre.

At some point the titan Hrinruuk took interest in the savage beasts of the region. They soon proved a disappointment as prey, however, and thus he endeavored to make them more challenging. According to elven and tribal legends alike, his most terrible creation of all was the mighty tarrasque. Nothing is spared its hunger during its active periods but, thankfully, this ravenous creature sleeps for years at a time. As the tarrasque was a lone horror, the elves might eventually have tamed most of the Iron Steppes — perhaps locking the Beast of Hrinruuk away behind some powerful magical ward — were it not for the coming Ma'exar. The great red dragon forged an army of wyrms, flying dragon-men and lizard men, and burned those enemies standing before him. Pushing northwards, they disrupted the lands of the gold dragon king Umaenes, while they pushed eastwards as far as Lake Minaga and its swamps. The scattered children of Umaenes survived as a diminished force of dragon allies of Eldura-Tre, while Ma'exar settled beneath the mightiest peak of the Chained Mountains, now called Dragonstooth.

Meanwhile, the charduni built the foundations of their own empire upon the eastern banks of the range. Led by the mighty priest of Chardun known as the One in White, the dark dwarves soon pushed through the passes of the Chained Mountains and sought to conquer the lands to their west, beginning with the Iron Steppes. It took them nearly 500 years to break the hold of the wyrm Ma'exar, but this did not stop the charduni from making forays through the steppes and beyond. Initially the charduni saw little of value here, generally moving their armies north to engage their elven foes, or west to seize human territories.

Then charduni scouts discovered copious amounts of gold in a wash left by a hard spring rain. The One in White ordered a campaign of occupation immediately, and charduni armies flooded the plains. At first they obliterated all resistance, shattering lamia and human tribes who stood against them in battle and placing armed camps around important mines. The native tribes began to avoid direct confrontation, turning instead to a variety of swift raids and guerrilla tactics. Charduni supply lines disappeared in the night, scouts failed to return or proved uncharacteristically treacherous, and tribes of humans and lamia even banded together to strike at their assailants. The first invasion was forced to withdraw while the

charduni generals tried to figure out what went wrong. Future invasions included various attempts at creating a skilled cavalry for the dark dwarves, but each met with failure when opposed by those who lived their whole lives upon the arid plains.

Finally, three centuries ago, the One in White ordered two legions of dark dwarves to establish a city around the most recently discovered gold deposit. Moving into the area in full force, the charduni were surprised to find little resistance from the steppes' tribes. Nearly a year later, after months of construction, they were to find out why — the Beast of Hrinruuk woke from its lair beneath the earth and devoured them all. The handful of stragglers who escaped were picked off by lamia warriors, and the One in White only learned of the event through auguries. Less than 20 years ago, the charduni tried again, but the invasion ended in 132 AV when the charduni general Axamoxes was captured by tribesmen and left on the plains to be devoured alive by jackals. To this day, charduni slavers continue their incessant raids, while the One in White prepares his next tactic: slave cavalry and Chardun-slain working alongside the dark dwarven infantry.

Flora and Fauna

The rolling plains support an incredible variety of grasses, including many with medicinal or narcotic applications, but very little else. Trees are extraordinarily rare, and are universally stunted and thorny. Sporadic spring rains birth a thick growth of new grass, which in turn dries during the Iron Steppes' fierce summers and lies buried beneath wind-blown drifts of snow during the winter months.

It is the creatures who inhabit the steppes that make them so dangerous to others. Human and lamia tribes are powerful and widespread, but they are challenged daily by stealthy kobolds, flesh-eating ogres and implacable steppe trolls. Beasts such as barghests, dire lions and naga are less common, but certainly still a danger. Not a season passes when a tribe doesn't lose a member to an enemy tribe or a predator on the prowl. Tribal tales recall the last known location of the ancient tarrasque, however, and whatever land it sleeps beneath is considered the territory of Hrinruuk. Only the foolish or insane tread within its reputed range, though outsiders who prove troublesome are not warned of the danger in hopes that the Hunter will destroy them.

Of course it is the muskhorn, antelope and wild horses of the steppes which give the tribes a chance at life. The former two serve readily as food, while the latter give human and steppe troll tribes the ability to compete with the lamia for speed and territory. Jackals and hyenas generally find enough carrion upon the plains to keep them happy, but during winter months can prove hungry enough to raid tribal camps.

People

The Iron Steppes are home to a large number of tribes, and not all of them are human.

Lamia (Population: 5,000) Estimates suggest that more of these creatures exist in the Iron Steppes than in the rest of the world combined. A typical tribe is very small, perhaps a dozen adults and their children. Lamia tribes often have human slaves, charmed by their magical powers, forced to run in tow. Charduni slaves appear occasionally, although usually they are slain due to the hatred the steppes' folk bear them. Only the Rising Sun tribe is known to keep dark dwarven slaves for any length of time, and they have a reputation for using them against their own brethren along the western banks of the Chained Mountains, particularly in the vicinity of the Mouth of Gaurak.

Human (Population: 25,000) Though they outnumber the lamia nearly five to one, human tribes are generally loath to tangle with their quadruped neighbors. The Lion-Eaters are a notable exception, using a wealth of armament passed down from their ancestors to crush any lamia who threaten their freedom. Most tribes do their best to avoid the lamia, except perhaps when they are forced to cooperate to drive out charduni foes. A small cult of humans insist on joining the lamia tribes, despite all the warnings and objections of the elders in every tribe. Encouraged by charmed proselytizers — the Pure Ones, as they call themselves — these deluded cultists walk into the grasslands seeking a totem vision, and only the lamia seem to fit their parameters.

Steppe Trolls: (Population: 1,500) Towering well above human height, the powerful steppe trolls are believed to be relatives of those trolls common on Ghelspad. They seem far more civilized, however. They wield and craft weapons, ride their own tremendous breed of warhorses and practice *Ushadani* more fervently than anyone else on the plains. A typical tribe is about 50 strong, though each warrior is considered the

match of 10 or more human foes. Steppe troll warriors are known to use the heads of fallen foes to decorate their possessions, adding skulls to armor or drinking goblets, while tanning the facial skin to embellish their clothing. Most tribes have a particular race they consider a most dangerous enemy, and their shamans rail against them incessantly. The Northern Tooth tribe recalls the times when they fought against Ma'exar's dragons, and the wealth and magic the tribe has displayed through the years suggests access to at least one treasure hoard.

Others: (Population: unknown) It is difficult to estimate the populations of the kobold and ogre tribes who also infest the plains. The former are small in number, and find little in common with other plains folks, even as enemies. They are excellent scouts and seem to have a relatively easy time finding food for their small frames. Ogres, on the other hand, are quite content to assault other tribes and seize their bodies as sustenance. Most ogre tribes are composed of one to three families bound together by habit and necessity.

Isle of the Dead

Dame Cherys Tibraen, First Admiral of the Order of the Sun,

I have prepared the following manuscript for distribution to the new captains coming out of the Citadel of the Sun. Since I was assigned to The Boantifal, my crew and I have seen perhaps more of this island than anyone else — or rather, more than anyone living. We've prevented nearly a dozen tattered ships and their undead crews from leaving the island over the last 12 years, and routed three ships foolishly approaching that dread isle from the mainland. But my credentials for this task you already know. The information that follows comes primarily from two sources. For nearly a year we have been working with an Adept of the Ethereal Wind who was willing to use her magic to perform aerial reconnaissance. Also, three years ago we captured one of their vessels and recovered several manuscripts. The author, presumably the vampire captain, described much of his existence. These texts, if they are to be believed, offer much insight into life, or unlife, on this forsaken island.

I must say, we need more support out here. We have several thousand miles of coastline to cover and barely 30 ships with which to do it. I hope this missive will prepare the new troops coming to patrol this foul stretch of water.

— Tepel Tanaryne, Captain of The Boantifal and Master of the Lament Flame

Off the southwestern coast of Termana lies a desolate island mostly devoid of life. Elven legends call it Thul'haefar, the Land of Sorrow, while the charduni call this place Brilaxadun, Bone Island. Among men, the island is called Huros, the Isle of the Dead.

This gods-forsaken place is an enigma to the scholars of Termana. No mortal creature can safely set foot on this island, as the land itself leeches the life from any who draw near, eventually rendering them into mindless undead creatures. This life-draining

aura extends roughly a mile from the island in all directions, covering a rocky section of sea called the Bone Reef and even extending into the skies above this wretched land.

Although no mortal creature can land on the island without feeling the effects of its necromantic aura, undead of all types freely roam its flat and desolate plains. While most of the undead are mindless and wander without will or direction, some have retained their sentience and have formed a civilization of their own. Sitting at the apex of this society is the throne of the Ghoul King.

History

Prior to the Divine War, few knew of the island. Ruins that lie beneath Huros' volcanic plain seem to indicate the presence of a past civilization on the island, perhaps from a time before the isle's curse. Who these people were and what happened to them, none can say. Of the races currently known to Termana, the elves of the South Sea realm have the earliest records of the island. According to their histories, when they first visited the island they encountered the same life-draining properties it has today. Astonishingly, their records state that with the use of their magic they were able to withstand the effect for days, long enough to make short expeditions. The elves claim that such magic has been lost since the Divine War, but the thought that it might be recovered has stimulated research at the Fourfold Academy at the Citadel of the Sun. A few records of the necromancers among the Charduni indicate that at one time they too took an understandable interest in the island, but their magic wasn't able to sustain any prolonged exploration.

Like so many other places on the Scarred Lands, the fate of this obscure island was significantly changed by the Divine War. In the years that followed the divine victory, while the world was being remade, a power who owed fealty to neither god nor titan made his presence known to the recovering nations of Termana. The Ghoul King's origins are truly a mystery; none know what role he may have played in the Divine War, nor from what land he hailed. Knowledge of this creature first came from reports of raiding along the western coast of mainland Termana. These raids were the precursor to a war that threatened to turn Termana into a land of the dead, led by a powerful necromancer. The Sisters' first encounter with the Ghoul King happened when he was still a man, albeit a powerful and wicked one. How he managed to survive the foul essence of the island is unknown, but he made the island central to his war effort. Many prisoners, along with those slain on the battlefield, were brought to the island to rise again as members of his undead army. Perhaps most disheartening to the beleaguered defenders was the sight of

their loved ones falling in battle, only to return as one of the enemy. Were it not for Madriel and her many followers who fell during the war with the Ghoul King, Termana would now be nothing but a land of death and sorrow.

Since the culmination of that initial battle with the Ghoul King, he has been trapped on Huros. But while the imminent threat of the undead lord has been contained, the forces of Madriel have been unable to breach his defenses and approach the island. Thus, there has been a stalemate between the two forces for well over a century — save for one occasion. In 62 AV the Ghoul King brought the war to the Citadel of the Sun itself. The Order of the Sun very nearly lost the day, but was assisted in the eleventh hour by mercenaries from the human nations on the mainland. Since the Ghoul King's last defeat, the waters around the island have been quiet save for the occasional test of the defenses of the Silverisle navy.

Geography

The island of Huros is dominated by three large volcanoes, whose broad slopes spread over the island like a paladin's shield. These volcanoes lie near the isle's center, one each to the north, east and west. The three mounds constantly belch forth steam, ash and molten rock, which spread in flocs inexorably to the sea. This constant discharge makes the terrain of the island unstable and the shoreline dangerous. Forming a perimeter about a mile wide around Huros is a structure called the Bone Reef. The Bone Reef serves as the boundary of the necromantic aura that radiates from the island. The reef is shallow and cluttered with rocks, oftentimes lying just below the surface, and marks the beginning of the island's debilitating effects. For those ships not deterred by the life-draining qualities of the island, the reef also serves as a secondary defense. The low-lying shoals of the Bone Reef will quickly sink all but the most cautious captain's ship. Further, those who have died in those foul waters rise again to challenge any living visitors; it is not uncommon for skeletal horrors to lie amidst the reefs, their bones blending with the surroundings until they attack. What treasures the reef has taken from the ships it has destroyed will likely never be known. Beyond the Bone Reef, the shore itself is loose, unstable and treacherous, oftentimes little more than a thin crust of stone over molten rock. The terrain becomes more stable as one ventures inland, but it is no less inhospitable.

Given the desolation of Huros and the life-sapping properties of the island, many assume that nothing save the walking dead could live there. Surprisingly, this isn't the case. Although many different unliving horrors exist in numbers on the island, some rare forms of life have adapted to the dark spirit

of the land. Across the volcanic plain that surrounds the three central mounts a hardy grass ekes out a living in the ashy, life-draining environment. Occasionally in these bleak prairies a blighted hound or solitary stag can be found. Whether these creatures were normal animals cursed by undeath, or remnants of the island's native inhabitants who have somehow adapted to the isle's harsh existence, is currently unknown.

The effect of the island's negative energy becomes stronger the closer one is to the center of the island. It appears that this effect comes from the very stone that composes the island, as it is possible to fly high above the isle and not suffer its curse. This necromantic energy has differing effects depending on where it is encountered.

