



BLIGHT ON BRIGHT SANDS SOURCEBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

"It's clear that a evil blight holds sway over bright sands. We know him as Rary the Traitor, but in future days I fear his sins will encompass more than treachery. He seeks something best left alone, and I fear that all of the Flanaess may suffer for his enterprise far worse than even ancient Sulm suffered for its transgressions against the Common Sense."

Eritai Kaan-Ipzirel

High priestess of St. Cuthbert in Greyhawk

Not far from the Free City of Greyhawk, at the very back doors of some of the most civilized powers of the Flanaess, lies a scorched and alien landscape created by the transgressions of a decadent mage in the last days of his vile empire. Today, history is doomed to repeat unless the fragment people of the region can rise up against he who is determined to shackle them.

This document is a character creation guide and regional sourcebook for this major new LIVING GREYHAWK adventure arc that pits heroes—new and old—against the rising hubris of Rary the Traitor, self-proclaimed Emperor of the Bright Lands.

This adventure arc makes extensive use of rules appearing in the recently releases *Sandstorm: Mastering the Perils of Fire and Sand* supplement.

While LIVING GREYHAWK has had many other campaign arcs in the past, this one is a little different. By starting a new, 1st-level, character to play within this campaign arc, new and different options not available to the general campaign are open to you. For this reason, much of this document describes creating a new 1st-level character for the arc and the campaign.

If you don't want to create a new character, don't worry; much of the campaign arc is still open to you. Only the arc's first adventure, *COR5-06 Blood on Bright Sands*, is for new characters only. But keep in mind that this campaign was specifically designed to open new and exciting gaming options for new characters, and you'll find much of its story more engaging and evocative if played with a new character geared toward the story.

This document lists new rules available for starting characters who choose the Bright Lands as their home region. These rules supplement the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook* and will be included in the next version of that document.

Required Sources: The following guidelines assume you have the following rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, *Monster Manual* and *Sandstorm: Mastering the Perils of Fire and Sand*.

If you've never played in the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, it's also recommended that download a copy of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*, which is available as a free download on the RPGA website (www.rpga.com), as this document compliments the main LIVING GREYHAWK rules.

Adventure Arc Schedule

"Blight on Bright Sands" runs throughout 595 CY and 596 CY (that's 2005 and 2006, for those of use still used to Earth's calendar) and consists of nine Core adventures and two Core Special adventures. We'll announce the 596 CY arc schedule toward the end of 2005, but the 595 CY schedule looks like this:

☛ **April 2005:** *COR5-06 Blood on Bright Sands*

☛ **August 2005 (with a premier at Origins 2005):** *COR5-09 Gateway to the Bright Sands*

☛ **August 2005 (with a premier at Origins 2005):** *COR5-02 Mines of Father Eye*

☛ **August 2005:** *COR5-11 Dark Deceit on Bright Sands*

☛ **November 2005:** *COR5-17 Time's Tide on Bright Sands*

☛ **January 2006 (with a premiere at Gen Con So Cal 2005):** *COR5-20 Phantoms of the Bright Sands*

The order in which a PC plays the adventures that make up "Blight on Bright Sands" will impact on a player's understanding and enjoyment of the series. For 595 CY the optimum order of play is the order of release.

Both *COR5-06 Blood on Bright Sands* and *COR5-09 Gateway to the Bright Sands* are designed as a starting point to the series. If you don't want to start a new character to participate in the adventure arc you can begin the arc with *COR5-08 Gateway to the Bright Sands*. Starting with a new character allows you to play in both starting adventures.

CHARACTER CREATION GUIDELINES

The first step in participating in the "Blight on Bright Sands" LIVING GREYHAWK adventure arc is creating a character. The following guidelines grant expanded options for character creation for this adventure arc. To gain access to these special options, the character must fulfill the two following requirements.

1. The character must have the Bright Lands as its home region. If you're not sure with what a home region is, skip to Step 6: Home Region for the basics on the concept.
2. *COR5-06 Blood on Bright Sands* must be the first adventure you play with the character.

Fastplay Characters: To speed play when a new player shows up without a character, we've create six fastplay characters for the arc. These characters can be used as a starting character for any *Blight on Bright Sands* adventure, but their first adventure must be from the arc. Once started, these characters advance as per the normal LIVING GREYHAWK campaign rules. All of the fastplay characters have the Bright Lands as their starting region.

Step 1: Ability Scores

Characters generated for the “Blight on Bright Sands” adventure arc, and the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign in general, assign their ability scores using the nonstandard point buy for tougher campaigns (28 points). Rules for the point buy system of generating statistics are found on page 169 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Step 2: Race and Class

All race and class options detailed in the *Player's Handbook* and even those presented in the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook* are available to new characters created to participate in this campaign arc.

Many other races are known to dwell within the Bright Lands. In addition to the core races presented in the *Player's Handbook*, several new races presented in *Sandstorm* and *Races of the Wild* are available to players creating a new character with the home region of the Bright Lands. These races are:

- ☛ Asheratis
- ☛ Desert centaur (available to D&D REWARDS members as a *Polyhedron* exclusive)
- ☛ Scabland half-orc
- ☛ Badland dwarf

Information about how the various races fit into the Bright Lands, and special rules for races from this region, are found in the “Bright Lands Region” section of this document.

