The Candlekeep Compendium

Volume VIII

Volume VIII

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EDITORIAL

elcome to the eighth volume of the Candlekeep Compendium. A collection of the finest Realmslore selected from the shelves of Candlekeep and delivered to us from our wandering scribes, forever seeking to further our knowledge of the Realms.

As always, our faithful, devoted scribes have been penning articles, filing reports and painting the images of our beloved Faerûn, upon which to feast thine eyes. Regular columns such as The Hammer's Stroke, Laborers of Toril, Untold Stories and Journals from an Apprentice Scribe need no introduction and are here in all their glory.

Ongoing reports and articles have also become a regular feature in the Compendium, and the latest installments regarding Shaundakul, the Hidden Lords of Waterdeep and a study of the Deep Gnolls are also contained herein.

Furthermore, there are a three new articles appearing in this volume, which I'm sure ye will find very interesting indeed. Following on from the focus of our stout dwarven friends in The Hammer's Stroke, we have a report on the Dwarves of the Dalelands, in The Village of Glen. A new column entitled In the Footsteps of the Gods makes it's debut in this volume with coverage of Moonfire - Blessed Water of Eldath. Last but certainly not least, is an article entitled Sprites of Faerûn, which speaks for itself and is certainly very intriguing; I must catch myself a few for a little entertainment and company.

I certainly hope ye enjoy these latest articles and enjoy our new columns to the Compendium. I'll leave ye to peruse the writings herein, and hope they bring ye many hours of enjoyment.

- Alaundo of Candlekeep

The Hammer's Stroke

Part VIII

By Kevin Liss
Illustration by Julius Petilla

onks of every world seek to perfect their art and self through training and dedication. This is as true in the Forgotten Realms as elsewhere. Many monks are trained in Kara-Tur, although their training and techniques have found their way to other parts of Faerûn. Seemingly improbable, dwarven monks are not unheard of, and it is even rumored that several schools exist in the realms of the Underdark and high in the mountains of the Spine of the World.

We will focus here on the world of the dwarven monk: their methods, their *ki,* and their powers. As befits the Stout Folk, monks of dwarven heritage do not train as other races of monks do. They are fundamentally different, but no less effective.

Methods

The life of a monk is a strange one to most dwarves, and rightfully so. Monks are not focused on the community at large, since they dedicate their training to self-perfection. This does not mean that they are of no value to their fellow dwarf. Several of the Morndinsamman faiths utilize monks as protectors of the faith. They often fight as hard and loyally as any; however, one cannot attain perfection except by oneself.

Dwarven monasteries are virtual fortresses, built to keep others out so that the monks can train and meditate. They are rarely found near dwarven cities or communities. Instead, they are built in secluded locations to allow for privacy. Only those monasteries dedicated to a dwarven god will be found attached to large holds or cities, exclusively of dwarven design. This excludes the Silver Marches' dwarven citadels of cloisters, due to the intermingling of races in these cities. However, it does include most of the Great Rift. Larger monasteries and training schools are thought to exist in both the Underdark and along the Spine of the World. These inhospitable environments seem impossible locations for any of the civilized races. However, these schools are large enough, with masters of such power, that few, if any, attacks are made on their halls. The more advanced students are believed to be powerful Stonelords as well, crafting their environment as well as themselves.

While the life of a monk is unusual for a dwarf, the strict discipline needed is not. The lawful, structured life of a dwarven community prepares monk students for the rigid life they will soon lead. It also allows for an easy transition back into dwarven society if and when a monk seeks to rejoin the community after a life of self-perfection.

Finally, the *ki* of a dwarf is wholly dwarven. The energy the *ki* draws upon is the power of the earth. This energy dictates the style and method of all the powers and training that they receive. While many races teach unarmed fighting methods that are graceful and fluid, the unarmed fighting methods of dwarven monks are earthy and rigid. It is angular instead of circular, powerful instead of precise, the immovable instead of the unstoppable. Their powers are taken from the gifts of the earth – diamonds, stones, mithril, gold, and other bounties.

Ki

All monks draw upon the subtle energy called *ki*. It is the magic of monks that powers their abilities and their fighting methods.

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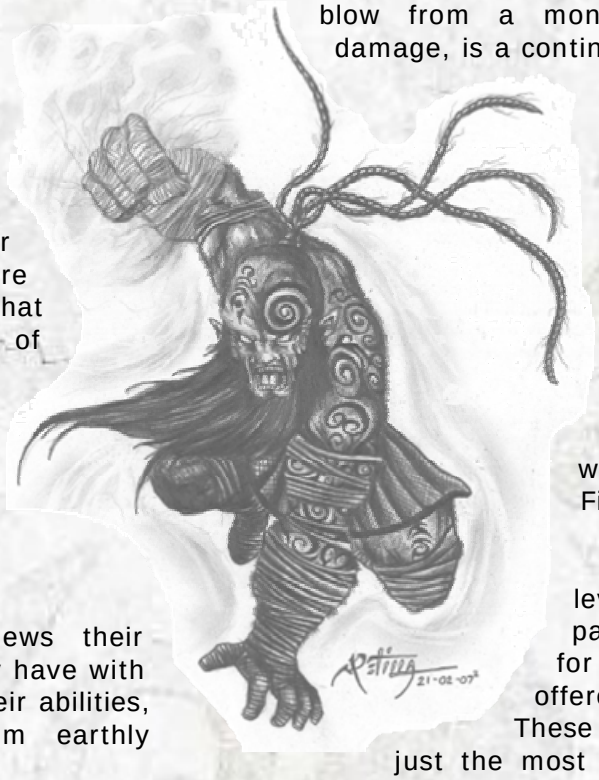
Dwarven monks are able to tap into the power of the earth for their *ki* magic. It is an energy that is similar to other monks' in that it cannot be blocked with normal magic, since the individual is trained in the use of the energy, channeled as *ki*. Every newly attained level of self-perfection brings with it new powers and abilities. The *ki* utilizes the essence of the gifts buried within the earth, giving the dwarven monk these powers.

Again, the abilities and powers attained with their *ki* cannot be taken away. It is a level of self-perfection that dwarven monks work toward, and the secrets of the earth are revealed, in time, to those who seek them. It is through this knowledge that many dwarves are able to attain the perfection they seek, but it is by no means the only path for them to follow. Some dwarves are able to study with a master that guides them down other roads of perfection. The *ki* of the earth is a unique way for the Stout Folk to learn the way of the monk.



Powers

The way a dwarven monk views their abilities is the only difference they have with any other monk, of any race. Their abilities, like their *ki,* are derived from earthly sources.

Class Skills are unchanged. However, some skills will be more prevalent than others, due to racial preferences and ability levels. The Charisma adjustments for dwarves can influence the choice of some skills, such as Perform and Diplomacy, although some dwarven monks will choose these skills because many of their fellows do not. As class skills, they may give a dwarven monk a decided advantage over other dwarves. Other abilities are:

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Some of the exotic weapons listed in the *Player's Handbook* will not be used by most dwarven monks, although they are still allowed. Monks seek self-perfection, and thus will use any advantage they can to attain it. As dwarves, however, they do gain proficiency with the light hammer.

AC Bonus: The sixth sense bonus to Wisdom given to dwarven monks still applies. The AC bonus given at 5th level and every five levels thereafter is unchanged, but explained as a hardening of the skin, as one stone is harder than another from its compacting in the earth over time.

Unarmed Strike and Flurry of Blows: A blow from a monk, their unarmed damage, is a continuous forging of the fists of a dwarven monk. The flurry they can unleash is like an avalanche, or the smith's hammer falling repeatedly and relentlessly.

Bonus Feat: The usual choices for a dwarven monk would be Stunning Fist at first level and Improved Disarm at sixth level, with no particular preference for either bonus feat offered at second level. These are not required, just the most likely feats due to race.

Evasion: Precious minerals are elusive to many who seek them. All monks are the same, with the right level of training.

Fast Movement: When the circumstances are right, the earth can move rapidly. The monks of the Stout Folk are no different, and often explode with a similar force on those who stand in their way, as would a volcano or earthquake.

Still Mind: By muddying their minds, these monks can resist the influence of others.

***Ki* Strike:** Remains unchanged.

Slow Fall: While dwarves usually welcome the earth's embrace, there are times that monks of the race use their abilities to keep from violently entering her arms. Every wall is connected to the earth, at some point.

Purity of Body: Diseases affect the creatures of the earth, while the earth remains unaffected. Dwarven monks learn from the earth how to avoid the blights of living things.

Wholeness of Body: The earth heals itself through the shifting of sand, soil, and rock. Monks learn from this and use this ability to heal wounds with their *ki*.

Improved Evasion: Remains unchanged.

Diamond Body and Diamond Soul: Diamonds, gifts of the earth.

Abundant Step: The earth is ever-shifting; most creatures are not able to see or detect this movement, yet later witness its affect. A dwarven monk is also able to slip from one place to another with the right training.

Quivering Palm: Dwarves learn at an early age to heed the deadly portents vibrations in the earth bring. Enemies of monks of the race would do well to learn this lesson.

Timeless Body: The aging of the earth is imperceptible to mortals, yet some dwarven monks learn this secret. However, everything changes eventually, and every mortal creature will die.

Tongue of the Sun and Moon: The earth hears all languages and understands.

Empty Body and Perfect Self: Those dwarven monks who learn what they can from the earth eventually seek wisdom beyond the earth's boundaries. This way they can achieve self-perfection.

All other monk restrictions and abilities still apply to dwarves who train as monks. The *ki* power of the dwarven monk is a philosophy of knowledge used to train dwarves in a way that they understand and can embrace.

Stonelord Monks

Some dwarven schools of monks teach the secrets of the Stonelords to their students. The link between their *ki* and the whispers of the earth to Stonelords is an easy one. All of the requirements for becoming a Stonelord are attainable to any monk with the allowable skills and feats. The prestige class is so well-suited to dwarven monks that they are able to continue advancing as a monk when they take Stonelord levels.

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Laborers of Toril

Part VI

By Scott Kujawa

First Reader, here is the sixth scroll of the project that you asked me to scribe for the records of Candlekeep.

As I said in my other scrolls, some of this lore might or might not be true, and I had to distill the details, lest they fill a whole tome. Besides, some of the information given to me was to be kept secret, and I gave my word as a follower of the Binder. As usual, I'm tracking down other folk who are willing to let me record what they do to make coin and survive.

After thinking about these scrolls and sending messages to you about them, I've decided to change the knowledge about these laborers. Every scroll from now on will contain information about laborers from the same settlement, instead of lore about laborers that span Toril and the planes.

First Reader, there are days that I worry that I may be becoming too much like Volo, since his chapbooks and my scrolls cover the same subject matter. Oghma be thanked that I have all of you to keep me from falling as far as Volo has; I, for one, don't want to spend my time as a statue in someone's garden.

This entry details some of the laborers of Corm Orp.

Scribe Lythrina Surstyn of Candlekeep

(Author's Note: My thanks to Ed Greenwood and The Hooded One for answering my questions about Corm Orp and halflings.)

* * * *

Eilnys Merrymar (Chaotic Good, Female Lightfoot Halfling, Expert 4/Adept 1, Cyrrollalee, Sheela Peryroyl, and Yondalla)

Eilnys is the matriarch of the Merrymar clan of halflings, who have resided in Corm Orp for as long as anyone can remember. This rotund halfling always had a wide smile for me, especially when I banged my head, more than once, on the ceiling of the clan's burrows, which are in built into the hills to the east of the village. When she isn't molding and firing the red clay that the halflings, gnomes, and humans of Corm Orp turn into pottery, she can be found watching over her clan. Her three husbands (or more, since I'm not sure if she told me the truth about how many she has) admire her and look to her for wisdom and knowledge. Myrver Merrymar, her second husband, doesn't care about Eilnys's intelligence and wisdom; he told me that he enjoys the brown hair on Eilnys's feet, as well as the thick brown hair that trails down her back.

Since Eilnys is a dedicated worshipper of Cyrrollalee, Sheela Peryroyl, and Yondalla, one part of their burrow has been turned into a large shrine to those three halfling deities. I also noticed a small section of the shrine contained the symbols of Brandobaris and Tymora.

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Jeris Merrymar (Lawful Neutral, Male Strongheart Halfling, Expert 6, Chauntea and the halfling pantheon)

Jeris is an average-sized halfling, with curly dark brown hair on his head and feet. However, since he is a winemaker, his feet are usually stained from the juice of the grapes. At other times, his feet are stained from the dirt of Chauntea, because of the harvesting of the grape clusters that are the size of a halfling's fist. When Jeris isn't helping stomp grapes, he spends time with Eilnys and the rest of the clan. This is Eilnys's first husband; they have one child together. But Jeris and Eilnys are not together for children – they stay together as companions for comfort and long conversations, since both of them like to discuss theology, the hin race, deities, and other topics.

Myrver Merrymar (Chaotic Good, Male Lightfoot Halfling, Commoner 3, Cyrrollalee, Sheela Peryroyl, and Yondalla)

Myrver is a shepherd, tending the goats and sheep that are kept in the hills overlooking Corp Orp. This light brown-haired, almost blond halfling is Eilnys's first lover. The two of them are together because Myrver was someone with whom Eilnys wanted to have many children, and because he fulfills her physical needs.

Hollythana and Janstina are just two of the children that Myrver and Eilnys have had, but as I said at the end of this scroll, I didn't have the room to write about all of the halflings in this clan.

Since Myrver spends a lot of time on the hills, he is deeply tanned. His body, for a halfling, is not pudgy – he is trim and fit.

Croglar Merrymar (True Neutral, Male Lightfoot Halfling, Expert 2, Cyrrollalee, Sheela Peryroyl, and Yondalla)

Crolgar is a slightly pudgy halfling that enjoys showing off the dyes he makes by dying his clothing various shades of colors. The different shades of blue, green, red, orange, and other colors make it hard to look at him, and when anyone needs to find him, it's very easy to do so. He has no children with Eilnys, because he is sterile. However, he is still one of her lovers. When both desire physical pleasure, they enjoy cross-dressing, bondage and discipline, and playacting. I was told, in considerable detail, that Crolgar's active imagination ensures that these enjoyments are never the same. I swear by the Binder that I learned more about halfling pleasure then I ever wanted to know, and I lost count of how many times I blushed as Croglar went into great detail about what he and Eilnys enjoy doing with each other.

Eilstine Merrymar (Neutral Good, Female Strongheart Halfling, Commoner 1/Expert 1, Eilistraee, Waukeen, and the halfling pantheon)

Eilstine is Eilnys's eldest daughter, and the only daughter of Eilnys and Jeris. She is named after Eilistraee because of a traveling priestess of the Dark Maiden. While sheltering in the Merrymar burrows, the halfling priestess spread the dogma of the Dark Maiden to members of the clan. She helped Eilnys with Eilstine's birth, so Eilnys decided, and Jeris agreed, to name their daughter after Eilistraee.

Her wavy brown hair is kept in a braid, with lose strands clipped to the sides. She watches over the younger Merrymars, with the help of her sisters. Arshim and Narsk are her two husbands, but she doesn't see Narsk very often. She enjoys Arshim for his intelligence. Narsk she enjoys because he returns from his frequent travels with new and interesting ways to pleasure her, which he learns about in other lands. I said it before – by the Binder, I really am not interested in learning about these things! But the halflings found it very amusing when I blushed, and went to great lengths to give me detailed explanations.

Hollythana Merrymar (Chaotic Good, Female Lightfoot Halfling, Commoner 1, Cyrrollalee, Sheela Peryroyl, and Yondalla)

Holly, as she told me to call her, is the second eldest daughter of Eilnys, and the eldest daughter of Eilnys and Myrver. Since the clan is so large, she also helps take care of the other members of the clan. This black-haired halfling enjoys making pies and eating them, which is why she is one of the more stocky halflings of the Merrymar clan. She is quiet and shy, so I didn't get much information from her. The other members of the clan didn't want to say much about her. All I know is they are disappointed with her; whatever she did to upset them involved a dwarf and a gnome.

Janstina Merrymar (Chaotic Good (Currently Chaotic Evil), Female Lightfoot Halfling, Commoner 1, Cyrrollalee, Sheela Peryroyl, and Yondalla (Currently Bane))

There was something different about this slim and muscular female halfling. I couldn't place it until I realized she had the look of someone that is under a *charm* spell. I discovered that she is under a spell because her faded brown eyes have the glazed look of those under mind-affecting magics. I followed her one night when I saw her leave the burrow, and I watched as she dropped a missive under a stone. Later, using some divination magic, I watched as a Zhent wizard retrieved the missive.

Janstina is Eilnys's second youngest daughter, and the second daughter of Eilnys and Myrver. Like her sisters, she helps take care of the other members of the clan. She has her mother's brown hair, but hers is straighter, shorter, and a little darker.

Arshim Merrymar (True Neutral, Male Lightfoot Halfling, Commoner 3, Cyrrollalee, Sheela Peryroyl, and Yondalla)

Arshim is Eilstine's first husband. Trim and fit, Arshim helps Myrver watch over the goats and sheep of Corm Orp. He is Narsk's brother, and the two used to travel together when Narsk came to Corm Orp. When Arshim fell in love with Eilstine, he decided to settle down and stay in Corm Orp while Narsk continued delivering and bringing back different goods. Arshim knows, or so he told me, that he isn't as intelligent as his brother, but Eilstine loves him for his skills in spanking and pleasure.

Arshim keeps his short black hair pulled back in a small ponytail, and his blue eyes sparkle and twinkle, like he is always thinking sexual thoughts. Arshim and Eilstine care deeply for their daughter, as does Narsk, because Xyrnda is the only child any of them will be able to have with Eilstine. Xyrnda's birth was hard on Eilstine, and the birth scarred her insides too much for her to carry another child.

Narsk Merrymar (Lawful Neutral, Male Lightfoot Halfling, Warrior 2/Expert 4, the halfling pantheon, and Waukeen)

This halfling surprised me because he is world-wise. I shouldn't have been that surprised, since Narsk is a merchant. He is short and stocky by halfling standards, almost like a dwarf. Despite his wealth, the only ornamentation on his green and brown clothing is the gold stitching along the hems, which signifies his dedication to Waukeen.

He is Eilstine's second husband, having married her a few summers after his brother did. Narsk and Eilstine enjoy each other because he brings her stories, news, and information from the other lands. She also values the coins he brings in from his wares.

He has a caravan of about half a dozen wagons, guarded by the humans and halflings of Corm Orp. His caravans travel northwest to Hill's Edge, along the Dusk Road, and south to Asbravn. From there, the caravans follow trade routes to places west and north of Asbravn, as well as to Berdusk and Iriaebor in the south.

Xyrnda Merrymar (Chaotic Good, Female Strongheart Halfling, Cyrrollalee, Sheela Peryroyl, and Yondalla)

This halfling child is the daughter of Eilstine and Arshim. Since she is young, she is carefree and allowed to run amok, though Eilnys's three sisters try to keep her from causing more trouble in the burrows. Her true appearance is hard to tell, because she is usually covered in mud. I think she has brown hair, brown eyes, and tanned skin.

The halflings of the Corm Orp are trying to get her interested in learning how to make Orthin cheese, but so far, she has resisted their efforts. Of course, they are not trying too hard to get her to pay attention; they are letting her be the child that she is.

First Reader, Orthin cheese is a soft, buttery yellow cheese that is never runny, and comes without a heavy rind. I'm told that it is named after a long-dead maker, but I'll have to research this some more.

Eiltranna Merrymar (Neutral Good, Female Lightfoot Halfling, Commoner 1/Cleric 1, Sheela Peryroyl)

Eiltranna is Eilnys's younger sister, and the mother of Kyrarn Merrymar. Eiltranna, like her niece and sister, is named after Eilistraee because of the follower of Lady Silverhair that came through Corm Orp. Her only husband died defending Corm Orp during an attack by Darkhold, when Kyrarn was only a few summers old. Ever since that attack, Eiltranna has been an acolyte at the Ladyhouse. When she isn't helping keep the gardens of the temple, she spends time with her son, with the other members of the Merrymars, and with the temple's clergy. Green robes cover her body, and many flowers are woven through her dark brown hair, which extends to her mid-back.

Eiltranna has a favorite hog, which she calls Snort-the-Wise. She claims it is an avatar of Sheela Peryroyl, and that it talks to her every time she feeds it. No one in the temple could prove or deny that Snort-the-Wise is really what Eiltranna claims, so I'll withhold my judgment about this — because the deities do work in strange ways.

Kyrarn Merrymar (Chaotic Good, Male Lightfoot Halfling, Commoner 1/Bard 2, the halfling pantheon)

Kyrarn is the only son of Eiltranna. He is named after a male human of Corm Orp, who died protecting the settlement during one of the attacks by Darkhold. Kyrarn is a historian and an apprentice bard. He specializes in the tales of Corm Orp, and the history and songs of the settlement's halflings, humans, and gnomes.

As a follower of two deities, he wears green and brown clothing with fresh flowers, which he picks from the burrow's gardens. Unlike most of his family, he has golden hair that extends to his knees. He wears it loose, except for the strands that he pulls back to keep it out of his face.

He carries around a glaur, a gift from a male human bard that passed through Corm Orp a year or two ago. I suspect that Kyrarn might be a member of Those Who Harp, or even a member of the Moonstars.

First Reader, there are many halflings in this clan, but it would have taken me many months to write about all of them. I'm leaving the rest of this clan for other scrolls or for other scribes to research. My next scroll may contain some lore about the gnomes of Corm Orp, unless I get wanderlust again — which is one of the reasons why you ordered me out of Candlekeep. However, you know the other reasons why you ordered me out of Candlekeep, and we agreed to never mention them again.

Folk of Faerun

Shaundakul, part III

By Doug Raas

* * * *

I have learned that Shaundakul teaches us in many ways. We can learn from other faithful, passing on what they have learned, or by watching an eagle soar and glide on the currents of the winds. His words are sometimes softly spoken, like the gentle rustling of dried leaves in the autumn, just before they fall from the trees. Sometimes his words are louder, whistling through the rocks of a mountain pass, or snapping the sails on a traveling ship. Regardless of how his words come to us, they are his words, make no mistake. Shaundakul speaks to all of us, but only a few can truly hear him, and fewer still listen. I am writing these things down to try to help others understand the voice.