Bone Reef (Warm Aquatic, EL 4): Here, the emanations of the Isle of the Dead sap the life but cause no permanent effects. Anyone who is in the Bone Reef, or flies within a mile overhead, suffers one negative level for as long as the character is in the region. This negative level never results in level loss, but cannot be overcome while in the region. Restoration magic doesn't work while in this region. Undead are granted a Turn Resistance of +1, which stacks with any Turn Resistance they already have.

Shoreline/Coast (Warm Plains, EL 4): The powerful draining effects of the Isle of the Dead cause permanent harm to any living creature who sets foot on the island. For each day a character is in this region, she suffers a negative level. After 24 hours, the character must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) for each negative level or lose a permanent level. Any character who has more negative levels than character levels dies immediately, to rise as an undead. The type of undead should be equivalent to the number of hit dice of the slain character, at the GM's discretion. Restoration magic doesn't work while in this region, and healing granted through the use of conjuration (healing) spells is reduced by 1 point per die rolled (minimum of 1). Undead are granted +2 Turn Resistance, which stacks with any Turn Resistance they already have.

The Lowlands (Warm Plains, EL 6): As one travels toward the center of Huros, the necromantic emanations of the island become more pronounced. For every three hours a character is in this region, she suffers a negative level. After 24 hours, the character must make a DC 18 Fortitude save for each negative level or lose a permanent level. Any character who has more negative levels than character levels dies immediately, to rise as an undead. The type of undead should be equivalent to the number of hit dice of the slain character, at the GM's discretion. Restoration magic doesn't work while in this region, and healing granted through the use of conjuration (healing) spells is reduced by 2 points per die rolled (minimum

of 1). Undead are granted +3 Turn Resistance, which stacks with any Turn Resistance they already have.

The Highlands (Warm Hills, EL 8): The terrain gets steeper and more rugged near the peaks. For every hour a character is in this region, she suffers a negative level. After 24 hours, the character must make a DC 18 Fortitude save for each negative level or lose a permanent level. Any character who has more negative levels than character levels dies immediately, to rise as an undead. The type of undead should be equivalent to the number of hit dice of the slain character, at the GM's discretion. Restoration magic doesn't work while in this region, and healing granted through the use of conjuration (healing) spells is reduced by 4 points per die rolled (minimum of 1). Undead are granted +4 Turn Resistance, which stacks with any Turn Resistance they already have.

The Central Peaks and The Ghoul King's Palace (Temperate Mountains, EL 10): The very center of the island is where the necromantic energy is at its zenith. For every minute a character is in this region, she suffers a negative level. After 24 hours, the character must make a DC 18 Fortitude save for each negative level or lose a permanent level. Any character who has more negative levels than character levels dies immediately, to rise as an undead. The type of undead should be equivalent to the number of hit dice of the slain character, at the GM's discretion. Restoration and conjuration (healing) spells do not work while in this region. Undead are granted +5 Turn Resistance, which stacks with any Turn Resistance they already have.

People

Even though the island is inhabited primarily by undead, a society has developed in which these unnatural creatures interact according to a loose hierarchy. The Ghoul King has managed to build a palace that rivals that of many a nation's capitol, and it looms near the center of the island in what can only be described as a city. From there, the Ghoul King oversees a court of nobles, consisting of a variety of undead including lichs, vampires and a few unhalloved. These lesser lords control domains of their own.

Scattered about the island, often buried quite deep in the continual lava flows, lie the remains of an ancient civilization. Where these ruins emerge from below, or openings to lava tubes readily connect to the surface, enclaves of various sizes are organized to explore and ransack whatever can be found in the rubble. These enclaves are each ruled by a single lord, usually the most powerful and intelligent of the undead. This lord organizes the lesser creatures in the area, with the mindless undead serving as manual labor to unearth the ruins, while the more powerful wraiths and ghouls recover lost artifacts and treasures. The volcanic nature of Huros has formed a vast network of lava tubes that crisscross the island, and a number of potential sites have yet to be explored. It seems as if the Ghoul King has quieted his efforts to escape to the mainland in order to investigate the remnants of this deceased civilization for some old relic or ancient piece of lore.

Thunderspike Mountains

(Temperate Mountains, EL 5)

Jutting from the highlands of western Termana, the Thunderspike Mountains were one of the major barriers preventing the complete victory of the old Charduni Empire. The human states of the west were primitive and weak, but by the time the charduni came knocking, all knew what lay in store if they gave in. Accordingly, the normally quarrelsome states banded together and moved to fortify passes through the Thunderspikes, and when the charduni arrived they encountered fierce resistance from the materially inferior, but numerically superior, humans. With the bulk of their armies occupied fighting the elves and dragons of Eldura-Tre, the charduni were dealt a stinging setback, and the human states retained their independence.

The charduni never did succeed in forcing the passes, for the Divine War and Kadum's Deluge sealed their fate, shattering the empire and reducing it to a pathetic shadow of its former self. The humans pursued the fleeing dark dwarves for a time, but soon returned to their old ways and fell to bickering, egged on by the manipulations of the Laughing Man.

Today, the mountains have returned to their wild state — rugged, trackless wilderness with few reliable passes and many ferocious beasts. The Thunderspikes remain a potent barrier, but today this barrier seems to be working against the humans, rather than for them.

Lay of the Land

The Thunderspikes are cursed with especially foul weather; some scholars believe that the massive wind- and thunderstorms are a remnant of great battles fought between the titans Lethene and Gulaben at some unknown time in

the past. Deep snows fill the passes from mid-autumn through the end of spring, then rain and wind lash the area for the rest of the year.

The few passes through the mountains are treacherous, and home to bandits, titanspawn and predators such as thunder-kites, storm children and deadly sleet-wolves. Some hardy caravans make the journey through Wolfs Teeth Pass, but elsewhere traffic is sparse and unreliable.

Winter Peak (Cold Mountain, EL 5): The tallest mountain in the Thunderspikes has never been scaled, nor would anyone really care to, for it is home to some of the harshest and most unpredictable weather in the region. It is said that an especially powerful outsider or unknown titanspawn makes its home on Winter Peak, drawing the fierce storms for sustenance. Others say that the creature is an old, evil dragon or the lost king of the storm giants, who was deposed during the Divine War and now vents his rage at the mortal world by flinging storms, lightning and rocks at travelers.

Wolf's Teeth (Cold Mountains, EL 6): Though the Wolf's Teeth stand guard over what is known as the safest and most reliable pass in the Thunderspikes, this isn't really saying much. The pass follows a dry streambed that fortunately remains below the snowline for most of the year. Rocky and treacherous, this pass nevertheless represents the only real lifeline across the Thunderspikes. Soldiers from Azale and Padrinola are stationed along the route, and endeavor to keep the passes open against bandits, marauding titanspawn and bad weather. In spring and summer, the pass often floods, and avalanches from higher elevations sometimes block the riverbed, forcing the garrisons to dig their way through. The route is doubly valuable to Azale and Padrinola, as the duties charged to caravans who travel along the pass provide both nations with substantial funds.

Titansforge Mountains

(Warm Mountains, EL 10)

Along with the Thunderspikes and the Chained Mountains, the Titansforge range forms the curved spine of Termana which saved the continent from drowning in the waves of Kadum's last throes. The heights of the Titansforge turn the rains of Kadum's Bight back upon the lush grasslands of the Centaur Plains, contribute innumerable streams which flow into Minagan Marsh and Lake Minagan, and cast volcanic dust upon the Iron Sands Desert. Some of the sharp peaks are topped with ice while others steam with the heat of their molten cores.

Most scholars and adventurers are more interested in legends proclaiming that the Forge of the titan Golthagga was located here before the Divine War. Obviously the source of the range's name, these legends might also explain many of the fell beasts which roam the heights. Certainly it is not hard to imagine that the volcanic heat, mountain streams and majestic peaks would have made a fine home for the Forger. Of course, given the whimsical power of the titans, it's just as likely that Golthagga shaped the mountains to his liking, as opposed to searching out a suitable home.

History

Throughout most of Termana's history, the Titansforge Mountains have marked the border of *something*. Even the ancient Dragon Kingdoms found the mountains inhospitable. Golthagga's perilous creations lurked throughout the range, and the titan was just as likely to put a dragon to work as a living bellows as he was to seize it as raw materials. The copper dragon Aminan, a lieutenant to the gold dragon king Umaenes, inexplicably betrayed and destroyed her allies upon entering the area, and the blue dragon Cuarul spent decades scouring the foothills for foes of the Forger. Cuarul is believed to have been destroyed by the red dragon Ma'exar before the charduni conquered the last of the draconic kingdoms, and Aminan was slain by an arcane archer during the Divine War, but stories of dragons seen over the mountains are common among merchants who brave the Centaur Plains.

South of the mountains, the Shan'Khud Empire dominated the Iron Sands Desert and sometimes braved the heights — and the beasts who dwelt there — to seek their patron Golthagga. Even after Shan'Khud crumbled beneath charduni invasion, the Iron Tribes

would occasionally seek the Forger, hoping to gain his favor. Presumably Shan'Khud civilization finally disappeared when their sorcerers, hastening to Golthagga's side during his epic battle with Corean, ran afoul of powerful rock goblin geomancers, and when the ravages of the Divine War caused deadly winds to scour the desert. Today only the Tehlashos tribesmen remain to prove that humanity can survive the terrible Iron Winds.

According to legend, the god Chardun created the dark dwarves and they soon marched upon the road to building an empire. After two and a half millennia of endless war, the Charduni Empire encompassed most of the continent. Only the elven nation in the north, bolstered by its alliance with dragons, and human states in the east remained free. South of the Titansforge Mountains, in the Iron Winds Desert, the charduni sought to finish off the Shan'Khud. North of the mountains, they scattered the Halanti Empire across the Centaur Plains. In the foothills and passes of the Titansforge Mountains, the charduni faltered like the dragons before them. The dark dwarves dispatched more of the Forger's creations than anyone since, but to no avail. Ultimately the perilous beasts, along with seemingly endless bands of stealthy goblinoids, convinced even the grim charduni to focus their efforts upon easier foes and return to the task of taming the Forger's mountains at a later time.

Flora and Fauna

The Titansforge Mountains are a bleak and dangerous place, filled with leftover creations abandoned by the Forger and those beasts who have taken to the peaks since his disappearance. Blade beasts, flailing dreadnoughts and tempus twins are merely the better known of Golthagga's products — unique creations still litter the valleys and peaks of the range waiting to strike new victims with awe or death. Spawn of other titans have been drawn to the heights in the decades since the Forger's fall, including storm children, thunder kites, forge wights, pyres and stranger creatures.

Life is an enduring force and its unconquerable spirit finds hold even in the ragged peaks of the Titansforges. Stocky scrub bushes, particular boxwoods and hollies, cling to precarious rock faces. Twisted and hardy pines find homes in fissures filled with runoff soil. Valleys draw fast running streams with leaping rock trout and stunted broad-leaved semi-tropical hardwoods. Numerous small and drab species of birds flit from stone to tree in search of food,

and even the dominant rock goblins have yet to exterminate the crafty mountain lions and fleet-footed rodents which move stealthily through the rugged terrain.

The region is swarming with goblinoids of all varieties, including a variety found almost nowhere else known as rock goblins. Humanoid tribal fortresses dot the mountainsides and rugged vales of the Titansforge range, warring with each other more often than neighboring lands. A handful of stone and fire giant clans remain within the peaks, though their time seems to have passed with the fall of the Forger. Beneath it all, a strange many-eyed spherical race known as beholders engage in slave raids, torture victims rendered helpless by their enchantments and war among themselves.

People

Members of the Divine Races are far from welcome among the peaks of the Titansforge range. Nonetheless the legends of the conflict between Corean and Golthagga continue to draw treasure hunters, religious zealots and political power seekers. Naturally, the Cult of the Reforged Flesh (see **The Divine and the Defeated**) braves the Titansforge Mountains searching for shards of the Shaper's hammer and tongs, as well as the fabled lost Anvil of Golthagga. Agents of the Eight-Fingered Hand, a council of druids commanding the Cult, have gained allies within some of the titanspawn tribes of the range but regularly lose members to antagonistic hordes. Rock goblin druids regard the Cult with hatred reserved for heretics and blasphemers.

According to tradition, the god Corean set aside his original blade to forge a new one upon Golthagga's anvil. The artifact sword Vindicare was lost during the battle between god and titan, and its current locale remains unknown. Stories claim it has been seen in lands throughout the Scarred Lands, but such tales inevitably prove impossible to verify. Thus the paladin knights of the Avenger sometimes venture into the Titansforges questing for their god's ancient holy weapon. None have yet conquered the slopes of the Titanspire, and the presence of a Calastian garrison at its foot promises future conflict.

