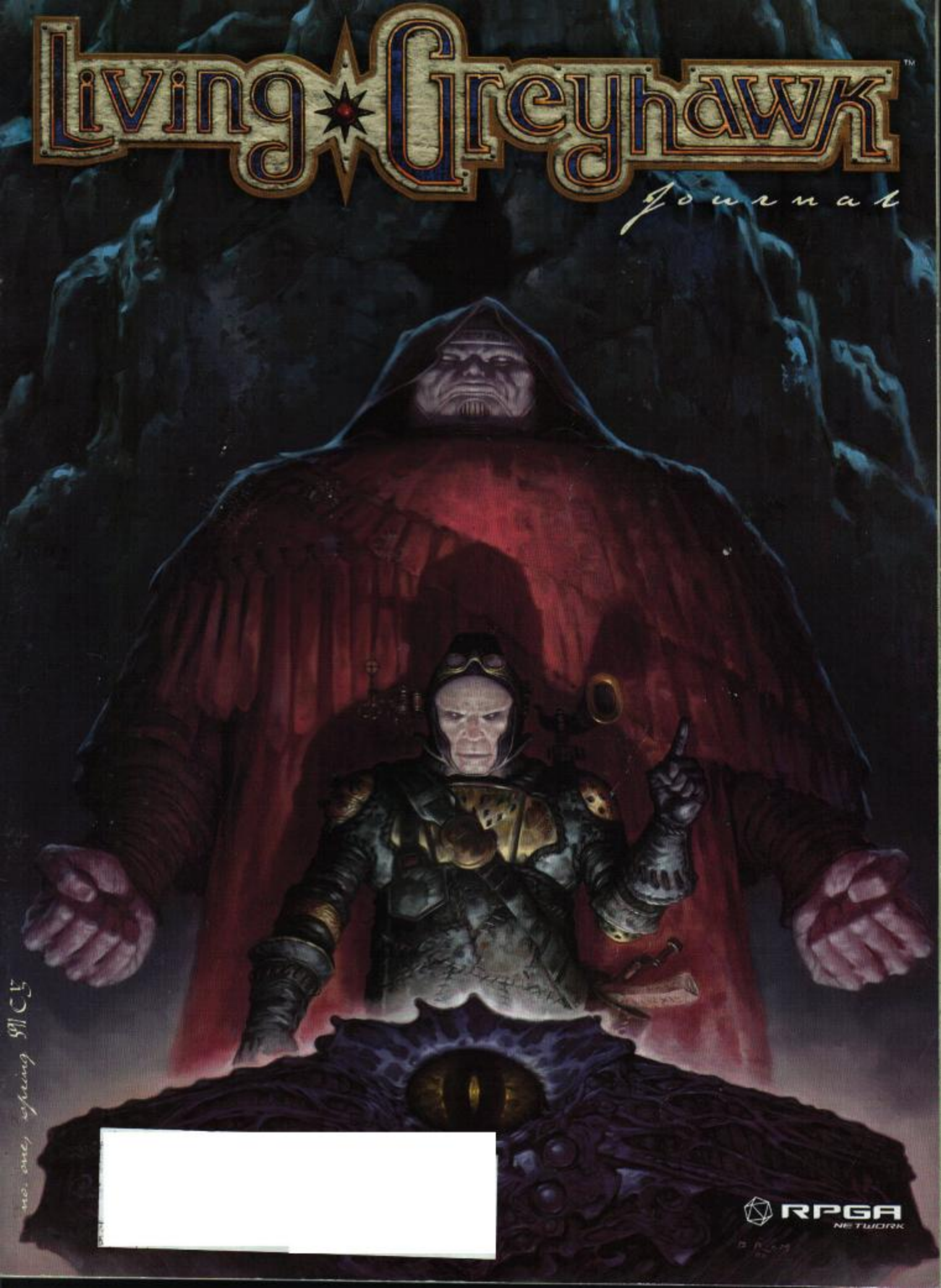


Living GreyhawkTM

Journal



no. one, spring 91 C5



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Journal

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By Erik Mona

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The mysterious Mantartigan Mellix, keeper of the Secret of Passage at the fabled Belching Vortex of Leuk-O, stands guard with the Barrier Golem, welcoming adventurers to his enigmatic lair. Painted by the incomparable Brom.

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The World of Greyhawk created by E. Gary Gygax

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Spring, 591 CY September, 2000

Campaign News

At Last, A Launch

Whew.

After more than two years of preparation, the LIVING GREYHAWK™ campaign debuted last weekend, at the GEN CON® Game Fair in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Reaction to the new campaign was overwhelmingly positive. We ran 305 tables of LIVING GREYHAWK events, most of which seated seven players and a Dungeon Master. Our offerings this year included *Dragonscales at Morningtide*, by long-time Greyhawk designer Sean K Reynolds, a particularly nasty dungeon crawl called *The Reckoning*, by Circle of Six member John Richardson and Sean Flaherty, and what turned out to be a rather controversial "dark" adventure called *River of Blood*, by yours truly. This latter event was the first in a continuing series of "core" adventures called *Absolute Power*. Lessons learned in this earliest of LIVING GREYHAWK adventures might come back to help, or haunt, adventurers years in the campaign's future.

The LIVING GREYHAWK excitement was not limited to the adventures at the convention, however. When faced with the problem of thousands of gamers wanting to make characters in a game system that debuted at the show itself, we decided to tap Circle of Six members

David "Tip" Vaught and Cheryl Llewellyn behind a series of tables set up as a "Character Creation Station." With assistance from Triad members Sam Weiss, Clay Hinton, Nick Perch, and a host of others whose names elude me at the moment, Tip and Cheryl helped hundreds of players create their first third edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® characters. Each Regional Triad had prepared a two-page informational flier on their region, allowing players to learn about their homeland before playing their first slot at the show. The able Shy Aberman ran several groups of adventurers on side-missions based on maps discovered in *River of Blood* as an adjunct to the activities at the Character Creation Station.