Sandstorm also presents several alternate versions of existing classes. New Bright Lands characters may elect to make use of some of these new options in character creation. The classes that make use of these optional rules are:

- ☛ Barbarian
- ☛ Druid
- ☛ Ranger
- ☛ Sorcerer
- ☛ Wizard

When the first level of any of the above classes is taken the player must indicate on their character sheet if they are advancing in the *Sandstorm* version of that character class. Indicate this preference by placing a bracketed “SS” after the class name on the PC's character sheet. Once this option is chosen, the character may never advance in the normal *Player's Handbook* version of that character class.

New Spells Access: New Bright Lands characters gain access to new spells from *Sandstorm* at 1st-level. These spells are unlocked for those characters. Unlocked is like core access, but you don't have to wait until 3rd-level to take them. These are the unlocked spells:

New Cleric Spells

- ☛ *Cloak of shade*

- ☛ *Locate water*

New Druid Spells

- ☛ *Cloak of shade*

- ☛ *Impede sun's brilliance*

- ☛ *Locate water*

- ☛ *Summon desert ally I*

- ☛ *Sunstroke*

- ☛ *Waste strider*

New Sorcerer/Wizard Spells

- ☛ *Locate water*

- ☛ *Parching touch*

- ☛ *Sunstroke*

Other spells in *Sandstorm* are core access for Bright Lands characters (and many will no doubt be opened up to core access to the campaign in general) with the following exceptions:

Limited Spells: *Ashstar*, *flashflood*, *flesh to salt*, *mass flesh to salt*

NPC Only Spells: *Awaken sand*, *black sand*, *sandstorm*, *slipsand*.

Restricted Spells: *Mantle of the fiery spirit*, and all epic spells.

New Domains: Any Bright Land cleric that worships one of the regional deities listed on Table 1—1 may replace one of the normal domains for one of the following domains. The choice is based on deity.

- ☛ **Beory:** Sand, Summer, Thirst

- ☛ **Geshtai:** Thirst

- ☛ **Llerg:** Thirst

- ☛ **Obad-Hai:** Sand, Summer

- ☛ **Pelor:** Summer

- ☛ **Phyton:** Summer

- ☛ **Skerrit:** Summer

- ☛ **Vathris:** Thirst

Spells granted by these new domains are unlocked, meaning that you don't need to wait until 3rd-level to add these to your spell list.

Prestige Classes: The following prestige classes from *Sandstorm* are available for play within the Bright Lands

- ☛ Lord of the tides

- ☛ Scorpion heritor

Characters qualifying for these classes may freely take levels in them as long as they maintain the Bright Lands as their home region.

Deities: With the exception of asheratis characters, character from the Bright Lands can worship any non-evil deity presented in the *Player's Handbook* and the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*. However, the worship of some deities is more prevalent within the Bright Lands than elsewhere. Details of these deities are presented in the Table 1—1, below.

Because of their special background in the region, Bright Desert asheratis characters may only worship Geshtai. Those who renounce her faith fall into a pile of sand, as they renounce the boon of life she granted to save the race.

Step 3: Hit Points

Characters start at 1st-level with maximum hit points. When a character advances, don't roll for base hit points. You get half the Hit Dice +1 base hit points. For instance, a 2nd-level cleric would gain 5 base hit points, while a wizard would gain 3 base hit points.

Step 4: Skills and Feats

Characters spend their starting skill points on skills listed in the *Player's Handbook*. Craft, Perform, Profession, Slight of Hand and Knowledge (Local) all have special campaign rules. If you are taking ranks in these skills, you'll want review those rules on page 9 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*.

Feats: You can choose any feat from the Player's Handbook that you can meet the requirement for. Normally, a character may not select feats from outside the Player's Handbook until they've reached 3rd level, but new Bright Lands characters can choose the following feats from Sandstorm at 1st-level.

- ☛ Blazing Berserker
- ☛ Drift Magic
- ☛ Eagle's Fury
- ☛ Heat Endurance
- ☛ Improved Heat Endurance
- ☛ Judged by Aurifar
- ☛ Light of Aurifar
- ☛ Pharaoh's Fist
- ☛ Priest of the Waste
- ☛ Rattlesnake Strike
- ☛ Sand Camouflage
- ☛ Sand Dancer
- ☛ Sand Snare
- ☛ Sand Spinner
- ☛ Sandskimmer
- ☛ Scorpion's Grasp
- ☛ Scorpion's Instinct

- ☛ Scorpion's Resolve
- ☛ Scorpion Sense
- ☛ Serpent Fang
- ☛ Searing Spell
- ☛ Fiery Spell

Effectively these are Bright Lands regional feats. Your character may choose feats from this list as long as they keep the Bright Lands as their home region. Currently these feats are only open to characters of the Bright Lands region. You cannot gain access to these feats by way of the Knowledge (local) skill.

In addition the following feats detailed in *Greyhawk: Regional Feats of Oerth* and *Greyhawk Feats: More Regional Feats of Oerth*, articles appearing in *Dragon* issues 315 and 319 are available for starting characters with the Bright Lands as their home region:

- ☛ Blooded
- ☛ Desert Fighter
- ☛ Vathrin Stigmata

Step 5: Equipment

Characters start with maximum gold pieces for their starting class from the *Player's Handbook* Table 7—1.

Bright Lands characters can purchase equipment from *Player's Handbook* "Chapter 7: Equipment." They may purchase equipment from "Table 7—3 Trade Goods," "Table 7—5: Weapons," "Table 7—6 Armor and Shields," and Table 7—8 Goods and Services" except for the section titled "Spellcasting and Services."