Calastia's interest in the area is far less pious. Presumably King Virduk wants to possess the Anvil of Golthagga to ensure his empire's might, and Royal Vizier Antreas has made more than one trip to the region. What precisely the mighty mage has discovered is unknown, but a Calastian regiment remains garrisoned in a hid-

den camp at the base of the Titanspire. Unfortunately for them, the near impossibility of hiding the movements of mercenary and naval units — all of which are necessary to arrange supply trains from Virduk's Promise across Kadum's Bight and the Centaur Plains — has enabled the spies of other nations to learn of this regiment's existence.

Rock Goblins: (Population: 45,000) Spread throughout the Titansforge Mountains, the rock goblins dominate their goblinoid neighbors through mastery of geomantic magic and lifelong teachings of "racial superiority." Individual tribes tend to be named with the Dark Speech for a type of rock, or else an ancestral chieftain whose name also often involves some aspect of stone. The Flowstone tribe holds territory closest to the Titanspire and digs intricate pathways, directing lava in patterns decreed by their druid followers of Golthagga. The Red Dust tribe controls the southern flanks of the range, and makes forays into the Iron Sands Desert seeking castoffs from the Forger's ancient works. The eastern mountains lie within the Black Ash tribe's domain, and to the west the Iron Quenchers claim that the Forger would lay his blades upon their snow-capped peaks after dipping them in Lake Minagan. Smaller rock goblin tribes, including the likes of the belligerent Jumping Rocks, the nomadic Lost Mine raiders and the fanatic Orange Shards cult, struggle to carve their own territories in bloody intra-clan warfare. (For more on rock goblins, see **Creature Collection III: Savage Bestiary**.)

Goblinoids: (Population: 60,000) Goblin and hobgoblin tribes are spread throughout the Titansforges, but are generally beleaguered or enslaved by their rock goblin cousins. If somehow they could unite, they might throw off the yoke of their geomancer brethren, but few possess the might, vision or cunning to do so. Only the brutal hobgoblin tribe of Mount Stoneshadow, which lies southeast of the Titanspire and is the only peak in the range to exceed that mountain in height, remains free of rock goblin dominance. Rock goblin leaders believe the Stoneshadows are pawns of their beholder enemies, and ceaselessly rail at their followers for failing to expunge the fearsome hobgoblins.

Geography

For the most part, the Titansforge Mountains make up a fairly homogenous range, with little save the differing shapes of the peaks to differentiate this section from that. Still, even this area contains certain sub-regions that dif-

fer sufficiently from their surroundings to be worthy of special attention.

The Titanspire (Warm Mountains, EL 9): The single most well known feature of the Titansforge Mountains stands prominently upon the range's northern slopes. The Titanspire is an ancient volcano, previously home to the forges of Golthagga and the Shaper's favored abode. During the Divine War, the god Corean defeated the Titan in an epic battle that tore the mountain asunder and spewed shards of the forges for miles in every direction. Once the war ended, Corean returned to render the Shaper's shattered workshop inaccessible. The sides of the mountain rose up and buried the Forge of the fallen titan. Lava spilled upon the faces of the spire and sealed his works from the hands of man. Corean carved great sigils into the heights of the peak and commanded the very fires within to turn aside those who would uncover the titan's forbidden crafts. To this day, the greatest mages the Calastian monarch can bring to bear and the mightiest druids of the Cult of Reforged Flesh have yet to pierce even the least of the Avenger's wards. Corean has not relented even for the knights of his Order of Gold — their efforts to penetrate the defenses of the Titanspire have been fruitless as well. Efforts continue, and it is always possible that some secret lore may change the current state of affairs, whether from the vaults of the Silver Knights, the Battle Mages of Calastia, the Eight Fingered Hand or some other forgotten trove. What treasures remain locked within the forges of the mighty titan shall remain a secret until the Titanspire is cracked.

Hills of Change (Warm Hills, EL 3): A cartographer from Ghelspad looking at the Hills of Change on a map might assume they were named such because their rolling heights marked the end of the Thunderspikes and the beginnings of the Titansforge Mountains. Termana natives living near the region know that the truth is far worse: the hills are named for their hideous effects on unfortunate travelers. Legends variously ascribe the strange phenomenon to Lethene, Enkili, Denev or Gormoth. Perhaps the most convincing story is that the hills long served as the resting-place of the titan Gormoth while he writhed in agony after his sister Mormo poisoned him, and that they still retain traces of his essence.

The Change

Any creature spending a week in the Hills of Change must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or be overcome by the warping effects of the region. Over the course of an hour the victim's body is destroyed and is reformed. Effectively the victim dies and is brought back to life as a different creature, as per the *reincarnate* spell, though without the associated loss of level. Victims who choose not to return to life simply remain dead, rotting, consumed by worms or transformed into dust. If a victim makes the save, she is immune to further warping as long she remains in the region, and for up to a week beyond (if she should leave and swiftly return, for instance). Should she ever remain outside of the Hills of Change for more than seven consecutive days, a new save must be made once she has again stayed a week's time in the range. This applies even to creatures who have already fallen prey to the change before; furthermore, for every transformation beyond the first, the victim *does* lose a level with each transformation, as per the *reincarnate* spell. Thus, it is dangerous to repeatedly risk new changes due to the leeching effect it can have upon one's life energy.

Note that a dead body (or undead creature) brought into the range is unaffected by the power of the Changing Hills; it cannot be used as a free *reincarnate* to return deceased companions to life.

Whatever the cause, the fact remains that creatures are sometimes inexplicably transformed after a time spent in the wild hills. It is all too common to encounter badgers or wolves speaking humanoid tongues, or to discover that the hill man robbing your camp truly has the mind of a beast. Druids of Denev and Gormoth claim the land as sacred to their patrons — Gormoth's druids because the Writhing Lord lay there, Denev's druids because the Earth Mother cared for the Warper during his sickness — and conflicts between the two are common. Some native druids claim that the gnome and centaur races, common only on Termana, sprang from these hills.

Appendix: New Traits and Prestige Classes

Surely if Termana is known for anything other than its many hazards, it would have to be the sheer variety displayed in all corners of the continent, by all imaginable features. In the geography, the flora, the fauna and of course the nigh-uncountable numbers of races, peoples and cultures, Termana displays a diversity of detail unmatched in any other portion of the Scarred Lands.

This carries over even into the various organizations, secret societies, religious orders, tribal guardians and spiritual emissaries of the continent. Whether the servants of a god or the eyes and arms of the *ushada*, whether birthed in the most "civilized" neighborhood or a jungle village, whether created for a specific goal or developed over the course of generations in answer to Termana's hardships, these noteworthy individuals are as much a part of the continent's history, culture and identity as any single nation or people could hope to be.

The people of the land have developed a number of paths to power. These are expressed in three areas in this appendix. First are the totem feats, which those who honor the proper spirits use to impressive effect. Second, all the poisons and herbs discussed throughout this book are assembled here in a single comprehensive list.

Third, this appendix details several of the unique prestige classes available to adventurers on Termana. As is often the case, many of these prestige classes have stringent and inviolate requirements for admission, and the responsibilities that come with these newfound skills and powers are often far more substantial than those powers themselves. To progress along the paths provided herein is to mark oneself as the bravest and most skilled Termana has to offer, a designation that carries with it its own duties and dangers.

Totem Feats

These feats represent those individuals who have been adopted by a particular spirit totem; this is usually an animal or nature spirit, but can also be an ancestor or other abstract spiritual concept. An initiate usually undergoes some sort of ritual or ordeal where she is attracts the attention of her potential totem. The exact nature of this ritual varies depending on tribal customs, but is officiated by one of the spiritual elders of her tribe. Usually a person has only one totem that she is beholden to. These feats are only available to characters who hail from cultures that worship spirits (such as the *ushada*), but it is possible for one of the totem spirits to appear to those who did not know of them before.

Totem feats represent the ability to channel the essence of the totem into the user. The wielder of the feat must use a standard action to channel her totem. Being imbued with a spirit is physically taxing and a character can only maintain this state for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the characters Constitution modifier, though the character may end it earlier if she so desires. A character can only channel her to-

tem a number of times per day equal to 1 + the characters Charisma modifier. Additionally, a totem feat gives a skill bonus to a skill relevant to that totem that applies at all times, whether the character is channeling their totem or not.

Totem feats also have a taboo; something that, if done, offends the patron spirit. If a character that has a totem feat, and breaks the taboo, the character loses access to the benefits of the totem feat until he undergoes some rite of contrition. These rites usually take the form of some quest undertaken to regain the favor of the totem. The difficulty of the quest usually is determined by the circumstances around the infraction.

For more on totem feats, and many such feats not listed here, see **Player's Guide to Fighters and Barbarians**.

Cobra [Totem]

Cobra is a sly, solitary spirit. When a hunter strikes out alone to covertly observe a rival village, he uses skills taught to him by Cobra. Cobra's children are skilled at moving unnoticed in the jungle, and in combat their strikes are most deadly. Cobra appears most frequently in the Yellow Jungle.

Benefit: When channeling Cobra, his children gain the ability to make devastating strikes to unaware targets. While channeling, the character gains +2 to hit and damage anytime the enemy is flanked, flatfooted or unaware of his presence. (In other words, whenever a rogue could potentially sneak attack the foe.) In addition, children of Cobra gain a +2 to all Hide skill checks.

Taboo: Having others help accomplish personal goals. Cobra encourages individual accomplishment and discourages teamwork.

Dragon [Totem]

Dragon represents the ancient glory of the forsaken elf people and the pacts once forged with their dragon allies. A guardian of tradition, Dragon chooses only those elves who respect the past and the preserve the forsaken elves' dying culture. Servants of Dragon are known as stoic guardians and mediators.

Benefit: While channeling Dragon, the character gains a +1 bonus to all saving throws. In addition, children of Dragon gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all Diplomacy skill checks.

Taboo: Violating elven tradition. Children of Dragon must work to uphold elven society against ennui and the slow decay of hopelessness.



Excess [Totem]

Revered in both Pelegael and distant Azale, Excess is the very spirit of debauchery, carelessness and hedonism. The chosen of Excess are free spirits, self-indulgent and uncontrollable. Wild and chaotic berserkers and hedonistic duelists find favor in Excess.

Benefit: While channeling Excess, all of the character's sense are greatly enhanced, granting a +2 circumstance bonus to Spot and Listen checks as well as a +2 primal bonus to saving throws against poison. In addition, children of Excess gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all Bluff skill checks.

Taboo: Refusing to engage in debauchery when the opportunity presents itself. Putting work and responsibility above self-indulgence risks Excess's ire (if the spirit can be roused enough to pay attention).

Fury [Totem]

The red-eyed spirit of Fury represents rage, intolerance and fanaticism. Increasingly a popular totem among the xenophobic forsaken elves of Ganjulael, Fury chooses those warriors who let rage take and guide them. Bloodthirsty and militant, children of Fury are known as reckless but unstoppable warriors who take to arms at the slightest insult.

Benefit: While channeling Fury, the character gains a +2 bonus to Strength but a -1 penalty to AC.

This bonus and penalty is cumulative with the rage ability. In addition, children of Fury gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all Intimidate skill checks.

Taboo: Letting an insult pass unanswered. The chosen of Fury must defend their honor regardless of cost, and most take gleeful joy at doing so. Children of Fury are especially unforgiving towards foreigners and outsiders.

Gnoll King [Totem]

Found most commonly among the native gnolls in the wilds of Virduk's Promise, the Gnoll King is proud, fierce and ever passionate. He lives for the moment, wading into battle with a fearsome weapon, an extension of the fire in his soul. His battle cant reduces his enemies to tears, and stirs the blood of his allies. A wise Ancestor, he does not limit his gifts to his kind, but grants it to any worthy of it, and so gains greater glory by their deeds.

Benefit: A character channeling the Gnoll King is rendered resistant to fear or any outside factors that might impede his bravery or his abilities. While channeling, the character gains a +2 to all Will saves.

Children of the Gnoll King also gain a +2 circumstance modifier to all Intimidate skill checks.

Taboo: Cowardice. The Gnoll King and his children can fear (only a fool fears nothing), but they never show that fear or let it affect their actions.

Gjora [Totem]

The first Emerald Maiden of the Crilosian Trinity had a simple but nigh infallible wisdom. The mortal mind, she said, knew all the truths of the world; it only needed to remember that it did. The future was written in the past, so prescience was a simple matter of learning from one's mistakes.

Benefit: Children of Gjora can perceive moments into the future, allowing them to react more swiftly than their foes. While channeling this Ancestor, they gain a +2 bonus to Initiative; if they begin to channel in the midst of combat, they move up in the initiative order as appropriate.

Taboo: Not learning from the past. Children of Gjora must never repeat past mistakes.

Horse [Totem]

The Centaurs Plains are a wild and dangerous place. If any beast is revered most here, it is the horse. The Centaurs respect its purity and seek to keep it wild, while the lives of the Ulande tribesmen revolve around its use. Horse is a potent totem here, its children being cavalry masters without peer.