Seeing the constant swarms of people at that Character Creation Station was a real affirmation for the Circle of Six. We've labored long and hard to make this campaign a reality, but until last weekend it existed primarily on paper and in the heads of the campaign administrators. Three days ago, the campaign took its first glorious breath. It was a sight to behold. Outdrawing the D&D Open (which itself had a record-breaking year), LIVING GREYHAWK was quite simply the most popular and best attended roleplaying event at Gen Con US.

In the coming weeks, the campaign will see its first play at GEN CON UK and GEN CON Benelux, as well as at several smaller shows across the world, where we expect a similarly warm reception. By the time you get this, GEN CON US will have been over for at least a month, and the bindings of your brand new *Player's Handbooks* are no doubt cracked beyond repair from frenzied reading and re-reading. Here at HQ, we're busy reading the feedback on the three premier events and our character creation rules, and using that information to improve the campaign as it goes forward. As I write this, regional scenarios are about to debut all over the world, bringing the action of this global campaign home to your backyards.

Let us know what you think of LIVING GREYHAWK in these early days. Your input is crucial to the success of the campaign.

Our First Contest: We Give You the World

The first issue of a magazine dedicated to our newest, most ambitious campaign seems like an ideal venue for the announcement of a new contest, created specifically to get you in the mood to



Circle of Six member David "Tip" Vaught mans the character creation station with an inviting smile and an evil twinkle in his eyes.

create your own LIVING GREYHAWK character. The character creation rules on the following pages give you a good set of guidelines with which to create a character. But they don't allow for the really crazy, really special stuff. Write a letter of up to 500 words telling us, the Circle of Six, one special "thing" you'd like for your character. Maybe it's a non-standard race. Maybe it's a magical item, a special title, an NPC relationship, or even a wizard's tower. Whatever. Be creative.

The Circle will review all entries, and will grant the five wishes we deem as "coolest" additions to the campaign. There's really no objective criteria here, save that we'll reward creativity and players who consider the world and their region as a whole when making our difficult decisions.

Entry is limited to GUILD-LEVEL™ members only. Each member may enter up to three times, but a given member will be limited to the granting of only a single "wish." Send hard copies of submissions to: We Give You the World Contest/RPGA Network/PO Box 707/Renton, WA 98057-0707. Sorry, no electronic submissions will be accepted. Deadline: November 15.

Character Creation Guidelines Version 1.1 - August 2000

These guidelines give you the basic information you need to create a starting LIVING GREYHAWK™ character, and to advance your character. Please be aware that these guidelines, like the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, will change. Our commitment to you is that any changes will add options to characters (as more D&D® or GREYHAWK® material is published), not take away options, but very infrequently we may have to restrict options that were previously available.



Our first contest lets you be any type of character you wish.

We will only do so after careful consideration. These guidelines have a version number and date. All LIVING GREYHAWK characters must comply with the most current version of the *D&D Player's Handbook* and these guidelines.

When new options become available, you may take advantage of them by adding them to your character at the next normal opportunity (usually level advancement). You may not retroactively change your character to take advantage of new options.

LIVING GREYHAWK players are required to keep a character sheet and log book for each of their characters. For a sample character sheet and log book, visit www.livinggreyhawk.com.

To create your LIVING GREYHAWK character, follow these steps:

Step 1: Ability Scores

To put all players on an even footing, the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign uses the Nonstandard Point Buy method of ability score generation, found in Chapter 2 of the *D&D Dungeon Master's Guide*. The LIVING GREYHAWK setting is considered a "Tougher Campaign"; hence,

Ability Costs

Cost	Score	Modifier
-	6	-2
-	7	-2
0	8	-1
1	9	-1
2	10	+0
3	11	+0
4	12	+1
5	13	+1
6	14	+2
8	15	+2
10	16	+3
13	17	+3
16	18	+4
-	19	+4
-	20	+5

each character uses 28 points distributed among all six statistics.

For example, using the full 28 points, a character's attributes might be purchased as follows:

Str 15: 8 points

Int 10: 2 points

Dex 13: 5 points

Wis 11: 3 points

Con 14: 6 points

Cha 12: 4 points

Apply racial modifiers to ability points after the base scores are determined. Thus, ability points range from 8-18 for humans, and 6-20 for nonhumans. Ability points gained as your character advances in level do not use this chart; they are full points and may be added as explained in the *Player's Handbook*.

Step 2: Race and Class

You may choose any race and class option described in the *Player's Handbook*. The LIVING GREYHAWK campaign also uses the following special rules for character creation. These override or limit the character options in the *Player's Handbook*.

Human characters should choose one

of the subraces of humanity (or admixture thereof), as explained in Chapter 2 of the *Living Greyhawk Gazetteer*. Elf characters must be of the gray, high, or wood subraces. Dwarves may be hill or mountain dwarves. Gnomes must be rock gnomes. Halflings must be of the light-foot variety. All half-orcs are considered human/orc crossbreeds.

You must choose a non-evil alignment that also meets all requirements for your character's class.

A cleric must serve a specific non-evil deity from the *Player's Handbook* or the *LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer*. A paladin need not (but may) serve a patron deity.

A character may begin play at any age from Adulthood to Old Age, as defined in the Age section of Chapter 6: Description, in the *Player's Handbook*.

Age modifiers to ability scores are not used in the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign. The character may be of any height and weight allowed by the height and weight tables for the character's race.

Prestige Classes: The following Prestige Classes are allowed for PCs: arcane archer, dwarven defender, loremaster, and shadowdancer. PCs must qualify for these classes as described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

A starting character receives the maximum amount of gold pieces for its class.