Much of the new equipment listed in *Sandstorm* is available for use within the Bright Lands. Starting Bright Lands characters can freely purchase equipment from the following tables in *Sandstorm*:

- ☛ Table 4—1: Wasteland Weapons.
- ☛ Table 4—2: Wasteland Armor
- ☛ Table 4—3: Wasteland Gear
- ☛ Table 4—5: Vehicles; except for the cloudskate, frame wheel, sand galley, sand schooner, sand

Table 1—1: Deities of the Bright Lands

Deity*	AL	Race	Areas of Concern	Domains	Weapon
Beory	N (NG)	Flan	Oerth, Nature, Rain	Animal, Creation ^{CD} , Earth, Plant, Water, Weather ^{CD}	Club
Geshtai	N	Asheratis	Lakes, Rivers, Wells, Streams	Plant, Travel, Water, Weather ^{CD}	Spear
Llery	CN	Suel	Beasts, Strength	Animal, Chaos, Competition ^{CD} , Courage ^{CD} , Strength	Battleaxe (m) or longsword (m)
Obad-Hai	N	Flan	Nature, Woodlands, Freedom, Hunting, Beasts	Air, Animal, Earth, Fire, Plant, Water	Quarterstaff
Pelor	NG	Flan	Sun, Light, Strength, Healing	Glory ^{CD} , Good, Healing, Nobility ^{CD SS} , Purification ^{CD} , Strength, Sun	Heavy mace
Phyton	CN	Suel	Nature, Beauty, Farming	Chaos, Community ^{CD} , Good, Plant, Sun, Water	Scimitar (m)
Skerrit	NG	Hueleneae	Centaurs, Community, Natural Balance	Animal, Good, Healing, Plant, Sun	Large shortspear
Vathris	LN	Flan	Anguish, Lost Causes, Revenge	Destruction, Law, War	Longspear

*For information regarding these deities refer to the *LIVING GREYHAWK Deities* Document

CD: New domain detailed in *Complete Divine*; SS: New domain detailed in *Sandstorm*

Additional Notes:

The Flan call Pelor "Aurifar."

skiff.

Also, desert centaur characters gain access to nonhumanoid armors. And at 6th-level, when they progress to Large size, they gain access to Large nonhumanoid armor (see page 123 of the *Player's Handbook*) and Large weapons at 6th-level.

Step 6: Home Region

Every character in the Living Greyhawk campaign is from a region. Regions not only influence a character's background, they also affect how much characters pay in time units (TU) to play adventures, as well as access to regional feats and other character options. Normally, characters have to be from one of the Triad-controlled regions of the campaign—usually a player's local region. Using these special character creation allows characters to be from the Bright Lands region. The region name is a bit of a misnomer, as the player region is more than Rary's new nation. This special region includes the Bright Desert, the regions of the Abbor-Alz Hills surrounding that desert, and the city of Hardby, with the city reserved for characters from the region that have a more cosmopolitan bent.

Since the Bright Land is a not a standard region, there are some special considerations. A Bright Lands character continues to have access to the special rules items detailed in the document until they change region. If you change home region you are able to use feats, spells, prestige classes, and equipment you currently possess, but you lose access to gaining new rules items granted by the Bright Lands region.

Also, "Bright on Blight Sands" adventures act like the regional adventures for Bright Lands characters. Bright Lands characters pay only one (TU) for adventures that are part of the adventure arc. Bright Lands characters have no metaregion, thus all metaregional adventures are considered out of region.

Characters created with these rules may start with the Bright Lands region, and those characters may change regions normally (see page 11 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*, under "Step 6: Home Region") and even take the Bright Lands again in future years, but characters that did not start out as a Bright Lands character cannot choose to take that region later. It is restricted to all but starting Bright Lands characters.

THE BRIGHT LANDS REGION

The Bright Lands is a region apart, with its own dark history and areas of high adventure. This section is a brief primer of an area. It will give you a general understanding of the region, which helps in the creation of a character with interesting regional flair.

A Brief History of the Bright Desert

Two millennia ago Flan civilization reached its zenith on the arid grasslands of Sulm. Here, the ancient Flan learned the secrets of agriculture, ironwork and engineering, and founded great cities and raised majestic temples to their gods.