From the journals of Dathal Rhain
27 Hammer, Year of Wild Magic

The Guiding Breeze

Shaundakul's teachings are, at their core, simple. Live life and let it take you where it will, letting the wind guide you. Explore your surroundings wherever you are. The wind is not from the sky, but from Shaundakul himself. He will guide you. You should live your life, and reasonably make your way in it. Changes will occur, and you must trust in the Helping Hand to help you make your decisions wisely. While the world is large, with many unknown lands far away, do not be intimidated by this – relish in it. The world has many riches, on the land, in the sea, and in the air itself. Travel to the distant horizons if you are able. Explore the world around you. Meet the rising sun in the morning. Climb to the peaks of hills and mountains, to the bottoms of valleys, traveling where others have not – and tell everyone about your journeys. The world has many wonders – see them, experience them, and share them.

In addition to his core teachings, Shaundakul would have his clergy spread knowledge of his worship through direct example. Very often his clergy and lay worshippers hire on as scouts or guards for groups of explorers, merchants, or mining expeditions. Sometimes they even lead such expeditions for others, providing the know-how to ensure success. This interaction is a sure way to spread his teachings and faith to others. Opening up new routes of travel across the Realms is another way his clergy spreads the faith. This often brings essential supplies, as well as desired comforts, to areas more quickly than had been possible before. This may be as simple as blazing a trail through a forest as opposed to traveling around it, or as complicated as setting up regular cargoes of goods for delivery to far-off lands more easily reached by ship. Aiding and guiding caravans also endears his priests to the hard-working people who spend their lives on the road. These people are always very grateful for any aid given, and many are willing subjects for expositions on the ways of the Helping Hand.

Shaundakul is very willing to share his worshippers, understanding fully the degree

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to which the people of Faerûn seek guidance, counsel, and solace from many of the deities, some on a nearly daily basis. Some deities do not take this long view, preferring that their worship is more solitary. As Shaundakul has seen in the past, this view is not healthy, and can lead to a deity being removed from the pantheon. Shaundakul believes fully that this diverse polytheistic approach is directly responsible for him keeping his divinity during his lowest points.

As Shaundakul's followers have begun to increase in numbers, another duty put forth to them is to reclaim and rediscover the ancient shrines dedicated to him. Sometimes Shaundakul will send a vision or a windghost to act as a guide when a priest gets particularly close to a lost shrine. Re-sanctifying these shrines, and spreading the knowledge of their locations, are additional aspects of the spread of his faith, and a duty of his clergy.

The Daily Zephyr

Clergy tend to live off the land, providing for themselves and often for their companions as well. A lot of the clergy hire onto caravans traveling across Faerûn from the Moonsea in the east all the way to the northern Sword Coast, as well as points even further afield. Many trading costers across the Realms will put a traveling priest of Shaundakul up for a night or two, hoping to persuade them to accompany a caravan of theirs in the future. Many of his priests take up a traveling, adventuring lifestyle. These priests tend towards groups that focus on expeditions of discovery, or ones that seek out and explore old ruins. Oftentimes these adventuring priests lean towards leadership or guidance roles inside these groups. Group affiliations outside of the Church are not unheard of, but are not common. Of all the organizations, the Harpers most likely have more faithful of Shaundakul among their ranks than any other. However, at least one follower is working with the Zhentarim, and some others at least peripherally deal with many of the more good-aligned groups. Those groups or individuals that seek to harm or disrupt trade, those that seek to explore, but hide those secrets they find, and those who would oppose or prevent mining run at cross-purposes to those of Shaundakul's followers.

Priests of Shaundakul not only seek out lost shrines, they attempt to visit as many existing shrines as they are able. They also try to construct new shrines when they have the means and are presented with a worthy location. Such locations would include newly discovered valleys, mountaintops not previously climbed, or new islands or lands further away. Sometimes these shrines are as simple as piled rocks in the form of a crude throne, or as complicated as magically-crafted thrones. In areas of strong winds, holes are sometimes drilled or shaped into these shrines, to capture the winds and form natural whistles.

Soon after the Time of Troubles, Shaundakul began seeking out new worshippers again. He was known at the time to appear to rangers, fighters, wizards, and rogues of non-evil alignment, whom he attempted to sway to his worship. Many at the time had never heard of him – but this soon changed. Since he was not concerned with having to share his worshippers with other deities, he attracted many followers. After a period of time, he decreased his own efforts at this, relying on word of mouth from previously approached individuals and new clergy. In the years since the Time of Troubles, his base of worshippers has spread greatly.

Shaundakul's worshippers span most of the major races of Faerûn. Obviously, humans are the primary explorers, due to their higher birthrate and naturally inquisitive nature. Half-elves are also attracted to Shaundakul's worship, as they oftentimes do not feel completely at home in either their elven or human parents' societies. Halflings who prefer a more nomadic existence are also drawn to Shaundakul's faith. Some of the more urban dwarves, especially those with fewer ties to dwarven society, will often gravitate to Shaundakul because of his governance of miners among the human deities. Of all the primary races, elves are the least likely to venerate the Wind Rider, but elven worshippers are not unheard of.

Worshippers pray in the mornings, as the sun rises. They offer prayers to Shaundakul

whenever the winds significantly change direction, and they also pray when the winds are still, in an effort to bring the breezes back. When traveling by sea, worshippers often stay on deck during the trip, relishing in the winds and breezes that propel the ship. Worshipers revel in being under the darkening skies before a storm hits, though they will protect themselves from danger, as well as the elements. Faithful sometimes feel out of place below ground, where the winds rarely blow. Many, however, use this time to try and learn about the underground world, as that is where mining takes place.

Singing is quite common with Shaundakul's worshippers, as is the playing of simple woodwind instruments. Many prefer to sleep outdoors when traveling, as opposed to using a tent, but common sense dictates when they protect themselves.

Untold Stories

Collection VIII

By Chris Jameson (Adventures I – VI)
& Scott Kujawa (Adventure VII - XII)

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

Authors' Note for Hooks VII-XII: *I hope that these hooks are useful... I'm not sure how many people have Monster Manual IV, but I looked through it and noticed that some of the monsters don't have a "Monsters in Faerûn" entry. So I wrote my own Faerûn-type entries for those monsters.*

Adventure Hook I

The most important person in the Alsevir family is an imposter.

Though they lack the prestige of many of Cormyr's more well-known noble families, the Alsevir family is one of the oldest noble houses in the Forest Kingdom. Ennobled by King Moriann for their service against the goblins of Hlundadim, the Alsevirs have long been loyal supporters of the crown.

In more recent years, the house's loyalties have become divided. The patriarch, Durann Alsevir, owes his life to the late King Azoun IV, and would sacrifice every coin of his family's wealth to ensure that the child king Azoun V lives to take over a strong Cormyr. Though not every member of his faction of the Alsevir family is as loyal as he, all of them support Steel Regent Alusair and the Obarskyr family.

Sonrin Alsevir, Durann's brother, cares not a whit for the Dragon Throne. The very model of a disloyal and discontented nobleman, Sonrin would happily see the Obarskyr family reduced to mere figureheads, with a stronger noble class commanding the kingdom. Sonrin feels that the crown has suppressed the rights of the nobility long enough; it's time for the true strength of Cormyr to lead the nation to glory. If this means selling part of the kingdom to Sembia or allowing Arabel to rebel once more, so be it – the rabble can always be brought to heel when it is advantageous to the ruling nobility.

Tangrym Alsevir supports his cousin Durann. However, his influence is limited. Due to youthful indiscretions, Tangrym was banished from the family estates by Durann's father, more than two decades ago. The elder Alsevir has since died, and Durann allowed his cousin to return to the ancestral home in Suzail. However, Tangrym is still disfavored. He remains at the family manor, but he knows that his relatives have long memories and that he could easily be banished again, if he crossed the wrong family member.

Tangrym also has a secret. He is the only one that knows that the real Durann Alsevir was killed seven years ago, in an apparent hunting accident. Tangrym was with Durann when he died, and realized that his death would allow Sonrin to take over the family. Durann did leave behind a son, but the lad was barely three years old at the time of his father's death. With the patriarch dead and his only son too young to lead the family, there was nothing to keep Sonrin from taking over the family assets and using them to further his own rebellious goals.

With little time to waste, Tangrym had to act immediately. He contacted Kolssari, a doppelganger he'd met in his adventuring days. Kolssari agreed to impersonate Durann; for his own reasons, he wanted to see the Obarskyr family last, and he owed Tangrym a great favor.

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With Tangrym's quiet help, Kolssari has led the Alsevir family to new prosperity. The two have also been grooming Durann's son, Dolthan, to take over the family interests in a few years, when he comes of age. It's been a long and difficult charade for Kolssari and Tangrym, but both know their efforts will benefit the family and Cormyr.

However, "Durann" disappeared from his bedchamber three nights ago. Tangrym doesn't know where the doppelganger is, but he is desperate to see that Kolssari returns to resume his role as head of the family. He will pay the PCs handsomely if they can discretely find and return "Durann" to his family.

Adventure Hook II

Romlin Farhammer's disappearance has raised as many questions as his first appearance.

Romlin Farhammer, a former Great Rift skyguard and a devout follower of Marthammor Duin, first arrived in Silverymoon about a tenday ago. He spoke of having found a castle partially buried in the frozen reaches of the High Ice. Though seemingly deserted, the ice-encrusted castle remained intact and full of treasure. As proof of his claims, Romlin produced a short sword with a blade formed of unmelting ice, and several large gemstones – including a beljuril the size of an ogre's fist!

Romlin also spoke of encountering many strange undead, many of whom wielded various cold-based powers as they attacked. The Icy Ones, as he called them, seemed to be guided by some fell intelligence, and it was only luck that enabled Romlin and his hippogriff steed, Sunseeker, to escape.

Romlin spent three days in Silverymoon, trying to recruit adventurers to help explore the castle and plunder its riches. Though he kept its exact location secret, he offered to provide transportation to the castle for any that joined him, as well as equal shares of the treasure. Several groups had expressed interest in joining, and the Men of the Bladed Behir had confirmed joining the planned expedition.

Then Romlin disappeared. He'd retired to his room for the evening, mentioning further preparations to be done the following day. The next morning, the innkeeper entered Romlin's room, only to find the dwarf missing and a thin coating of ice covering everything in the room. All of the dwarf's possessions were gone, as was his steed Sunseeker.

Three days later, Morli Farhammer came to Silverymoon. As Romlin's thunder twin, Morli can sense that Romlin is somewhere to the northeast. She doesn't know if he's healthy or wounded, free or captured, but she is certain that he is in trouble and needs to be rescued. She recruits the PCs to help find her errant twin.

Adventure Hook III

A renowned bard has fallen silent.

Alariel Snowlark is one of the North's most renowned bards. A lovely half-elf from Neverwinter, she is widely considered to have one of the most beautiful singing voices the gods have ever granted a mortal. Even the famed bard Mintiper Moonsilver was enchanted by Alariel. He composed a ballad about her, "The Winter Lyrewing", in which he compared her to the intelligent songbird bards often associate with love. The ballad refers to Alariel's voice as "liquid moonlight", and says that even the goddess Sune Firehair is captivated by her singing.

In the cities of the North, Alariel is very popular. Nobles and fine inns alike compete for her attention, and her lodgings are often provided by whoever was lucky enough to win her regard. Alariel is favored by many guilds, too, and receives most goods and services – particularly clothing – at very favorable prices.

The PCs are lucky enough to be staying in an inn when Alariel arrives. She performs many popular songs, including a haunting rendition of "Valira's Lost Love". After her performance, she leaves the stage to partake of a meal. She is joined by a handsome half-

elf, and the two spend hours in quiet conversation. As the night grows old, Alariel retires to her room, accompanied by the handsome stranger.

The next morn, Alariel awakes to find herself alone. Her nocturnal companion is gone, and, to her horror, so is her voice! She doesn't know when the stranger left, but she does have a vague, dream-like memory of him chanting over her in the middle of the night. The words he spoke were somehow disquieting, and left an odd tingling in her throat.

Alariel can't provide the stranger's name, either. She has no memory of it, and suspects that the handsome half-elf may have *charmed* her in order to get close enough to steal her voice. She has little information more than this to offer. All of the information she shared had to be written on parchment, but her expression still reveals the depths of her loss.

Alariel can't offer the PCs much money for their help, but having such a famous bard in their debt can be worth far more than gold.

Note: I should like to thank Ed Greenwood and his lovely assistant The Hooded One for their assistance with this hook. Lyrewings are a type of songbird that have not yet been published in Realmslore; I thank Ed for telling me of them, and the lovely Lady Hooded One for acting as an email go-between.

Adventure Hook IV

Paelitha Talns owes her life to a mysterious stranger – and this frightens her.

Now a successful clothier in Neverwinter, Paelitha was once a sword-swinging adventurer. She and her companions had enjoyed modest success, until finding a ruined tower in the depths of the Lurkwood. Paelitha was the only survivor of the ill-fated attempt to explore the ruins; she and her companions had been assaulted by relentless waves of undead. Paelitha managed to escape the tower, but was severely wounded and almost delirious from the loss of blood. After wandering in the forest for several hours, she collapsed, exhausted by her wounds and her exertions. She likely would have died right there, but a mysterious woman rescued her.

Paelitha never found out the woman's name. Her rescuer was a plain, dark-haired woman in simple garb, accompanied by a trio of foxes and a pair of ravens. The only remarkable thing about the woman's appearance was a soft blue glow, a shimmering of light that was hardly visible, even in the shadowed depths of the forest. The woman touched Paelitha's forehead, speaking a single word. Paelitha instantly fell into a deep slumber.

When she awoke, hours later, the mysterious woman was gone. She'd left a small fire, and a simple but filling meal of roasted rabbit and wild berries. Most importantly, all of Paelitha's wounds were healed, leaving a slight tingling behind, but no scars. Even her clothing and equipment had been repaired.

Paelitha searched, but was unable to find any signs of her benefactor. After a time, she ended her search, and began the journey homeward. When she reached Neverwinter, she bought a small clothing store, and resolved never again to leave the city unless business demanded it.

This was over a decade ago. Paelitha has since married a member of the guard, and borne him a single son, Kaelin. To all appearances, Kaelin is a normal boy, full of the trouble and innocence only a child of eight summers can muster. However, Kaelin has begun to demonstrate some decidedly un-childlike abilities. He can already speak to and understand nearly any animal he encounters, and seems to enjoy conversing with dogs and horses in particular. He also seems able to cause small objects to float in the air, and Paelitha once caught him trying to make himself float in the air, as well. Most worrisome for his mother, Kaelin sometimes displays the same blue glow she saw around her rescuer.

Paelitha doesn't know how her son has come by his new abilities, but she fears it is the result of something done by her long-ago

rescuer. She hires the PCs to try to find the mysterious woman, and to find out why her son has these unusual powers. Though she's unwilling to leave the town herself, she can provide a map to the ruined tower she had escaped from before being rescued.

Adventure Hook V

The halfling assassin Andulin Hollowthorn fears only one person in the Realms – his grandmother.

Andulin Hollowthorn was once a bright and optimistic young halfling. He left his home in Luiren almost two decades ago, seeking adventure and wanting to see the wider Realms. He traveled first to Calimshan, where he was captured and sold into slavery on trumped-up charges. He was sold to Majiid el Akar, a powerful but unassuming wizard, who trained Andulin to be an assassin.

Andulin at first hated what he had become, but found the magical ties placed by the wizard too much to escape. After several years, Andulin grew inured to his situation. His youthful optimism replaced by grim fatalism, the halfling barely noticed the evil growing within himself. When el Akar died in a duel, Andulin finally found himself free of his arcane bonds. He left Calimport, but not to return to Luiren, as he had once dreamed. He instead wandered northward, seeking a new home. He eventually found himself in Sembia, where he realized that a skilled assassin could earn much gold in a land ruled by merchants.

Since settling in Sembia, Andulin's renown as a hired killer has grown. He has slain victims as far north as Zhentil Keep, and as far south as Chondath. He's been very careful to insure that none of his slayings can be directly traced back to himself, avoiding justice while driving up the demand for his services. Murder for hire is a dark business, but Andulin has done well for himself.

Perhaps too well. Though he never considered it, word of his deeds has reached Luiren. His grandmother, Lenalla Hollowthorn, is horrified at what her grandson has become. A very formidable woman, Lenalla has decided that her errant grandson needs to face justice. She hires Walder Greenthistle, a notable adventurer, to bring Andulin home.

Walder describes himself as "The halfling who leaves hearth and burrow so that others don't have to." A capable warrior and priest, Walder fears that his skills are not sufficient to capture a well-known assassin and transport him home. Not wanting to fail Lenalla, Walder hires the PCs to help him capture Andulin. He can't offer a large amount of money, but assures the PCs that Lenalla is quite well-connected and could find ways to make their journey to Luiren worthwhile.

Adventure Hook VI

Not all Netherese cities drifted among the clouds.

Those who know of the ancient realm of Netheril know that many Netherese enclaves floated in the sky, far above the land below. Few sages realize, though, that some Netherese cities were located in far different environs. One such city was Crossaer, a small city founded several miles off the Sword Coast, about a thousand feet beneath the ocean's surface. The city's *mythallar* created and sustained a large dome of breathable air around the city, and also prevented the sea's inhabitants from entering the city.

Life in Crossaer didn't follow the frantic pace of life in the enclaves. Crossaer's arcanists simply wished to pursue their research in peace, unbothered by the affairs of the rest of Netheril. Many of the arcanists experimented with sea life, finding ways to grow coral buildings and weapons, or modifying the various creatures of the deep. The few sages that know of the city believe that selkies originated in Crossaer, though their proof is hardly conclusive.

Despite its location, the Fall of Netheril was just as disastrous to Crossaer as it was to the flying enclaves. When the *mythallar* quit functioning, the dome of air covering the city

collapsed. Thousands of gallons of sea water rushed to fill the void. Most of the city's inhabitants were crushed by the pressure; the unlucky ones drowned as water filled the few remaining air-filled chambers and rooms. Many of the city's buildings were also crushed, the pressure of the water crumpling them into piles of rubble.

The city lay undiscovered on the bottom of the sea for many centuries. Last month, the Company of the Blinded Shrike discovered that Crossaer still existed. Exploring an ancient complex of subterranean chambers, they found a *portal* leading to the city. There are indications that the *portal* is no more than a century or two old, and the chamber it leads to appears to have been magically repaired and filled with air. Notably, the chamber is also warded against the intrusion of undead.

The adventurers weren't able to explore much of the city, for they found it swarming with undead. Many of the undead appeared to be little more than skeletons, but they cast fearsome spells and acted with a malign intelligence. The Company of the Blinded Shrike escaped with all of their members, but it was a very close thing. They are quite unwilling to return to "that underwater deathtrap", as they called it.

Many mages and adventurers are scrambling to be the first to explore the lost city. The PCs are hired to go into the city by Jandal the Whistler, a priest of Mystra. Jandal believes that the long-lost *silver plates of Koss Yeldeni* can be found within the city's temple to Mystryl. It's said that the *silver plates* hold many secrets of magic lost to today's wizards. They are quite important to Mystra's faith, but there are many less than devout wizards who would love to obtain such lost lore.

Adventure Hook VII

The High Mage Rhialonil has settled into reclaimed Myth Drannor, where she is researching the history of Moander for the Sad Queen. The sun elf has been studying the Rotting God from the time of Netheril up to his death at the hands of Finder Wyvernspur. During her research, she has come to believe that the briarvexes that have spontaneously appeared in the High Forest are remnants of the duel between Moander and Finder. Rhialonil is actively seeking information about the fell creatures; she can draw upon Evermeet's coffers to reward anyone who brings her more information about her studies, proof about her theory, or information about what the briarvexes plan to do in the High Forest.

Adventure Hook VIII

Another secret that Lathander hid after the Dawn Cataclysm failed was the creation of the creatures now known as concordant killers. Fearsome warriors, these half-fiend, half-celestial beings appeared in Faerûn after that event. Their only goal is to keep the balance, and to make sure that Lathander doesn't cause another event like the Dawn Cataclysm.

In recent years, many of these beings have been seen gathering throughout Faerûn, in places where Lathander's faithful are more concentrated. For now, the concordant killers only watch and gather information – but many of the faithful fear that the planar beings are planning to attack and destroy Lathander's churches, to stop the dawn deity from making another mistake. The few faithful that have been brave enough to speak with these beings have learned that the killers speak of Lathander's Deliverance. What that is, no one seems to know – or at least, they are not willing to discuss it with the lesser clergy.

(Author's Note: My thanks to Eric L. Boyd and Erik Mona for the Deliverance passage in Lathander's entry in Faiths & Pantheons.)

Adventure Hook IX

Now that Orcus has returned to his layer in the Abyss, he has been gathering his forces again. He captured many of Kiaransalee's faithful when she fled his realm; the corpses of these unfortunates have provided fuel for his experiments. Using his blood and his

necromantic skills, he created pits of vile essence from which a new breed of demon emerged.

These new fiends, known as deathdrinkers, have started appearing in Narfell. There, they search for and try to free tanar'ri that have been sealed away. The Witches of Rashemen are also concerned, because many of these fiends have been seen along the northern borders of Rashemen. The leaders of Rashemen are willing to hire outsiders to enter the lairs of these demons and remove them from Narfell.

Additionally, Orcus has sent many deathdrinkers to the Fugue Plain to gather the souls of Kiaransalee's faithful as they cross over from Faerûn. So far, Kelemvor and Jergal haven't chastised Orcus for this, but that may be because the devils have been keeping the tanar'ri from becoming too strong.

Adventure Hook X

It is believed that Loviatar visited Waterdeep during the Time of Troubles. Before her arrival in the City of Splendors, she visited her temple in Zhentil Keep. While she rested within the temple, she noticed some elf-like fey residing in the city slums. After studying them, she realized that these fey are bound to the Ethereal Plane. As soon as the Time of Troubles ended, she sent an avatar to the fey. The deity and the fey came to an agreement: she would protect them from their old masters, the ethergaunts, and the joystealers would drain joy, love, and happiness from the mortals that live in Faerûn's various cities. This would bring pain to Lliira, one of Loviatar's enemies.

In retaliation, Lliira formed the Scarlet Mummers. Their duties, besides hunting Loviatar's clergy and protecting Lliira's clergy or lay worshippers, are to hunt down and destroy joystealers. A band of Mummers has recently settled in Crimmor in Amn, and has the help of the Theater of Joy in hunting down that city's joystealers. Chynna Crytrapper, the leader of the Theater, is offering a reward of fifty gold pieces per joystealer to any adventurer, or adventuring band, who wishes to help the Scarlet Mummers destroy the joystealers in Crimmor.