Step 3: Hit Points

Assign your starting character the maximum hit points possible for its class. For each additional character level assign hit points according to the new class by taking half the maximum value for the class, then add 1 point. For example, a character adds 3 hit points upon gaining a new level in the sorcerer class.

Step 4: Skills and Feats

A few skills need brief additional rulings:

Alchemy Skill and Craft Skill: These skills do not allow you to craft items other than the ones that PCs can purchase normally (see Step 5). In other words, no acid or masterwork equipment.

Knowledge skill: Knowledge skills cannot be anachronistic. Remember that the more specific a field of knowledge, the lower the difficulty class for information related to that knowledge – it is better to be specific in what you know.

Profession Skill: At this time, profession skills can only be chosen from those listed in the Profession skill description in the *Player's Handbook*.

Step 5: Equipment

Purchase equipment for your character from the Weapons, Armor, and Goods and Services sections of Chapter 7: Equipment in the *Player's Handbook*. The only exception is that you may not purchase Masterwork items (manacles, tool kits, etc.) from these sections. You may purchase holy water from the Special, Superior, or Masterwork section of Chapter 7, but nothing else. You may not purchase magical items for your character except through play opportunities. Special, Superior, and Masterwork items will be available in play.

The Carrying Capacity rule is used in the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, so keep track of what your character is carrying and how much it weighs.

Step 6: Home Region

All LIVING GREYHAWK characters are based in one of the nations of the Flanaess, as detailed in the *LIVING GREYHAWK Gazetteer*. (There is no such thing as a "regionless" character.) The default home region where your starting character operates is determined by where you actually live. You may choose a different home region for your starting character, but your character then suffers out-of-region Time Unit penalties when you use it in the game region assigned to where you live. If you change your address in real life, your character's default home region moves with you. If you move, but choose not to change your character's home region, your character again suffers penalties for out-of-region play when you play in the new area to which you moved.

A player may not choose as a character's home region the Free City of



Member Shy Aberman (bottom, left) runs a group of adventurers through a dangerous dungeon in the Cairn Hills.

Greyhawk or any campaign nation not moderated by a Regional Triad.

Consult the table below to determine your LIVING GREYHAWK character's default home region. American states and Canadian provinces are given in abbreviated form. Additional regions will be assigned as the campaign grows. Visit www.livinggreyhawk.com for the latest regions list, and for information on how to contact your Regional Triad.

LIVING GREYHAWK Regions

Ahlissa (Innsa/Adri): Austria, Germany

Ahlissa (Naeric): Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden

Bandit Kingdoms: OK, TX

Bissel: CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT

Bone March (Knurl): Greece

Dyvers: IA, KS, MO, NE

Ekbir: France

Furyondy: MI

Geoff: DC, DE, MD, VA, WV

Gran March: NC, SC, GA

Highfolk: WI

Keoland: NJ, NY, PA

Ket: MB, NB, NS, ON, PEI, SK

Nyrond: AZ, Southern CA, UT

Onnwal: United Kingdom, South Africa

Pale: Northern CA, NV

Perrenland: Australia, New Zealand

Ratik: HI

Sea Barons: Italy

Shield Lands: MN, ND, SD

Sunndi: Belgium, Netherlands,

Luxembourg

Tusmit: PQ

Ulek, Principality of: FL, PR

Urnst, County of: CO, MT, NM, WY

Urnst, Duchy of: AK, AB, BC, SK, ID, OR, WA

Veluna: OH

Verbobonc: IL, IN

Ycomany: AL, AR, KY, LA, MS, TN

Time Units

Time Units are used to record how PCs spend their time. By using Time Units you do not need to worry exactly in what order adventures took place, or exactly when you researched a spell or created an item. Time Units save you from taking your character out of play to perform non-adventuring activities.

Every year, a PC receives 52 Time Units (of 1 week each) to spend on their activities—adventuring, spell research, creating magic items, belonging to a

knighthood, or managing a business can all potentially take part of a character's time. Adventures take either one or two Time Units, and the cost will be indicated in the adventure text. Other activities take varying amounts of Time Units, as indicated in the rules for the activity in question.

Learning New Arcane Spells

Learning a new spell normally takes a wizard one Time Unit. However, the two spells a wizard receives for advancing a level do not cost Time Units.

Sorcerers and bards must choose their spells from the appropriate spell lists, unless they have a special certificate that allows them to do otherwise. Sorcerers and bards do not normally pay Time Units to learn their spells.

Banned Spells

There are several spells that are not suitable for use in a LIVING Campaign environment. The following spells are not available to PCs: *polymorph other*, *polymorph self*, *permanency*.

Fame Points

Fame points are used to track how well known your PC is, and if your PC is recognized by those he meets. Fame points are always with an organization, never with individuals. Fame normally cannot be used up the way influence is—once someone knows who you are, they tend not to forget.

Influence Points

Influence points are a way of keeping track of who in the World of Greyhawk owes your PC a favor. Influence points can be earned with individuals or organizations, and there is no limit to how many a PC can eventually acquire. Influence points are used (spent) to convince NPCs to do favors for you—enough influence with the right people, and you can convince them to work miracles on your behalf.

Lifestyle

PCs in the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign must pay a lifestyle cost at the beginning of each adventure, associated with the economic level of the place where the adventure takes place. Lifestyle costs include expenses incurred during the time between this adventure and the last one, and all training costs associated with advancing in levels. It does

not cover cost of adventuring equipment. PCs must pay for things bought during the adventure (from equipment to drinks and meals and lodging) at the prices stated in the scenario, or the *Player's Handbook* if the scenario does not specify.

The lifestyle costs are divided according to the economic level that the PC wants to maintain, and there are Charisma-related penalties and bonuses for maintaining certain lifestyles.