Benefit: While channeling Horse, the *Ushadan* is at peace with the equine spirit's children. This grants a +2 circumstance bonus to all Handle Animal and Animal Empathy skill checks related to horses or other equines, which lasts so long as the character channels Horse. The *Ushadan* can even attempt these checks untrained, providing her total

modifier is greater than +0. In addition, children of Horse gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all Ride skill checks.

Taboo: Horse desires that his children be treated with respect. His children may never intentionally cause harm to a horse. Those who ignore this taboo will find that Horse has abandoned them.

Lak [Totem]

Known throughout Crilos as part of the Trinity, the Warden of the Second Gate of Elligass was a legendary warrior in life, most famed for advocating wise plans above strong arms. His children hold true to this, believing that a battle not won before it is fought will never be won at all.

Benefit: Characters channeling Lak gain a +2 circumstance bonus to either attack rolls or AC, but only when engaged in executing a particular battle plan that has been worked out ahead of time. The character must choose when he begins channeling Lak whether the bonus applies to attack rolls or AC, and he may not change his mind during that particular engagement.



Not surprisingly, Lak esteems ingenuity and also grants his children a +2 circumstance bonus to all Craft skill checks.

Taboo: Recklessness. The children of Lak are passionate, not foolish. They must always attempt to analyze a situation before acting on it.

Lethargy Blossom [Totem]

The sultry scent of Lethargy Blossom brings sweet dreams and death to the unwary. She offers surcease from daily pains but her price is steep. Her children travel from village to village, serving as entertainers, storytellers and medicine men. Lethargy Blossom grants her children knowledge of herb lore, which they then use to mix poultices and concoctions that cause euphoria and bliss. This happiness is false, however, and only the most strong willed can resist the temptations of this capricious spirit.

Benefit: When channeling Lethargy Blossom, her children gain +2 to any poison-related saving throw, and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves. In addition, her children gain a +2 on all Craft (alchemy) and Knowledge (Nature) skill checks and can use these skills untrained.

Taboo: Refusing herbal relief to others. Lethargy Blossom expects her children to offer her sweet gifts to anyone in need of release or escape.

Mountain [Totem]

Towering, majestic and mighty, Mountain provides shelter and valuable ore to those who learn his secret. Mountain's children stand tall among their brethren, quietly condescending towards those beneath them. When moved to fury, Mountain is implacable.

Benefit: Mountain's children share the endurance of his vast bulk. While channeling Mountain, his children gain +2 to their Constitution, but suffer a -5 penalty to their movement. In addition, children of Mountain gain a +2 on all Climb skill checks.

Taboo: Bowing before enemies. Mountain's children are far too proud to bend to the will of a foe. Like Mountain, they will stand tall until they are brought tumbling to the earth.

Rose [Totem]

The rose is beautiful but fragile, a thing reliant on a perfect balance of sun, rain and soil. However, despite this weakness it is coveted by all and enjoys a place of honor in all gardens able to afford it. It might be said then that Rose is as nothing on her own, but in the

company of others is a thing out of legend. Few outside the Grey Isle honor this totem.

Benefit: Children of Rose may channel her to dazzle opponents; this has the mechanical effect of granting the channeler a +2 bonus to AC, as the foe is vaguely distracted and not quite as able to strike her.

Children of Rose gain a +2 circumstance bonus to all Diplomacy skills checks.

Taboo: Children of Rose can never be alone for more than a few moments at a time.

Skiji [Totem]

Like the third member of the Trinity himself, the children of Skiji are creatures of great compassion and forgiveness. His greatest belief was that all enemies could be transformed into friends; it was only a matter of patience and will.

Benefit: While channeling Skiji, a character gains a +2 circumstance bonus to attack and damage rolls, but only when attempting to deal nonlethal damage.

Additionally, children of Skiji gain a +2 circumstance bonus to all Diplomacy skill checks.

Taboo: Killing for any reason other than for food, is forbidden to the children of Skiji. They must atone even after killing in self-defense.

Sphere [Totem]

The symbol of flawless symmetry, Sphere is perfection of balance in form. Her children make good judges as they can see all things from all perspectives. Never off guard, Sphere is always ready in every direction. Sphere is most frequently called by followers of Trelu who have adopted some of the ways of their more "primitive" neighbors.

Benefit: A character channeling Sphere gains up to a +2 insight bonus, but where that bonus applies depends on the character's actions, for Sphere delights in symmetry. If the character is making a full attack action, the bonus is to attack. If the character is fighting defensively, the bonus is to AC. If the character is doing anything else, the bonus is +1 to attack and +1 to AC.

In addition, Sphere grants a +2 circumstance bonus to all Sense Motive skill checks.

Taboo: Creatures of moderation, children of Sphere never work in extremes. They can be passionate but they will act on that passion by measured degrees and not by radical moves.



Yellowtree [Totem]

Yellowtree is a diseased totem, forever changed by the depredations of the yuan-ti empire. Where once he stood tall and strong, a protector of the jungle, Yellowtree now grimly watches the fall of his jungle home, pushing it along in hopes of ending his pain. Yellowtree has few children, but those who do follow him seek to spread the disease beyond the Yellow Jungle. Yellowtree's children tend to come from the more nihilistic members of the various slave tribes; those who have no hope for escape, but find happiness in bringing misery to their kin in order to ease the loneliness of their own horror.

Benefit: When channeling Yellowtree, his children become preternaturally tough. The character who is channeling Yellowtree receives damage reduction 2/- for the duration of channeling. In addition, children of Yellowtree gain a +2 on all Survival skill checks.

Taboo: Working to prevent the spread of the yuan-ti empire. The children of Yellowtree actively work to bring yuan-ti dominion to nearby tribes.

Zenith Tree [Totem]

The Zenith Tree is emblematic of the forsaken elf people. The spirit of the tree favors

those elves that represent the best aspects of their people; strength of will, perseverance, a noble spirit and quickness of mind. Those chosen by the tree serve as defenders of their dying people and realms.

Benefit: While channeling Zenith Tree, the character is treated as though he had damage reduction 2/-. In addition, children of Zenith Tree gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all Survival skill checks.

Taboo: Killing another forsaken elf. The Zenith Tree will not tolerate the destruction of its people, even in the most dire of circumstances.

Poisons of Termana

The jungles and other wilds of Termana boast a wide assortment of dangerous and deadly substances. Animals, plants and even the environment itself often prove toxic.

Provided below is a list of all the various toxins, herbs and poisons mentioned throughout this book, along with their effects and mechanical attributes.

Gamulganjus Poisons and Herbs

Bloodroot — ingested or injury, DC 12, —/ 1d4 Con + 1d4 Wis; Cost: special. This hallucinogenic is often used for the purposes of vision questing or rites of passage. The gnomes sell it to tepuje nomads in barter worth 100 gp or to outsiders for 200 gp. Tepuje nomads use it for the Maratawo Pilgrimage. Paradoxically, its disorienting effects on the humanoid mind provide a measure of defense against the psionic beasts that haunt the ruin. Characters receive a +2 circumstance bonus to Will saves against psionic attack.

Dlaruan — ingested, DC 12, 1d2 Wis/ 1d2 Wis; Cost: 25 gp. A mild hallucinogenic, dlaruan is commonly employed in *Ushadan* rituals used to commune with the spirits. The herb is a fern-like plant which grows to about a foot in height and has bluish-tinged leaves. The herb has no known medicinal properties.

Foolsbane — ingested, DC 11, 1 Wis/ 2d6 Wis + 1d4 Int; Cost: 400 gp. Foolsbane is often used on captured interlopers before they're dropped off someplace far from their point of origin.

Ghost Tree Sap — contact, DC 16, paralysis/ —; Cost: n/a. Ghost trees are tropical trees that are said to grow upon the site of particularly tragic or painful deaths. Given the number in the Gamulganjus, this is either fanciful thinking or tragedy is quite common. Of course, given that ghost trees can move under their own power, it's just as likely that they feed on tragedy. Gnomes do not trade this poison to outsiders.

Ketresal — ingested, DC 16, 1d6 Int + 1d6 Wis/ 1d6 Int + 1d6 Wis; Cost: 200 gp. Ketresal is a root of a stalk-like plant of leafy green. The aboveground portions of the plant are edible, and indeed considered a delicacy among the jungle tribes. The root, however, is a toxic astringent

that cleanses the body of both poison and disease. When used to cure poison or disease, Ketresal grants a +5 alchemical bonus to the Heal check, but subjects the patient to the effects of the herb.

Mind's Eye — ingested, DC 18, 2d8 Con/ 1d2 Con*; Cost: 400 gp. Mind's eye is a black, poppy-like flower that grows along the edge of the Yellow Jungle and a virulent poison. The secondary damage caused by this herb is perma-



ment Constitution damage unless the victim makes his Fort saving throw. This herb has no known medicinal properties.

Scarlet Spider Venom — injury, DC 20, 1d6 Con/ 2d6 Con; Cost: n/a. Gnomes prefer to coat their blow darts with this venom when they want to kill their intended victims. Gnomes do not trade this to outsiders.

Small Centipede Poison — injury, DC 11, 1d2 Dex/ 1d2 Dex; Cost: 150 gp. This venom is a mild paralytic and is rarely used. Gnomes will happily sell this venom to outsiders in barter for trade goods.

Sren — injury, DC 14, 1d2 Cha/ 1d2 Cha; Cost: 50 gp. This colorful yellow vine grows high in the treetops of the Gamulganjus, but only the flowers of the Sren vine may be used as a remedy. Sren temporarily dulls the mind but acts as a coagulant and a minor disinfectant. When used as an aid in healing, the herb adds a +2 alchemical bonus to the Heal check, but the patient suffers from the effect of the herb.

Witchweed — inhaled, DC 15, 1d4 Wis/ 1d4 Wis; Cost: 100 gp. Witchweed is a potent hallucinogen used by jungle shamans during the most sacred of rituals. The thick black smoke produced by burning this reddish vine obscures a 10-foot cube exactly the same as a smokestick (see *PHB*, Chapter 7, "Smokestick").

Yellow Jungle Poisons and Herbs

Lethargy Blossom — injury, DC 17, 1d6 Dex/ unconsciousness; Cost: 200 gp. The flowers from these plants can be powdered down into a paste which causes unconsciousness in those who fall victim to it.

Silver Fern Oil — ingested, DC 14, 1d2 Str/ 1d6 Str; Cost: 100 gp. In the jungle undergrowth a type of fern grows with characteristic silver edges on its leaves. Though beautiful, the fern's leaves are tasteless and highly toxic.

Wasting Wood Oil — injury, DC 15, 1d6 Con/ 2d6 Con; Cost: 250 gp. The bark and leaves of many jungle trees exude a toxin that makes travel hazardous. This oil is often used to coat weapons by the local tribes.

Death-touched

The Isle of the Dead is spoken of with fear by most sane folk across western Termana. This island radiates a foul necromantic energy that quickly drains the life from any living being who attempts to explore this place, raising them again to prowl the island in an eternal unlife. The dangers of this place are enough to discourage most people from visiting; some few, however, actively seek out the island. For the careful, or the foolhardy, this island offers a route to power. While the isle saps the life out of those exposed, it also leaves its visitors forever changed.

The death-touched are a relatively recent phenomena. After the second invasion of the Ghoul King, the Order of the Sun sent several groups to explore the island in order to finally eliminate the threat posed by the nearby isle. Most of those groups perished, though a handful of brave men and women managed to return, bruised and battered, to the Citadel of the Sun. These survivors, however, could not purge the lingering effects the island had on their souls. Within a year's time, all found themselves in conflict with

the Order. Though some have since been imprisoned, not all have been accounted for.

In the last twenty years, several mysterious cults have appeared in major cities—not only in Silverisle, but also in Padrinola, the Gray Isle, and as distant as Virduk's Promise and Pelegael. The activities of these cults vary, but they often organize covert trips to the Isle of the Dead to create more death-touched. These cults also serve as power bases for powerful death-touched to accomplish their individual aims. Society's impoverished and overlooked are specifically targeted for recruitment. These people find it difficult to refuse such a seemingly quick and easy way to power. The cult smuggles these new aspirants out of the city in the dead of the night, where they undergo a long treacherous trip to the Isle of the Dead. If they aren't confronted by Silverisle patrols, pirates or titanspawn along the way, most succumb to the necromantic emanations of the island or to the undead that wander its shores. Few return, but those who do are consid-



ered true members and return to study the further effects of the island's dark power.

Hit Die: d12

Requirements

To qualify to become a death-touched (Dtc), a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus: +2

Skill: Gather Information 3 ranks, Knowledge (undead) 6 ranks

Special: Sufficient exposure to the necromantic energy of the Isle of the Dead to risk level loss.

Class Skills

The death-touched's class skills are: Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (undead) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the death-touched prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Death-touched gain no additional proficiencies with weapons or armor.