Adventure Hook XI

Lunar ravagers have been a bane to Selûne ever since their birth during the battle between the Moonmaiden and Shar. Shar formed an alliance with these fey; they now fight at the side of the Mistress of the Night. On nights when Selûne is full, Shar commands her lunar ravagers to ride moonbeams down to Faerûn to attack Selûne's clergy, wherever they could be found. After they have collected enough trophies from Selûne's faithful, the ravagers return to their lodges in the Shadow Plane to celebrate their kills, rest, and to prepare for another full moon.

With the pact that the Red Wizards have formed with some of the lodges of the ravagers, Shar has been watching the ravagers train for an attack against Aglarond. The Simbul has asked the Harpers and their agents for any information on the weaknesses of these fey, so that she can be better prepared for their inevitable attack. As payment for the information, she is willing to give a spell to a user of the Art or a few minor magical items. If the adventurers manage to get into Thay and destroy the ravagers, she is willing to give more wealth or a small plot of land where the adventurers could create a stronghold.

Adventure Hook XII

Since becoming a deity, Velsharoon has continued to create new undead. Some of his more vile successes are the creatures called vitreous drinkers. One of these undead, Olelvil, has settled into Silverymoon, where it has taken up residence in a building west of the Market. Since it is a spy, infiltrator, and information broker, it has formed an alliance with Xara Tantlor, the owner of The Shining Scroll. The two regularly exchange information. However, Olelvil's time in Silverymoon might be running out, because

the High Guard has been investigating why many of the citizens of Silverymoon have gone blind. When they learn that an undead creature has infiltrated the city, they will ask adventurers to find the evil creature and remove it. The drinker's treasure most likely consists of books, missives about the people of Silverymoon, and other goods. The adventurers are free to keep anything they find, unless it is material that could cause harm to Silverymoon and her citizens.

The Candlekeep Compendium

Sprites of Faerun

By Jorkens
Illustration by Tiziano Baracchi

About Sprites and Faeries

Through the turning of thousands of seasons, the inhabitants of the Seelie Court have spread themselves into innumerable worlds, creating new myths and societies. From the court of the mythical Titania and Oberon, they have fluttered and played through green-canopied forests and winding river valleys where few others have wandered. The children of the Seelie Court were named by one of the esteemed monks of far off Candlekeep the "true nomads of the dimensions", a designation I find quite appropriate.

As each turn of the seasons comes to a close, the king and queen of the Seelie Court encourage thousands of their whimsical sylvan subjects to leave the gigantic oaken halls that comprise their throne room. For those about to leave, the *gates* that by now bind nearly every world and dimension in the multiverse to the gardens of the faeries are opened. By means of these *gates*, it is guaranteed that the bonds between these wanderers and their homeland are not broken. Titania's realms are now without borders any mortal mind can detect, and her subjects more numerous than the drops of the sea.

Those that have traveled through wizardly *gates* or by the magic of dragons into the secret realms of the Seelie peoples feel as if they are spanning the reaches of time and wonder itself. These travelers know that it can be extremely frustrating and demanding to associate with the innumerable inhabitants of these magical realms. If there is one common characteristic among the children of Titania and her court, it is an extreme reluctance to worry about the troubles of this world. The children of the Seelie Court live for the happiness that life offers, not its sorrows.

The same tendency to look away can be seen as one travels between worlds, but in a different form and for different reasons. The fey races are possessed of a shifting and highly magical nature that makes them quite susceptible to impressions, both from their surroundings and from other beings. The Seelie races will, to a far greater degree than other living beings, be shaped by the influences of the world and can, with time, be changed right to their very core. This explains why one often will meet faeries, sprites, elves and nature spirits that outwardly look identical to others one has seen, but that in manner and behavior can be diametrically opposite. Other times one will stand before a creature seemingly unique but that will proclaim, unflinchingly, to be a member of a people bearing little or no likeness to it. It is my belief that the children of Titania do not put as much thought into form as others do. They will therefore count themselves among the people to whom they feel the most mentally similar, and will break with these for reasons of the mind, not the body.

In my mind, the clearest – and at the same time most frightening – example of this is the existence of the Unseelie Court. This dark empire and its ruler, the poetically named Queen of Air and Darkness, have servants spread out among nearly as many realms as the Seelie Court. These creatures, which I would almost describe as the anti-faeries, usually follow in the tracks of the faerie races. They take great pride and pleasure in creating as much chaos and mischief as possible, both among the natives of other worlds, and among the Seelie races. In no land are the faeries safe from the whispers of the Queen and the temptations she

represents, and in her wake, once-laughing faeries now travel as bloodthirsty shadow-beings.

The Unseelie threat has also provided another constant for the Seelie people: the mistrust of the dwarven races. In the minds of the faeries, it is impossible to forget that the bearded ones under the mountains were responsible for the corruption of Titania's sister, when they, in their ignorance, brought forth the Black Diamond. I will not dwell on this legend here, as this treatment has the sprites, more than the Seelie Court as whole, as its subject.

The instability of the faerie nature has been seen by some sages, particularly among the great schools of Chondath and the earlier writers of the Shoon, as a sign of their incompleteness as living creatures, and therefore a sign of weakness. I disagree with this notion… Only in the arrogance of the unknowing can one race define what is a whole creature from the terms the gods have laid out for themselves. I will assert that this instability is the key to their success, and that the ability to change with the demands of the world has been their greatest weapon for survival trough the ages. Most Seelie creatures will easily forget sorrows, and easily remember pleasures, in a life that to them is always moving forwards. Only the greatest of tragedies can break this image in the mind of faeries, and this ruin will leave their minds open to the Queen of Air and Darkness.

The Seelie state of unworried bliss also extends into the feys' love life, particularly for the faeries. The faeries love easily and will multiply in uncountable forms, both with other children of Titania, and with any other creatures that make it possible for the fey to love them. If surroundings necessitate a change to the Seelie creatures' form, breeding and magic will let them take these new forms in a very short time. With travel back and forth through the *portals* of realities and dimensions, these forms will again spread to other worlds and back to the Seelie court. This has created a nightmare of chaos worthy of a demon of the southern lands for any sage or learned scribe wanting to put the Seelie people into a form of system or classification. To best preserve one's sanity, it is advisable to simply take a

Seelie creature's word for what it is, and let it be with that.

For an example of this diversity of form, one can look at the family of sprites. This grouping of small-sized fey creatures, usually viewed as the truest children of Titania, have in reality few common denominators. Even wings are not universal among all the sprite races. No scribe has ever found any certain links between pixies, nixies, grigs, sprites, or water sprites, and the faeries themselves have not been known to offer much help on the subject. To the fey, the questions of sages and scribes have generally been golden opportunities to play tricks on "the lumbering giants", and the information they have given has varied between the somewhat dubious to the absolutely unbelievable, in every sense of the word.

> It should also be noted here that any sage trying to find a path trough this bramble of lines and likenesses would also have to discard, or at least downplay, the likenesses and links to leprechauns, brownies, flower faeries, tree spirits, nymphs, kilmoullis, etc. To put it simply, the faeries are a magical race, and no mortal can have more than a marginal understanding of them.

I will here concentrate on the sprite proper. You can, for simplicity's sake, stop worrying about these definitions, as I will not return to the subject in this article.

The Abilities and Appearance of Sprites

Abilities

When most humans see a small, winged, elflike being, they think of the legendary pixies. But among the family of sprites, the most common and important members are, well, the sprites, not the more well-known pixies. The creatures that have given their name to this tangled grouping are more flighty, and according to some, more primitive and shyer than the pixies, and therefore have less influence on the lands. But if you ask, you will find that most druids, rangers and elves can bear witness to the fact that the sprites are far more commonly met in the woodlands than most other fey races. Most people of the woodlands have learned to look for signs of the sprites; for those that know the sylvan lands, sprites are a common sight in forests safe for passage. By safe passage, I mean any place not made uninhabitable by the ravages of dragons, orcs, and such. The lands of the sprites may hold plenty of danger, but they are not deathtraps.

The frequency of the sightings is not solely because the sprites are a numerous species. They also differ from pixies in that invisibility is not their natural state. Like many other faeries, they have the ability to turn themselves invisible when danger threatens, but this is not a natural form for them, and no sprite would ever live his or her life in such a state. In fact, one of the most important differences between the sprites' and pixies' abilities is that the sprites are not able to see each other in their invisible state. Therefore it becomes a state of isolation, only entered on fear of death. A person's first encounter with sprites will probably be as a victim of their tricks, but if that person were to come near the sprites, they would have a good chance of actually catching a glimpse of them.

To summarize on the subject of the sprites' invisibility: I have already said that they are not naturally invisible creatures, even if they can enter the state with little effort. It is therefore an ability, not a state. One of the best arguments supporting this theory is that the sprites are not able to negate the invisibility towards each other, something that is common – and in fact a necessity – among most invisible creatures. I would therefore point out the fallacy inherent in statements such as "no, that was not my hand on your backside, it must have been an Invisible Stalker trying to find its mate!" Allow me to give warning: that the next person that tries that joke on me will be in dire trouble.

In my studies of sprites, I have more than once come across evidence of them being far less magical creatures than pixies, even if their abilities are substantial. There are, in

fact, great variations in ability between the various members of the sprite family. Even though the pixies have given them all a reputation for being highly magical creatures, most of them do not form their lives around their inborn magic. The elves of Eaerlann had a theory about the strength of fey magic being reduced by a species' ties to the physical world; I find this theory interesting, but I can not say that I have seen clear proof of its validity.

I should also point out that I am not referring to magic as it is commonly utilized by human wizards, mages, symbol-makers and rune-casters. Traditional wizards have been known to exist among the sprites, but this has little to do with the abilities that to sprites are as much a part of them as our breath, our digestion, or our movements. The arcane talents of sprites are not something upon which they dwell or give much thought, and these talents are not tied to the symbols and writings used by most practitioners of Mystra's Weave. Nor do sprites have to spend years learning to use these talents; they usually manifest their magical abilities before they are able to control them. Sprite parents will eagerly await the first signs of manifestations, and even make bets about what the child will do first, take its first steps or turn invisible.

When it comes to the sprites' incredible and well-known ability to detect the intentions of others, there have been, through the learned circles, round upon round of discussions. The debate centers on whether this is a magical ability, a form of telepathy, or just uncommonly strong deductive abilities when it comes to other creatures.

Most of people to whom I have spoken that have studied the subject hold that it is a primitive form of mind reading, but I myself would call it a weak form of soul reading. I have discussed this with the druids of both Mistledale and of the deep valleys of the Thunder Peaks, and have in both cases been told that the sprites have an ability to detect imbalances in other intelligent creatures. I have judged this to mean that they are referring to the dreams and ambitions that put us above most normal animals and – in the eyes of the druids – have weakened the natural balance upon which the world rests.

In general, the elves I have met have shown little interest in discussing the magical abilities of both elven and Seelie creatures, but one gold elf I met on a long travel a couple of years ago told me that the fey can detect the dark fingerprints of evil upon the souls of other creatures. If this is true, the sprites detect the prior actions of a creature, not their future plans. In this case, it would seem that it is more of a precaution based on earlier actions, rather than foresight, which leads the sprites to decide which creatures they will appear before.

The sprites may detect uncaring lives of murder and rapine, or it may be they sense the underlying conscience, or that they feel the madness evil brings with it. I must admit that I have not been able to find a definitive answer to the question of the sprites' ability to sense others' inner beings. The one thing I have found to more or less be certain is that the ability is tied to the two antennae on the sprites' forehead, and that these feelers somehow gather information about other forms of life. I mostly base this on the fact that there is no other logical reason for the antennae that I can see. The sprites' senses in general are not exceptional, if one discounts their capability for sensing the motives of other creatures.

I will warn any reader of this text to not judge the actions of sprites by the information I have given above. They do not always react out of spontaneous feelings towards evil, even if this is a rumor that I have met many times in both my journeys and my studies. Both elves and druids can attest that the sprites have been known to plan far ahead and base their actions upon both experience and historical knowledge. Few sprites, for example, will attack an elf or a druid, though these have been known to bear the marks of cruelty as clearly as any others. Conversely, few sprites will let a goblin pass unharmed, no matter how far from his mind evil comes. With experience and knowledge there also comes a degree of paranoia. It is important to remember that sprites in general are more intelligent than the average human, even if their somewhat

whimsical and inquisitive natures can lead one to think the opposite.

Sprite attacks on goblins, orcs, and other such creatures have led some people, especially earlier sages of the halls of Berdusk and some of the lesser schools of Turmish, to conclude that the fey have a hatred for all things ugly and unaesthetic, and that they will seek to preserve beauty in all its forms. I find this only slightly more believable than Agramondth of Hlath's ridiculous theory that the fey are elemental manifestations of feelings, incapable of thought and reacting out of instinct. I would also point out the idiocy of the teachings of Araxaran, the sage of Cimbar, when it comes to this subject, and I hope time will bury his words as well as it has buried his body. The earlier writings of Turmish and the drunken mistakes of Agramondth's addled brain should not be used to excuse today's Sembians and Chondathans ravaging the fey lands.

It is my belief that these stories are more a result of the all-too-human tendency to liken evil and ugliness. The creatures that threaten lives and existence over generations will usually not become an image of beauty.

Now, let us take a closer look at the sprites…

Appearance

Sprites closely resemble elves, as do most other Seelie creatures. Most sprites stand between eight and twenty-four inches tall. This varies from world to world, and any single group of sprites will be rather harmonious in size. The sprites in the Seelie Court itself are about twelve inches tall. My description here will be of the standard Faerûnian sprites.

Their builds are uniformly slender and elflike, one of the few constants among the sprites. Their faces share elven features, but with much larger eyes, even if these do not reach the dimensions of pixies. Sprites have mammalian eyes, unlike the multifaceted eyes of the grigs. Among the sprites of Cormanthor, the eyes are warm and brown, with slightly oval faces that give them a rather catlike expression. In contrast, the sprites of the Wood of Sharp Teeth have sharp features and cold blue eyes. Most Faerûnian sprites are somewhere between these two extremes.

Their pupils are usually rounded, but there are stories in some areas of sprites having elongated pupils, in the manner of cats. This seems to stem from having a more night active life. I have not seen these sprites myself, but the stories originate in the area between the river Chionthar and the borders of the Shaar, so there might be something to them. The pigments of hair, skin and eyes vary as much as between different human peoples, but lighter colors are the most common among the sprites of Cormanthor and Cormyr. Like the atomies, their heads are crowned by two small antennae that arch gently sideways, away from the forehead.

From their backs extend two large wings, reminiscent of a butterfly's wings. In proportion to their bodies, the wings are a little small, a bit shorter from point to point than the length of the sprite's body. There has to be some kind of magic involved in keeping the sprites flying, with the wings acting more as a means of steering. The shape of the wings resembles a cross between the wings of a butterfly and the wings of a dragonfly. In contrast to most of their relatives, sprites have delicate markings and beautiful coloration on their wings. I can not describe in words the beauty of sunlight sparkling on multicolored wings.

The wing-markings of a sprite are usually highly individualistic, but often bear signs of family and heritage, helping sprites identify each other at a distance. Some groups even have markings so characteristic that when traveling between worlds and communities, whole towns or even larger communities can be identified by their wings.

I will now be very careful when it comes to describing the clothing of the sprites, out of fear of giving the impression that there is any sort of uniformity in this. As with humans, elves and any other people, culture, individual taste and availability play as large a role as heritage.

As is natural is for creatures with such diverse habitation, sprites' attire are strongly influenced by the climate and fashions of the lands they inhabit. The main difference between sprites' clothing and the clothing of the non-sprites around them is usually the material itself, as sprites are somewhat more resistant to cold than humans. They will also favor close-fitting clothes, as larger, loose items get in the way of their wings while flying. Light tunics are common, even in harsh weather. Breeches are uncommon, and soft leather boots are popular in the winter months. In contrast to pixies, sprites will seldom wear any form of headgear, as these interfere with the antennae on their forehead. If they live near pixies, sprites will wear pointy shoes.

Sprites, like elves and most other of the sylvan races, use clothing mainly for practical reasons, not modesty. I have met individual sprites that have fallen in love with fashionable clothing, and own large and colorful wardrobes.

In the warmer climes south of the Greenfields or during the summer months, the sprites will often wear very little or no clothing. A sprite at play will have little use for any article of clothing, but a hunter will find it practical to wear at least a belt for bags, food pouches, etc. A loincloth will be used to protect private areas if the sprites plan to descend down into the undergrowth of the wild lands, but more clothing is neither practical nor necessary.

I have also met sprites, mostly in the areas of the central and northern Sword Coast, that spin cloth out of bog cotton and the silky threads of butterfly cocoons. These clothes are modeled on those of the elves and humans that lived in the area in millennia past, and the sprites of this area are seldom seen naked. I have heard that these sprites also live closer to the local pixies and brownies, something that may have influenced their habits. One sage, Barnsdall of Crimmor, has theorized that these sprites, who also show a larger degree of organization and "civilization" than most other sprites, may be a separate species or a group of immigrants from another world. I have not had the chance to verify these rumors, so I can not speculate further on the lives of these peoples.

In times of war or when expecting combat, some of the more ferocious sprites will wear armor made out of leather or, in rare cases, mithril. This is more common among sprites used to fighting other sprites (glorious wars with very few casualties), or when fighting flying creatures. Most sprites prefer to fight from a distance and from ambush, making armor more of a hindrance than a help

When seeking contact with races outside their territory, sprites will often don clothing, to avoid offending the modesty of other people. They have, in my experience at least, little understanding of this modesty, and find it slightly comical that the naked body should offend others. Still, most sprites will make the effort, out of courtesy. Be warned, though, if they should find it desirable, a sprite will remove every garment in as short a time as it takes a Sembian courtier's wife to work up a fake blush.

I have already said that the sprites prefer lighter clothing, so it should therefore come as no surprise that the sight of a sprite in the winter time is a rare one. I have also mentioned that the sprites are somewhat more resistant to the elements than humans – but their bodies are not immune to the winter, even if they handle the cold better than most races. If they leave their homes during the winter, it is necessary for them to dress in clothing that makes it impossible to fly. Their large winter coats are made out of rodent skin, and completely cover their wings. In these winter times, travel in the tree branches is the only available option for the sprites, as they will never go down on the ground without the ability to take wing and flee swiftly.

Leaving their homes in winter is seldom necessary for the sprites. All settlements will carefully build up a store of winter food, large enough to last the inhabitants through the winter. Large amounts of honey, nuts and dried fruits will be stored inside the trees where the sprites dwell. Firewood is not necessary, as the sprite community seems to have some form of collective ability to heat their living areas enough to keep them in

comfort. I suspect this to be some sort of magical blessing, shared by those native to the dimensions of the Faerie court, but I have no proof of this. A sprite will go out into the cold out of boredom a couple of times each winter, but for the most part, they socialize, eat from the stores, and sleep in a state of near-hibernation.

Once, during the last days of the Council, I traveled through the woods near Hillsfar. I was seeking a group of sprites under the queen Malibriinza; Syluné of Shadowdale had told me about them. Eager and unlearned as I was at the time, I went in the late harvest. By the time I had reached the glens she named as the faeries' home, the first snow had already fallen. For two months I combed the woodlands of northern Cormanthor without the sight of a faerie, before giving up and traveling north to Hillsfar. Syluné gave me a good taste of her sweetest laughter the next time we met; she had heard of my search during the winter months. The sprites were there, she told me, watching me the entire time. One of them had visited her, in fact, and told her about this crazy human female traveling through the snow-clad lands, seemingly at a random.

Now, dear reader, I hope you will forgive me for saying that all of what I have written thus far has no relevance whatsoever upon one aspect of the sprites' lives. For, in the event of a party in the dimensional realms of Oberon and Titania, there are no dressers flashier than the sprites. In their ceremonial attire and silver-spun cloaks, they are the very image of the impractical dandies and ladies-in-waiting. Few sights can be compared with that of a procession of hundreds of these tiny people, dressed in the finest clothes that can be made from the combined divinities of our world. Here you will see costumes inspired by any insect, flower or bird you can imagine. These costumes are especially extravagant in the warm interior of Cormanthor and the woodlands south of the Vilhon Reach, where tropical bird feathers and orchids turn the faerie procession into a sight comparable to that of the olden kings of Durpar.

By Lady Dhamina of Deepingdale
Marsember, the Year of the Lion
Theories and facts collected during the travels of the Star's Tear

The Dwarves of the Dalelands

The Village of Glen

By Jared Rascher
Illustration by Lucian Barasu

hen a storyteller or historian mentions the Dalelands, one often thinks of humans and elves, or occasionally pastoral halflings. Rarely does one think of the dwarves in conjunction with the Dales, as they are usually associated with the lands of the Savage Frontier or with the Great Rift far to the south. But there is a village in Mistledale known as Glen, which is a bastion of dwarven culture. It was founded by Ammarindar dwarves that first migrated to Myth Drannor, then settled this region after the City of Song fell.

Glen (Village); Conventional; AL NG; 200 gp limit (see below); Population 701 (631 dwarves; 63 humans; 7 halflings)

Authority Figures: Baern Thunderstroke, head priest of the shrine of Marthammor Duin (NG shield dwarf male druid 5, Marthammor Duin); Gwarr Goldenthrone, head priest of the shrine of the Morndinsamman (LG gold dwarf male cleric 5); Fyrfar Snowsbattle, Chief Elder of Glen (NG shield dwarf male expert 10).

I**mportant Characters:** Brongulf Ironfurrow, member of the Council of Elders and head of the Ironfurrow merchant clan (N shield dwarf male rogue 7); Chorn Stoneturner, chief caravan guard and bodyguard to Brongulf (NG shield dwarf male ranger 10); Wulgar Browniefriend of Hillsafar Hall, adventurer and betrothed to Brongulf's daughter Yrend (LG shield dwarf male Fighter 10); Maegar the Addled, "hedge wizard" and spellcaster for hire (NG shield dwarf male wizard 7); Iolar Honedaxe, adventurer and dragon egg merchant (LN shield dwarf male ranger 8); Shalagha Ironfurrow, proprietress of the Dark Door Inn, cousin to Brongulf (NG shield dwarf female expert 6).

Notable Imports: Ores (from Cormyr, via Ashabenford), wood (via other communities in Mistledale), trade animals (via the western Mistledale ranches).