Destitute: You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You stink and are undernourished. You suffer a -3 on Charisma-related skill checks.

Poor: You sleep in the common room of an inn, or perhaps the loft of a stable. Your clothing is generally worn and patched. You suffer -2 on Charisma-related skill checks.

Low: You rent a small room at a tavern, perhaps shared with one or two other individuals. If you own a home it is a one-room shack. It wouldn't be wise to leave anything of value laying around. You suffer -1 on Charisma-related skill checks.

Medium: You are moderately successful, and your equipment is plain but sturdy. You have your own room in an inn or boarding house, where you can leave items of moderate value without worrying about them disappearing.

High: You rent a roomy house or apartment, or own a nice home. You own clothes for many occasions, and can entertain anyone without feeling overly ashamed. You receive a +1 bonus to Charisma-related skill checks.

Luxury: You have the best of everything—spacious living quarters, exotic food, expensive clothes. Your success is the envy of many. You receive a +2 bonus on Charisma-related skill checks. Equipment left at home is generally quite secure.



German Triad member Rainer Nagel leads his party through the labyrinthine streets of Greyhawk's Slum Quarter, on the trail of the *River of Blood*.

Certificates

You will be issued certificates for things and favors that your character acquires during adventure play, during interactions, and through other means. These certificates include information on the item or favor that you will need in order to use it in play. Some specific sections of the certificate to note are:

Validation: Certificates must be signed in ink by the DUNGEON MASTER® who issues them, and the DUNGEON MASTER'S RPGA number must be completely legible. The name of the character the certificate is assigned to must be written in ink on the line provided at the top of the certificate.

Use Restriction: Use restriction is a category that describes how many of a certain certificate from a certain scenario a given character can be assigned. The categories are:

Common—A character can possess as many duplicates of this certificate as desired, provided they were all earned in play by a character.

Unusual—A character can possess only one of these items.

Rare—Only one of these rare items may be used at a given table of players. If multiple characters bring this item, then only one "exists" for the adventure. Which of the duplicates exists must be determined at the start of the adventure, and may not be changed during the course of the adventure. Further, all rare items are also bound by the restrictions on unusual items.

Unique—Only one of these exists.

The categories apply by item and scenario name. For example, if you happen to get item X from scenario A, and it is considered "unusual," then you can own one of item X from scenario A. If item X comes out in scenario B later, you can collect one or more of those as well (depending on its restriction in scenario B), since the scenario name is different.

Trade Policy: Certificates indicate whether they can be traded between characters. If a certificate can be traded, and is traded, then a complete trade history must appear on the back of the certificate. The information for each trade must include the player name and RPGA number and character name of the person trading the item away and the person accepting the item, and the date of the trade. This all must be completely legi-

ble, and the history must show the progress of the certificate from the original owner (noted on the front) to the current owner.

Certificates in the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign are the property of Wizards of the Coast, and must be returned to the campaign staff upon request. They have \$0 cash value and cannot be sold for cash or other real world considerations.

Making Things

Non-magical crafted items, as well as crafted potions and scrolls, do not require certificates. Make a logbook entry for the time spent, and have your game master sign it. Indicate when you use your crafted potion or scroll in the logbook entry where it is used, referencing the log entry for when it was created.

Craft Item: Crafted items cannot be sold to NPCs; they can only be saved for use by the maker, or sold to other PCs. Crafting an item takes time, as calculated using the formula in the *Player's Handbook*, with a minimum of 1 Time Unit. PCs may not craft items that are restricted from purchase in Step 5 of these guidelines.

Brew Potion: Creating a potion takes material resources (gold) and XP as indicated in the *Player's Handbook*. Creating a potion costs 1 Time Unit, and only one potion may be created per adventure played.

Scribe Scroll: Creating a scroll takes material resources (gold) and XP as indicated in the *Player's Handbook*. Creating a scroll costs 1 Time Unit per level of the spell being scribed, and only one scroll can be scribed per adventure played.

Other magic creation feats: Costs (in gold, XP, and Time Units) for creating other magic items are covered on a case-by-case basis. Contact your Triad for more details. These items require certificates, so though you may have the pre-requisites for making something (according to the rules in the *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide*) you must use the approved campaign procedure for doing so.

Guidelines for Ethical Play

In the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, we expect that you will conduct yourself in a manner suitable to group cooperation and group enjoyment. Specifically:

Players

Contribute to the fun of the whole group when playing. Don't play in a style that detracts from the fun of the game.

Play fairly and honestly.

Be considerate of others, and their right to enjoy the game as much as you do.

Follow the spirit of the rules, as well as the letter of the rules.

Dungeon Masters

You are the Dungeon Master. It is your job to run the game. You are not playing against the players. Their fun is your top priority.

All players should be treated equally and equitably by you and by other players.

Run games in a professional manner. Remember that you represent the RPGA and the campaign to your players.

Abide by the expectations that apply to the players.

Administration

Respond and communicate in an articulate and timely manner.

Uphold the authority of our Dungeon Masters, and do not overrule them without careful investigation.

Abide by the expectations that apply to the players and the Dungeon Masters. ★



The first Living Greyhawk adventure, *The River of Blood*, debuted at the 2000 Gen Con Game Fair.

Illus. Michael Dubisch

Places of Mystery

BY ERIK MONA ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL DUBISCH

The travelogues of the Flanaess often dwell upon the magnificent hanging gardens of Niole Dra, the splendid canals of Chendl, and even, occasionally, the forlorn dolmens of the Tovag Baragu. Less well known are the transdimensional conduit known as the Belching Vortex of Leuk-O and the Fabled City of Dar Kesh-Anam, a metropolis in a most unlikely locale. Both offer exploration and opportunity for profit, at great risks.