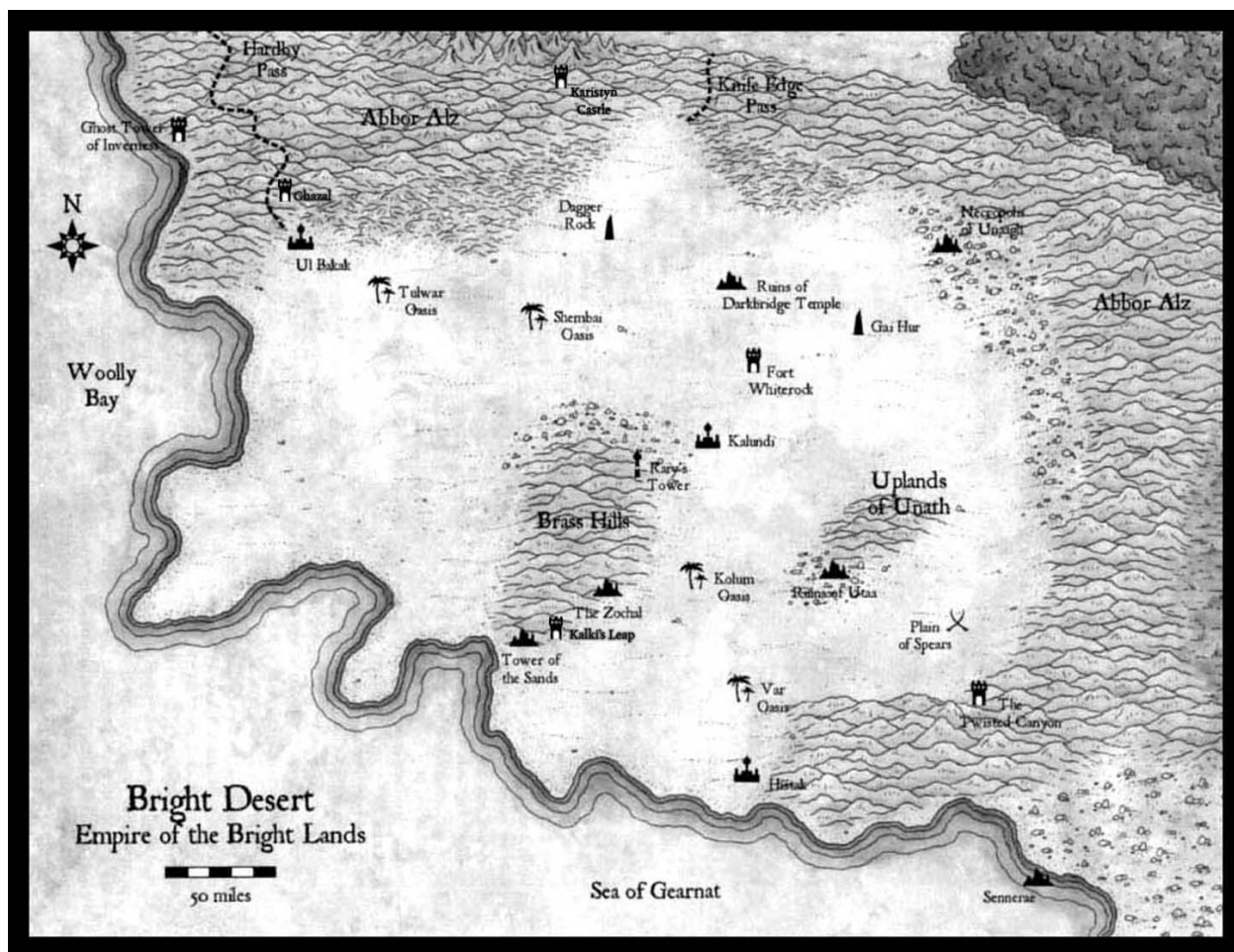
With its success Sulm grew, absorbing neighboring states. And like many empires, hegemony breed arrogance and decadence. With those black seeds planted, an evil rot eventually disintegrated the Sulm civilization.

The final doom of the Sulm came suddenly, when its last ruler—a mad sorcerer named Shattados—was granted a boon from his divine patron, Tharizdun. The dark god's gift took the form of a powerful artifact called the *Scorpion Crown*, which promised to allow Shattados's true and everlasting dominion over all of his subjects. What it did was transform almost all of Sulm's people into hideous manscorpions bound to Shattados, and precipitated the eventual decline of the Sulm's lush grasslands to a wasteland of sand and rock.

Thus Sulm passed into history, languishing all but forgotten until events transpiring in the City of Greyhawk thrust these accursed lands into the minds of the great and the good.

The treacherous acts of Rary and his co-conspirator, Lord Robilar, on the Day of Great Signing was the first overt act that brought the Bright Desert to the forefront of Flanaess politics. His conspiracy thwarted and his plotting exposed, Rary fled civilized company. He wrenched his entire tower from the very foundation-rock in Lopolla and transported it, along with Lord Robilar and his fanatical followers, thousands of leagues eastward to the Brass Hills. In short order Robilar's forces pacified the peoples of the central desert forcing them to pay homage to the red and blue of the fledgling empire.

The rise of a new military power in the region would normally be met with little more than indifference in the surrounding nations but doom-laden warnings from the Circle of Eight awoke the Flanaess to a dire threat. The mage Mordenkainen has made it known that the Traitor knew of the ancient histories that cluster thick about the Bright Lands and that he likely seeks the catalyst of Sulm's unnatural fall, an artifact of surpassing power said to contain a portion of Tharizdun's essence. All is not lost, however. Although warriors of many desert tribes swell the empire's ranks some few tribes still resist Lord Robilar's forces and in other places small pockets of those professing neutrality still survive. None stand so bitterly opposed to The Traitor's machinations as the Hueleneer—a race of desert dwelling centaurs. A fierce and proud people, they war with the outlanders, seeing Rary as evil and ambition personified. Their guerrilla tactics have won many victories against Robilar's soldiers and their constant raiding continues to tie down and harass the empire's forces.



And now a steady stream of adventurers trickles into the region. Some are beguiled by tales of high adventure and of the near limitless wealth rumored buried in the sands of the Bright Desert. Others have nobler goals. After all, if Mordenkainen is right, Rary is working to free He Who Should Forever Sleep, and what better cause is there than to rage against the world's dying by thwarting a traitor at every turn?

The Desert and Environs

All of the following locations (except Hardby) are marked on the above region map. More information on many of these locations can be found in the following articles: "Into the Bright Desert" from *Dungeon* issue 98 and "Denizens of the Bright Desert" from *Dungeon* issue 103; and "City of the Scorned" from *Dungeon* issue 109 by Paul Looby.