Notable Exports: Various in-ground crops, including potatoes, pumpkins, turnips, and most especially mushrooms (the last being a year-round crop and one that is produced in a great deal of variety), various spirits distilled from the above crops, masterwork trade goods (including mithril and adamantine goods, imported from the Long Road, and only sold to various trustworthy clients), dragon eggs (sold to an even more select, narrowly-defined group of customers).

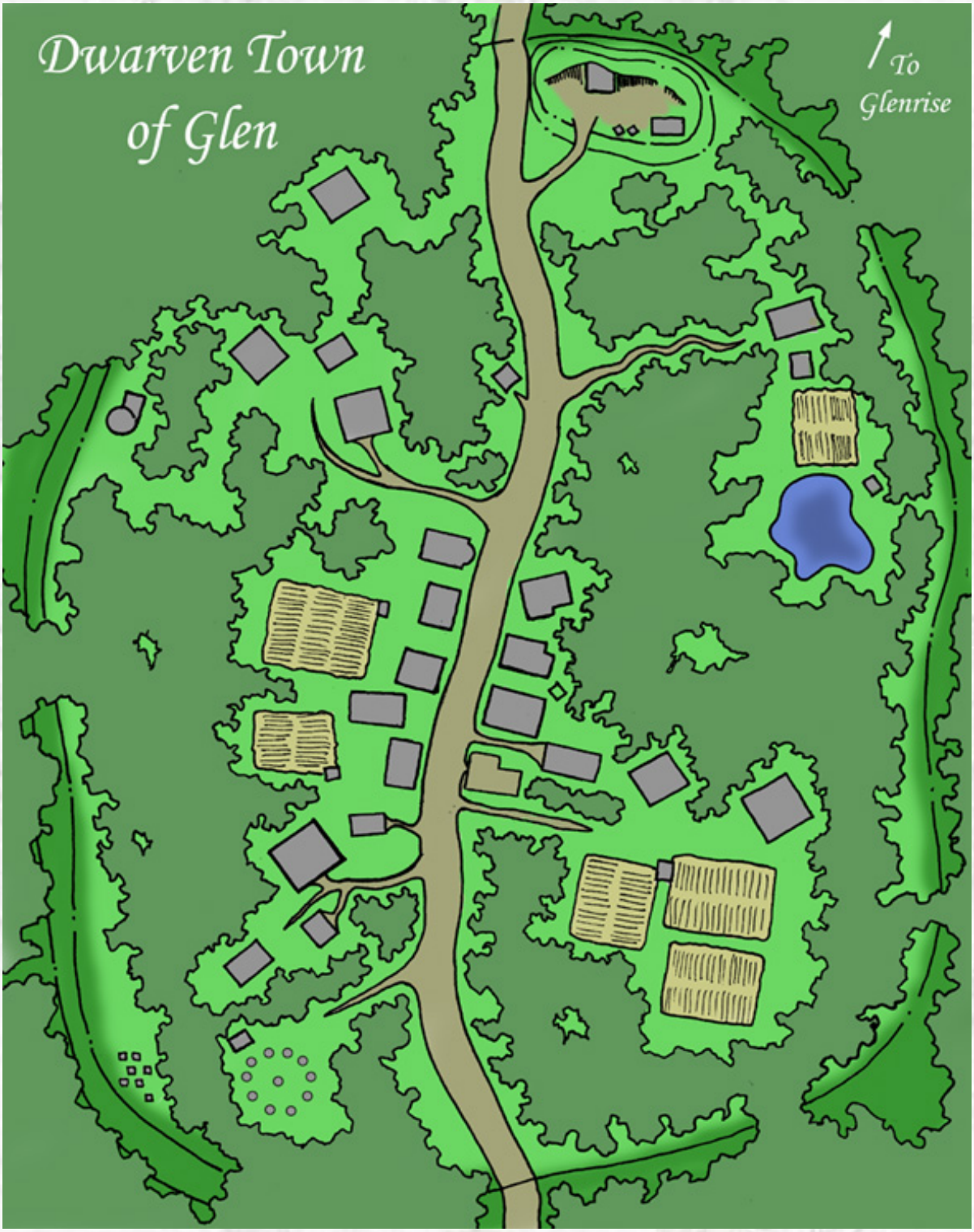
* * *

In a dale full of rural villages, Glen is noteworthy in that it is comprised mainly of dwarven farmers. It is further noteworthy due to the fact that the dwarves seem to have a very "Dalesmen-like" attitude about them. They are fairly friendly, especially to those from the Dales proper. It should be noted, though, that much like any inhabitant of the Dales, the dwarves of Glen take note of Sembian or Moonsea accents, and keep a closer eye on those that hail from those areas.

Glen was founded in the years after the fall of Myth Drannor, as survivors banded together to make a new home and to defend one another. The dwarves that settled Glen were native to Myth Drannor by way of Ammarindar in ages past. Far from their homeland, and orphans of two fallen realms, the dwarves of Glen, while greatly respectful

of their dwarven roots and traditions, feel greatly at home among the folk of Mistledale.

They have learned to love the open air and their simple farming lives, though they haven't given up on traditional dwarven pursuits entirely.



Map by Lucian Barasu

The Government of Glen

Glen itself is governed by a council of six elders, one from each of the major dwarven families in the town. Each elder is chosen during Shieldmeet, and either affirmed the next Shieldmeet or replaced at that time. The Chief Elder is chosen from the elders that served during the last term, and if need be, his family places a new elder onto the council (meaning that one family always has a Chief Elder and a member on the council of elders. This causes few problems, given the small size of the town and the relative lack of political ambition within the families). The ranking priests of Marthammor Duin and Moradin Soulforger each have an honorary (but respected) position on the council, as well.

In recent years, the dwarves have allowed the human families in town to appoint their own elder from amongst themselves to represent them on the council. The dwarves in general consider Glen a dwarven town, but also consider themselves citizens of Mistledale, and have no problem with a human sitting on the Council of Elders. Tessaneer Bellowburrow (NG halfling male expert 5) has grumbled a bit that the halflings in the town have no representation on the council, but there are only seven of them in the town. This may soon change, though, as Tessaneer has relatives that were visiting during the tragedy that struck Stumphill, and may be living with him permanently. Still, this would only double the halfling population in the end.

Despite their assimilation into Mistledale's culture, most of Glen's dwarves, as with many dwarven communities, are fairly competent with an axe or hammer. There is no formal village guard to speak of, but each of the elders can call upon the young dwarves of his clan to defend the village or the Dale if they are ordered to do so. While no dwarf has ever joined the Riders of Mistledale, several dwarves have joined the militia for various stints, and a few dwarven rangers from Glen have served as scouts for the Mistledale Militia long term.

The Dwarves and Their Gods

The dwarves of Glen pay homage to their ancestors and to the Morndinsamman, but the town itself is dedicated to the spirit of their patron, Marthammor Duin. While the rest of the dwarven pantheon shares a shrine, Marthammor has his own grove just on the edge of the "bowl" that houses the town itself. Near this grove is a small house maintained by Baern Thunderstroke, a druid dedicated to Marthammor, and his three attendants (3rd level druids themselves). Baern also runs an apiary and sells honey in town to help supplement the upkeep of his home and the shrine, although the dwarves of Glen would never let their patron's shrine fall into disrepair. Baern's druidic tradition, and the veneration of Marthammor Duin as patron, is rooted in the dwarven culture as it was influenced by the other inhabitants of Myth Drannor.

Gwarr Goldenthrone is the gold dwarf that mans the shrine to the Morndinsamman. None of the dwarves of Glen are specifically devoted to the Soulforger, but they all greatly revere the dwarven gods. As such, Gwarr, a dwarven cleric from the Great Rift, traveled north on the Long Road (see below), in order to ensure that there is proper observance of the various dwarven rituals and holy days. If asked about the presence of a gold dwarf in a town of shield dwarves, Gwarr only says that he is a traveler from the Great Rift who has settled in the town to tend to their spiritual needs, which is not, in all honesty, a lie.

The Dwarves and Magic

The Moonsea Ride runs through the southern part of town. Near it is a house that stands apart from the rest of the town. This is the home of Maegar "the Addled." The dwarves in Glen collectively maintain a running joke with Maegar, concerning those who visit the town. The dwarves constantly make disparaging comments about Maegar and his addled wits, and refer to him as a lackspell hedge wizard of minor power, useful for a few cantrips. In truth, Maegar is the last of an Ammarindar clan that was trained in powerful magics. While Maegar himself isn't exceptionally powerful, he has hidden in

secret chambers in his basement a great many powerful items from Ammarindar and Myth Drannor. Maegar's brother still lives, and has actually started a secret school for training dwarves in their "lost" arcane traditions. This school is located just north of Cormanthor, roughly equidistant from Hillsfar and Voonlar.

Uldred's school is essentially its own community, and is home to many small families plying their normal trades while learning arcane skills. One particular family, the Stonebloods, has elected to stay at the "clanhold" for an extended period of time. Eventually, the hidden school-hold might become a more formal dwarven town. At the moment, however, it has other concerns. Theoderus Stoneblood, a promising young dwarven wizard, recently fled from the school to Melvaunt, due to various accidents that maimed other students. What Uldred is unaware of is that Bethryn Orediver, a well-liked female student, is no dwarf at all, but a Red Wizard spy. She tricked Theoderus into various dangerous experiments, as well as divulging the fact that Uldred's family holds the *Key of Xothol*, an artifact said to be able to open the lost school of Ammarindar's wizards.

Uldred does not hold the *Key of Xothal*. When he departed Glen to form the secret clanhold/school, Uldred left the *Key of Xothal* with Maegar in Glen, just to be safe. Uldred is quite unlikely to reveal anything about the *Key*, but at the same time, he is in grave danger of which he is not fully aware, due to the scheming of Bethryn Orediver.

Maegar himself might take on one or two apprentices from time to time. For the first time, he has a human student, Olrand Realithan, the youngest son of Glen's current human elder, as well as Thrindel Honedaxe, cousin to the adventurer and dragon egg merchant Iolar.

The Deep Mine and the Long Road

Outside of town and south of the Moonsea Ride, on the upswing of the depression in which Glen is built, is what appears to be a small mine, with very little activity. When asked about this particular mine, most of the inhabitants of Glen will say that it has a fairly poor run of iron ore in it, but it is not played out. They send in miners when their stocks get low, but would rather only put the effort into the bad ore when trade with Cormyr for such things isn't flowing fast enough for their needs. In truth, the Deep Mine is actually the access point for trade missions into the Underdark.

The various dwarven families in Glen sell their own crops and spirits, as well as trade goods from the World Above. They pick up fine dwarven and deep gnome goods from the Underdark for their own use and for the use of a few trusted customers in the Dales. Brongulf Ironfurrow makes contacts in the dale for these trade missions, and also arranges for guards to travel with the caravans of trade goods into the Underdark. Both his daughter's betrothed, Wulgar Browniefriend, and his own bodyguard, Chorn Stoneturner, often lead these expeditions.

The mouth of the Deep Mine does appear to be a true mine, and there are several shafts with various elevators not far into the mine itself. One of these elevators actually lowers into the staging area for the Long Road. This staging area has craftsmen to repair armor, weapons, and wagons, as well as stores of preserved food for the long trips into the Underdark. There is also an unstaffed shrine to Dumathoin here, where many dwarves heading into the Underdark stop and pray before their trip.

The shaft elevator that leads to the staging area can easily be disabled, leaving only a few other elevators that do indeed lead to poor iron ore deposits. There is also a long passageway from the basement of the Dark Door Inn that winds to the staging area of Long Road. This passage is only known to a handful of those in the Ironfurrow clan's favor. Beyond the ability of the dwarves to cut off the elevator to the Long Road, the dwarves of Glen have had to from time to time refute the existence of the Long Road. To those that are knowledgeable about such things, the dwarves of Glen often laugh off such a road, saying that anyone that knows the Lands Below knows that the Underdark beneath the Dalelands does not directly

connect to the far southern reaches where the Great Rift exists.

Portals on the Long Road

The Long Road winds for several days to the south, with many smaller passages, until it comes to an area that has several branching paths that lead to various *portals*. The main *portal*, and one that is guarded by several gold dwarf warriors, leads to the "Southern Leg" of the Long Road, which then winds for several more days into the Great Rift. At least one other side passage leads to a *portal* to the svirfneblin city of Dakkurabund, which has been steadily trading with Glen for years, though from time to time they seal off their side of the *portal*.

There are other *portals* that are less well-known in this section of the Long Road. It isn't fully known if one of the side passages leads to a different *portal*, or if one of the passages extends under Battledale, but dwarves traveling the Long Road have clashed with a goodly number of House Jaelre scouts, as well as a few other drow expeditions. These skirmishes have been ongoing for years, beginning long before the Jaelre drow made their major push through the *portal* nexus under the Abbey of Swords a few years ago. The clashes have died down a bit since then, although a few drow expeditions come through from time to time. Recently a *portal* was found leading to an unnamed duergar community; the gray dwarves have been sending a few probing teams into the Long Road, as well. There is also assumed to be a *portal* leading to the Lowerdark and a community of mind flayers, and the dwarves of Glen are looking for some trustworthy adventurers to find this *portal* and seal it off.

The Honedaxe Portal

The last *portal* of note is controlled by the Honedaxe family. Iolar Honedaxe handles all travel through this particular *portal*, and reveals its location to no one. Iolar and his family have a standing relationship with a mist dragon named Ulvastergristashast, who is renowned among dragons as running an "orphanage" of sorts. When a dragon kills a rival, but does not wish to raise the offspring of its defeated foe, or when a dragon feels that it will be unable to care for a clutch of eggs that it has produced, such eggs are often taken to someone that can facilitate a "surrogate" to raise the dragons, since even the most vicious evil dragons are loathe to see draconic numbers dwindle. Ulvastergristahast is known as a dragon that can find "good homes" for such eggs. Long ago, the Honedaxe clan found a *portal* to Ulvastergristashast's domain, and the dwarves managed to forge a fairly good relationship with the dragon. The Honedaxe clan has never tried to find the geographical location of Ulvastergristashast's lair, and they do not even divulge the source of their dragon eggs to the other dwarves of Glen.

The Honedaxe family spends a great deal of time watching and listening to visitors that seem like they may be interested in buying dragon eggs. If the consensus of the various agents of the family is that the visitor is trustworthy and will treat the dragon well, then Iolar or one of his kinsmen will strike up a conversation to further ascertain the motives of the would-be dragon buyer.

In years past, some of the Honedaxe eggs have made it into the hands of agents from Impiltur, and recently agents of Cormyr have made contact with Iolar and his agents. At the moment, this relationship is somewhat strained, however, because Dragon Cultists ambushed the Cormyrean agents shortly after their purchase. The Honedaxe family would pay well to find out how the Cult of the Dragon managed to find out about the transaction. Though they have no proof of his complicity, the Honedaxe family has become wary of anyone that claims a tie to the merchant Jarwain Evensword of nearby Ashabenford.

The Ironfurrow Clan

Brongulf Ironfurrow is a charismatic retired adventurer. When he retired, he brought with him several members of his clan to settle in Glen. Brongulf is a true rogue and a skillful merchant. He has contacts throughout the Dales, and is friends with Iolar Honedaxe and anyone of great importance in the town. Brongulf organizes most of the caravans setting out on the Long Road, and has

several contacts in the Great Rift as well as in the svirfneblin settlement of Dakkurabund. While Glen normally has a gold piece limit of 200 gp, if one knows Brongulf, he can procure much more expensive goods. Virtually anything can be obtained in the Great Rift, but this takes several tendays to return to Brongulf's hands. Less expensive items can be obtained from Dakkurabund, and such goods can be back to Glen in less than two tendays. While generally a fair merchant, Brongulf is a master at manipulating others to do what he wants them to do, and has a somewhat malleable view of the truth.

Brongulf's daughter, Yrend, is a bookish girl, fascinated by old lore and stories. She also has a head for business figures, and works on her father's books. When she was sent with a caravan to the Great Rift to check on some discrepancies, she was possessed by the spirit of a duergar psion fleeing her oppressive clan. Brongulf, not wanting to deal with the scandal of his daughter's plight due to the fact that he sent her on such a dangerous mission, sent for a newly arrived dwarven adventurer, Wulgar Browniefriend, who lived in Ashabenford. Brongulf arranged for his daughter to be attacked by a "runaway" automaton, forcing Wulgar to save her.

The two became betrothed. Soon after, Wulgar found out that Yrend was sharing her mind with the duergar psion, and he felt obligated to aid in retrieving the duergar's body so that she could leave Yrend in peace. In the end, Brongulf ended up with his daughter hale and healthy, and a new caravan leader in Wulgar, who found it only proper to work for the father of his future wife.

Chorn, Brongulf's bodyguard, knows that Brongulf has a tendency to manipulate others, and sometimes worries at Wulgar's open acceptance of his employer. Chorn has taken it upon himself to keep an eye out for Wulgar, to make sure Brongulf doesn't push the dwarven adventurer too far.

Shalagha Ironfurrow, Brongulf's cousin, runs the Dark Door Inn, and the two of them commissioned some dwarven stoneworkers to aid in creating a tunnel leading from the basement of the Dark Door to the staging area for the Long Road. Only dwarves in the employ of the Ironfurrow clan are allowed access to (or even know of) the passage leading from the Inn to the Road.

Surrounding Areas (and Dwarven Stubbornness)

A few miles north of Glen, where the bowl that contains the town levels back out again, two taller walls rise on either side of the trade road. Just up the side of the Moonsea Ride is a small human community. This community also called their town Glen, as a reference to the fact that their town looks down into the valley on the road below. This rankled the normally easygoing dwarves of Glen.

For years the dwarves tried to convince the humans of this "other" Glen to change their name, and eventually the town itself called itself Glenwatch, to differentiate it from the dwarven town. Despite this, the residents of Glenwatch often refer to their town as Glen. Any time the dwarves of Glen hear about this naming convention, they are often aggravated.

The dwarves were so aggravated by this that they brought the matter up at Shieldmeet in 1372 DR, wanting to have a formal recognition of the name of Glen as belonging to the dwarves of Glen, and the town of Glenwatch being formally named Glenwatch in all Mistledale records. Ulwen Sharin, the representative of the eastern farms of the Dale, granted this request, though she was dubious about the need for it.

A major battle was fought during the Elven Crusade to the south of Glenwatch. Because the locals still refer to their town as Glen, the battle has been called the Battle of Glen, which further drives the dwarves to distraction. For their part, during the Battle of Glen, the dwarves were busy holding off forces that had circumvented the village of Glenwatch and came down the wall onto the Moonsea Ride to march into Ashabenford.

In the Footsteps of the Gods

Moonfire, Blessed Water of Eldath

By Chris Boor

"To strive for the higher ideal – to nurture rather than destroy, to calm rather than enflame, and above all, to teach the wisdom of resolving problems through words rather than actions – that is the way of the Quiet One. The waters of Moonfire not only symbolise the ideal, they allow those willing to look inside themselves to find new courage to step closer to true harmony."

– Selm Fletwaral, priest of Eldath

First Reader, during my time at the Leaves of Learning I have been studying locations holy to the various clergies of Faerûn. In pursuit of my research, I have persuaded several priests, or other worshippers, to take me to some of these sacred sites. Whilst there, I was also able to extract further information about the workings of the churches, and other secrets of the priesthood, through questioning, and was fortunate enough to witness and even participate in some rituals.

This first offering details my visit to Moonfire, a pool sacred to Eldath, located northwest of Shadowdale.

Scribe Jostyn Falmoot of Candlekeep

As I recall, it was the start of the first tenday of Mirtul, almost two tendays into my stay at the Leaves of Learning, when Lorekeeper Venturer Whitehorn interrupted my research to inform me that she currently had a guest she believed could be useful to me. She explained that a priest of Eldath was making a brief visit to the temple, and that she believed he would probably be willing to aid me in my studies. I thanked Tessele, and followed her from my chamber to be introduced to Selmwell Fletwaral. I introduced myself, saying I was pleased to meet him and that I would appreciate any help he could give me in my study of holy sites. He promised me he could do better than that: he would show me one, but only on the condition that I called him Selm. He explained that the only person allowed to call him by his full name was his elven love, and even then only in certain situations of either grave importance or moments of passion. His blue-grey eyes smiled at me as he said this, but I thought there was a hint of sadness – perhaps longing – in them, too.

He informed me he would take me to Moonfire, a pool touched by his goddess, located in the woods to the northwest of Shadowdale. It is an area of outstanding beauty, tended by the Eldathyn clergy who regularly visit it for contemplation and the serenity it offers. When Selûne is full, he said, the moon lights up the whole area around it, with the help of phosphorescent mosses that grow under the water. Filled with excitement about the chance to visit a place that sounded so full of wonder, I eagerly hurried back upstairs to pack for the road, remembering to pick up some fresh parchment from the Tower of Tomes – I was running low, and felt I had a good chance of learning much from this trip.

My companion was already dressed for the road. I learned he spent a lot of time in the service of his goddess. He was quite

forthcoming with information about the church, and was an amiable companion as we spent the next few days travelling north towards Shadowdale. I found that I knew little of the Green Goddess, perhaps one of the forgotten deities of the Faerûnian pantheon. I thought her often overshadowed by other nature deities with much larger followings, such as Silvanus and Mielikki. With Tempus's role as Lord of Battles ever-popular in the eternal warfare that plagues various realms of Toril to a lesser or greater degree, I supposed it might be easy to forget that a goddess devoted to peace could exist. However, Selm informed me that the folk of the Dales and elsewhere acknowledge the Eldathyn for the useful role they play. My experiences with the clergy were limited, but I soon came to realise that they play a crucial role in tending natural environments and waterways, and providing lore regarding their maintenance. If they are under-appreciated, it is due to scribes not extolling their virtues, as the common folk I spoke to supported his view of the work of the church of Eldath.

This was demonstrated when we stopped for a couple of hours one morning, to aid a farmer having problems getting water to reach the higher parts of a field. Selm helped to irrigate the field properly, explaining how channels could be made to make sure enough water flowed to the right places, something they had been working on with the clergy of Chauntea. Whilst he was doing this, the farmer's wife explained that the Eldathyn are respected for the work they do cleaning up after others and nurturing growth. "They just don't harp on about it the way some other folk do," she explained while preparing a delicious-smelling vegetable stew. At this point, the other two came in. Selm and the farmer's wife traded tips on seasoning, and the couple refused to let us be on our way without us staying for lunch. Selm seemed quietly pleased with the encounter, and if I didn't know better, I would suspect my companion of setting the whole thing up just to prove his point.