The Belching Vortex of Leuk-O

The folk of the Hestmark Highlands hold many secrets, but perhaps none so enigmatic as the great portal known colloquially as the Belching Vortex of Leuk-O. Named for an ancient Oeridian general who is said to have entered the place and emerged with unheard-of treasure. The Vortex appears as an undulating black, leprous membrane set against a sheer cliff face on the mountain known as *Vashal-Tul* in the language of the dwarves who once made their homes in the craggy hillsides nearby. In the days before the Empire of Aerdy, a band of hill folk established a small colony at the foot of the membrane, which ancient texts refer to as a smooth opalescent barrier, soft to the touch but impenetrable even by magic. At some point, however, the gateway degraded, as did the village. Now, little more than eroded foundations can be found at the site, along with the time-buried remains of a people set upon by a terrible wasting disease. Leuk-O himself is said to have fallen victim to this illness, which caused his skin to turn sallow and his hair to fall from its roots. Those who have visited the Vortex in the last two centuries report that the surrounding area is a wasteland bereft of animal or plant life. Occasionally, it is said, the black membrane opens suddenly, expelling an invisible gas that can strip the flesh from a man's bones.

Taken as a whole, these dangers would be enough to warn away most adventurers. However, the treasures said to be found within the angular

metal cavern structure beyond the Vortex have lured many adventurers to their deaths, and a small few to a modicum of fame and success. The fabled treasure includes such esoterica as artificial men built for battle (such as the *Mighty Servant of Leuk-O*, a towering automaton of crystal, unknown metals, and a strange fibrous material), translucent visors that allow a man to see in the dark, round sculptures that can capture the spoken word, and a host of other arcane devices. That no few of these items have military applications has enticed many warlords to lay claim upon the region, but nearly all of these pretenders fall victim to the wasting illness.

The latest claimant, the Geoffite archemist **Mantartigan Mellix** (NG hm Wiz15), dwells within a well-constructed hovel near the village ruins, tempting adventurers into the Belching Vortex, selling the Secret of Passage (as well as specially constituted medicinal tablets meant to protect against the "poison of the airs") for a princely sum. Those who seek to steal the wizard's secrets must deal with his companion, a powerfully-built construct Mellix refers to as the Barrier Golem.

DM's Notes: The Belching Vortex is actually a remnant from another time and place, a portal to an ancient outpost of explorers from one of the many worlds along Oerth's metaphysical axis. The means by which these travelers first arrived, and, indeed, how long they observed the affairs of the Flanaess from within the stronghold is not known. The indigenous hill folk who were thought to have mixed with the inhabitants of the Vortex last encountered civilized Oeridians more than 600 years ago, after which they mysteriously disappeared. Evidence of otherworldly influence in the village ruins nearby include glass windows of extreme clarity and a coppery sort of underground tubing running from building to building, much of which has been looted. The village reportedly once sported a fully functional water faucet, though this treasure was looted

from the village ruins and installed in a dark corner of the Imperial Repository in Rauxes.

Unless protected by one of Mellix's tablets, anyone exploring the village ruins or spending more than an hour within three miles of the Vortex must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 18) to avoid contracting the Mortification, a wasting disease (Incubation: 1 day, Damage: 1d6 Con). Those who fail suffer nausea, fatigue, dehydration, hair loss, and lesions on the skin. Those who survive six weeks of the illness generally recover, though remission (as in the case of Leuk-O) is not uncommon.

Mellix's "Secret of Passage" is a simple gray card of a nearly indestructible lightweight material, three inches long by two inches wide. When held before the Eye of Aspersion (a small, eerily-lit panel at waist height to the right of the Vortex portal), the black membrane slowly melts away, only to reform shortly thereafter (the exact time varies erratically). The poisonous catacombs beyond are filled with strange, quasi-magical technic creatures that assault intruders with relentless precision. It is said that paths to other worlds can be found within the Vortex passages, but that the mechanism controlling their operation failed long ago.

The Fabled City of Dar-Kesh Anam

In the scholarly settlement of Nellix Town, deep in the dark alleys of the community known as Dryleaves, a wanderer can find a signless establishment known by students and scholars as the Dross Shop. Depending upon whom one asks, the Dross Shop is either a museum or a chaotic collection of trash. The proprietor (some say curator) of the Dross Shop is one **Venal Lon-Verdagis** (particulars uncertain), a gregarious, apparently human man with burgundy skin, a jaundiced left eye, and a wardrobe consisting of at least seven sets of identical deep green robes.

The interior of the Dross Shop is dominated by several oak tables, upon which are situated a number of items, from empty buckets to rusted swords to librams containing words in languages never before seen in the Flanaess. Whether these items are genuine treasure or the junk collection of a madman is anyone's guess. For his part, the curator sits in a corner rocking chair, solemnly nodding to all who enter, inviting them to handle the items as he stands to explain their history.

Lon-Verdagis is something of a local mascot, and visitors to the Dross Shop can often find collections of students surrounding the curator as he walks from table to table, explaining fanciful histories of this or that item. No one knows for sure if the man speaks truth or lies—he has a strange way of deflating difficult questions or criticisms by launching into some lengthy tale of ancient derring-do. Many find the man insufferably insane, but those who appreciate his odd genius return to the Dross Shop again and again, supporting Venal Lon-Verdagis with donations of food and gold.

If a visitor returns often, Lon-Verdagis will whisper to him conspiratorially, leading him to a large table covered in cloth near the back corner of his shop. Here, he will lift the cloth to reveal a city in miniature, covered by an intricate glass dome. Though the tallest onion-domed spire reaches no higher than a foot, the detail of the sculpture is amazing. No fewer than four dozen buildings, some of them ruined, line the narrow streets of the miniature city. If one looks closely, tiny figures seem to move along those abandoned, sand-swept streets, a phenomenon the curator blames on the reflections of light upon the enclosing dome.