Abbor-Alz: The craggy hills that ring the bright desert. To the west, the highlands are actually a small mountain range joining the Cairn Hills to the north. Hill barbarians, dwarves, and giants dwell within the various regions of the hills. The barbarian peoples of the Abbor-Alz abhor Rary, but neither do they tolerate other "civilized" peoples.

Brass Hills: The jutting peaks of the Brass Hills now serve as the seat of Rary's power in the desert. The Traitor has pacified the place, and its only dangers are

his worldly and otherworldly forces, or so the tyrant claims.

Dagger Rock: This ancient deformed pinnacle of cracked granite stands amid a shattered landscape. Rumored to be the lair of an ancient blue dragon, other stories claim the wyrm was slain by Lord Robilar about five years ago.

Fort Whiterock: The easternmost outpost of Rary's power, it from this place that Lord Robilar campaigned against the hueleneae at Gai Hur. The place is a garrison for more than 400 of Rary's nomads and mercenary crossbowman. It was built atop the ruins of an ancient white-walled Sulmish citadel.

Gai Hur: Its name translates to "Sky Peak" in the Flan tongue. This roughly hewn stone pinnacle is a vital landmark of the eastern desert. The place was once an important regular biyearly meeting spot for the hueleneae, until Lord Robilar twisted one of their 592 CY moots into a parley of deceit and enslavement.

Ghazal: The Tareg tribe of Suel nomads controls this small but sound fortress. They claim the "right" of tribute from all who use the pass, but are fickle in their enforcement of it. They deal harshly with those who refuse to pay for passage.

Ghost Tower of Inverness: Many sages claim that the extensive ruins predate even the Sulm Empire. Most travelers avoid the place claiming that either it

has no secret left to plunder or it's still haunted and dangerous.

Hardby—City of the Scorned (not listed on the map, located on the Woolly Bay coast northwest of Hardby Pass): This bustling port city of over 5,000 souls was once a free city, but Hardby has been a vassal to Greyhawk for more than a decade. Famed for its long history, and its ancient tradition of rule by women, collectively known as the Gynarchy, Hardby serves, among other things, as the gateway to the Bright Lands.

Hardby Pass: This rough pass travels from Hardby past Storm Lake, the Ghost Tower of Inverness, and the fortress of Ghazal, and then ending at the tent village of Ul Bakak.

Histak: Once a neutral village that forbade open conflict in its environs, Rary subjugated the place last year. Built atop the ruins of a larger city with architecture similar to that of Sennrae, the place is well known for its healers.

Kalki's Leap: Rary's main fortress in the southern desert, Lord Robilar uses the place as his personal command center. The place is defended with strong walls reinforce by the winding canyon it's wedged in. The place is filled with norkers and Paynims riders.

Kalundi: An important staging post for Rary's forces, this village's fortifications have been recently bolstered. This permanent village is cunningly irrigated by the runoff from the Brass Hills.

Karistyne Castle: Home to a paladin of Heironeous, this five-towered keep stands on a plateau overlooked by some of the largest peaks in the Abbor-Alz.

Kolum Oasis: Once this place was harried by manscorpions, until Rary's forces annihilated a nearby nest of the creatures. Nomads have returned to this place, though now under the watchful eyes of the Traitor.

Knife Edge Pass: This rugged pass reaches into the Western Abbor-Alz March of the Duchy of Urnst, where the barons of that place prepare eagerly for the fight, as they are sworn to stop all the Traitor's scum who dare even look upon the duchy with greedy eyes.

Necropolis of Unaagh: Once Sulm's most sacred site, this is now a city of ghostly denizens ruled over by an ancient lich. Some unknown agency binds the undead to their grim, shattered capital. All intelligent folk of the desert keep their distance from this dangerous haunt.

Plain of Spears: This haunted battleground is sprinkled with countless man-tall outcroppings of rock. It's said that the ancient weapons and armor of the ancient Sulm people still litter the graveyard, waiting to be plundered from their undead protectors.

Rary's Tower: A settlement began with Rary's magically transported onion-domed tower has sprawled into a surrounding fortress and a yet-unnamed town destined to be the capital of the Traitor's empire. A curtain wall completed in 593 CY protects the entire settlement from attack.

Ruins of Darkbridge Temple: This old temple to some long forgotten evil god revered by the Sulm is now the lair of a shadow dragons who shares the site with ancient undead and a ferocious tribe of jermaline.

Ruins of Utaa: Sulm's former capital, this sand-covered ruin is home all forms of incorporeal undead that some say are ruled by a dry lich.

Sennerae: This place has been a ruin since the days of Sulm's expansions. A handful of shattered structures rest on treacherous cliff, but most of the former city lies under the sea of Gearnat. The undersea ruin is the haunt of an ancient dragon turtle named Lhamzygax.

Shembai Oasis: The only major watering hole not totally dominated by Rary, this place is a gateway to the Abyss that opens each night to spit out fiends. Demons despoil the area at nightfall, only to be sucked back into the portal before the light of dawn hits the sands. Desert nomads—loyal to Rary or not—keep away between dusk and dawn.

Tower of Sands: This recently uncovered tower is an enigma. There are rumors that the place may be older than Sulm, and other still claim the place is holy to the hueleneae.

Tulwar Oasis: The last safe oasis between Ul Bakak and Rary's capital, this place is guarded by a yugoloth-built fort and a tribe of nomads fanatically loyal to the Traitor.

Twisted Canyon: This long but narrow canyon is a holy place of the god Vathris. Somewhere within there is at least one hidden temple to the god of anguish and lost causes.