It struck me that behind his cheerful, easy manner lay a strong moral core and determination to work for the benefit of all, something I came to learn was common to the Eldathyn. This model of both inner and outer peace is certainly an attractive one. The rest of our journey passed pleasantly, talking about politics and happenings in the Dales, a topic my guide seemed most knowledgeable about. We reached Shadowdale town around evenfeast, and decided to eat before continuing onwards. It seemed likely to be a fairly clear night, which Selm said was the best time to view the pool. As we partook of a hearty meal at the Old Skull Inn, he told me the history of Moonfire.

"Many, many centuries ago, before the time of men – but after the peak of the elven nations – a shy, beautiful maiden with auburn hair was enjoying a walk through the forest of Cormanthor. Of course, back then, the forest was much larger then that it is today, and the woman had been enjoying this walk for many days, exploring the area, befriending the animals she encountered, and taking in its beauty. Clad all in white, she carried herself with grace and strolled easily along, her bare feet leaving no trail discernable to even the best rangers. On her shoulder she bore a clay vessel, simple but finely crafted, filled with water said to be so pure and sweet that one drop could refresh a dying man."

Surmising that the woman was Eldath, I told Selm of my belief.

"Quite so," he agreed, seemingly pleased that I had worked it out. "Anyway, no matter how many creatures she offered a drink from the jug, it remained ever-full. Whenever she encountered travellers, she hid and watched, aiding them quietly; and when those who would do her harm approached, she hid and quietly tidied up after them."

"Why did she not confront them and try to get them to change their ways?" I asked, for I had learned that was an important part of the Eldathyn doctrine.

"A worthy question. Maybe she deemed what she did the best course of action. Maybe she was simply enjoying the tranquillity she was spreading. Or perhaps it was something beyond your knowledge and mine. Maybe you should commune with Oghma and see what he knows," he added with a wink. Smiling, I bid him continue.

“This pattern of events went on for some time, until during a foray into the forest not far from here, she came across a small dip in the land. Dwelling there, she found a mated pair of deer and their fawns, and spent a pleasant afternoon relaxing with them. No sooner had she left the deer family, when Malar the Beastlord, who had been watching them the whole time, jumped out on her. Surprised and frightened, Eldath dropped her jug, which smashed into pieces. The water, far more than the jug’s capacity, spilt everywhere. Hearing her scream, the stag ran to her aid and challenged the hunter. Unwilling to fight, and in no position to do so, Eldath used the time the stag gave her to flee. The stag paid with his life.

“Instead of seeping into the earth, the water collected into the pool that we know as Moonfire. A gift from Eldath, albeit an unplanned one, it is to be treasured. So it is that we look after it, keeping its waters as clean and pure as they always have been.”

I thanked him for the tale, though I decided to see if I could verify the story in any way or get another perspective on it. One must always keep an open mind about such myths, though only a fool would deny that it was assuredly possible. Although young at the time, I remember the Time of Troubles and have read much about it in the years since.

After we had finished eating, Selm led me through the forest to Moonfire. I was instantly stricken by the unspoilt beauty of the place, secluded as it was in a small dell. The pool of water was as clear and clean as any I’ve seen, perhaps even more so. I could certainly believe Eldath herself may have had something to do with its creation. Trees grew sporadically around it on three sides, the remainder being clear of any growth other than grass and ferns. Nearby were patches of many different herbs and flowers, as great a variety as I have seen growing in the same place. As I took in the surroundings, Selûne emerged from behind a cloud and shed her light on us. The waters of the pool shone silver, and I saw how it came by its name. Beneath the surface of the water, I could see a strange moss glowing with a green light, giving a slight tinge to the whole area.

So absorbed was I that I am ashamed to say I did not notice a woman had appeared from the undergrowth until she bid us both welcome. She appeared motherly and I would put her age at about forty, though I am by my own admission a poor guesser of such things. She wore a loose green shift over leathers, and her chestnut hair fell limply to her shoulders.

“Well met, Verenne,” said Selm, embracing her. “This is Jostyn, a scribe who has been staying at the Leaves of Learning in Deepingdale. He wishes to learn about our faith.” We exchanged greetings, and Verenne told me that she watched over the pool and tended the area.

“What does that involve?” I enquired. She explained to me that she made sure the waters remained clean and tried to encourage both flora and fauna to be at home here. She confirmed my suspicions that the vast array of plant species around was due to her efforts.

“Any luck with the snow orchids yet?” asked Selm.

“They’re definitely starting to come through,” she replied, indicating some pretty white flowers growing on the trunks of some of the largest trees. “Though I’ll have to wait and see if they have the desired effect.” The desired effect, I found out, was to attract bastet hummingbirds, a tiny, sparkling green little bird found across Cormanthor, in order to increase pollination of the plants. The snow orchids of Miliiran are crucial to attracting the birds, because this magical flower blooms in the winter and ensures them a supply of nectar all year. I marvelled at her careful planning and cultivation and discovered another facet of Eldath’s followers that I had not known about.

Selm then asked me if I wanted to take part in a ritual, which I took as a great honour, and eagerly accepted this invitation. He told me that swimming was a major part of services to Eldath and that all Eldathyn are taught to swim from an early age. Verenne gathered some giant leaves from a flotissa plant and spread them on the ground in front

of the water. Then we all stripped off and ventured into the water. It was not as cold I had expected, which I was rather relieved about! After swimming in silence for a while, we all got out and I followed their lead by rolling around on the leaves. Verenne then bid me lay face down and massaged something sweet-smelling into my back and shoulders, before doing the same to Selm. I later found out it was a potion made of the nectar and juices of various flowers. Then, using a vibrant blue dye made from bluebells, she drew patterns on my back. Selm then did the same for her, and we all lay down again. As we stared out across the water in contemplation, Selm gave thanks to Eldath for her kindness in helping nurture new life and create peaceful environments. His prayer ended, a peaceful silence settled over us. How long we lay there, I really have no idea – so absorbed was I in my own thoughts. It must have been at least a couple of hours, for when Verenne finally got up, she bid us goodnight. Very at ease with myself, I easily fell into a contended sleep.

The next day I learned more about the everyday work of the Eldathyn. This involves a lot of nurturing growth, helping things grow and achieving systems of life that work because the right numbers and types of plants and creatures were present. A surprisingly complex system, but one that nature tends to assert by itself.

“It is sad that we have to encourage such systems,” explained Selm, “because normally they would occur naturally. However, people do not always live well with the land, and we do our best to educate them and to address any imbalances created.”

Verenne, I found, is a not infrequent visitor to Shadowdale, where she and the clergy of Chauntea advise Lord Mourngrym on how best to work with the land, though she told me she preferred to intervene less than the followers of the Grain Goddess. She explained that she felt compelled to put this view across after the Shadowdale druids’ circle disbanded. She feels living with the land as it comes is more important than working it and turning it to human needs, so wanted her voice to balance against the Chaunteans, preaching harmony and peace in all aspects of life.

She also told of how the Shadowdale circle used to watch over Moonfire and guard it against damage from aggressive beings, and how she came to fulfil that role after it broke up.

“I used to wander the forest more, but still visiting the pool regularly. But over the years, I felt increasingly like settling somewhere, so the departure of the other druids made me want to take greater responsibility for the area’s welfare.”

I was a little surprised to hear the pool would occasionally be attacked – how could anybody want to destroy its beauty?

“Ah,” said Selm with a sigh. “You remember the story of how Moonfire came into being? Well, the pool is sacred to my goddess, but it remains a place of pilgrimage, if one can really call it that, for Malarites. A couple of times a year they will mount a hunt through Cormanthor, wreaking destruction as they go and making sure they visit here.”

“And in the last couple of years, without the strength of the circle, the attacks have become more frequent,” added Verenne. “Fortunately, there is a guardian here.”

In spite of myself I looked about, for I had seen no sign of any guardian. Sensing what I was looking for, she smiled, but it was a smile tinged with sadness. “Prince will no doubt be roaming further afield, but rest assured he’ll be here if I need him. His loyalty knows no bounds. Even in death,” she added.

“The stag?” I asked quietly. She nodded. I was pleased by this discovery, for I would not wish harm upon Moonfire or Verenne. After this we lapsed into silence; I did not wish to break it.

We had a simple highsun meal before Verenne asked Selm if he would be coming ‘trealing’ with her this afternoon, to which he replied he would, and that he was sure I would wish to help. Eager to acquire new knowledge, I agreed, though with no idea

what it was I had to trust it wouldn't be dangerous. When I enquired as to what 'trealing' involved, Selm laughed.

"It's an abbreviation of 'tree healing.' As I understand it, it was first used in the High Forest by priestesses of Shiallia, and has been adopted by not only our clergy, but also that of Mielikki. Silvanites frown upon it because they see it as frivolous."

"So," I posed, "does that mean you also refer to tending plants and flowers as 'plealing' and 'flealing'?" He fixed me with a stare, the laughter gone.

"No, that just sounds silly," he said seriously, though I'm sure there was a sparkle of mischief in his eyes as he said it.

As it turned out, the process was similar to something I had read about. Verenne and Selm would carefully inspect the trees, tapping the trunks for hardiness and signs of disease. If there were any problems, they would offer prayers to Eldath and place their hands over the unhealthy part of the tree, pouring new life into it.

This went on for some time, and I must confess that I became distracted watching a male berrygobbler scurrying to and fro trying to collect enough food to feed his family. Every time he returned, his mate sent him back for yet more. I was left with the impression of the local rarecrown throwing her beleaguered husband out to sleep in the cold again after one more misdemeanour.

"Enjoying yourself?" asked Selm. I nodded, and turned my attention back to the trees. I asked if such healing could be done to stop trees losing their leaves or, ultimately, dying. Although I assumed it would go against the tenets of the faith, one thing I have always been taught is that there are always examples that break the rules. "The ability to do so possibly exists," he replied, "but Eldath would not grant it except in the most unusual of circumstances, and it would take a truly devout worshipper to channel that sort of power. The natural lifecycle is important; we preserve things as best we can, but all things have a natural lifespan and that cannot really be altered."

"Much like the differences between healing people using the Power, and bringing them back to life?"

"Quite so," he agreed. "Aiding life, particularly when it has been unnaturally affected, is a noble goal, but there is a morality in bringing plants or animals back to life because it can have more repercussions than you may realise." He gestured to where the poor berrygobbler was still running backwards and forwards. "If your friend there got eaten by something, his mate would soon find herself in trouble, and to bring him back to life would certainly be an act of kindness towards her and the young ones. Yet if we were to bring back every berrygobbler that ran afoul of larger creatures, we would soon be overrun with them, which would then lead to them needing a much larger supply of food. It's like a huge web, where there is a balance between the different plants and creatures that are part of it. One species dying out or coming to dominate can potentially affect all of the others."

I nodded in understanding, and reflected on this as we went back for evenfeast, a wholesome soup of many different greens. Afterwards, we swam once more. This night Selm enlarged some of the water lilies floating atop the surface of the water so that they were large enough for us to lie on them, where we stayed until I drifted off to sleep.

In the morning we departed back for the Leaves of Learning. I thanked Verenne for being such a kind host and for involving me so much in the ways of the Green Goddess. I promised to come and visit her again, for the beauty of Moonfire is something that should be seen more than once, and then we were off.

Selm said he had business in Shadowdale with an old acquaintance, so we stopped there on the way home. While he went off, I enjoyed a stroll about the town, seeing the sights. However, I gave Elminster's Tower a wide berth after reading the signs that promised a quick end to one's life if the Old Mage was unnecessarily interrupted. Instead, I spent my time talking to the villagers about what they knew of Moonfire.

We went back to the Old Skull for lunch, and Selm showed me something he had been keeping as a surprise for me. He took out from his pack a delicate crown of moss, which I recognised as the glowing type that grew under the waters of Moonfire. He explained that sometimes it was carefully harvested to be enchanted into these items, which were given to lucky members of the clergy, allowing them to harness its natural light property, as well as putting the wearer more in touch with their surroundings.

Impressed, I told him what I had learned from the villagers, who had spoken well of Verenne, but nobody I spoke to had actually been to visit Moonfire themselves. Selm laughed when I mentioned Elminster's Tower, saying it was probably not meant to be taken literally, but that a wise man would probably choose not to meddle in his affairs anyway.

I told him that one of the farmers, an elderly man who called himself Luth Mlennon, said it was well known that Moonfire's greatest secret is that it hides a nymph's grotto somewhere beneath its waters. Although I was told by others that he was prone to telling tall tales, I asked Selm if it was true.

"A church has to keep some secrets," he answered with a wink.

Moss Crown

This thin circlet of moss is carefully harvested from the naturally glowing vegetation beneath the waters of Moonfire by the clergy of Eldath. It is then fashioned into a simple crown shape and enchanted. When worn upon the head, it grants the wearer +1 natural armour and a +2 competence bonus to Knowledge (nature) checks. Additionally, the wearer can cast *faerie fire* 3/day and *calm animals* 1/day.

Caster level: 3rd; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *barkskin*, *calm animals*, *faerie fire*; *Market Price:* 5,000 gp; *Weight:* 1lb.

Unveiling Waterdeep's Hidden Lords

Part IV

By Chris Jameson

Of all the forms of government found in the Realms, perhaps none is as intriguing as Waterdeep's unique system. With the exception of a brief and tumultuous period, the City of Splendors has been ruled by a hidden council of Lords for over three centuries. With one exception, Waterdeep's Lords have ruled fairly and justly, putting the needs and concerns of the city ahead of their own desires.

Another of the unique qualities of the Lords is that they have been drawn from all walks of life. Wizards, nobles, merchants and common laborers have all served as Lords. Lordship is not restricted by race; though most Lords have been human, there have also been elven, half-elven, and halfling Lords.

The citizens of Waterdeep believe they are ruled by sixteen Lords. However, the number was secretly increased to twenty in 1364, after an ex-Harper caused considerable turmoil within the city. *City of Splendors: Waterdeep* (pages 52-55) lists the following individuals as Lords: Open Lord Piergeiron the Paladinson, Brian the Swordmaster, Caladorn Cassalanter, Durnan the Wanderer, Mirt the Moneylender, Larissa Neathal, Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, Nymara "Kitten" Scheiron, Sammareza Sulphontis, Texter, Kyriani Agrivar, Brianne Byndraeth, and Nindil Jalbuck. Ed Greenwood's short story "A Slow Day in Skullport", found in *Realms of the Underdark*, listed Mirt's lady Asper as another Lord of Waterdeep. *The Siege*, the second book of the Return of the Archwizards trilogy, named another Lord, Deliah the White.

With fifteen of the twenty Lords named, Dungeon Masters are free to create their own Lords, filling their own needs. Here is one possible Lord DMs can use. Following the tradition of past Waterdhavian supplements, only a minimal stat block is given.

Sierkan Dahl

Sierkan Dahl
Male Chondathan Human, Warrior 3/Psion 12

History

Sierkan Dahl is a man without a past.

He does not remember his parents. He can recall nothing of his childhood, or of his adolescence. Even the details of his early adulthood are lost to him. All he has are vague memories, and the tattoo of a sword and sunburst on his right shoulder. Up until twenty years ago, Sierkan's past is a mystery.

Sierkan's earliest memory – what he regards as the beginning of his current life – is of a warm Kythorn night, in the Sembian city of Saerloon. He was confused and dizzy, surrounded on all sides by silent darkness. Some unseen force suddenly struck him in the chest, propelling him backwards. Wooden boards shattered and broke as he struck them, flying through a wall and landing in the street. In front of him was a warehouse, with flames visible through the opening his inadvertent exit had created. Within minutes, the entire warehouse was consumed in flames. Guards frantically doused nearby structures with water, trying to keep the flames from spreading.

Sierkan watched the warehouse collapse in on itself with a roar. His earlier dizziness had

faded, but his confusion remained. He had no knowledge of who he was, where he was, or what he was doing there. He gave no protest as the guards detained him. He was questioned, but eventually the guards released him.

The young man had nowhere to go. Knowing no one and having no money, he could not call on anyone for assistance. With no other options available to him, he had to live on the streets. He found his way to the docks, and eventually fell in with a group of homeless people sheltering in an abandoned warehouse.

It was here that he met Narel, the man who gave Sierkan a name. Narel, a retired adventurer, had himself fallen on hard times. Seeing something of himself in Sierkan, he took the young man under his wing and began teaching him how to survive. Narel taught Sierkan how to scrounge for food, how to avoid the guards, and, most importantly, how to use a dagger.

Both were surprised to discover that Sierkan was already an accomplished hand-to-hand fighter. Though he could easily hold his own against larger opponents or even small groups of attackers, Sierkan seemed – to Narel, at least – to be strangely lacking in knowledge of martial weapons. The only weapons Narel had were daggers, but he gladly gave one to Sierkan and trained him in its use. Sierkan excelled in his training, quickly surpassing his mentor in ability.

Narel fully intended to teach Sierkan how to use a sword, but never had the chance. With no income, swords were beyond their immediate reach. In an attempt to earn money, both men took jobs as dockworkers. It was hard, strenuous work, but it gave them a chance to make a real life for themselves.

The two had been working on the docks for just a few weeks when Narel was killed in an accident. He was helping unload cargo from a ship when an overloaded net gave way, dropping several crates. Narel was crushed by the falling crates, dying instantly. Sierkan was working on another ship, some distance away, and never even heard the commotion as his friend lost his life. It was only much later that night, when he tried to find Narel, that Sierkan learned the fate of the former adventurer.

Sierkan was once more alone. This time, however, he at least knew where he was and how to get by. Though disheartened by the death of his friend, Sierkan went on with his life. For the next year, the young man continued working on the docks. He was eventually able to rent a small room above a woodcarver's shop, leaving behind his time on the streets.

It was not a good life. Working on the docks was difficult, requiring both strength and long hours. Many nights, after leaving his job, Sierkan was too tired to do more than choke down a cheap, unappetizing meal before returning to his small, vermin-infested room. Sierkan longed to find a better life, but had neither the time nor the skills to pursue one.

Then came the Time of Troubles. It was a time of dramatic upheaval for many, when even the laws of magic and nature went awry. The gods themselves walked the land, and all across the Realms, people found their lives changed.

Despite all this, little changed on Saerloon's docks. Ships were still arriving and departing, and cargo still had to be loaded, unloaded, stored, and moved. For Sierkan and most of the other dockworkers, the Time of Troubles was a distant thing, one that didn't affect them. They were mostly right. But, by chance, the crisis affecting the Realms was what gave Sierkan a chance at a new life.

Stopping in a tavern for his dinner, Sierkan met a shopkeeper named Fesgan Himmer. Fesgan had just arrived in Saerloon that afternoon, coming in by ship from Westgate. A crafter of jewelry, Fesgan left Westgate when his shop was destroyed by a spell gone awry. The jeweler intended to open a new shop in Saerloon, and asked if Sierkan knew of any good locations. Sierkan did not, as he spent most of his time near the docks. The two conversed for a few hours, before going their separate ways.

Over the next several days, Sierkan didn't think much about the garrulous merchant. He went about his normal routine, loading and unloading ships from dawn until dusk. Each night, he visited the same tavern, then retired to his small room to prepare for the next day.

One night, nearly two weeks after meeting Fesgan, Sierkan found himself restless and unable to get to sleep. He got up and got dressed, leaving his room for a nocturnal stroll. He wandered around the city almost aimlessly, content to just walk. Finally beginning to tire, Sierkan was thinking of returning to his bed – but then he heard a cry for help.

Sierkan heard the sounds of struggle coming from a nearby alleyway. Fully aware that it could be a trap, he cautiously approached. When he reached a position to see into the alley, he was surprised to see several thieves assaulting Fesgan. Without thinking, Sierkan rushed to the man's rescue.

He couldn't remember his hand-to-hand combat training, but Sierkan's forgotten instructors had trained him well. Though the merchant's assailants were armed with clubs and daggers, three of them fell to Sierkan's assault before he had to pull his own dagger. Within minutes, all of the thieves had either fallen or fled.

Fesgan was immensely grateful for his rescue. He had little to offer in reward, so he offered Sierkan the best thing he could: a job as an assistant. Fesgan's own apprentices and assistants had been killed when his shop was destroyed, so he needed the help. Additionally, Sierkan had already proven he could act as a bodyguard, if necessary. Fesgan would pay him well, and would also instruct Sierkan in his craft, so that he could one day have a shop of his own. Sierkan readily accepted this offer.

Fesgan's shop was successful almost from the beginning. Catering mostly to successful but not wealthy patrons, the shop very quickly developed a large customer base. Within months of opening, Fesgan had to hire more assistants to help fulfill orders and to run the store.

During this time, Fesgan kept his promise to train Sierkan. Sierkan became skilled in working with both gold and silver. He also became an expert gem cutter, and learned how to ascertain the value of gems and jewelry through careful examination. After five years, Sierkan's skills were nearly the equal of Fesgan's, and the two were more like business partners than master and apprentice.

As Fesgan's business became profitable, Sierkan's personal income increased. He was able to leave his tiny room over the woodcarver's shop, and get a home near the North Market. He was able to start frequenting finer inns and taverns, as well. However, his newfound prosperity didn't change one fact: he still had no knowledge of his past. He had managed a few vague impressions, but the events of his life before the warehouse fire were still unknown to him.

As time permitted, Sierkan visited the temples of Mystra and Azuth, as well as the shrines of Tymora, Tempus, and Lathander, seeking any clerical aid to restore his lost memories. Though many clerics tried to aid him, none could restore his forgotten past. Sierkan also consulted with the various mages living in the city, even the sinister Veldadin the Dark, hoping that arcane magic would succeed where divine magic had failed. Again, Sierkan knew only disappointment.

One night, while in the Blue Cow Inn, Sierkan met someone who could possibly help him. Aera Foxmane was a slender half-elven adventurer, formerly of the group Halder's Band. She had left that group after a dispute over division of treasure, and was now looking for a new group to join. As she and Sierkan talked, he found out she practiced a strange kind of mental magic called psionics. While a skilled psionicist could do many of the same things as a wizard or cleric, their power came from within, instead of from the Weave or from deities. And unlike most spellcasters, psionicists could far more readily delve into the depths of someone's mind.

Sierkan was intrigued. Not only was Aera quite attractive, but she professed to abilities

that could help him regain his past. He immediately hired her, hoping she would be the one that unlocked the mysteries within his mind. This also kept her nearby and gave him an excuse to spend time with her, a desire that had little to do with her psionic talents.