Venal Lon-Verdagis introduces the model as the Fabled City of Dar-Kesh Anam, the legendary birthplace of the saga hero Molaho Khem. In a time so ancient that history melds openly with fable, it is said that Dar-Kesh Anam was the location of the first union between man and dragon, the resting place of

the Five-Fold Deity, and the final refuge of the Sisterhood of Balash-Kopph. Those scholars who believe the city ever existed cannot agree upon its location, placing it either in the lowlands of ancient Iтар or in a vast mountain valley west of Mur.

The curator of the Dross Shop, however, will inform trusted visitors that neither is correct, and that the fabled city now and always has rested within a dome of glass. Further, for a small donation, he will twist a magic ring worn on his left hand, sending his visitors to the city, that they might tempt history themselves.

DM's Notes: Whether the city in miniature in the Dross Shop is the Dar-Kesh Anam of legend has not been determined by the six-score groups of adventurers who have accepted the challenge of Venal Lon-Verdagis. What has been determined is that the place is a veritable death-trap. Once transported within, explorers find themselves in a city that is all too real, an ancient, decaying metropolis that at first appears empty but that in fact is occupied by hundreds and hundreds of residents. Most of these beings are human, but no few are strangers to the Flanaess, and perhaps even Oerth itself, with features and languages wholly alien to Eastern Oerik.

Despite the promises of Venal Lon-Verdagis, once a band has entered the domed city, the curator of the Dross Shop will do nothing to effect their return. While this might be thought of as a dangerous pursuit, no one has as yet returned from the city, and the curator's pleas of ignorance to their fates have been enough to protect him from serious recriminations. Perhaps, as many believe, the man is simply insane, and transports the brave and the bold to the domed city because of some illogical calling.

Despite the appalling escape rate of those transferred to the city from Nellix, there are a number of ways out of Dar-Kesh Anam. The most prominent of these is the ominous Chamber of Portals, at the top of the spire known as the Far Turret, which stands at the cen-



Mantartigan Mellix's "Secret of Passage"

ter of the city. The tower is protected by legions of insects who walk on two legs, who arm themselves with strange weapons that shoot poisonous darts with the force of a crossbow. The leaders of these insects keep themselves obfuscated in mists and invisibility, but are known to be masters of the mental disciplines.

Less dangerous is the vast under-city, a confounding dungeon populated by uplanders who thought to find escape below, and who became lost in the winding tunnels. Here can be found two-dimensional ruptures in reality that open into space, leading to the innards of a distant volcano as often as they do to safety. All are guarded by man or beast.

The sky above the fabled city of Dar-Kesh Anam is a deep red, and a trip to the horizon (through several miles of desert) leads only to an impassable barrier.

Most of the treasure promised in saga tales has been long-since looted from the city, or perhaps never existed at all. The remaining treasure may well be in knowledge, for the inhabitants of Dar-Kesh Anam represent a thousand cultures from twice as many locales. Many of these residents did not enter on their own request, and were instead sent by burgundy-skinned men armed with magical rings. The fabled city is hence a prison, from which few have escaped. Those who find a way out will likely be far from where they entered, and may even transcend reality to enter another world. ★

The Kingdom of Keoland

BY GARY HOLIAN

The Kingdom of Keoland, located between the Javan and Sheldomar Rivers, is the oldest surviving nation in the Flanaess. Since the Twin Cataclysms forced the Great Migrations of prehistory, Keoland has had the most impact upon the history of the Flanaess of any nation outside the former Great Kingdom. Until now, Keoland has received a fraction of the attention given to Aerdy elsewhere. This article expands upon the information provided in the *LIVING GREYHAWK™ Gazetteer* by further detailing the make-up of the kingdom and its provinces. As the entire Sheldomar Valley has at various times been under the influence of the kingdom, much of this detail has relevance to neighboring states such as the Gran March, Geoff, Sterich, the Yeomanry, and the Ulek States.

Keoland is steeped in ancient tradition of its nobility. The key to understanding the nation as a whole lies in the study of the various factions that vie for power here.

Powers of the Land

Throne of the Lion

The reigning monarch of the Kingdom of Keoland sits upon the so-called Throne of the Lion. This office, the highest in the land, is charged with acting as the nation's Chief Bureaucrat and Defender of the Realm. As such, the monarch is head of both the government and the military, though he lacks the power to levy taxes, a right reserved solely to the Council of Niole Dra. According to the founding charter of Keoland signed centuries ago by representatives of all the original noble houses, both Oeridian and Suel, it is the Council that approves all matters of succession to the throne. The monarchy is not strictly heredi-

tary, but rather is a vested office. Once appointed, a king rules for life barring extreme infirmity or a rare vote of disenfranchisement by the nobility. While the ability to produce a qualified series of heirs often constitutes a dynasty, succession is not guaranteed and often passes between various royal houses. It has done so many times in the past, which has preserved a continuous line of Keoish rulers dating back to the first century of the migrations. Such controls have created the stability that has allowed Keoland to endure for centuries under relatively unbroken and benign leadership.

Court of the Land

The Council of Niole Dra, referred to colloquially as the Court of the Land, is a gathering of the chief independent nobles of the realm, along with the heads of certain long-established guilds and secret societies. It is the Council, which gathers year round in the capital (save during the four festival weeks), that approves royal succession, administers final disputes between independent nobles, levies taxes on the provinces, and ratifies changes to the Founding Charter of the Kingdom. This ancient document is a binding agreement on the conduct of both the nobility and citizenry of Keoland, ascribing both rights and obligations to all. It has been amended only on two occasions in nine centuries (requiring near total unanimity of the Council) and its provisions are generally considered sacrosanct. Most decisions are made based on the vote of a simple majority. The most important passages of the Founding Charter concern the election of a monarch. This occasion remains the most momentous and contentious in the land. While the royalty of the kingdom has been dominantly chosen from the amongst the small number of original Suel houses, Oeridian noblemen dominate the membership of the approximately 100 member Court of the Land. Therefore, these lords enjoy a privileged role as kingmakers, providing further check and balance to the power of the rulers of Keoland.