Ul Bakak: Little more than a permanent collection of tents, this nomad trading village stands at the foot of three craggy hills at the end of Hardby Pass. The settlement grew around a now well-guarded spring, and is a holy spot for Suel and Flan nomads, as well as Abbor-Alz hillfolk. Ul Bakak claims neutrality in Rary's fight to subdue the region, and the Traitor allows its people this illusion because of its trade with Hardby.

Uplands of Unath: Long ago these hills were home to a small but thriving colony of dwarves allied to the dwur of the Abbor-Alz. The Unath dwarves today are an isolated, dwindling people. Called badland dwarves by outsiders, they tend not to intermingle with other peoples of the Bright Desert, but some of the younger generation has grown more adventurous as of late. The Uplands are now infested with jermaline, norkers, and the occasional clan of desert trolls. Many of these foul creatures make their homes amid the remains of Unath.

Var Oasis: This southernmost oasis is the largest in the region. Hundreds of nomads gather here each day to refresh themselves in Var's never-failing waters. A garrison of Rary's troops lingers here to control the natives.

Zochal: Now only a crater, the Zochal was once a seemingly impregnable arcane magical building that mysteriously exploded in 592 CY.

Peoples of the Region

The Bright Lands region is home to a diverse group of people. This diversity is bred by the harsh terrain and ancient magics that have further fragmented the wasteland's population.

The people described here are not a comprehensive list of the intelligence folk that dwell in the region, but rather a list of those available for play.

Going Native: Some typical races in GREYHAWK don't fit very well with the background and flavor of the Bright Desert and *Sandstorm*. This is one of the reasons that the city of Hardby was added to the region. Characters of these types can originally be from Hardby but through contact with the people of the Bright Desert and the Abbor-Alz, have gone native; learning local lore and desert skills from the people of that land. When the description talks about characters that have "gone native" it's talking about the humans, dwarves, elves, gnomes, half-elves, half-orcs, and half-elves who may have hailed from civilized lands, but they have adjusted to ways of the desert through experience and contact with its native people.

Humans

There are a few types of human native to the Bright Lands that are open for play, they are:

Abbor-Alz Hillfolk: The barbarian folk of the Abbor-Alz are a mix of Flan and Suel peoples. In the past they have guarded their way of life jealously, repelling all outsiders with force or its threat, but with the coming of Rary things are slowly changing.

They abhor the Traitor and his fiendish servants, and see his encroachment as a dire threat to their independence and way of life.

With a love of isolation as fierce as any desert nomad, hillfolk tribal culture is less divisive than their desert neighbors. An Abbor-Alz hillfolk feels he should be the only one allowed to kill other Abbor-Alz hillfolk. It is this unity against outsiders and the foreboding terrain of the Abbor-Alz hills that earn these people their continuing independence from Rary, as the wizard does not yet want to face a unified hillfolk force in their own environment.

They also differ from the desert nomads in their treatment of women. Women are equals in hillfolk society. Some of the backwards nomads blame this on the hillfolk's closer proximity to Hardby. Hillfolk blame the nomad's chauvinism on heatstroke.

The Abbor-Alz hillfolk are a tall, strong, and tanned, favoring light colored hair and eyes. They worship a strange mix of Flan and Suel gods, predominately Pelor (who they sometimes call Aurifar in the desert tradition), Fortubo, and Llerg.

Special Rules: Abbor-Alz hillfolk are humans as presented in the *Player's Handbook*.

Flan Nomads: The most numerous of the desert peoples are the Flan nomads. Predominately of unblemished Flan lineage, these people were originally Flans of the Sulm periphery who were pushed into the

desert by the migrations of Suels and Oeridians in centuries after the destruction of the Baklunish Empire and the Suel Imperium.

The Flan nomads who dwell in the Bright Lands are a surly, violent, honor-driven folk famed for their incessant intertribal warfare, superstitious beliefs, and disdain of outsiders. A strongly patriarchal society, the nomads of the Bright Land value strength—be it spiritual or temporal—as the only source of power. Speakers of Flan, few know any of the Common tongue, deeming it beneath them.

A stocky, bandy-legged race they exhibit few of the characteristics of Flan existent elsewhere in the Flanaess. Uniformly deeply tanned, they are a dark-eyed race. Similarly their hair is lank, straight and brown-black or black in hue. Their dress typically consists of dark-colored, lightweight flowing robes over simple buckskin garments. When going into battle, or when mourning, they daub sacred symbols on their faces with ochre, which they believe imparts strength to the wearer. They prize ornamentation—bone or brass headbands decorated with brightly colored beads are highly valued.

A simple folk eschewing most forms of magic, they worship the spirits of earth, air and water. Chief among their pantheon are Beory, the Oerth Mother, and her lord, Obad-Hai the Shalm known also among them as Lord of the Wild Places. Above all they fear Nerull, for to them he is death incarnate; some even denounce Rary as the Reaper's emissary. Some nomads venerate Pelor, invoking him as a protective power against Nerull's pervasive evil, while others seek to improve their lot through the worship of Vathris in his original guise as patron of ingenuity and progress.

Special Rules: Flan nomads are humans as presented in the *Player's Handbook*, but have an automatic language of Flan. They must take Common as either a bonus language, or gain it with the Speak Language skill. Flan nomads may choose from the list of Flan racial feats presented in Chapter 3 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*.

Folk of Hardby: This old city was founded by a Suel mage named Ena Norbe in -278 CY, and while there are many folk of Suel extraction in the city, it is a cosmopolitan place where the members of many races (human and otherwise) rub shoulders. Humans of every type can be found living in the city.