For the next several months, Aera and Sierkan worked together, trying to discover his past. Aera was able to uncover a few partial memories – little more than additional vague impressions – but that was all she was able to do. However, she did begin instructing Sierkan in the harnessing of his own mental energies. Though he felt that his own burgeoning psionic talent was, in some way, connected to his past, it still wasn't enough for him to recover his lost memories.

Finally, Aera suggested that Sierkan seek out her own former instructor. Tayn Silbur, she explained, was not only more powerful than she, but also a more skilled telepath. Her own telepathic abilities served her well, but it wasn't the area of psionics in which she had concentrated her studies. Tayn, with his knowledge and wisdom, could surely help Sierkan more ably than Aera.

Sierkan agreed, and the two journeyed to Waterdeep. Sierkan, following in Fesgan Himmer's footsteps, opened a jewelry store in the North Ward. It took little time for his shop, the Golden Sunburst, to become profitable. Wealthy merchants and nobility frequented his store, and by listening carefully to their complaints and comments, Sierkan began to learn quite a lot about Waterdeep and its people.

Meanwhile, Aera located her old mentor, Tayn Silbur. Tayn, an elderly but highly skilled psionicist, was delighted at the prospect of teaching Sierkan how to use his new talents, and equally delighted at the thought of helping him regain his lost past. It was a challenge, and the old man loved challenges.

Under Tayn's tutelage, Sierkan's psionic skills developed at a rapid pace. Though he did learn some telepathic abilities, he found his talents and his interests lay more in the manipulation of matter, and to a lesser extent, the body. Tayn tried to instruct Sierkan in farseeing skills, but this was an expertise that Sierkan couldn't master.

Despite Tayn's efforts, the secrets of Sierkan's past still remained a mystery. Tayn tried repeatedly to help his student reach his lost memories, attempting several different techniques. No matter how often he tried, no matter what method he employed, Tayn was unable to penetrate the veil that lay over Sierkan's earliest history. It was almost as if Sierkan didn't have a past before the warehouse fire… Tayn had encountered such a phenomenon before, in one of his other students.

Sapphire was a tall, redheaded woman with a fiery personality. A former courtesan, she had also come to Tayn seeking to recall lost memories. Unlike Sierkan, she had proven to be part of a unique sisterhood: a group of a dozen women with false pasts, mysterious tattoos, and a unique heritage. Once she'd met one of her sisters and learned the truth about herself, Sapphire had stopped searching for her past and embraced her future. She studied the ways of telepathy and farseeing, becoming greatly skilled at both. As a courtesan with such unique abilities, she became a valuable asset to Tayn.

Tayn Silbur was a man of much knowledge, and many secrets. One secret he shared with students was the presence of a group of shapeshifters operating in Waterdeep. Long before Volothamp Geddarm's public revelation of the doppelganger presence at the Hanging Lantern festhall, Tayn had discovered that the business employed many mirrorkin. Careful investigations revealed that the doppelgangers were part of an organization, and that their plans for Waterdeep were less than benign.

As his students developed sufficient skills, Tayn shared with them everything he had learned of the Unseen and the threat they posed to Waterdeep. With several students conducting their own investigations, Tayn began to uncover the identities of several Waterdhavians who had been replaced by shapeshifters. Tayn knew he had to act against the Unseen, but their greater

numbers and established plots gave them the advantage.

Not all plots uncovered by Tayn's students were connected to the Unseen, however. A psionically gifted bard named Valson Halfmoon had, through his own observations and investigations, uncovered the identity of one of Waterdeep's Hidden Lords. Eolann Westril, a respected swordcaptain of the Watch, was also a Lord of Waterdeep. After discovering this, Valson used his abilities to, bit by bit, mentally dominate Eolann, until little of the Watch officer's own will remained.

After learning of Valson's actions, Sierkan and Aera took it upon themselves to free Eolann. A great battle ensued, taking place on both the psychic and material planes. Sierkan and Aera prevailed, but at great cost. In killing Valson, Aera used so much of her own strength that she was unable to cope with the physical and mental wounds she'd received. Soon after seeing their foe collapse, Aera followed him into Kelemvor's halls.

Tragically, Eolann Westril was not entirely saved by her sacrifice. Too much of his mind had been destroyed by the evil bard's powers. Eolann lived, but lost much of who he originally was. No longer able to serve Waterdeep, Eolann was sent to Goldenfields. Now more suited to a simple life of farming, the former Watchman was happy with his new life. He missed serving the people of Waterdeep, but the damage to his mind was such that he never realized how much he had lost.

Sierkan was disconsolate over Aera's death. Sapphire had also been friends with Aera; the loss that she and Sierkan both felt served to draw them closer together. As the two worked through their shared grief, their friendship began to grow into something deeper. Many months passed, and their attraction grew. More than a year after Aera's death, Sierkan and Sapphire became lovers.

As they'd grown toward this point, Sierkan learned a valuable lesson from Sapphire: though the past shapes us, it is the present we live in, and the future we strive for. Finally at peace with himself, Sierkan quit worrying about his past, and focused his thoughts on what was still to come.

The Unseen did not rest during this time, nor did Tayn. He realized that his actions, and those of his students, would eventually be noticed by their shadowy foes. He began planning for several contingencies, including the one he saw as the most inevitable: his own death and replacement at the hands of a greater doppelganger. Using methods both arcane and psionic, he started researching ways to separate his consciousness from his body. He also researched the consequences of such disembodiment, and investigated the possibilities of having his own consciousness reside in the body of another.

Tayn and his students had been successful in keeping their conflict with the Unseen out of the eyes of most of Waterdeep's power groups. However, Sierkan and Aera's actions against Valson Halfmoon were known to Waterdeep's Hidden Lords, mainly because one of the Lords was involved. Eolann's fate made the Lords realize that the Hidden Art was not something they could afford to ignore. Khelben chose to have his own agents observe Sierkan and Aera, and soon discovered the shadowy war they and the Unseen were fighting.

Without tipping his hand or revealing his involvement, Khelben lent aid to Tayn and his students. His background actions helped the small group of psionicists stay undiscovered by the Unseen, and his magical assistance supported Tayn's goals in ways the latter never realized. Considering him a potential Lord, Khelben also manipulated Sierkan, challenging the man to test his loyalties and his abilities. In matters both great and small, the Blackstaff was impressed with what he saw of Sierkan.

Early in the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR), Tayn's fears were realized. He'd dug too hard for information, and though the Unseen didn't know if he acted alone or with someone, they definitely knew that Tayn was the hidden foe that had challenged them for the past few years. Ganyos, a greater doppelganger, was dispatched by Hlaavin to kill Tayn and assume his identity.

Ganyos feared the battle that could result if he directly confronted Tayn. Slipping into Tayn's home, the greater doppelganger waited, dagger in hand, to ambush his prey. Tayn returned home late that night, his mind dwelling on information he had just that day received. Due to his preoccupation, he didn't notice the lurking mirrorkin until it was almost too late. As the dagger entered his throat, Tayn frantically cast his consciousness out of his body. He wasn't sure whether or not his mind could survive without his body, but he had no choice but to trust in the abilities he'd developed.

His body had not even stopped twitching when the doppelganger began eating his head. After consuming Tayn's brain, Ganyos used a *ring of spell storing* to *disintegrate* the psionicist's remains. Once he'd disposed of the evidence, Ganyos assumed Tayn's form. In a matter of minutes, the Unseen had destroyed one of their most implacable foes, and replaced him with one of their own members. Tayn's lingering consciousness was afraid of what could now happen, but even greater than his fear was his rage at what had just transpired.

Without thinking or considering the consequences, Tayn launched a psionic attack against his slayer. Ganyos, unprepared for such an assault, was stunned. He fell to the ground, the limbs of his assumed form unable to support him. Taking advantage of his foe's weakness, Tayn sent his consciousness into the doppelganger's body. Now wholly within the alien mind of his opponent, the psionicist continued his assault on the mirrorkin.

Though not without mental abilities of his own, Ganyos was sorely unprepared for psionic combat. The mental powers of greater doppelgangers are more suited to reading minds, not battling them. Ganyos tried to resist, but there was no way he could best a trained psionicist in mental combat. The murderer was himself slain, as Tayn's consciousness overwhelmed and destroyed his own.

Tayn found himself alone in the doppelganger's body. With some effort, he was able to assert control over it. Getting up from the floor, Tayn realized that he was now in the body of a member of the Unseen. He had found the way to infiltrate an organization dedicated to infiltrating and controlling his own society. He was now in the best position possible for working against the Unseen.

Tayn spent the next several hours learning how to use his new body. Once he felt confident in his abilities to fool the Unseen, he arranged to meet with Sierkan. Revealing all that had happened, Tayn instructed his student to contact Khelben Arunsun, reasoning that the archmage would be very interested in having an agent among the Unseen. Sierkan left to seek an audience with Khelben, and Tayn used Ganyos's memories to return to the Unseen's lair and report to their leader, Hlaavin.

Sierkan gained an audience with Khelben, and spent the next several hours explaining everything that had happened. He spoke of the conflict with the Unseen, not realizing that some details were already known to the Blackstaff. Next he spoke of the attack on Tayn Silbur, and the fact that the psionicist was now able to infiltrate the Unseen by using one of their own against them. As anticipated, Khelben was quite intrigued by this opportunity.

Khelben then surprised Sierkan. Not only did he agree to make use of Tayn as an agent, but he also gave Sierkan an unexpected opportunity: the chance to be a Lord of Waterdeep. Recent events had shown that psionics could be a threat to Waterdeep and its Lords, and Khelben wanted to be able to counter and prevent that threat. Sierkan had already proven himself to Khelben, and the knowledge he and Tayn possessed could prove invaluable. Sierkan was shocked, but he agreed to take the Lordship.

Current Status

Sierkan has become comfortable in his role as a Lord of Waterdeep. Though his primary area of expertise is psionics, Sierkan is a strong proponent of Waterdeep's armed forces. He doesn't wish to use those forces unless absolutely necessary, but he believes

in keeping them well-trained and well-provisioned, ready for any contingencies.
As someone who worked his way up from society's lowest rungs, Sierkan is quite mindful of the common folk, and also of the merchants. He supports almost anything that keeps life orderly and comfortable for these folk. Conversely, Sierkan has little love for the nobility. Though some nobles frequent his jewelry shop, he has little use for the nobility as a whole. He feels that anyone who isn't willing to earn their position in society does not deserve that position. He tries not to let his feelings interfere with his business or his position as a Lord, but still finds himself favoring the Waterdeep's working class over the nobility.

Despite her frequent teasing, Sierkan quite likes Kyriani. He has great respect for Texter and Piergeiron, and tends to follow their lead with most issues. Sierkan isn't entirely comfortable with Sammareza Sulphontis or Ralser Kepp, since he considers the morality of both men to be questionable. Sierkan has recently befriended Taethen Caliel; Taethen is helping Sierkan overcome his ignorance of the demihuman races that call Waterdeep home.

Through Tayn Silbur, Sierkan knows that Nindil Jalbuck has been replaced by the greater doppelganger Hlaavin. He shared this knowledge with Khelben, but, at the Blackstaff's urging, has kept this information from the other Lords. He is not comfortable with his enforced silence, but he trusts Khelben implicitly. He suspects that Khelben is using the false halfling Lord to manipulate the Unseen. He also suspects that Mirt and Durnan know of this, but he is not certain.

Recently, Sierkan discovered that Valson Halfmoon had somehow returned to life. The dark bard apparently has no memories of his prior actions in Waterdeep, but Sierkan is closely watching him, anyway.

Appearance and Personality

Sierkan is a short man, standing barely five and a half feet tall. His closely-trimmed hair and beard are steely grey; these features, along with the lines on his face, indicate an age of over fifty winters. Sierkan's eyes are also grey. He maintains a serious air, and is rarely seen relaxing. He has not shown a preference for any particular colors, and prefers loose-fitting clothing that is finely made but simple in detail.

Despite his apparent age, Sierkan is in excellent shape. He exercises regularly, and often spends time in combat practice with Waterdeep's soldiers. At least once a tenday, he conducts informal unarmed combat training with any willing soldiers. There is talk of formalizing his instructions, as his training has proved valuable to a number of Guardsmen.

Sierkan has a passion for military history, and he is becoming something of an expert on past conflicts in the North. He also collects daggers; many of the soldiers he trains have given him fine daggers in gratitude for his instructions. Sierkan is occasionally seen buying gemstones. Many of these stones go to the Golden Sunburst to be made into jewelry, but some Sierkan keeps for himself.

Though Sierkan has stopped trying to recall his past, his vague recollections and impressions have given him a very rough idea of his life before the warehouse fire. He is fairly certain he was a soldier, and recalls serving someone he thought of as the prince, or alternatively, "the Fox". Sierkan knows that he served in combat, but he doesn't know who the enemy was. He recalls being at an academy of some kind, though he doesn't remember why he was there. Sierkan has an odd fear of fire that he believes also dates back to his time as a soldier.

Author's Note: Sierkan Dahl was one of the first NPCs I ever created, back when I was in a very munchkin phase. He was always a psionicist, though I had little idea beyond that of what to do with him. When I grew out of the munchkin phase, I decided to leave Sierkan in Waterdeep, and wait for a plan of what to do with him.

I dusted him off when I began the Lords of Waterdeep project. I arbitrarily decided to base his physical appearance on Jaime Wolf of Wolf's Dragoons, from the Classic BattleTech universe. An equally arbitrary decision was to make the Waterdhavian Alias clone into a psionicist and involve her with him.

The amnesiac searching for his past is a bit cliché, but it seemed an excellent reason for someone to delve into psionics. Until I thought of that angle, I had no idea what Sierkan's backstory was. That's why the oldest NPC was the last one to be written up for this project.

Tayn Silbur taking over a greater doppelganger was an idea I've kicked around for a while. Attaching the idea to Sierkan's backstory made everything work better, and gave Sierkan the necessary "in" to eventually become a Lord of Waterdeep. The Valson Halfmoon angle was simply to get Aera out of the picture.

Sierkan's true past is left for DMs to develop as they will. My idea, which can be ignored or adapted as necessary, stemmed from the use of a BattleTech individual as a physical model. I decided that Sierkan – obviously under a different name – served in the Davion Heavy Guards around the time of the Fourth Succession War. After suffering a head injury, it was discovered that he had psychic abilities. He was sent to the New Avalon Institute of Science to participate in psychic experiments, though his official cover was as an unarmed combat instructor at the New Avalon Military Academy. How he was transported from New Avalon to a Sembian warehouse is, to me, an unimportant detail, but it can be readily explained as an experiment gone awry.

The tattoo on his shoulder is the logo of the Federated Suns.

I'd like to thank Steven Schend for his assistance while crafting Sierkan's backstory.

Deep Gnolls

Part II

By Danyel Woods

Being the completion of a treatise on the nature and society of this sub-race of gnolls, also known as 'Reavers' or *hahlorkh*, who dwell in the Underdark; compiled by Susprina Arkhenneld of Shadowdale, sorceress and apprentice of Elminster, from various sources.

* * * *

As I promised, esteemed Vangerdahast of Cormyr, I have enclosed the second half of the treatise on the deep gnolls, which was compiled from historical research, testimony from an exile of the race, and my own experiences and discoveries during a visit to their city in the guise of a Lolthian priestess/trade agent. This portion of the treatise deals with their magical and religious traditions, their preferences in terms of arms and equipment, and the race's relationships with other races, along with some sociological facts which may give you a slightly better understanding of their mindset.

Reaver Magic And Lore

The realities of day-to-day life in the Underdark, and the concerned with practicalities Reaver mentalities and values (as delineated by the Living Ancestors) generally do not lend themselves to prolonged study and contemplation of esoteric mystical minutiae, meaning that few wizards can be found in their civilisation. (This discouraging of wizardly pursuits was once a deliberate policy by the fiends, who were initially worried about the possibility of being bound by their former slaves; even some two hundred summers after relaxing this policy, scholar-mages are far from common amongst them.) On the other hand, Reaver veins course with the blood of fiends, granting those who can overcome their initial trepidations about the arcane arts the power to become mighty sorcerers. Similarly, not a few directly bind themselves (and/or their progeny) to pacts with the Living Ancestors in return for eldritch powers, making them warlocks of often formidable prowess.

While surface gnolls may favour druids as leaders, the presence of the Living Ancestors amongst Reavers and the immediate savagery of the Underdark's dangers tend to discourage the kind of detachment druids must cultivate in order to achieve their powers. Adepts and clerics who venerate 'aspects of the Ancestors' (see below) are respected amongst the Reavers for their healing gifts and the added 'muscle' their spells can provide the front-line combatants (especially when war-parties encounter well-equipped foes like drow), not to mention the 'insights' into the Will of the Living Ancestors which they can provide. Such priests often serve as advisors to house leaders or other nobles, but it is rare for them to wield any direct secular power (unless they are appointed to the Council as an Ancestor's representative).

Spells And Spellcasting

Reavers prefer magics which produce immediate, visible results, typically destructive evocations and conjurations. (As noted, the Living Ancestors once took a very dim view of study of the actual 'summoning and binding creatures' aspect of the conjurer's Art, for obvious reasons; however, once both the Ancestors grew secure in their divinity, this restriction was gradually relaxed.) Illusions are reserved for entertainment, and some more subtle casters readily follow Valyethra's lead in using enchantments to turn foes against one another. Necromancy is seldom practiced amongst Reavers, for the simple reason that

The Candlekeep Compendium

most Reavers consider the dead to be food rather than potential servants.

Reaver Magic Items

In imitation of the Living Ancestors, Reavers favour *flaming* longswords or longbows; oftentimes, those intended for use on the surface against 'civilised' folk are also imbued with the *unholy* property. Some smiths also 'cut corners' by using the city's *faerzress* to create *drowcraft* weapons, though they do not know or use that term; as such weapons generally cannot survive under the city's 'sun' (or on the surface), they are typically issued for use in the outlying settlements – or to those of questionable loyalty. Long centuries of constant skirmishing with the drow of Maerimydra have taught them the value of stealth and ambush, so they prefer armour that combines protection with freedom of movement (such as 'mithral-weave', their own equivalent of the famous elven chainmail), often also imbued with the *shadow* and *silent moves* properties for added concealment. With these exceptions, Reavers tend towards the 'brute force' method of empowering weapons and armour, directly increasing an item's enchantment bonus rather than adding any 'fancy' qualities.

Arcane casters often make great use of *Staves of Earthen Might* (c.f. *Dragon* #314) in construction and engineering (both civil and military); rods are not common, but neither are they conspicuous by their absence, as *Rods of Metal and Mineral Detection* (c.f. *Underdark*) are particularly useful to the mining industry (and expeditions sent to locate and conquer the mines of other, 'lesser' races). Enchanted ropes such as *ropes of climbing* and *ropes of entanglement* are also a firm favourite (in conscious imitation of Valyethra's preferences). Scrolls are rare, as Reavers prefer expendable items that can be used without special abilities, such as potions. Other than the obligatory healing drafts, these usually consist of orog-style blends like *bull's strength*, *bear's endurance*, *enlarge* and *haste*, which can greatly augment a Reaver's already impressive physical prowess. Wands are also commonly deployed to augment units which lack active arcanists amongst their numbers; direct attack spells are generally preferred, though the effects of a simple *wand of light* or *wand of daylight* on a drow patrol can make a debilitating, crucial difference which the Reavers greatly appreciate.

Reaver Deities

Yeenoghu no longer features in the spiritual lives of the Reavers. Jyalkaath and Valyethra having long since supplanted him through a combination of their immediacy, their visible potency, and methodical extermination of any who spoke the balor's name. (After more than thirty generations, only the most learned sages amongst the Reavers even know the tanar'ri's name any more, and then only as a 'lesser deity who failed his chosen people'.) Jyalkaath and Valyethra now occupy the pinnacle of the Reavers' pantheon as their 'Living Ancestors', immortal guardians and guides of the deep gnoll civilisation, using their supernatural might and ageless natures to awe the Reavers into submission. Considered a partnership of equals to the Reavers, the two fiends are considered to govern different aspects of the spiritual realm. Jyalkaath is naturally worshipped as the 'male' aspect, portrayed (accurately) as the embodiment of The Way of Things, a ruler often brutal, cruel and unforgiving (as most natural laws are) but always with a purpose (hidden though it may often be), and as a bloody-handed soldier who revels in mayhem. Just as obviously, Valyethra is the feminine aspect, being responsible for fertility (naturally) and all things which grow or allow others to grow; she is also revered for her patience and forethought and is the 'patron' Ancestor of those Reavers who can balance their bestial instincts with rationality and methodical preparation for exigencies. If Jyalkaath is the embodiment of Power in Reaver society, Valyethra is the personification of Purpose.

However, while the 'Living Ancestors' do not relish letting the Reavers acknowledge the existence of proper deities, they *do* recognise that allowing worship of such deities (in the guise of 'aspects of the Living Ancestors' or quasi-animistic practices) allows them to

identify, allow for, and even rectify weaknesses in their grip on the Reavers. Disturbingly to the Living Ancestors, many Reavers follow an aspect who strongly resembles the savage Malar, whose glory in the kill appeals to the Reavers' own deep-seated bloodlust – though to openly worship the Beastlord as himself is apostasy, punishable by death or exile. Similarly, worship of Chauntea is necessary to the flourishing of certain crops farmed by the Reavers – including the sacred yew trees used to craft the enchanted bows carried by Valyethra's military followers – but the farmers' following of this 'aspect', with its strong veins of concern for the welfare of others, is considered foolish and weak; the Ancestors acknowledge its necessity, but ensure that it is thoroughly derided by Reaver society at large. (Nonetheless, there is a small following of a Chauntea-analogue in the farming community, especially amongst the slaves who work the farms, and some of them – and a few of their Reaver overseers! – have even become druids, despite risking execution for such apostasy.) A sect of Valyethra's church actually follows the dogmas of both the lesser goddess/erinyes and of Shar, with Valyethra's full knowledge and approval; naturally, this 'variant doctrine' is not widely advertised, especially where Jyalkaath's followers might hear of it. (Despite her faith being officially proscribed, the Lady of Loss [and her sect within Valyethra's clergy] does sponsor a small, outlaw cult of assassin-terrorists within the city whose existence is an open secret; their services are just a touch too useful to the ruling Clans for them to be actively pursued and destroyed.) The Earthlord Grumbar is usually given offerings in return for his gifts of iron and mithral, which allow the Reavers to survive and flourish – though attention to him by any but the miners is likely to last only as long as it takes for the Reavers to carve out a surface kingdom of their own. More sophisticated Reavers who achieve some degree of leadership often offer prayers to an analogue of Gargauth (their fiendish masters raise little objection to this, since Gargauth was formerly a devil himself) or the Red Knight, as her mastery of matters martial and military is vital to their future success; some few, usually the most devoted of front-line soldiers, even (unknowingly) give obeisance to Helm.