Necromantic Attunement: After the death-touched's exposure to the necromantic energies of the Isle of the Dead, he becomes partially inured to the life-draining abilities of many undead. The death-touched gains a +1 bonus to saving throws related to any attack that causes negative levels or ability drain from negative energy. This bonus increases to +2 at 3rd level, +3 at 5th level, and +4 at 7th level.

Flesh of the Dead: The death-touched starts to gain the preternatural resilience of the undead. If an

attacker threatens a critical hit on a death-touched, the death-touched adds his class level to his AC for purposes of resolving whether the attack is a critical hit.

For example, an attacker rolls a natural 20 when attacking a character with 4 levels in the death-touched prestige class. The death-touched receives a +4 bonus to his AC on the subsequent roll to determine whether the attack actually scores a critical hit.

Pallor of Death: At 2nd level, the death-touched begins a slow transformation into a creature halfway between life and undeath. At this stage, the character looks less vibrant, less alive. This gives the character a -2 penalty on Diplomacy checks when dealing with the living, but gives the character a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy, Gather Information and Bluff checks when dealing with undead (or those who work closely with undead), and a +2 bonus to all Intimidate checks. In addition, the character doesn't naturally offend semi-sentient and mindless undead, and these creatures won't specifically target the character, though they may follow orders to do so, and will certainly attack the death-touched if he attacks them first.

Necromantic Art: Starting at 2nd level, the death-touched can harness some of his own inherent negative energy to simulate necromantic spells. At every even level, the character chooses a spell that he may cast as a spell-like ability once per day. This spell must either be from the school of Necromancy or from the clerical Domain of Death. The rating of Necromantic Art reflects the highest level of spell the character may choose. This ability takes a standard action to invoke and requires no components. Spells that require an XP expenditure cannot be chosen as a Necromantic Art.

Blasphemous Health: At 3rd level, the character now suffers a painful reaction to positive energy. If the character has a conjuration (healing) spell cast

Table A-1: The Death-touched (Dtc)

| Class Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---|
| 1st | +0 | +2 | +0 | +2 | Necromantic attunement, flesh of the dead |
| 2nd | +1 | +3 | +0 | +3 | Pallor of death, necromantic art I |
| 3rd | +2 | +3 | +1 | +3 | Blasphemous health |
| 4th | +3 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Necromantic art II |
| 5th | +3 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Undying perseverance |
| 6th | +4 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Necromantic art III |
| 7th | +5 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Unliving physiology |
| 8th | +6 | +6 | +2 | +6 | Necromantic art IV |
| 9th | +6 | +6 | +3 | +6 | Mantle of the undead |
| 10th | +7 | +7 | +3 | +7 | Necromantic art V |

on him, he takes damage equal to what would have normally been cured. Any spells that heal undead (such as *inflict* spells) affect the character as if he were undead.

Undying Perseverance: At 5th level, death is no longer a fear or deterrent. The character may still act even if brought below 0 hp. A death-touched in such a state is considered undead, with all the benefits and penalties thereof. He may only take a move action each round. He may continue to act until he is brought to -10 hp, and which point he falls. One round later, the necromantic energy infused in him will animate him fully as an undead. Although most death-touched become zombies or ghouls, the type of undead is at the GM's discretion, and particularly powerful characters might return as more potent

undead such as vampires. Such animation renders the character incapable of being *raised* or *resurrected*. The character becomes an NPC.

Unliving Physiology: As a death-touched practices with the energies that are imbued in him, his body starts to fail. Though it loses none of its capabilities, many of the body's humours cease to function. His body grows cold, and the character becomes more resistant to attacks that target his physiology. At this point the death-touched is forever immune to diseases, toxins and poisons.

Mantle of the Undead: At 9th level, the death-touched has fully embraced his necromantic energy and is now but a step away from undeath. The death-touched is forever immune to the negative effects of necromantic energy, including ability drain and negative levels.

Are you tired of living on the bottom rung, stepped on by those who believe themselves your betters?

Are you sick of struggling while others live off your toil?

Are you ready to see power in the hands of those truly willing to work for it?

It's time to take that power, seize control over your own life and make a difference.

Far across the sea lies an island lost in mystery. This land is a source of power and grants its gifts to any willing to risk the treacherous journey to reach it. This place is called Huron, and is spoken of in legend as the Isle of the Dead, mentioned as a place of death and sorrow. These are lies told to us by those wanting to hide its secret. They don't want simple folk like us to find the truth. They fear we might discover a path for influence greater than theirs. It is time for hardworking folk to rise and send the quiescent nobles to naught. This is the time for our ascendance. Are you ready to set the path for your life, rather than follow the one handed to you? If so, speak with Mydral at the Falling Star.

—pamphlet found posted in the Swordsman's Struggle Inn in Nehala.

High Magus

The forsaken elven nations of Termana have a magical tradition that pervades every aspect of daily lives. Common elves use small and simple magics to enhance their lives and sustain hope in their dying realms. The most powerful elven wizards, known as the high magi, take the magical nature of elves to new heights to defend the elven realms. These powerful wizards are masters of illusion and protective magics, allowing them to confuse and bewilder their enemies or keep them at bay with their arts. Each elven realm has its own unique order of high magi, though once they were a unified order, sundered during the chaos of the Titanswar.

The Order of the Rose, the most ancient and respected order of high magi, occupies the Eternal Isle, an island isolated from the rest of the elven nations since the Titanswar. With the aid of their ancient dragon allies, the Order of the Rose protects the rest of Termana by containing demonic forces released upon the Eternal Isle during the Titanswar. These high magi are scholars of planar knowledge as well as masters of abjuration magics, and they may well be the last remaining elves unaffected by Chern's curse.

The Order of the Star of the Skysight Realm contains the most powerful and prominent wizards left to the elven realms outside the Eternal Isle. Unlike the Order of the Rose, the high magi that dominate this realm spend little time devoted to the protection of the elven nations. Instead, they rule the realm with distance and detachment, conduct magical research, and communicate with outsiders. The magic of the Order of the Star often takes on a darker tone than most elven magics, as these

wizards bind outsiders and toy with the forces of life and death themselves. Nevertheless, Order of the Star high magi have a well-deserved reputation as excellent diviners and illusionists.

The Southsea Realm's high magi, known as the Order of the Wave, spend much of their time maintaining the magical and physical barriers that hold back the might of the sea and allow the nation to exist. Their focus on abjuration magic helps immeasurably in this task, both in restraining the water and driving off monstrous attackers. Quite a few high magi of this order serve as ship wizards on the remnants of the elven fleet maintained by Ehitovael.

The Shield Realm's Order of the Blade is composed of notoriously martial wizards



who combine powerful illusion magic with force of arms. This order fanatically defends the elven nations against the nigh-unstoppable Charduni Empire, and are the quickest to strengthen their faltering forces with half-elven recruits, pragmatically setting aside their prejudices in the name of survival. Members of the Order of the Blade are known for wielding rapiers.

Like the rest of their hedonistic realm, the Midrealm's Order of the Eagle magi focus on personal comfort, bending their magic away from more pragmatic pursuits. Magi of this order use their illusions to hide the decay of their realm, to entertain, or even to play elaborate pranks. Unlike more traditional orders, the Order of the Eagle recruit half-elves, though often on a whim or as a lark. The Order of the Eagle is the only sect of high magi that accepts bards as full members, provided they are capable of casting the *eagle song* spell.

Often multiclassing as druids, member of the Order of the Leaf of the Forest Realm prefer magic that connects them more closely with nature. These magi have a great aptitude for illusion-based spells that allow them to maintain their solitude within the wilderness. Forest Realm legend has it that elder members of the order do not die, but become so attuned to the forest that they become one with it, losing all individuality.

High magi are most often wizards, although exceptional and powerful sorcerers or bards may be permitted to join a lenient order. Clerics and druids rarely become high magi unless they also multiclass as wizards. Although high magi with levels of fighter or ranger are not uncommon in the Order of the Blade, outside this order it is very rare to find a high magus with levels in the martial classes.

Hit Die: d4

Requirements

To qualify to become a High Magus (Hmg), a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Feats: Spell Focus (Abjuration), Spell Focus (Illusion)

Race: Forsaken Elf (although some orders have been known to accept half-elves of forsaken elf heritage)

Skill: Knowledge (arcane) 10 ranks, Spellcraft 10 ranks, and the appropriate Order class skill from the table below at 5 ranks.

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast five separate Illusion and Abjuration arcane spells, one of each must be at least level 4.

Special: Character must be accepted for training by the appropriate order.

Class Skills

The high magus' class skills are Concentration (Con), Craft (any) (Int), Knowledge (any) (Int), Profession (Wis), Ritual Casting (Con), Spellcraft (Int). In addition, the high magus gains proficiency in an additional skill based on her order according to the following table.

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

| Order | Class Skill |
|-------|--------------------|
| Rose | Knowledge (planes) |
| Leaf | Survival |
| Star | Spellcraft |
| Wave | Swim |
| Blade | Tumble |
| Eagle | Diplomacy |

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the high magus prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: High magi do not gain proficiency with any weapons or armor. Armor of any type interferes with the high magus' arcane gestures, which can cause his spells to fail if those spells have somatic components.

Spellcasting: High magi continue to advance in spellcasting ability. When a new high magus level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of controlling or rebuking undead, metamagic or item creation feats, and so on). This essentially means that he adds the level of high magus to the level of some other spellcasting class the character has, then determines spell per day and caster level accordingly.

If a character had more than one spellcasting class before he became a high magus, he must decide to which class he adds each level of high magus for purposes of determining spells per day when he adds the new level. Levels in this class do stack for the purposes of familiar advancement.

Dual Specialty: When memorizing spells, the high magus may choose her bonus specialization spell per level from either the Illusion or Abjuration schools, regardless of her original specialization school. If the high magus was not previously a specialist, she may now specialize in either Illusion or Abjuration even if her class does not normally allow it. High magi who choose to specialize need not pick additional opposition schools unless they are specializing for the first time.

Merged Casting (Su): The high magus may merge illusion and abjuration spells, allowing them

Table A-2: The High Magus (Hmg)

| Class Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special | Spells per Day |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1st | +0 | +0 | +0 | +2 | Dual specialty | +1 spellcasting level |
| 2nd | +1 | +0 | +0 | +3 | Merged casting | +1 spellcasting level |
| 3rd | +1 | +1 | +1 | +3 | | +1 spellcasting level |
| 4th | +2 | +1 | +1 | +4 | Enhanced focus | +1 spellcasting level |
| 5th | +2 | +1 | +1 | +4 | | +1 spellcasting level |
| 6th | +3 | +2 | +2 | +5 | Skill focus | +1 spellcasting level |
| 7th | +3 | +2 | +2 | +5 | | +1 spellcasting level |
| 8th | +4 | +2 | +2 | +6 | Enhanced focus | +1 spellcasting level |
| 9th | +4 | +3 | +3 | +6 | | +1 spellcasting level |
| 10th | +5 | +3 | +3 | +7 | Shatter resistance | +1 spellcasting level |

to cast one spell from each school with a single full round action. The total level of these combined spells must be equal to or less than the high magus' class level. Each spell must have a casting time of a standard action or less. For example, a 5th level high magus may cast *invisibility* and *dispel magic* as a single full round action. Metamagic feats may be applied to a merged casting as normal, assuming that the spells being cast were previously prepared with metamagic feats. Metamagic feats may not be applied spontaneously, even if the caster's class normally allows it.

Enhanced Focus: Add a +4 bonus to the DC of either illusion or abjuration spells cast. This bonus does not stack with the Spell Focus feat. Each time this ability is gained, a new school (either Abjuration or Illusion) may be chosen.

Skill Focus: The high magus receives a bonus Skill Focus feat for the skill that is keyed to the magus's order (see table above for the indicated skills).

Shatter Resistance (Su): High magi often must face dangerous outsiders and other magic resistant beasts. By overwhelming such monsters with arcane energy, the high magus can rend through the creature's magic resistance. As a standard action, the high magus can sacrifice a memorized spell (or spell slot) of 1st level or higher to lower an enemy's SR by an amount equivalent to the spell level for 1 hour unless the opponents makes a Will save (DC 10 + high magus level + Int modifier). Multiple spells can be sacrificed over several rounds for a cumulative effect. This ability may be used as a ray attack against opponents within Medium range (100 ft. + 10 ft./level), and the opponent's SR does not apply against this ability.

One in Black

In the Land of Chains, Chardun the Overlord reigns supreme. As the Great General bids, the strong and the devout must dominate the weak and the unfit. Under the vigilant gaze of the One in White, harsh charduni masters command their wretched thralls. Standing over the charduni masses, however, the Ones in Black are exemplars of the righteous order and dark power of Chardun. Ones in black are found throughout the Charduni Empire and, more rarely, in the intolerant nation of Dunahnae.

These elite warriors don all-black armor and carry the massive warscepters of the Overlord as a symbol of their devotion. The Ones in Black are known for their ability to wield the weapons of Chardun, whether they be scepter or necromancy, domination or fear, avarice or ambition. They serve as bodyguards, lieutenants and dark champions of the mighty church of Chardun. Like their paladin counterparts, the Ones in Black represent an individual investiture of power instead of the well-organized armies that the Great General usually prefers.