Special Rules: The humans living in Hardby are humans as presented in the *Player's Handbook*. If you are interested in making a new character for the adventure arc, but don't want to utilize the special options for new characters in *Sandstorm*, it's recommended that you make a character from this city. Because the character is still part of the region they still have access to the rules for *Sandstorm*, allowing play of characters who "go native," while adventuring in the desert. Folk from Hardby may take Mercantile Background and Well Read as regional feats.

Suel Nomads: A few tribes are of Suel descent and speak only the ancient language of the Imperium. A

thousand years ago several large bands of Suel, fleeing the destruction of their empire, forced a passage through the Abbor Alz in a fruitless search for a bountiful land spoken of in Flan legends. By the time their folly was revealed they had not the strength to win free and were trapped by vengeful Flan tribes. Now, dangerously inbred, they are reviled and distrusted by their Flan brethren and are slowly being hunted into extinction. Foremost among them are the Tareg who, from the ancient Suel fortress of Ghazal, control Hardby Pass, exacting a heavy toll on all who pass through. These folk cling to fragments of their ancient heritage, worshipping Llerg above all others. In this harsh, but starkly beautiful, environment they have forgotten most other deities of note although some few still revere Phytan.

A tall and slender deeply tanned race, blue eyes are common among them as is red or yellow hair, which they wear closely cropped beneath their leathern coifs. Warriors proclaim their tribal allegiance by wearing cleverly crafted brass armbands inlaid with mottled blue or black ornamental stones. Their broaches are their honor and will never willingly be surrendered.

Special Rules: Suel nomads are humans as presented in the *Player's Handbook*, but have an automatic language of Ancient Suloise. They must take Common as either a bonus language, or gain it with the Speak Language skill. Suel nomads may choose from the list of Suel racial feats presented in Chapter 3 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*.

Asheratis

The rules for this race are found in Chapter 2 of *Sandstorm*. The background of the Asheratis in the Bright Lands has been slightly modified from that presented in *Sandstorm*. In places where these two sources differ the rules presented below take precedence.

The asheratis as a race were created on the very day on which Sulm fell. While the bulk of the Sulmites were agonizingly transformed into manscorpions by Shattados' folly, those among the Sulmites not irredeemably lost to evil cried out for mercy. As the curse swept across the arid grasslands and sand began to pour forth from the holy places and cities of Sulm only Geshtai in her mercy heard these Sulmites' pleas. Foreseeing the land's fate she used her divine power to transform them into creatures that could survive the wastes in return for their worship of her and her alone. Those who forsake Geshtai are returned turned to sand, but no asheratis has turned from her worship for many generations.

Asheratis priest and elders have different explanations for Geshatai's harsh revocation of her gift. Some believe that only exclusive worship can create the conduit necessary to receive the boon, while others believe that the deity is moving the race to a greater purpose in the future of the Bright Lands. Her harsh ways are there to ensure that the race is ready when

time for the reclamation of the land from desert finally comes.

Special Rules: Asheratis worship Geshtai to the exclusion of all other gods, meaning that all asheratis clerics must revere that deity. If an asheratis ever turns away from the worship of Geshtai, immediately fall into a pile of sand, effectively destroying the character.

Dwarves

There are three types of dwarves in the Bright Lands region. They are:

Abbor-Alz Dwarves: It is said that once dwarven tribes controlled much the Abbor-Alz, but today only a small number of settlements clutch around Hardby and other civilized spaces. Driven out of their traditional mine in the Abbor-Alz interior by their chief enemy, the duergar, the dwarves of the Abbor-Alz now focus on craftwork rather than mining, selling their wares in the markets of Hardby through dwarven agents living in the city.

Special Rules: The dwarves living in the craftholds of the Abbor-Alz are dwarves as presented in the *Player's Handbook*. Because the character is still part of the region they still have access to the rules for *Sandstorm*, allowing play of characters who "go native," while adventuring in the desert.

Badland (Unath) Dwarves: The Uplands of Unath (a range of hills deep within the Bright Desert) were named for a colony of dwarves inhabiting the range when ancient Sulm was yet young.

Now, their civilization has all but failed, overrun by successive waves of invaders. A few isolated clanholds still survive but these final remnants of a proud lineage are fragmented and failing.

Special Rules: Badland dwarves hail from ancient Unath. Badland dwarves PCs treat all feats from the list presented in Step 4: Skills and Feats as regional feats. More information on this new race can be found in *Sandstorm*, Chapter 2. Badland dwarf PCs may also choose from the list of hill dwarf racial feats presented in Chapter 3 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*.

Dwarves from Hardby: The city of Hardby has number of dwarves living within its borders. Some have migrated out of the Abbor-Alz, and act as trading go-betweens for the dwarven craftholds of the western hills, while others have settled here from other dwarf holds and cities across the Flanaess.

Special Rules: The dwarves living in Hardby are dwarves as presented in the *Player's Handbook*. If you are interested in making a new character for the adventure arc, but don't want to utilize the special options for new characters in *Sandstorm*, it's recommended that you make a character from this city. Because the character is still part of the region they still have access to the rules for *Sandstorm*, allowing play of characters who "go native," while adventuring in the desert. Folk from Hardby may take Mercantile Background and Well Read as regional feats. Dwarves may also take the Dwarf regional feats.