Jyalkaath

The Great Father, the Claw of Tyranny, the Enslaver's Chains

Demigod

Symbol:	Green rays squeezed forth from a cornugon's black clawed hand
Home Plane:	The Barrens of Doom and Despair (Baator)
Alignment:	Lawful Evil
Portfolio:	Strife, hatred, tyranny, fear (*athletic prowess, *battle, *cities, *strength)
Worshippers:	Conquerors, evil fighters and monks, tyranny, wizards
Cleric alignments:	LN, LE, NE
Domains:	[*City,] [*Competition,] Destruction, Evil, Fear, Hatred, Law, *Strength, Tyranny, *War
Favoured Weapon:	The Enslaver's Chains (spiked chain)

* Portfolios held in his own right after Gilgeam's felling; others are accessible to him, but controlled by Bane.
[Domains in square brackets] are accessible only if the *Complete* series of books are in play.

Jyalkaath received his 'divinity' in a bargain with Bane: all Reavers who served the cornugon faithfully – and according to the dictates of Bane's faith – would grant both of them power, with the Black Lord having 'right of first claim' over their souls once they passed; any he did not choose would be consigned to the devil's home plane of Baator, furthering the fiend's own agenda and power. After sealing this bargain, Jyalkaath encountered the Untheric dictator-deity Gilgeam in a dream, and the self-proclaimed god-king agreed to the same arrangement mainly as a jest, for he knew that none of his subjects would ever fall under the horned devil's sway and he did not *want* the souls of Reaver worshippers, as they would 'pollute' his demesnes. However, when both Bane and Gilgeam were slain during the Time of Troubles, it was Jyalkaath

who laughed, for Gilgeam's portfolios fell to him (even if only in a limited fashion). This was vital to the cornugon's survival as a demigod during the dogfight over Bane's legacy, for Cyric refused to honour Bane's arrangement with the fiend and severed his access to those aspects; Iyachtu Xvim likewise felt disinclined to share his 'toys', and it was only when Bane himself was reborn in 1372 DR that the cornugon demigod was allowed to reassert his power over those spheres (subject to the old arrangement with the Black Lord). He now shares Bane's spheres of influence and follows/preaches the Black Lord's dogma while possessing Gilgeam's former portfolios in their own right (though they are applied to the Reavers, rather than Unther; he has no influence in that surface nation, and few on the surface know his name).

Clergy of Jyalkaath pray for spells at dawn, preparing themselves for a full day in the pursuit and perpetuation of dominion over others. They garb themselves in robes of green-trimmed black, or in green tabards over otherwise black clothing, and habitually arm themselves with spiked chains or swords, even though both custom and law declare the persons of clergy completely inviolate under pain of immediate death. Other than prayers for spells and other divine powers, the faith's only formal observances are the New Year (marked at Highharvestide, the date on which the fiends first took control of the Fleshraker March and thus the date of the city's formal foundation) and the gladiatorial contests held at the Challenge Arena on the ninth day of every month. The ceremonies at the games include ritual blessings of the contestants and audience at the start of the day's events, adjudicating the fates of losing fighters, and another ritual at the close of the contest, congratulating the victorious and granting freedom or clemency to those who have earned it under the law or through shows of courage, savagery and/or prowess. Those who are defeated in the Arena in a way exhibiting cowardice or weakness of spirit, or who have been defeated three times running, thus proving themselves too weak to survive, are sacrificed just before the closing blessing and their hearts burned so that Jyalkaath might claim their power and purge it of its flaws.

Clergy and Temples: Jyalkaath's primary place of worship is the Challenge Arena of Godsvault, where both he and Valyethra hold court during the monthly gladiatorial bouts. In smaller communities which lack such an arena, worship is undertaken on a military training ground/dueling field (or in the Great Halls of Clan strongholds) with a life-size statue of the Great Father overlooking all that occurs on the field from a balcony. The leaders of those sub-communities usually watch and judge all that occurs on the field from a viewing box of their own below the statue's feet.

(Owing to the limits enforced upon him by the *collar of material entrapment* he has never been able to remove, Jyalkaath is always in his avatar form: that of a Huge (15' tall) horned devil. He has a Divine Rank of 7; with the exception of his inability to *teleport* or summon devils, he is otherwise treated as a 23HD cornugon/Barbarian 5/Sorcerer 12.)

Valyethra

The Great Mother, Mother of Reason, Mistress of Obligation

Demigod

Symbol:	A flaming sword crossed with a lightning bolt, set upon a midnight-black disc with a deep-purple surround
Home Plane:	Baator (*Plane of Shadow)
Alignment:	Lawful Evil
Portfolio:	duty, order, storms, thunder, vigilance, war, (*caverns, *secrets, *the Underdark)
Worshippers:	Soldiers, peace officers, servants and slaves, forward planners of all types
Cleric alignments:	LN, LE, NE
Domains:	(*Cavern, *Darkness,) Evil, (*Knowledge,) Law, [Planning,] Protection, Storm, War
Favoured Weapon:	Burden of Duty (longsword)

(* Portfolios and domains accessible to Valyethra and her initiated followers, but controlled by Shar.)
[Domains in square brackets] are accessible only if the *Complete* series of books are in play.

Valyethra's divine imprimatur from Ramman, an Untheric deity of storms and obligations, was arranged through Jyalkaath and Gilgeam soon after those two struck their initial bargain. Ramman was not as sanguine about such dealings as his god-king, but hoped that he could influence the erinyes away from her former path of corruption and redeem her in some fashion, perhaps counterbalancing her companion's evil influences over the Reavers. He was to be sorely disappointed by a marked lack of progress towards that goal, and harvested few of the souls available to him through the pact (as few Reaver worshippers possessed the kindlier impulses that would have made them acceptable to him), but could not contemplate breaching the bargain and his own sworn oath. During the Time of Troubles, all of this abruptly ceased to matter to Ramman when he was slain and most of his power passed to his Mulhorandi counterpart Anhur. Unfortunately for both, a fragment of his power (and access to his spheres of influence) passed to Valyethra when Ramman fell. With Bane and Jyalkaath protecting the erinyes/demigod, Anhur cannot justifiably risk a confrontation over the pittance of Ramman's former power he *might* gain by slaying Valyethra.

During a surface venture soon after the city's foundation, Valyethra was surreptitiously approached by an avatar of Shar, who offered her access to her own spheres of darkness and secrets in return for certain concessions functionally similar to the bargain between Jyalkaath and Bane – and also permitting the Lady of Loss to establish a small 'doctrinal variance' within the Great Mother's clergy which allowed them both to channel certain nihilistic impulses within the Reavers into more useful avenues. After the Time of Troubles, while Jyalkaath was still sorting out what had happened to his sponsors, Shar allowed Valyethra access to the 'caverns and Underdark' portfolios she had recently acquired by slaying Ibrandul.

(Note: Owing to the Great Mother's close relations with Shar, Valyethra's clergy may take the 'Initiate of Shar' feat from *Champions of Ruin* and/or Shadow Weave feats; however, taking the Nightcloak prestige class requires direct worship of the Lady of Loss. Members of the Great Mother's clergy may freely choose from any of the listed domains, but only initiated members of the innermost circles of the clergy know who truly grants them.)

Clergy of Valyethra pray for their spells at dawn (or dusk for the 'divergent sect') after bathing, which symbolises cleansing oneself of the sweat of previous labours in preparation for those of the day (or night) ahead. Her clergy are almost exclusively female, and their everyday garb consists of robes of pale purple, trimmed with black; when expecting battle, soldiers or clerics of the faith wear black cloaks over purple surcoats emblazoned with Valyethra's sword-and-lightning emblem, and are almost invariably armed with both longsword and longbow. Other than prayers for spells and other divine powers, the faith's only formal observances are the New Year (marked at Highharvestide, the date on which the fiends first took control of the Fleshraker March and thus the date of the city's formal foundation) and the gladiatorial contests held at the Challenge Arena on the ninth day of every month. The ceremonies at the games include ritual blessings of the contestants and audience at the start of the day's events, adjudicating the fates of losing fighters, and another ritual at the close of the contest, thanking the slave-fighters for their service and granting freedom or clemency to those who have earned it under the law or through shows of courage, savagery and/or loyalty.

Dogma: Be attentive, diligent and thorough in the performance of your duties; those who fail in a duty, especially if they gave it anything less than their utmost, will suffer mightily for their indolence. All duties are valuable and should be mastered; when assigned to a task, devote yourself to learning its every aspect. No task should be undertaken without a thorough understanding of the intended goal, what its achievement entails, and what difficulties might await you during its execution:

preparation and forethought are the differences between success and failure. Those above you are your masters and may do with you as they see fit; that is their right, and you must give them nothing but your unconditional obedience and loyalty. Your masters give you what is your due for your service and aptitude, no more, no less; they *may* grant you advancement if you prove worthy, but ambition, insubordination and insurrection *will* see you punished.

Clergy and Temples: Valyethra's primary place of worship is the Challenge Arena of Godsvault, where both she and Jyalkaath hold court during the monthly gladiatorial bouts; however, lay followers and clerics in more isolated communities can pray to the Great Mother through as simple a shrine as a small statue of the Goddess standing atop a purple cloth in a wall alcove.

(Valyethra is also permanently invested in an avatar, being that she cannot claim dominion over Baator in her own right. She has a Divine Rank of 7; her avatar is treated as a 16HD erinyes/Rogue 9/Cleric 10/Nightcloak 4.)

Relations With Other Races

Even before the establishment of the cavern-city, Jyalkaath harboured a towering resentment for the drow of Maerimydra, one of whom was responsible for his imprisonment within the cavern – and in turn, the drow consider the Reavers to be trespassing within *their* rightful domains. There are frequent clashes between Reaver patrols and Maerimydran pickets, and the forces of each city derive great satisfaction from destroying caravans bound to or from the other. Given the expansionist bent of the Reaver society – their primary means of locating and exploiting their mining operations is by conquering the mines of 'weaker' races – Maerimydran leaders would be well-advised to keep their eyes open; they never know when a deep gnoll army might appear at their doorstep. Given the fractious nature of the drow, their ability to repel a full assault by the fiendish Reavers is very much in question.

(Update, 1373DR: this is now something of a moot point. The army of fiends and giants which sacked Maerimydra during the Silence of Lolth did so with the aid of reconnaissance information supplied by Reaver scouts and agents working on a principle I once heard termed, accurately if rather ungrammatically, as 'let's you and him fight'.)

Other drow cities, like the more southerly Sschindylryn and Dusklyngh far to the north, actually enjoy relatively cordial relations with the Reavers, as their mines and smithies forge arms and armour of impressive quality and ask reasonable prices for them in return for various drow goods, such as the *piwafwi* much prized by Reaver leaders and soldiers. Indeed, Reavers sometimes serve as mercenaries to concerns within those cities (either individually or in some strength – groups as large as Squadrons have been observed in some actions, though one or two Parties are sufficient to most tasks). Similarly, duergar can do business with the Reavers without much incident, as both races are well aware of each others' unusual abilities and respect that power. The 'exotic' foodstuffs produced by Godsvault, including its fruits, vegetables, and heady liquors, are also greatly prized by these foreign trading races, and a cask of apples or apple-brandy can fetch a staggering price from drow or duergar merchants (and their customers). The Zhentarim also enjoy commerce with Godsvault, partly because of the deep gnolls' positive flair for mining (and breaking and managing slaves); more than one *hahlorkh* battle-group has marched under Zhentish banners for Zhentish coin.

However, the Reavers do have an ongoing feud with the beholders of Ooltul, who see the deep gnolls' 'uniform aberrations' as a particular offence against their race's bizarre ideals of physical and spiritual perfection – and speculation that some probes and hit-and-run raids on outlying communities were conducted at the behest (and in the pay) of the Maerimydran drow has eased few minds amongst the Reaver leadership. Thankfully for the deep gnolls, the eye tyrants rarely sally towards the city in any numbers, but even a single beholder can wreak savage devastation before withdrawing. Much the same can be said of the kir-lanan found in

the region, as their hatred of the gods and those who worship them makes them natural enemies of the Reavers; again, they rarely assail Godsvault directly or in any great number, though even a small band can cause havoc in smaller, less-defended fringe settlements.

Other races – weaker goblinoids, kobolds, and breeds of orc less potent than the orogs or the tanarukks – are almost invariably killed when they 'trespass' within the city's zone of control, or captured and forced into slavery, tending farms or livestock or toiling in mines and smithies to further the city's economic might and growth. Most goblinoid factions take great pains to avoid areas controlled by Reavers or where they have been sighted, and with good reason: even Hellgate Keep's mighty, savage tanarukks would be hard-pressed to best a Reaver in single combat. There are no illithid settlements in the region, and even the pernicious mind flayers are careful to stay away from baatezu such as the Living Ancestors. There are few dwarven or svirfneblin settlements in the area, so these races rarely encounter Reavers in the Underdark; those who *are* encountered, as with surface-dwellers of almost any stripe, are generally considered fit only for enslavement – or eating.

Reaver Equipment

Of simple necessity, the Reaver civilisation makes almost all of its own equipment, relying on their remarkably productive economy for most essentials and military gear. Such equipment tends towards the kind of ruthlessly pragmatic functionality many dwarves would admire, though bladed weapons often sport cruelly serrated edges and heavier armours are often spiked for close-combat.

ARMS AND ARMOUR

Most Reavers favour the longsword, the longbow, and in spaces sufficiently open to wield it, the spiked chain – all weapons much beloved of the Living Ancestors. While there is a dearth of wood in the Underdark, making the construction of conventional longbows rather problematic, the horn and/or bone which can be laminated into *composite* bows is readily available as a byproduct of the farming industry, and since the longbow is a holy weapon, craftsmen take great pride and pains in their construction. (The yew trees transplanted by Valyethra are considered sacred, and are used only to make enchanted compound longbows for holy warriors of the Living Ancestors.)

Similarly, rothé leather is easily cured into armour. Trainee Reavers are taught to move swiftly and stealthily, spending much of their military apprenticeship in masterwork quality studded leather armour. Those who have completed their military training and entered active service are equipped by their masters and/or employers, often the Godsvault March itself. However, not a few keep their training armour and have it enchanted as they climb the ranks for the sake of retaining their stealth advantage, though others with better resources (or connections) trade it in for mithral chain shirts (or full-blown mithral chainmail) at the first opportunity. 'Heavy hitter' units intended for shock action, as well as most combat clerics, favour heavy steel shields and banded mail (for heavy protection) or breastplates (for speed of movement).

ANIMALS AND PETS

Like most other gnolls, Reavers greatly enjoy the company of hyenas. Valyethra had the forethought to take this into account and secured a goodly supply of them over the years, both normal-size for pets/companions and dire breeds for riding; a goodly number have been infused with devilish energies in their own right, though such fiendish hyenas are so rare and prestigious as to be found only with the clergy, Clan leaders, and senior officers of the Godsvault March. Those deep gnolls who lack the wherewithal (or favour of the Living Ancestors) to acquire dire hyenas for riding often settle for riding lizards as mounts (breeding stock having been purchased from 'friendly' drow some time ago and housed within the city's farming district).

Other animals favoured as pets include dragazhar (the deep bats also known as

'night hunters', often trained and employed in the same fashion as a surface-dweller might fly a hawk), the beholder-kin known as 'eyeballs' (typically used as sentry-animals that raise an alarm rather than fight an intruder themselves, as their offensive powers are mostly ineffective against Reavers), ibrandlin (for slightly more effective guard-beasts), and humanoid slaves such as kobolds, goblins, or orcs.

Character Creation Aids

Regions: Gnoll, Underdark (Northdark) (as dwarf), *Reaver*.
Racial Feats: Fiendish Bloodline, Improved Energy Resistance, Improved Natural Armour, Infernal Bargainer
Racial Prestige Classes: Blackguard, Cavelord, Deep Diviner, Shadowdancer, Prime Underdark Guide, Wild Scout*
*The special benefits of the Wild Scout class apply either underground or on the surface; this is determined at the time the PrC is taken and cannot be altered thereafter.

Reaver Region

Preferred classes: cleric, fighter, ranger, or sorcerer. A first-level character from any of these classes may choose a regional feat and *one* equipment option from those listed below.
Automatic Language(s): Undercommon.
Bonus Languages: Common, Draconic, Elven, Goblin, Orc.
Regional Feats: Blooded, Knifefighter, Resist Poison, Thug.
Bonus Equipment:
a) longsword* or composite longbow (+2 Str bonus)
b) studded leather armour* and light steel shield*
c) *wand of cure light wounds (CL5)* with 20 charges or *wand of burning hands (CL5)* with 20 charges

GODSVAULT

The region above represents citizens or expatriates of the only known Reaver city and its outlying settlements. Housing some thirty thousand Reavers and half as many slaves, the city's name translates from the Infernal-influenced Reaver dialect as 'Godsvault' (a contraction of the original quasi-poetic term set upon the cavern by the initial gnollish settlers, 'The Vault of the Living Gods'). The outlying settlements, most of them conquered mining communities now worked by slaves or similar farming/fishing towns, add some further ten thousand Reavers and twenty thousand slaves to the total population.

Godsvault is a single large cavern in the Underdark, specifically the Middledark on the north-western shore of the Reachmere (south-east of Maerimydra, beneath the Dragon Reach). Much like the drow, the Reavers have hollowed out a number of massive stalagmites for their oldest and noblest dwellings; dwellings for commoners are built of stone on the cavern floor or found in warrens excavated (sometimes magically) out of the cavern walls. The cavern's stalactites are untouched, as most Reavers cannot access them without magic; there is one massive central stalactite which *is* inhabited, but this is the home of the Living Ancestors and none may enter without an express summons, on pain of summary execution (usually by the Ancestors themselves).

Centuries of the Ancestors' selective-breeding programmes and living in the Underdark have bestowed both darkvision and low-light vision on the Reavers. Nonetheless, in light of their manifest destiny of returning to and dominating the surface, they have not let themselves become vulnerable to the light, as the drow have. Through the use of powerful magics by the Living Ancestors and the city's arcanists and clergy, an illusory ball of light (which acts as natural sunlight to all things which are touched by its light, including undead, plants and *drowcraft* weapons) tracks across the cavern's 'sky' in time with the movements of the sun on the surface, acting as timepiece/calendar *and* natural illumination for the city's 'solar' cycle. By night, the streets of most districts of the city are brightly lit by the use of 'lamp-posts' set with *continual flames*; similar lights also mark the entrances to most entertainment venues, such as the Challenge Arena, taverns and festhalls. The city's Reachmere foreshore

even enjoys a small park-like area a little away from the fishing-docks, complete with a sacred grove of yew trees transplanted by Valyethra to be used in the crafting of enchanted bows. The farming district, on the south side of the Godsvault cavern (on the other side of the 'park' from the foreshore), includes both grazing paddocks for deep rothé and planting fields (most of them having been magically transfigured from bare rock into arable land) which support a wide range of edible herbage, both Underdark fungi and transplanted surface corps such as wheat, cabbage, apples and even potatoes. (Those crops requiring special conditions to flourish are tended by the farmers and their (barely) tolerated druids with spells such as *plant growth* and weather-mimicking effects.)

Laws and the peace are enforced by the Godsvault March, whose loyalty is to the city and its Ruling Council, rather than any Clan. This force has retained the 'base-five' structure once imposed upon the Army of Darkness that assailed Myth Drannor, patrolling the city's streets in five-strong bands and its outlying regions in 'parties' of twenty-five. Large-scale actions are fought by Squadrons, consisting of five Parties, and the nominal strength of the Godsvault March is forty such Squadrons, which can be augmented in time of emergency by the 'call-up' of able-bodied males to form almost thirty more such Squadrons (including the full strength of all the Clan militias, which can be annexed by the City March at dire need). In all, the city of Godsvault can muster an army of almost nine thousand swords without causing its economy excessive distress.

Deep Gnolls As Monsters

DEEP GNOLL, 1ST-LEVEL FIGHTER

SIZE/TYPE:	Medium Native Outsider
HIT DICE:	3d8+3 + 1d10+1 (25hp)
INITIATIVE:	+0
SPEED:	30' (six squares)
ARMOUR CLASS:	16 (+2 natural, +3 masterwork studded leather armour, +1 masterwork light steel shield), touch 12, flat-footed 16
BASE ATTACK/GRAPPLE:	+4/+6
ATTACK:	masterwork longsword +5 (1d8+2/19-20/x3) or composite longbow +4 ranged (1d8+2/x3)
FULL ATTACK:	masterwork longsword +5 (1d8+2/19-20/x3) or composite longbow +4 ranged (1d8+2/x3)
SPACE/REACH:	5'/5'
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	–
SPECIAL QUALITIES:	Damage reduction 5/magic, good or silver; resistance to fire 5, cold 5; spell resistance 13; darkvision 60', low-light vision
SAVES:	Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +3
ABILITIES:	Str 15, Con 13, Dex 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8
SKILLS:	Climb +2, Handle Animal +2, Heal +1, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Jump +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Ride +2, Search +2, Spellcraft +2, Spot +6, Survival +5, Use Rope +1
FEATS:	Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack, Stealthy
ENVIRONMENT:	Any underground
ORGANISATION:	solitary, pair, band (2-5), or party (2-20, plus one Ftr2/Rog3 sergeant and 1-4 Rgr2 scouts)
CHALLENGE RATING:	4
TREASURE:	Standard
ALIGNMENT:	Usually lawful evil
ADVANCEMENT:	By character class
LEVEL ADJUSTMENT:	+2

Even the lowest-grade front-line deep gnoll soldiers in the service of Godsvault (or its Clans) are equipped with masterwork studded leather armour, a masterwork light steel shield, a masterwork longsword, and a mighty composite longbow (+2 Str bonus) with twenty arrows. If deployed in an 'internal security' role, their arrowheads and swords will be of alchemical silver.

Typical accessories for field operations include: an alchemical silver dagger (for dealing with other Reavers), two vials of alchemist's fire (used as grenades), two smokesticks, a *potion of cure light wounds*, and the standard-issue field gear (backpack, bedroll, blanket, four days' trail rations and mess kit, two waterskins, armour maintenance kit, whetstone, four sunrods, an *everburning torch*, ten tindertwigs, 50' silk rope, five pitons, two pieces of chalk, and two explorer's outfits).