Heralds

Ceremony and complex ritual are strong characteristics of Keoish culture. The maintenance and chronicling of such traditions is the province of the heralds. Most heralds serve varied roles in the kingdom. They are known to act as historians, couriers, ambassadors, conciglieri, courtesans, stewards, and even spies between the noble houses of Keoland. Their unique position, sandwiched between the nobility and the free classes, gives the heralds a modicum of power and influence. Most heralds, whether serving a noble house or not, also consider themselves part of a grand fraternity, the so-called Brotherhood of Harbingers. Heralds generally

Illus. Michael Dubisch



Heraldic device of the Kingdom of Keoland

treat each other with respect and equanimity, though longstanding feuds are not uncommon. High Heralds, often sharing blood ties with the nobility they serve, are rare and specially empowered representatives. They can act as the virtual voices of their respective lords and often sit in Council in Niole Dra to act as proxies.

Watchers

The only major national knighthood represented in Keoland is the Watchers. The Knights of the Watch are most common in the northern quarters of the kingdom, as they are based in the Gran March and share many roots with the Neheli. Many can still be found in the service of the Throne of the Lion, or various independent nobles. Hugo of Geoff, related distantly to the nobility of Keoland, is the putative leader of the order. However, a branch of the Watchers known as the *Malgari*, or "Darkwatch," are found only in Keoland and are primarily active in the Duchy of Dorlin and the northern provinces. The Margrave of Mandismoor is believed to be a highly placed servant of the Darkwatch. In general, Watchers are concerned with the defense of the kingdom from external threats and influences, particularly the Baklunish, though the Knights of the Hart are considerable rivals as well.

Priesthoods

The role played by priesthoods in the Kingdom of Keoland differs from that typical of other realms of the Flanaess, particularly those nations influenced by the march of the Aerdi. Establishment of any faith is forbidden in the founding charter of Keoland. This was an early exhortation by the Neheli and a recognition by the founders of the kingdom that religion often fosters division and conflict between disparate peoples. Given the diverse coalition of Suel, Oeridian, and demihuman clans that formed the early kingdom, it was decided early on to exclude this element from civic life. While this proscription has generally been observed, religion has by no means been suppressed in Keoland, and many faiths have flourished in the kingdom over the course of the last nine centuries. Almost all the gods of the Flanaess are represented here to one degree or another, though the political influence of any one is modest at best. Most of the nobility consider themselves above anything but the most token propitiation of deities, while the superstition and provinciality of the common folk prevents much proselytization.

Magic

The practice of magic was a scarce and tightly controlled commodity in the early days of Keoland. This was the byproduct of a people harried from their homelands by magical catastrophes and beset for decades by power-mad sorcerers. For centuries after the kingdom's founding, magecraft was limited to the nobility and their appointed seers. This included the semi-independent Silent Ones of the Lonely Tower, who oversaw all training and guarded magical secrets closely. They acted swiftly against any who would gather such power in the kingdom. All other practitioners were considered witch-

es and treated as such by a wary peasantry. This included foreign mages, who were not long tolerated in Keoland. Such prohibitions were eventually lifted three centuries ago, during the reign of Tavish the Great, when Keoland emerged as a conquering power in the region. An academy of magic was established in Niole Dra to train and regulate wizards, a practice already common among rivals such as Furyondy and Aerdy. Mages who were not members of this academy, nor established nobility, were still considered illicit, but the fervor to eliminate such "witches" eroded as Keoland mixed with other cultures during its imperialist phase. Lawless wizards eventually took to calling themselves freemages. Only in cosmopolitan Gradsul, where they act under the protection and support of Duke Luschan and the Archmage Drawmij, do freemages gather together as a guild (calling themselves the Sea Mages), often hiring themselves out to ship captains for travel and exploration.

Merchants

From the point of view of the Keoish, most particularly its noble and peasant classes, the kingdom is the hub of a great wheel. Niole Dra is its heart, the center of civilization in the Sheldomar Valley. The capital is surrounded by the fertile provinces of the realm that extend to the frontiers of the kingdom. Across these borders lay former client states of varying obligation to the Throne of the Lion and beyond them are uncultured and often hostile foreign powers. Bridging these worlds has been the role of the mercantile class, who form the bulk of the middle class and have a much more cosmopolitan outlook. Merchants and traders, who typically gather together in large merchant houses, explore the reaches of the Flanaess by land and sea. They bring back wonders to the kingdom, which is rich in staples but poor in exotica. Various merchant guilds, representing the interests of the houses, form a very powerful political faction in Keoland. They often press their concerns with the Court of the Land to much effect. While the lords of Niole Dra often take a more introverted view, the guilds are not often ignored for, in addition to the farmers, they are the lifeblood of the nation.

Major Provinces

A survey of some of the major provinces of the Kingdom of Keoland follows. The information below should not be considered complete, as preference was given to those provinces which provide the greatest

The Early Kings

- 342 CY Great Council of Niole Dra
(gathering of the Suel Houses and Oeridian tribes of Keogh)
- 342-(314) CY Nyhan I of House Neheli (The First King)
- 314-(295) CY Malv I of House Rhola (The Defender)
- 295-(279) CY Lorgyr I of House Neheli (The Seer)
- 279-(272) CY Nyhan II of House Neheli (The Forlorn)
- 272-(236) CY Mandros I of Sedenna (The Oeridian)
- 242 CY Borders of Keoland first expand to present boundaries

opportunities for adventure, or which play home to some of the most important movers and shakers in Keoish politics (two qualifiers which are by no means mutually exclusive). The numbers listed after the name of each province correspond to the map of the Kingdom of Keoland on the inside back cover of this magazine.