Clerics and fighters most often don the black in service to Chardun, but monks, rangers and rogues occasionally take up this path. Most rarely, a wizard or sorcerer will take this prestige class in order to enhance his skill with necromancy and martial ability. Ones in black combine impressive martial talent with potent necromancy, fear, and domination magics.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify to become a One in Black (Obk), a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Alignment: Lawful Evil

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Feats: Exotic Weapon (warscepter), Iron Will

Race: Charduni dwarf

Skill: Intimidate 5 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 5 ranks, Profession (soldier) 10 ranks

Spellcasting: If cleric, must have access to the Domination domain.

Patron: Chardun

Class Skills

The One in Black's class skills are: Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the One in Black prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Ones in black are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with all armor and with shields.



Table A-3: The One in Black (Obk)

| Class Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special | Spells per Day |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| | | | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +0 | +2 | Rebuke Undead, Fear Aura 10 ft. | 0 — — — — |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +0 | +3 | Iron Mind +2 | 1 — — — — |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +1 | +3 | Necromancy | 1 0 — — — |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Craft Rod | 2 1 — — — |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Fear Aura 20 ft. | 2 1 0 — — |
| 6th | +6 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Iron Mind +4 | 3 2 1 — — |
| 7th | +7 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Improved Fear | 3 2 1 0 — |
| 8th | +8 | +6 | +2 | +6 | Chardun-Slain | 3 3 2 1 — |
| 9th | +9 | +6 | +3 | +6 | Fear Aura 30 ft. | 3 3 2 1 0 |
| 10th | +10 | +7 | +3 | +7 | Iron Mind +6 | 3 3 3 2 1 |

Spellcasting: At 1st level the One in Black gains the ability to cast several divine spells. To cast a spell, the One in Black must have a Wisdom score of at least 10 + the spell's level. One in black bonus spells are based on Wisdom, and saving throws against these spells have a DC of 10 + spell level + Wisdom modifier. When the One in Black gets 0 spells of a given level, he may cast only bonus spells. The One in Black's spell list appears below. The One in Black has access to any spell on the list of an appropriate level and prepares spells like a cleric, although the One in Black may not spontaneously cast *cure* or *inflict* spells.

Rebuke Undead (Su): The One in Black may rebuke or command undead as an cleric of equal level. Cleric class levels stack with One in Black levels for this purpose.

Fear Aura (Su): Ones in black are so accustomed to intimidating and terrifying those around them that they do so almost unconsciously. As Ones in Black advance in power, they project a fear aura with a radius dependent on the One in Black's level. Any creature within this aura that harbors ill intent toward the One in Black suffers from a fear effect (as per the *cause fear* spell) unless they make an appropriate Will save (DC 11 + One in Black's Wisdom modifier). This effect lasts only as long as the creature remains within the One in Black's fear aura and for 1 round thereafter. If a creature leaves and reenters the One in Black's aura, they must make another such save. A creature that makes a successful save is immune to the One in Black's fear aura for the rest of the day.

This is a mind-affecting fear effect that inflicts a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls and saving throws if the

Will save is failed. Creatures so afflicted will try to avoid confronting the One in Black as best they can, although they will defend themselves if attacked. Creatures with 6 or more Hit Dice are immune to this effect.

Iron Mind (Ex): At 3rd level the One in Black gains the ability to shrug off mind-influencing effects that would otherwise control or compel him. If the One in Black is subject to a mind-affecting spell or power, he may make another save the following round with a bonus based on the level of the iron mind ability. If this save is successful, the One in Black is no longer affected by the spell or power. Only one extra save attempt may be made for any spell or power.

Necromancy: At 3rd level, the One in Black gains the Spell Focus (Necromancy) feat. In addition, all spellcasting levels stack when determining the caster level of Necromancy spells cast by the One in Black.

Craft Rod: At 4th level, the One in Black gains the Craft Rod feat, even if he does not meet the feat's normal prerequisites. For the purposes of crafting rods, the One in Black's caster level is the total of One in Black levels plus any other spellcasting levels he may have.

Improved Fear (Su): Beginning at 7th level, the One in Black's fear aura now affects creatures of any number of Hit Dice. In addition, the Will save to avoid the fear effect is DC 16 + Wis modifier.

Death Thrall (Su): At 8th level, the One in Black is capable of animating Chardun-slain (see **Creature Collection Revised**) as undead servants. Only one Chardun-slain may be created per day, in an hour long ritual which requires no less than 150 gp-worth of onyx. The One in

Black may control up to twice his caster level in Chardun-slain at any time (this is in addition to the number of undead which a spellcaster can normally control).

One in Black Spell List

Ones in black choose their spells from the following list:

1st level—*bane*, *cadaver dance**, *cause fear*, *Chardun's glory***, *command*, *detect undead*, *grim feast**, *inflict light wounds*.

2nd level—*aura of menace***, *bull's strength*, *commanding presence**, *death knell*, *desecrate*, *inflict moderate wounds*, *rend the sovereign soul**, *scare*.

3rd level—*animate dead*, *Chardun's torments**, *curse of terror**, *fist of iron*§, *inflict serious wounds*, *repair dead***, *suggestion*.

4th level—*cloak of righteousness**, *Chardun's presence***, *chains of binding***, *dominate person*, *fear*, *inflict serious wounds*, *lesser geas*, *unholy channel**.

5th level—*circle of doom*, *create undead*, *darksoul***, *greater command**, *mind fog*, *righteous might*, *shadow chains***, *visage of the overlord*†.

* From Relics & Rituals

** From Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore

† From Divine & Defeated

Sister of the Sun

Although Corean is known for his paladins, and is served by some of the most famous knightly orders in the Scarred Lands, paladins serve other gods as well, though in smaller numbers. The Sisters of the Sun is an unusual order in that it is composed entirely of female paladins who serve Madriel and do her work, healing and tending to the sick, protecting the innocent, and attempting to redeem all that is evil with the Mother's infinite mercy.

This is not to say that the Sisters are a passive order — far from it. When evil is abroad in the land, no warriors battle it more fiercely than the Sisters of the Sun, and when there is injustice, no order opposes it with greater vigor. But the Sisters see their real mission as healing and succor, and the quest to find the good in even the darkest of hearts. Those foes who prove irredeemable are dealt with swiftly and mercifully, their evil extinguished and their souls sent on to their reward. The Sisters take no joy in the death of an enemy, and see such things as a painful but necessary part of returning Scarn to health, something akin to removing a diseased limb for the sake of the body.

The Sisters are based on Silverisle, off southwestern Termana, and play an important role in controlling the undead and evil creatures of that continent. They are dedicated foes of the evil Jack of Tears and his minions, and also serve as wardens, keeping the walking dead contained, and fighting the liches, vampires and other powerful undead that plague southern Termana.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a Sister of the Sun (Ssn), a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Ability: Detect evil as a spell-like ability.

Alignment: Lawful Good

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Deity: Madriel

Skill: Knowledge (religion) 4 ranks, Knowledge (undead) 2 ranks, Spellcraft 3 ranks

Special: Must be female

Class Skills

The Sister of the Sun's class skills are: Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Knowledge (undead) (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Sister of the Sun prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Sisters of the Sun are proficient with simple and martial weapons and with all types of armor and with shields.

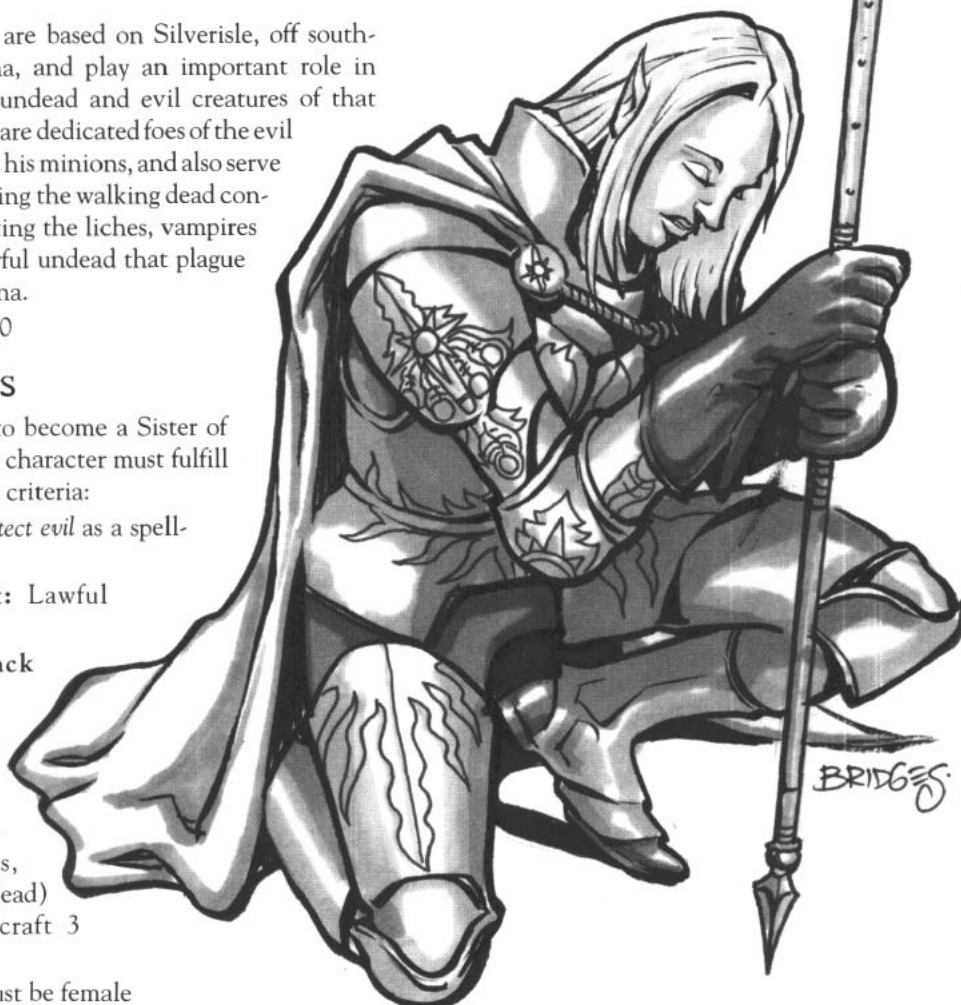


Table A—4: The Sister of the Sun (Ssn)

| Class Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +0 | +2 | Convert |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +0 | +3 | Power of mercy 1/day |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +1 | +3 | Light of justice 1/day, stun evil |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Convert 2/day |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Power of mercy 2/day |
| 6th | +6 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Light of justice 2/day |
| 7th | +7 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Convert 3/day, paralyze evil |
| 8th | +8 | +6 | +2 | +6 | Power of mercy 3/day |
| 9th | +9 | +6 | +3 | +6 | Light of justice 3/day |
| 10th | +10 | +7 | +3 | +7 | Convert 4/day, destroy evil |

Lay on Hands (Su): A Sister of the Sun is able to use the paladin's *lay on hands* ability as if she was a paladin of her original level plus her Sister of the Sun level.

Smite Evil (Su): A Sister of the Sun adds her class level to her paladin levels when determining the damage caused when *smiting evil*.

Turn Undead (Su): A Sister of the Sun adds her class level to her paladin levels when determining her ability to turn undead.

Convert (Su): Madriel prefers that evildoers repent rather than be destroyed, and she grants her servants the ability to help them along. Beginning at 1st level, a Sister of the Sun can offer an evil creature an opportunity to be fully redeemed in the eyes of gods and mortals alike. This power functions as an *atonement* spell, but never requires components or the sacrifice of XP.

This power works *only* on those who truly wish to repent, and has no affect on unwilling subjects. This power may be used once per day at 1st level, twice at 4th, three at 7th, and four times per day at 10th level.

Power of Mercy (Su): In addition to the ability to convert non-good creatures, a Sister of the Sun can prevent an evil-aligned creature from using a special attack or special quality. This power counts as a full-attack action and requires the Sister to make a successful touch attack on her foe. The foe must then make a Will save against a DC equal to the Sister's character level plus her Charisma modifier. If the target fails, it loses the use of one special attack or quality for one full day. The special attack or quality is chosen by the Sister. If she does not know what special attacks and qualities her foe has, the lost ability is determined randomly. At 5th level, she can use this ability twice per day, and at 8th level she can use it three times per day.

Light of Justice (Sp): Once per day, beginning at 3rd level, the Sister may transform her weapon into

a burning brand of near solar brilliance. This ability only functions if the Sister is armed with a shortspear or longspear, the holy weapon of Madriel. Triggering this effect is a free action. The effects are equivalent to those of the spell *daylight*, and last for 10 minutes per class level. The Sister may use this ability twice per day at 6th level and three times per day at 9th level.