Elves

Elves in the Bright Lands are all from Hardby. While there have been elven explorers and adventurers who have pierced the dry interiors of the Bright Desert and the Abbor-Alz Hills, there are no settlements of these folks in either place.

Special Rules: The elves living in the region are elves as presented in the *Player's Handbook*. Because the character is still part of the region they still have access to the rules for *Sandstorm*, allowing play of characters who “go native,” while adventuring in the desert. Folk from Hardby may take Mercantile Background and Well Read as regional feats. Elves may also take the regional feats of their sub-race.

Gnomes

Gnomes in the Bright Lands are all from Hardby or the surrounding area. While there have been gnome explorers and adventurers who have pierced the dry interiors of the Bright Desert there is not settlement of gnomes in the desert.

Special Rules: The elves living in the region are elves as presented in the *Player's Handbook*. Because the character is still part of the region they have access to the rules for *Sandstorm*, allowing play of characters who “go native,” while adventuring in the desert. Folk from Hardby may take Mercantile Background and Well Read as regional feats. Gnomes may also take the regional feats of their race.

Half-Elves

Half-Elves in the Bright Lands are all from Hardby. While there have been half-elven explorers and adventurers who have pierced the dry interiors of the Bright Desert and the Abbor-Alz Hills, there are no settlements of these folks in either place.

Special Rules: The half-elves living in the region are elves as presented in the *Player's Handbook*. Because the character is still part of the region they still have access to the rules for *Sandstorm*, allowing play of characters who “go native,” while adventuring in the desert. Folk from Hardby may take Mercantile Background and Well Read as regional feats. Elves may also take the regional feats of their sub-race.

Half-Orcs

There are two types of half-orcs in the Bright Lands region. They are:

Half-Orcs from Hardby: The city of Hardby has substantial half-orc population. Valued as caravan guards, sailors, mercenaries, and enforcers, half-orcs serve in potions of a martial persuasion throughout the city.

Special Rules: The half-orcs living in Hardby are dwarves as presented in the *Player's Handbook*. If you are interested in making a new character for the adventure arc, but don't want to utilize the special options for new characters in *Sandstorm*, it's recommended that you make a character from this city.

Because the character is still part of the region they still have access to the rules for *Sandstorm*, allowing play of characters who “go native,” while adventuring in the desert. Folk from Hardby may take Mercantile Background and Well Read as regional feats. Half-orcs may also take half-orc regional feats.

Scabland Half-Orc: The Abbor-Alz has long been a refugee for outlaws, brigands, bandits and other unsavory types. Many bands of raiders are composed almost entirely of scabland half-orcs. As a race they have an unsavory reputation and as a consequence they are unwelcome in many of the surrounding nation states

Special Rules: Scabland half-orcs PCs treat all feats from the list presented in Step 4: Skills and Feats as regional feats.

Halflings

Halflings in the Bright Lands are all from Hardby. While there have been halfling explorers and adventurers who have pierced the dry interiors of the Bright Desert and the Abbor-Alz Hills, there are no settlements of these folks in either place.

Special Rules: The halflings living in the region are halflings as presented in the *Player's Handbook*. Because the character is still part of the region they still have access to the rules for *Sandstorm*, allowing play of characters who “go native,” while adventuring in the desert. Folk from Hardby may take Mercantile Background and Well Read as regional feats. Halflings may also take the regional feats of their sub-race.

Hueleneae (Desert Centaurs)

A dwindling people, these desert centaurs yet lingering in the Bright Lands are the final inheritors of a long and glorious past. The progeny of mercenary warriors who once guarded the sorcerer-kings of Sulm, they are a proud and noble race that still sings the songs of their past recalling the folly of those who venerate fell powers. Strongly good aligned in nature they had all but abandoned their former allies by the time Shattados donned Tharizdun's “gift.”

An intelligent, cultured people they are rich in the lore of elder days, still remembering where many of Sulm's ruins lie hidden. Although cultured they are savage and merciless when aroused. Puissant warriors and skilled scouts, they are a deeply tanned people and although smaller than their sylvan brethren they more muscular than their kin. Implacable enemies of the manscorpions that roam the desert, periodically the tribes unite to speed through the desert slaying all such creatures they find.

Since 589 CY, when a prominent chief was slain by unknown assailants they have waged a bitter guerrilla war against Rary's forces—for in him they recognize the folly which doomed Sulm centuries ago.

After last year's pitched battle at Gai Hur the war drums beat and the blood-red war lance is being passed among the tribes, summoning them to war. As a nation the centaurs are preparing for what could be their final

crusade against the evil that again threatens their homeland.

Special Rules: Hueleneae PCs treat all feats from the list presented in Step 4: Skills and Feats as regional feats.

A hueleneae character starts at first level with the centaur monster class from *Races of the Wild*, with the following changes:

Racial Traits: Automatic Languages: Common and Giant

Class Features: Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Hueleneae centaurs are proficient with all simple weapons, scimitars, and longbows, as well as light armor and shields.

As per the rules for monster classes, the character must complete all six levels of the centaur monster class before taking any other class levels. A character progressing in a monster class gains feats and ability score increases according to Table 2—5 of the *Player's Handbook*. That table also limits their maximum ranks in class and cross-class skills.

Centaur are not mounted creatures, and PCs can't be used as mounts by other PCs.

To play a Hueleneae PC a player must be a D&D REWARDS member and have a special starting adventure record (AR) distributed in *Polyhedron* issue 142. A player must bring both the AR and their D&D Rewards card when they play *COR5-06 Blood on Bright Sands* to start playing a Hueleneae character.