[Note: skills listed include attribute modifiers.]

[Note: deep gnolls prefer a 'grinding advance' style of warfare which favours their raw physical power and various supernatural advantages, but are more than able tacticians and will ruthlessly exploit almost any advantage they can seize or create, including guerrilla techniques, natural or combat engineered terrain features, artillery and archery support (including sniping attacks against key personnel) and all manner of tactical trickery to achieve their objectives. Basically, create a list of every simple tactic, clever stratagem, dirty trick, sneaky manoeuvre and act of outright bastardry you have ever seen or heard (especially those planned or actioned by PCs), and use *that* check-list as your standard playbook. In battle, deep gnolls are firm believers in the maxim "If you ain't *cheatin'*, you ain't *tryin'*".]

Special notes:

1) There is no such thing as a 'fiendish Reaver'; the amount of devilish heritage in their veins is sufficient to stabilise their bloodlines, too weak to permit proper 'fiendish' categorisation, yet too strong to permit application of the 'fiendish' template. However, the racial feats relating to fiendish heritage listed at the start of this text *may* be taken. Effects mimicking the *faerzress*-infused template are rare but not entirely unheard-of.
2) The fiends' breeding programmes produced humanoids that are balanced on a knife's edge between rationality and their feral instincts, and thus there is little that can stop a Reaver when he goes truly berserk – *including the Reaver himself*. Any Reaver with barbarian class levels *automatically* gains the 'Blind Rage' flaw from *Dragon* #325 *and* the 'Gnoll Ferocity' feat from *Races of the Wild*.
   Blind Rage: once he has entered a rage, the barbarian *cannot* voluntarily end that rage and *must* attack a creature every round if he is able – be they friend or foe – until the rage exhausts itself. If he attacks an ally, he can attempt a DC15 Will save once per turn to stop attacking that ally.
   Gnoll Ferocity: grants a raging gnoll a 1d6 bite attack; used alone, this attack uses the full Strength modifier for bonus damage; used as part of a multi-attack routine, it suffers a –5 to-hit penalty (but causes no penalty to other attacks) and uses only half the Strength modifier for bonus damage.
3) If the campaign uses the additional base classes from *Complete Arcane*, the warlock replaces the sorcerer on the Reaver region's list of preferred classes – direct pacts with their patron fiends being a routine thing amongst the Reavers, especially since the simplicity of a warlock's invocations appeals to their 'right here/right now' instincts. Reaver warlocks do *not* gain DR/cold iron as warlocks of other races do; instead, they increment their racial DR by the value appropriate to their warlock level, retaining all their Reaver racial vulnerabilities. Class-based energy resistances such as the warlock's stack with Reaver racial resistances, should the *fire* or *cold* energy types be chosen for the class resistances. Note that the Improved Energy Resistance

feat can *only* be taken for the racial resistances.

4) If the campaign uses the variant base classes from *Complete Warrior*, Reaver rangers who worship the primary Living Ancestors are of the 'non-spellcasting' variant class, as the Living Ancestors lack the portfolios to grant such magics. Spell-casting rangers are almost invariably followers of the Ancestor-aspects which mimic Malar the Beastlord or Chauntea and are the exception rather than the rule.
5) GMs creating Reaver characters as NPCs should be aware that formal military training is the rule rather than the exception in Godsvault: use of the NPC 'Warrior' class is *never* appropriate unless the character in question departed the city before adolescence or is only just beginning his training. NPC and 'monster' Reavers expected to see front-line combat should be built with PC classes such as fighter or ranger; only 'civilians' use the NPC classes.

Were I a sage impressed with the depth of my own knowledge of the *hahlorkh*, Brother-in-Art Vangerdahast, I might say that I hope you find this treatise greatly useful. Given the gravity of what lies within, I must instead close this treatise with the fervent desire that you never again have cause to take it down from your shelf.

Yours by song and sword,

Susprina Arkhenneld of Shadowdale

Journal of an Apprentice Scribe

A History of Berdusk

By J P Hazelhoff

Well met, fellow scribes and learned scholars!

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Rikos Dughol, late of Saradush, in Tethyr. I have been traveling across Faerûn, at least across the regions known as the Western Heartlands and the North, as an apprentice scribe with my master Brin Orgul.

During my travels, I have kept a journal of the places I have visited and things I have seen. As I retrieve and edit these journal entries while staying in Candlekeep, I will make them available for all to read. My journal might resemble the works of Volothamp Geddarm, whose writings I came across during my studies, but are by no means copies of his excellent work, which has served as a wonderful source of inspiration.

Most of the journal has been written during those moments when I did not have to perform some tasks for my master, or when I wasn't occupied with the physical part of traveling. Because of this, the entries in the journal may sometimes seem disjointed. Also, the entries might not be published in chronological order; the pages were scattered during an unfortunate incident with an overeager air mephit.

I hope that for the places I've visited, the journals will provide you as much insight as Volothamp's journals provided me.

Till swords meet,
Rikos Dughol of Saradush

* * * *

Journal of an apprentice scribe by Rikos Dughol of Saradush

17th Hammer 1371, Year of the Unstrung Harp

hile Master Orgul was tied up with priests of Oghma in the Seat of Lore, I found myself conveniently placed in the temple's library. Though certainly not one of the largest libraries in Faerûn, the collection of the loremasters was sufficiently large to keep a simple scribe's apprentice like me busy for many a winter.

Having received permission to browse through the books, tomes, and scrolls, I chose a set of volumes describing the history of the Sword Coast. It was in those books that I read about the earliest human settlers of Berdusk – or Sulduskoon, as it was called at the time. Founded at the site of the elven moot Clearspring, human settlers established a small fishing community. The combination of a freshwater spring, the rapids in the Chionthar at the Breaking Steps, and the sheltering presence of the twin tors made the spot ideal for the fishermen.

Perhaps out of respect for the elven moot, the dominant human culture in the Chionthar valley – the now ruined Talfirian city of Talis, located in the northern parts of the Reaching Wood – had not shown interest in the twin tors. Likely the southern settlers were unaware of the elven site; the region's native humans were still scattered and recovering after the fall of the Shadowking's realm, Ebenfar, in the Year of the Miscast Shadow (323 DR).[1]

While the historical texts did not detail where exactly the settlers came from, I surmised that the majority of them hailed from the original tribal lands and the area around Zazesspur. They took the name of the river that flows from the Tethyrian highlands to the Bay of Bormul, and bestowed it on the small river that flows from Clearspring Tor to the Chionthar.

When the first settlers arrived is not quite clear; no written texts or other tangible references are mentioned. The small fishing community received a substantial influx of Amnian, Tethyrian and Calishite settlers during the rise and fall of the kingdom of Valashar[2] and the subsequent expansion of the Shoon Empire to its largest size in the Year of the Leaping Hare (376 DR).

During the Shoon reign, the foundations of the High Lady's Castle were laid as Valashar forces fortified the village and turned it into a military outpost with wooden palisades. Not many structures of this era survive; the two most intact are the minaret of the House of the High Hand and the twin bridges that connect Shortarrow Gate with Moondown Isle and the opposite bank of the Chionthar.

This northward expansion did not sit well with the Forest Kingdom, and a force was quickly mobilized to check the advance of the Calishite forces. The army of Crown Prince Azoun I of Cormyr routed the Valashar forces within two days, sending them running westward to what is now the Fields of the Dead, where a larger contingent of southern troops had gathered. The Cormyreans left a token force behind in Sulduskoon, using it as a supply base so that Azoun no longer had to rely solely on Iriaebor.

At the end of the campaign, when Crown Prince Azoun I drew back his forces to Cormyr, the governance of the village of Sulduskoon was given back to its residents. Though primarily of Tethyrian and Calishite stock, the villagers were pleased with their new-found independence, and pledged to not seek re-unification with the Shoon Empire. They did not have to fear another Calishite incursion; the death of Shoon IV in the same year halted further Calishite expansion.

A century after the defeat of Valashar and the Shoon, under the leadership of Garron Starshan, steward of the Vale, the villagers erected a monument to Azoun's victory and Sulduskoon's independence. This day – the 16th day of Kythorn – is considered a holiday for both the residents of Berdusk and the church of Helm; the latter after the death of Starshan, who served as a paladin of the Watchful Eye. The monument to Azoun can be found close to Dragon Square, not far from the large market on Amberside. In the park on Clearspring Tor stands a statue of the Helmite paladin Starshan.

When still part of the Shoonite Empire, irregular troops and mercenaries from Sulduskoon were part of Shoon IV's effort to visit the imperial wrath on the elven tribes of the Arundath, currently better known as Snakewood, but also known in the past as the Wyrmwood. The massed troops of the Shoon Empire and allied humanoids entered the woods with a two-fold purpose, capturing as many unicorns as possible and slaying as many elves as possible in revenge for their resistance to Shoon's will.[3]

While all the elves under the canopy of the Wyrmwood fled or found their end beneath the blades of the Shoon army, they did not disappear from the forest without extracting a heavy toll on the invading forces – and the toll was not only of an immediate nature.

[1] More detail on Ebenfar can be found in *Serpent Kingdoms* [WTC96566].

[2] Valashar lasted from ~320 DR to 361 DR – see *Empires of the Shining Sea* [TSR9561] and the *Lands of Intrigue* boxed set [TSR1159] for more detail.

[3] In the late 350's the last tribe of elves was annihilated by Shoonite forces. *LoI* page 23 *Tethyr*; pages 37-38 *Amn*

Several of the surviving mercenaries and irregulars who returned to Berdusk unwittingly brought with them a curse: for each survivor, the next person met for the first time became hostile. The elven curse turned chance encounters into confrontations between hated enemies.

Throughout the latter half of the 4th century and lasting for a little over a hundred years, the slow-working curse exacted its price upon the survivors and several who came into regular and close contact with them. The inevitably ensuing fights caused much bloodshed, and resulted in the loss of many lives before the curse ran its course with the eventual (and usually violent) deaths of the veterans of the Wyrmwood. These years of misfortune cast a shadow over young town, bringing trade – the city's lifeblood – to a virtual standstill.

When the Principality of the Snarling Boar was founded in 457 DR, several folk left Sulduskoon in hopes of carving out new riches and avoiding the hands of misfortune and loss in the fledgling realm[4]. Rather than fortune, they found disaster: in 692 DR, after only two centuries, Prince Chelimber's reign ended with the formation of the infamous Marsh that now bears his name.

Having slowly recovered from the elven curse and its effects on trade, Sulduskoon and the Sunset Vale were kissed by the Maid of Misfortune once more. In the Year of the Triton's Horn (697 DR), Sharran worshippers created havoc all along the Sword Coast and in parts of the hinterland[5]. Though the texts in the library don't explain the connection, they do link the events to the fall of the kingdom of Delimbiyran in that year, as well as the fall of the Principality of the Snarling Boar five years earlier.

In Sulduskoon, a crazed Sharran monk immolated himself inside a shrine to Selûne and Sehanine Moonbow. The resulting blaze raged through the area near the Woods Gate, consuming a sizeable part of Sulduskoon. Little remains of the shrine to the two goddesses – it was never re-consecrated. The only remnant is the small spring inside the Running Stag, which stands on the site of the former shrine.

The time between the 8th and 11th centuries DR was a period of stability and relative peace for Sulduskoon and its environs, not coincidentally linked to the growth and prosperity of the burgeoning city of Waterdeep under Ahghairon's rule. This quiet period aided the growth of the communities in the Chionthar valley, with overland trade growing and folk migrating further inland from the Sword Coast. Trading companies and costers came and went as businesses started up, some failing while others merged.

After destroying the dracolich Alglaudyx in the Year of the Watching Wood (1065 DR) and seizing its rich hoard for its coffers, a secretive group started investing money in valuable properties and businesses in cities up and down the Sword Coast[6]. Though their investments in Sulduskoon were not large, they were a foundation upon which the organization built further in the centuries to come. While more secretive and obscure in those days, the group is now somewhat better known – the Harpers.

During the Year of the Scourge (1150 DR)[7], a virulent plague ran rampant throughout the Sword Coast and parts of the Western Heartlands, catching many by surprise and defeating initial attempts by the various priesthoods to quell the disease. The priests' failure and the tales of doom accompanying the spread of the plague boosted the worship of Talona and Loviatar. Some of the more opportunistic members of these priesthoods – more or less immune to the plague, courtesy of their patron deities – used the disease to fill their personal and temple coffers.

From the Year of the Black Horde (1235 DR) through the Year of the Lost Lady (1241 DR), one of the more devastating orc hordes swept out of the Spine of the World and stormed the Sword Coast, even reaching as

[4] 457 – 692 DR Principality of the Snarling Boar

[5] *Lost Empires of Faerûn* [WTC17738]

[6] [TSR9547] The secretive organization is of course the Harpers at Twilight, on which more follows later in this journal.

[7] [WTC11836] [TSR1085a]

far south as the Empires of the Sands. Sulduskoon did not escape the onslaught of the orcs. Though the town weathered several attacks, the surrounding areas were virtually under orcish control, severely hampering the economic life of the growing town.

A local warrior, Berdusk Orcslayer, organized frequent patrols to scour the countryside and attack the orcish camps. His heroics and persistent manner in taking the fight to the orcs, despite the overwhelming odds, boosted the morale of the local militia. With the aid of the denizens of the Reaching Wood – including a nomadic tribe of gnolls – the town persevered, and was eventually able to push the orcs back far enough to return to a semblance of normality.

The mighty warrior was also the driving force behind erecting stronger walls around the expanding town, creating a safe bastion against orcs and roving bandit armies. After Berdusk Orcslayer died in the Year of the Vigilant Fist (1259 DR), the merchant council that ruled the town decided to rename Sulduskoon. Since then, the town and later city have been known as Berdusk.

The entrepreneurial skills of two wool merchants led to the establishment of a then-new type of woolen mill in the Year of Bright Dreams (1261 DR). The efficiency of the mill and the quality of the wool it spun built the foundation for the thriving industry that now makes up a large chunk of Berdusk's economy. The heath fields and the slopes of the Sunset Mountains play host to numerous flocks of sheep; their wool is sold at the market in Asbravn, and it is from there that the shorn wool is transported to Berdusk for processing.

Combined with the favorable location of the city on the Chionthar, just downstream of the Breaking Steps, Berdusk's wool industry makes it an ideal location for shipping bales of spun wool to other locations in the Sword Coast – predominantly Baldur's Gate and Waterdeep – or beyond. The Berduskan merchants don't really know – or care – where their wool finally ends up, but many folk north of Waterdeep are protected by the woolen clothes that came from Berduskan mills.

While the woolen mills form the industrial backbone of Berdusk, the city's location and the wool industry have generated a sizeable shipping industry, attracting investments from all over the Sword Coast and even from Amn, Tethyr and Calimshan. To facilitate this industrial growth, some of the shrewder merchants started lending sizeable sums at steep but affordable rates. This money-lending has become a secondary business in its own right. Some respected names among the current resident moneylenders are Thoront of the Gilded Hand, Than Tassalar, Orn 'Manycoins' Beldarm, and Aulimann the Patient.[8]

With increasing agricultural yields in the Sunset Vale, especially in the Year of the Groaning Cart[9], business is thriving in Berdusk. While the wainwrights in the city never achieved much beyond standard quality wagons and carts, the wheelwrights have earned a reputation as the best in the region. With Berdusk being an important waystop along the various axes of trade, the wagon repair and re-supply business is good and brings in additional revenues for the city. It is also the primary source of wealth for the Gort family, whose patriarch currently heads the Wheelwright's Guild.

Not all of these funds are wholly legitimate, as at least one source of investments comes from the Shadow Thieves. After new rule was established in Waterdeep under Open Lord Baeron Silmaeril[10], the Shadow Thieves started relocating some of their investments elsewhere on the Sword Coast. The Shadow Thieves were never successful in dominating the underworld of Berdusk, having had to compete with Zhentarim-sponsored criminals; both sides kept each other from operating effectively.

Another source of wealth flowing into Berdusk stems from the same area. Relatives of a banished family in the City of Splendors attempted to rebuild their powerbase under a new name in Berdusk. Emmer Gildeggh, the

[8] See also *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast* – Berdusk [TSR9460]

[9] 1267 DR – A bountiful harvest year. [TSR1085a]

[10] *City of Splendors: Waterdeep* – Reign of Baeron from 1273 to 1308 DR [WTC88162]

grandson of the late Waterdhavian Guildmaster, renamed his house after his wife's family. After the Year of the Crumbling Keep (1276 DR), House Gildeggh was known in Berdusk under the name of Parstin. The only link with their former shipwrights business is that the Berduskan Gildegghs – now Parstins – are heavily involved as wheelwrights. They are the biggest competitor in the trade for the Gort clan.

The Partsins are not the only wealthy merchant family in Berdusk. The booming economy of the Jewel of the Vale elevated several other shrewd and clever merchants above their peers. Some of these merchants were locals – among them are the Athalankeir, the Caunter, the Gort, the Halabart and the Jalarghar families. These are also among the oldest of the merchant families, along with the Charthoon family from Lantan, the gnomish Danallbur and the Turami Uthgolabar families from the Dragon Coast. The Athalankeir and Jalarghar can even trace their roots back to the Talfir, and the name of Caunter is closely related to an extinct Tethyrian family of the Bormul clan.

Since then, more families have risen to a level of wealth comparable to these established families, or they already had the wealth when they arrived in Berdusk. These 'new bloods' include the Bellanbram, the Lothkarr, the Mreen and the Oyindle families, as well as the half-elven Felannlilts. Collectively, the older and the newer wealthy families are known as the First Folk. Unlike their peers in Waterdeep, the 'nobility' of Berdusk has not received any official status. The lack of official status has not deterred the families from considering themselves nobility, and acting accordingly.

The influx of money and business created the need to expand the city beyond the walls. In the Year of the Hooded Falcon (1291 DR) new walls were constructed, using material from the old walls – which for a large part became a wide road known as the Minstrelride, a street that leads up from Shortarrow Gate towards and around the castle to connect to Amberside. The Berduskans were motivated to construct new walls not just by the money, but also by the previous year's unsettling events along the Trade Way[11].

The Year of the Griffon (1312 DR) saw a dark cloud gathering in the east, as the Zhentarim gained control of Darkhold in the Sunset Mountains. The presence of the Black Network prompted some inhabitants of the Sunset Vale to relocate; several of them chose Berdusk as a safe haven. From then until the Year of Chains (1321 DR), Berdusk also saw a steady influx of a variety of folk that seemed intent on thwarting the expansion of the Zhentarim. Most of these folk belonged to the shadowy organization known as the Harpers at Twilight.

In Berdusk, the Year of Chains (1321 DR) is called the Year of Seven Strings. During this year, construction began on a temple to Deneir, after a battle between the Harpers and the Zhentarim leveled part of the city, including a shrine to the Lord of All Glyphs and Images. Several members of Berdusk's ruling council were exposed as Zhentarim when they were found dead or captured after the fierce battle.

A notable figure came to the fore during the years leading up to the battle: the young bard and veteran Harper Cylyria Dragonbreast. The short, white-haired woman was respected in the city, as were the Harpers she led, having covertly provided security for Berdusk. Their efforts aided the city's growth and prosperity by driving out unwanted elements in the community, among them agents of the Zhentarim and the Shadow Thieves, culminating in the fierce fight in the Year of Seven Strings.

The majority of the First Folk and the other merchants of the city quickly realized that the Zhentarim offered a greater threat than previously believed, but fell to bickering amongst themselves over how to effectively rule Berdusk while protecting their mercantile

[11] 1290 DR – Dragonspear Castle falls. [TSR1085a] Interestingly, the Calishite wizard Iththaerus is a descendant of Sarsora yn Nadim al Amun, the sorceress who commanded the tower which now forms part of the House of the High Hand (Azuth) in Berdusk: see the Journal entry published in *Candlekeep Compendium Volume II*.

interests. Popular support for Cylyria and the behind-the-scenes diplomacy of two disguised silver-haired sisters and a certain elderly mage from Shadowdale resulted in a proclamation at Highharvestide, with the young lady Dragonbreast being chosen to be the ruler of Berdusk.

It was the Silent Lady and several other rulers of the city-states along the Sword Coast that joined together in the Year of the Great Harvest (1325 DR)[12], establishing a tenuous but lasting alliance. The increased security and strengthened trade relations allowed the Jewel of the Vale to shine even brighter. Berdusk's primary rival in commerce has always been Iriaebor, the Overland City, with the two strong mercantile cities vying to support the caravans that ply the Chionthar and the Dusk Road between the Sword and the Dragon Coasts. The presence of the Harpers – or perhaps the absence of the Zhentarim – have to date settled the score with Berdusk the stronger of the two.

In the same year that Lady Dragonbreast led the city into a wider alliance, the Vintner's guild of Berdusk combined their efforts after the bountiful grape harvest, resulting in a quality wine, a cuvee of three different grapes: Berduskan dark. The highly favored sweet wine is similar to a very dark amber sherry, heavy and burning to the tongue. It also travels well, one of the reasons why one is apt to find it in taverns and eateries all over Faerûn.

Vineyards have always been a part of the area. The gently rolling hills spanning from the banks of the Chionthar towards the Sunset Mountains have been deforested and cultivated for the growing of grapes on their southern and southwestern flanks. Though the soil does not contain any volcanic sediment, it is suitable for growing certain varieties of grapes. Most wines of the Berduskan vineyards are for the local markets, and cannot compete with high quality wines like those from the Purple Hills region in Tethyr. The vintners keep trying, though, and occasionally one can find a cask or a few bottles of Berduskan wine (other than the aforementioned Berduskan Dark) as far west as Baldur's Gate or as far east as Westgate.

* * * *

While there is certainly more to tell about Berdusk, I found myself running out of time to read through the more recent events. As they were extinguishing one lamp after the other, the caretakers of the library requested me to return the tomes to their shelves and leave for the night. It was an advice I gladly followed; I would rather find myself enjoying a tallglass of the aforementioned Berduskan Dark, than to encounter some unfortunate spirit haunting the halls of the library after dark. Whether these hauntings are deliberate rumors spread by the priests to discourage unwanted nightly visitors, or the plain truth, I had no intention of finding out.

[12] 1325 DR, Year of the Great Harvests: Beer and wine of this year are legendary [TSR1085a]. The Lord's Alliance is established. [WTC17738]

Credits

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

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

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Volume IX

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