Stun Evil (Su): Once per day, the Sister may declare a successful *smite evil* attack to be a *stun evil* attempt. (This attack must come from the paladin *smite evil* class ability, not any other magic source.) Her foe must then make a successful Fortitude save against a DC equal to her combined Sister and paladin levels, plus her Charisma modifier, or be stunned for 1d6 rounds. Because this power is supernatural in nature, it is effective even against creatures normally immune to stunning.

Paralyze Evil (Su): Once per day, the Sister may declare a successful *smite evil* attack to be a *paralyze evil* attempt. Her foe must make a Fortitude save against DC equal to her combined Sister and paladin levels, plus her Charisma modifier, or be paralyzed for 1d4 hours. Because this power is supernatural in nature, it is effective even against creatures normally immune to paralyzation.

Destroy Evil (Su): Once per day, the Sister may declare a successful *smite evil* attack to be a *destroy evil* attempt. Her foe must then make a Fortitude save against a DC equal to her Sister of the Sun level plus *half* her paladin levels, plus her Charisma modifier. If the Fortitude save is a failure, then the foe is instantly slain. Even if they save succeeds, the attack is automatically considered a critical hit. (Remember that a paladin's bonus damage from *smite evil* is also multiplied on a critical hit.) Because this power is supernatural in nature, it is effective even against creatures normally immune to critical hits.

Tepuje Winddancer

Like grand ziggurats reaching to the distant heavens, the mighty tepujes erupt from the jungle canopy in stark contrast to the sea of foliage that is the Gamulganjus. Men have conquered these strange formations of the jungle, learning to use their stony carapaces for shelter, to grow food in their warm bosoms and even to soar from their precipitous peaks. In the form of the winddancer, the people of the tepujes have learned to fly.

The winddancers form an elite and exclusive corps who are part scout, part messenger and part aerial warrior. Most winddancers hail from the aristocracy of the tepujes, being trained at a young age to forsake the land and embrace the heavens. Acceptance into the winddancers is also granted as a reward to those who have proven their valor in the service of the tepuje city-states, and many a hero has been gifted with a wind-glider as a token of appreciation. The possession of a wind-glider is a symbol of the owner's status, much as a warhorse is in feudal societies. However, possessing a wind-glider is one thing, having the skill and training to use one is entirely different.

The art of wind-dancing is quite dangerous to learn. Very little of the art can be taught by teachers, and a student must often trust to the spirits to protect her. A winddancer learns the subtle play of winds over the jungle canopy, often hundreds of feet below, and any mistake can quickly end a student's life. The *ushada* of the winds can be fickle and capricious, and many inexperienced fliers have lost their lives

for failing to give the Wind Lords proper devotion. Many winddancers claim one of the Wind Lords as their totem, in order to receive protection during their arduous journeys. Those who don't enact the proper rituals risk slow travel and treacherous winds at best, a quick descent hundreds of feet to the forest floor at worst.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a tepuje winddancer (Tep), a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus: +3

Feats: Alertness, Endurance, Windrider

Skill: Balance 5 ranks, Craft (wind-glider) 5 ranks, Diplomacy 3 ranks, Listen 3 ranks, Spot 3 ranks

Class Skills

The tepujes winddancer's class skills are: Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Tumble (Dex), Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6
+ Int modifier.

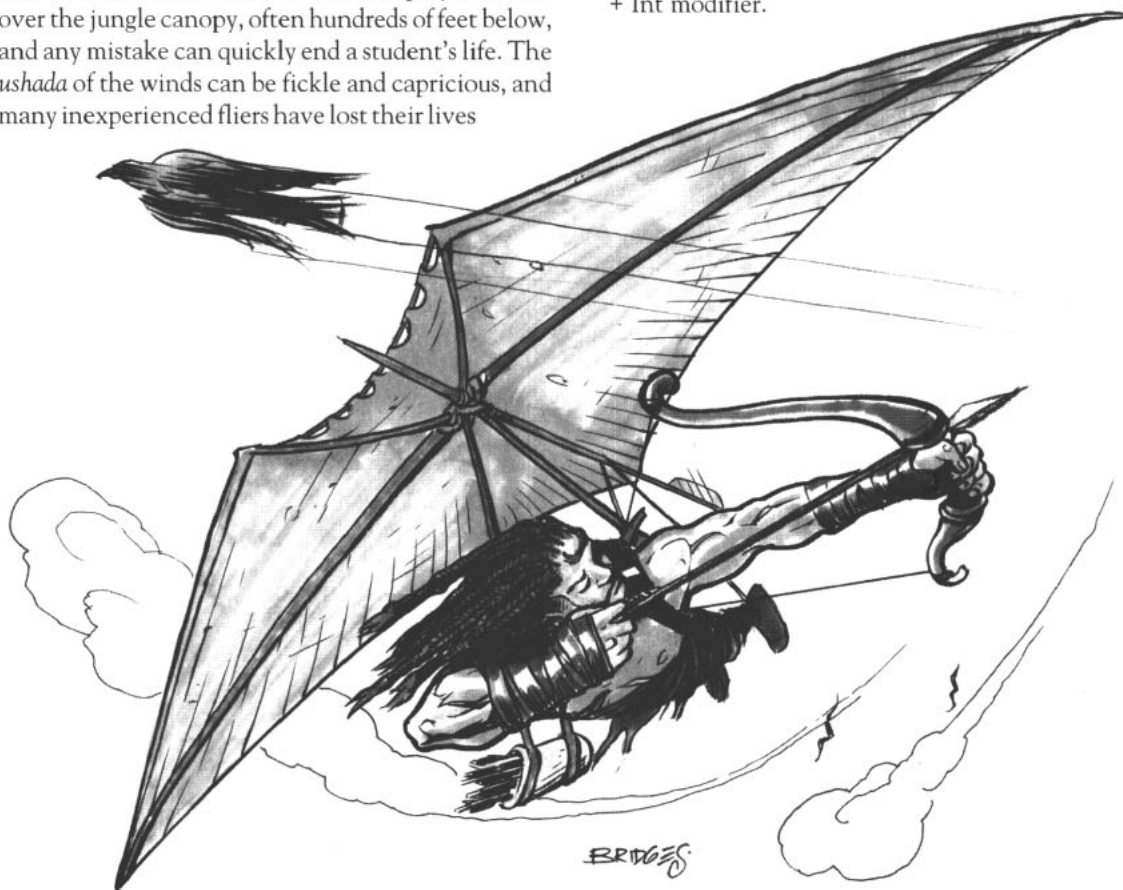


Table A—6: Tepuje Winddancer (Tep)

| Class Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------------------|
| 1st | +1 | +2 | +2 | +0 | Fluid strike |
| 2nd | +2 | +3 | +3 | +0 | Enduring vigil |
| 3rd | +3 | +3 | +3 | +1 | Grace of the sparrow |
| 4th | +4 | +4 | +4 | +1 | Eagle's sight |
| 5th | +5 | +4 | +4 | +1 | Strike of the night owl |
| 6th | +6 | +5 | +5 | +2 | Harness the man-wings |
| 7th | +7 | +5 | +5 | +2 | Ceaseless vigil |
| 8th | +8 | +6 | +6 | +2 | Embracing the sky |
| 9th | +9 | +6 | +6 | +3 | Wheeling of the falcon |
| 10th | +10 | +7 | +7 | +3 | Master of the heavens |

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the tepuje winddancer prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Tepuje winddancers are proficient with simple and martial weapons, and with light armor.

Fluid Strike (Ex): While flying a wind-glider in combat, the winddancer may choose to take his standard action in the middle of his move action, instead of before or after. Moving through an opponent's threatened area still provokes an attack of opportunity. If the winddancer also has the Spring Attack feat, moving through an opponent's threatened area with Fluid Strike does *not* provoke an attack of opportunity.

Enduring Vigil (Su): As part of her duties, a winddancer must become accustomed to long periods of time spent awake and flying. At 2nd level, a winddancer's training allows her to continue flying much longer than others can walk. The winddancer can add her winddancer level (as well as any bonuses for the Endurance feat) to her Constitution roll to resist damage from a forced march while flying great distances.

Grace of the Sparrow (Ex): At 3rd level, the winddancer can spur her wind-glider to increased speed and mobility. When she is flying a wind-glider, her flying speed is now 80 feet and her maneuverability is now Poor.

Eagle's Sight (Ex): At 4th level, the winddancer has become accustomed to reconnaissance while at a great height and her perceptions are honed like those of a raptor. The winddancer gains a +5 circumstance bonus to all Spot and Search skill checks while flying.

Strike of the Night Owl (Ex): Much like a hunting owl, the winddancer can silently and effectively strike an opponent on the ground. The winddancer can swoop and attack a ground target as a full attack action, moving a total distance equal to twice her Speed. She may make an attack on one target along her path of movement, which receives a +2 bonus on the attack roll due to her momentum. This is considered a charge action but the

winddancer doesn't receive any penalty to AC because of this action. If the winddancer is armed with a lance, she does double damage with this maneuver.

Harness the Man-Wings (Ex): At 6th level the winddancer has become an expert at using and operating a wind-glider. The character no longer suffers any penalties while being harnessed in a wind-glider and can make attacks and use skills as normal.

Ceaseless Vigil (Su): The winddancer has learned to endure the rigors of extended travel using a wind-glider. At this level, the character can enter a trance like state that postpones the need for sleep. The winddancer can remain in this state for a number of days equal to her character level, but can do nothing other fly the wind-glider. She may leave this state at any time, but if it has been more than a day since she last slept, the character is fatigued and runs the risk of passing out. Every minute she spends fatigued after ending her vigil, she must make a Constitution check (DC 10 +1 per minute spent fatigued) or else fall unconscious. Reentering the vigil eliminates the fatigue and the character doesn't need to make any further Constitution rolls. The longest a winddancer can go without sleep is her character level in days.

Embracing the Sky (Ex): The winddancer further improves the performance of her wind-glider, increasing the speed to 100 feet and the maneuverability to Average.

Wheeling of the Falcon (Ex): The winddancer can perform a "wingover" maneuver allowing her to make a 180 degree turn once per round. The winddancer cannot gain altitude during a round she performs this maneuver, but may descend.

Master of the Heavens (Ex): At this level, the winddancer becomes the undisputed master of the sky. Using the maneuverability of her wind-glider to her advantage she gains a +2 to any attack rolls she makes. By using her wind-glider defensively she can choose one opponent and gain 1/2 cover from any attacks made by that opponent.

Wind-Glider

Cost: 100gp +

Weight: 80 lb. +

The wind-glider is the principle mode of travel for those who venture far from the tepujes, and is a symbol of status among the influential of these city states. Though citizens of the tepuje cities travel by foot when hunting game and searching the jungle for supplies, the wind-gliders are used for quick transport between cities. The wind-glider consists of a large sail, usually of leather, pulled taut on a frame of bamboo or wood. Leather straps for the shoulders and ankles support the rider and keep his hands free for steering. A wind-glider is expensive and usually reserved for the wealthy and influential of the tepuje cities. As symbols of wealth, they are often ornamented and decorated. A few even incorporate tepuje crystals and some are enchanted (either magically or psionically.) A typical wind-glider has a hardness of 5, 10 hp and a break DC of 16. If the wind-glider takes more than 3 hp of damage, the glider cannot be flown until the damage is repaired.

Windrider [General]

The wind-glider is a complicated item to operate and requires training to use effectively. A character with this feat has mastered the use of the wind-glider for both transportation and combat.

Prerequisites: Dex 13

Benefit: By using air currents, the character can actually fly (gain altitude) with a wind-glider. When used by the character, the wind-glider grants a speed of 60 feet with a maneuverability of Clumsy. The wind-glider still interferes with most physical actions the character attempts and while harnessed in a wind-glider; the character suffers a -2 armor check penalty, and a -1 circumstance penalty to attack rolls and AC.

Normal: The wind-glider can only glide, giving the character a speed of 60 feet but descending 20 feet every round. A wind-glider is very cumbersome and a character harnessed in a wind-glider suffers a -4 armor check penalty and a -2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls and AC.

Viromancer

Termana may well have the largest concentration of venoms, toxins and pestilence in all of the Scarred Lands. From the deep canopy of the Gamulganjus to the blighted waste of the Plaguelands to the festering swamps of the Blood Bayou, Termana is a hazardous place where death lies innocuously behind every tree and under every leaf. It is quite understandable, then, that some individuals have devoted themselves to the study of poisons and diseases in an attempt to master what is perhaps the most dangerous foe on Termana. Viromancers are an eclectic group of spellcasters who delve into magic that manipulates poisons and toxins.

The specific type of magic matters little — wizards stand equal among priests of the Reaver and followers of the Hag Queen as viromancers. All that is required is knowledge of diseases and poisons, the magic that manipulates them, and personal exposure to the principles of that magic.

Though most viromancers are both solitary and reclusive, there are a few organizations through the continent where viromancers congregate. Along the northern coast of Ganjulael lie the blighted and festering Plaguelands. Here viromancers congregate, mostly humans and half-elves from the elven kingdoms, in an al-



most unholy pilgrimage to visit the land where Chern fell. A cult, calling itself the Harbingers of the Ill Wind, has developed to pay homage to the Scourge. Further west, in the Blood Bayou, a more secular organization devoted to the study of toxins and disease has developed under the auspices of the Momus and Lord Quick.

Hit Die: d4

Requirements

To qualify to become a viromancer (Vir), a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Base Fort Save: +3

Skill: Craft (alchemy) 5 ranks, Heal 8 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 5 ranks or Knowledge (religion) 5 ranks

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast 3rd level spells, including 3 spells from the viromancer specialty list.

Special: Must have been affected by and recovered from a disease or poison.

Class Skills

The viromancer's class skills are: Concentration (Con), Craft (any) (Int), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (Int), Profession (Wis), Ritual Casting (Con), Search (Int), Spellcraft (Int), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

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

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Viromancers are proficient with no extra weapons, armor or shields. Armor of any type interferes with the viromancer's arcane gestures, which can cause her spells to fail (if those spells have somatic components).

Spellcasting: Viromancers continue to advance in spellcasting ability. When a viromancer gains a new level in the prestige class (other than 3rd and 7th), the character gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in a spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have received (improved chance of controlling or rebuking undead, metamagic or item creation feats, and so on). This essentially means that she adds the level of viromancer to the level of some other spellcasting class the

character has, then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly.

If a character had more than one spellcasting class before she became a viromancer, she must decide to which class she adds each level of viromancer for purposes of determining spells per day when she adds the new level. Levels in this class do not stack for the purposes of familiar advancement/turning-rebuking undead/etc.

Poison Use: A viromancer is skilled in the use of poison. When handling poison, she never runs the risk of accidentally poisoning herself.

Enhanced Spell Progression: A viromancer has a small list of spells that are considered specialty spells. These viromancer spells are considered to be on the character's spell list and a viromancer can use any spell slot of the appropriate level to cast a viromancer spell. The type of spell slot used determines whether the viromancer spell cast is arcane or divine. These spells, when cast by a viromancer, are more potent than when cast by other spellcasters. A viromancer may add +2 to the DC for any saving throws required by any viromancer spells she casts.

Disease/Poison Immunity (Su): Starting at 2nd level, and every second level thereafter, the viromancer may choose one specific nonmagical disease or poison, to which she then becomes immune. The character can never be affected by that specific disease or toxin. Furthermore, if the chosen affliction is a disease, the character is considered to permanently have the disease and is a vector for spreading that disease.

Disease Artistry (Su): As a viromancer is exposed to more diseases, she learns to tailor the effects to suit her purposes. At 3rd level, a viromancer can increase the virulence of a disease she currently carries (whether she is immune or not), raising the Fortitude save DC +2 for others to resist the effects of the disease. At 7th level, this mastery increases to such a degree that the viromancer can change the vector of the disease to any one of the following: Contact, Ingested, Inhaled or Injury. Changing a disease is a standard action.

Poison Artistry (Su): At 5th level, the viromancer can increase the potency of any poison she is immune to, mixing it with some of her own toxic blood. Fortifying the venom requires a standard action, and raises the Fortitude save DC of the poison by +2.

Table A-7: Viromancer (Vir)

| Class Level | Base Attack | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special | Spells per Day |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|----------------------------|
| | Bonus | | | | | |
| 1st | +0 | +2 | +0 | +2 | Poison use, enhanced spell progression | +1 level of existing class |
| 2nd | +1 | +3 | +0 | +3 | Disease/poison immunity | +1 level of existing class |
| 3rd | +1 | +3 | +1 | +3 | Disease artistry | — |
| 4th | +2 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Disease/poison immunity | +1 level of existing class |
| 5th | +2 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Poison artistry +1 level of existing class | |
| 6th | +3 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Disease/poison immunity | +1 level of existing class |
| 7th | +3 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Disease artistry | — |
| 8th | +4 | +6 | +2 | +6 | Disease/poison immunity | +1 level of existing class |
| 9th | +4 | +6 | +3 | +6 | Master of plague | +1 level of existing class |
| 10th | +5 | +7 | +3 | +7 | Master of venom | +1 level of existing class |

Master of Plague (Su): At 9th level, the viromancer becomes an expert in diseases. Her exposure to pestilence has rendered her immune to all normal diseases. She may use the abilities of disease artistry to affect any disease she is handling, magical or not. Furthermore, the poxes the viromancer is afflicted with or handles are fast-acting, the incubation time being only a tenth of normal.

Master of Venom (Su): At 10th level, the viromancer is the undisputed master of all things debilitating. The viromancer is immune to all venoms and toxins, and can use the effects of poison artistry to affect any poison she is using. Also, she may use a standard action to change the vector of any poison to contact, ingested, inhaled, or injury.

Viromancer Enhanced Spell List

0-level—*bleeding disease**, *detect poison*.

1st level—*bed bug bites***, *delay poison*.

2nd level—*remove disease*, *Sethris' potency**.

3rd level—*contagion*, *neutralize poison*.

4th level—*poison*, *verminplague**.

5th level—*Durlock's withering pox*†, *insect plague*.

6th level—*Chern's exhalation***, *plague touch***.

7th level—*virulence***.

8th level—*horrid wilting*.

9th level—*incapacitate**.

* From *Relics & Rituals*

** From *Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore*

† From *Players Guide to Wizards, Bards, and Sorcerers*.

Weaver of Spirits

The human, terali, gnome and gnoll tribes of the Gamulganjus worship neither gods nor titans, instead associating with the spirits of nature that surround and protect them. The druids of these tribes worship these spirits, gaining power from the land directly rather than through intermediaries such as titans. Other tribal spellcasters, however, also draw upon these nature spirits to cast their spells. The black-pelted terali sorcerers known as marked ones and gnomish illusionists are best known for weaving spirits into their spells, granting the normally immaterial spirits form and substance.

The weavers of spirits take this process one step further by actually interacting directly with *ushada* to enhance their magic. These shamans are known to take a variety of mind-altering herbal solutions to induce trance-like states so they can be close to the spirit world. If the weaver of spirits can withstand the maddening visions and weakened stamina caused by this contact, the spirits reveal a world of shadows and a magical power beyond the grasp of more mundane spellcasters.

Weavers of spirits must maintain close ties with the spirits, constantly undertaking tasks and offering gifts to propitiate these primal forces. If properly satiated, the *ushada* provide the weaver of spirits with a powerful form of illusion magic and a connection to nature shared by only the most powerful druids.

This class is most useful to wizards, although it is also commonly taken by bards and sorcerers. More rarely, clerics or druids learn the illusion magics necessary to master the weaver of spirits' arts. The prestige class improves the character's ability to wield deadly illusions and allows her to create exotic herbal potions.

Hit Die: d4

Requirements

To qualify to become a weaver of spirits (Wos), a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Feats: Spell Focus (Illusion), Brew Potion

Skill: Craft (alchemy) 5 ranks, Heal 5 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks, Profession (herbalist) 10 ranks



Spellcasting: Ability to cast 5 illusion spells, one of which must be 3rd level; or ability to cast 3rd level druid spells.

Class Skills

The weaver of spirits's class skills are Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (arcane) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the weaver of spirits prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Weavers of spirits do not gain proficiency with any weapons or armor. Armor of any type interferes with gestures used by weavers who wield arcane magics, which can cause his spells to fail if those spells have somatic components.

Spellcasting: Weavers of spirits continue to advance in spellcasting ability. When a new weaver of spirits level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of controlling or rebuking undead, metamagic or item creation feats, and so on). This essentially means that he adds the caster levels of weaver of spirits to the level of some other spellcasting class the character has, then determines spell per day and caster level accordingly.

If a character had more than one spellcasting class before he became a weaver of spirits, he must decide to which class he adds each level of weaver of spirits for purposes of determining spells per day when he adds the new level. Levels in this class do not stack for the purposes of familiar advancement.

Herbal Magic (Ex): With their excellent knowledge of herbal lore, weavers of spirits are able to concoct potent mixtures to enhance their magic, albeit at some cost. Weavers of spirits can make a different herbal mix with each level of this skill with an appropriate Profession (herbalist) skill check. A weaver of spirits may either purchase materials equal to half of the market price of each herbal preparation and craft the solution as normal (see the Craft skill in Chapter 4 of the *PHB*) or gather the needed materials from the jungle. Gathering the materials from the jungle requires a number of days equal to the Craft DC for each preparation divided by 2 (in addition to the normal craft time) and a successful Knowledge (nature) check with a DC equal to the Craft DC of

the herbal preparation. These herbal solutions cannot affect characters that are immune to poisons.

Dlaruan induces mild delusions that place the character in closer contact with the spirit world — ingested, DC 12, 1d2 Wis/ 1d2 Wis. Effect: +1 alchemical bonus to all Illusion spell DCs for 1 hour; Craft DC 14; Market Price 25 gp.

Sren heals the body but surrounds the character with startling visions — ingested, DC 15, 1d4 Cha/ 1d4 Cha. Effect: fast healing 1 for 5 minutes; Craft DC 18; Market Price 50 gp.

Witchweed induces strong delusions and hallucinations that allow the character to contact spirits of great potency — ingested, DC 18, 1d8 Wis/ 1d8 Wis. Effect: +1 caster level bonus and +2 alchemical bonus to all Illusion spell DCs for 1 hour; Craft DC 22; Market Price 100 gp.

Ketresal purifies the body, but only at great cost to one's mind and soul — ingested, DC 21, 1d4 Cha + 1d4 Int/ 1d4 Cha + 1d4 Int. Effect: fast healing 3 for 10 minutes, purges all other natural poisons and diseases; Craft DC 26; Market Price 200 gp.

Mind's Eye allows the character to gain true harmony with the natural world, although he may lose his grasp on the mortal shell — ingested, DC 24, 1d8 Con/ 1d8 Con. Effect: *omniscience* (as the spell, see **Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore**) for 1 hour; Craft DC 30; Market Price 400 gp.

Shadow Spirits (Su): With his illusion magic, the weaver of spirits is able to give form to the spirits of nature, thereby adding an extra dimension to his spells. The weaver of spirits may prepare and cast the following spells as if they were on her class spell list: *greater shadow conjuration*, *greater shadow evocation*, *shades*, *shadow conjuration*, and *shadow evocation*. In addition, the weaver of spirits gains the following abilities as he gains levels:

Shadow Damage: All illusion spells with the shadow descriptor cast by the weaver of spirits are strengthened to inflict increased damage. Shadowy creatures summoned with these spells gain a +1 primal bonus to attack and damage rolls and +1 hit point per hit die. Spells that directly inflict damage cause +1 point of primal damage per die.

Empower Spell: A number of times per day equal to 1 + Charisma modifier, the weaver of spirits may enhance any illusion spell with the shadow descriptor with the Empower Spell feat without raising the spell level, even if she does not have the Empower Spell feat.

Maximize Spell: A number of times per day equal to 1 + Charisma modifier, the weaver of spirits may enhance any illusion spell with the shadow descriptor with the Maximize Spell feat without raising the spell level, even if he does not have the Maximize Spell feat. This ability may be used in

Table A—5: Weaver of Spirits (Wos)

| Class Level | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special | Spells per Day |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1st | +0 | +2 | +0 | +2 | Herbal magic 1 | +1 spellcasting level |
| 2nd | +1 | +3 | +0 | +3 | Shadow spirits (damage) | |
| 3rd | +1 | +3 | +1 | +3 | Herbal magic 2 | +1 spellcasting level |
| 4th | +2 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Visions | +1 spellcasting level |
| 5th | +2 | +4 | +1 | +4 | Herbal magic 3 | +1 spellcasting level |
| 6th | +3 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Shadow spirits (empower) | |
| 7th | +3 | +5 | +2 | +5 | Herbal magic 4 | +1 spellcasting level |
| 8th | +4 | +6 | +2 | +6 | Inflict hallucinations | +1 spellcasting level |
| 9th | +4 | +6 | +3 | +6 | Herbal magic 5 | +1 spellcasting level |
| 10th | +5 | +7 | +3 | +7 | Shadow spirits (maximize) | |

conjunction with the Empower Spell ability described above.

Visions (Su): The weaver of spirits is in constant contact with the minor nature spirits that surround her and give form to her spells. The character may choose any of the following spells to be active permanently, as information conveyed by these guardian spirits: *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *detect secret doors*, *detect thoughts*, *detect undead*,

or *see invisibility*. The weaver of spirits may alter this choice with a standard action. These spells are cast at the character's normal caster level.

Inflict Hallucinations (Sp): At 8th level, the weaver of spirits can overwhelm opponents with the full force of the illusionary spirits that continually surround him. He can cast *Gulaben's ecstasy* (see **Relic & Rituals II: Lost Lore**) twice per day at his normal caster level.

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