Royal District and City of Niole Dra (I)

The sleepy capital of the Kingdom of Keoland has constituted an independent territory since the formal founding of the nation. Niole Dra (pop. 25,000) was established soon after the migrations by the nobles of House Neheli as a governing demesne for the Duchy of Dorlin. However, its active control eventually passed to a bureaucracy appointed by the Council of Niole Dra when it became the capital of the united kingdom some decades later. It is one of the oldest and most impressive standing cities in the Flanaess.

According to legend, the placement of Niole Dra was determined by the seers of House Neheli, and its present location supposedly holds some mystical purpose. In any case, the majestic and sprawling city is located along the western bank of the Sheldomar River, at the northernmost point where it is still navigable to smaller seagoing vessels. In nine centuries it has never been besieged or touched by warfare. The city sports only token walls and fortifications, and most of these are adornments that only add to its acclaimed beauty. Niole Dra's quarters, of which there are more than a dozen, are separated by hanging gardens instead of walls, one more splendid than the next. The architectural style brings together the best of Suel and Oeridian influences, with soaring towers and open squares commonplace. All of these refinements contribute to the attitude of its residents, which is often described by outsiders as serene, slumberous, and even decadent.

Niole Dra is an active port, though it only sports a fraction of the traffic of Gradsul at the mouth of the Sheldomar. Barges travel southward to the capital from as far north as the headwaters of the Lort River, carrying trade from the Gran March and Waybury in the Duchy of Ulek, benefiting the city greatly. Niole Dra is administered by a lord mayor who reports regularly to the reigning king and his court at Santhmor, the royal palace, which dominates the western skyline. Currently, **His Honor Pugnace Dillip** (LN male human Ari6) holds the office of mayor. His appointment, as that of all mayors, was secured by the Court of the Land, which also affords him the budget needed to sustain a large bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is necessary to support the complex ritual and formality which dominates the culture of the city, a role that the corpulent, fatuous mayor takes on with ill-concealed glee.

While the official precincts of Niole Dra extend to little more than a day's march in all directions, the population of the district falls off rapidly outside the city's immediate limits. Other than a handful of fortresses that house some of the kingdom's standing forces, most of this open land is featureless and not under cultivation. Well worn roads lined with trees emerge from the city in all directions, leading to the various provinces of Keoland. Only one fortress of note lies within the region, and that is located in the flat plains some 25 miles directly south of the capital, near the border with the Earldom of Linth. It is a lonely spire, known as the Silent Tower, home of an ancient order of ascetic sorcerers descended from the early seers of the Neheli. It is avoided by most southerly traffic, which instead favors the river road to Segor.

Though the public markets of Niole Dra are busy, the politics of court are the real traffic and trade of the city. Over a hundred nobles or their representatives maintain



The breathtaking skyline of Niole Dra

Illus. Luis Vasquez

offices in the capital, most of them near the halls of the Court of the Land. Seats in these council chambers are emblazoned with the family crests of all the nobles, including those of provinces long since lost, with the whole affair being highly ritualistic. The figure of **Archmage Lashton** (LN male human Wiz19), chief advisor to the court and head of the academy of wizardry located in the Blind Quarter, cuts a large swath in the city. It is well known that **King Kimbertos Skotti** (LG male human Rgr15), who was an avid ranger in his youth, dislikes the city and can often be found instead at his retreat near Linnoden, where he is good friends with the Baron of Axewood. Skotti has already gained the nickname "The Commoner" from clucking critics. Without the king's moderating influence, various factions make bold efforts to promote their agendas before the Council, turning the city into a hotbed of intrigue.

Duchy of Dorlin (2)

This vast province extends north from the city of Nirole Dra, along the Sheldomar River to the border of the Axewood. It continues north and west nearly to the edge of the Rushmoors, and is the largest territory in the kingdom. These grasslands are the ancestral lands of the Neheli, an ancient Suel noble family whose roots date back to the migrations following the Twin Cataclysms. The Duke of Dorlin is the title usually held by the leader of the house, save when the Neheli hold the Throne of the Lion in Nirole Dra and another prominent member of the family assumes the dukedom.

The province is administered from Dorglast Castle (pop. 1,080), an ancient fortress that completely encircles a small township some 90 miles northwest of Nirole Dra. Located adjacent to the main north-south road to Shibolet, Dorglast Castle is a sprawling walled complex formed by a half dozen small citadels connected by a labyrinthine set of walls and towers. Reportedly, this jumble of edifices comprises no fewer than two thousand chambers, a figure which may or may not include the vast dungeons below the town. In the open area located between the walls, amidst the shadows of the towers, lies the town proper, which in ancient days formed the housing of men-at-arms and servants. Built primarily of stone like the citadels, the narrow alleys of the town are crossed by a pair of main roads that pierce the outer walls like points of the compass.

Numerous individuals spend their entire lives within the walls of this place, such is the gloomy and often decadent existence afforded its residents. Dorglast Castle makes Nirole Dra seem vibrant by comparison. The most prominent of the citadels and the first to be built nearly a millennium ago is the palace of the duke, called Gollunfane. The other citadels hold numerous apartments, the living quarters of various lesser nobility, many of whom rule minor provinces of Dorlin in absentia. Many here spend their time embroiled in family politics, quasi-scientific research (so-called nomology), or inscrutable artistic pursuits. A great many skilled artisans, including some of the most gifted in Keoland, dwell within Dorglast Castle, many of them jostling for the attention of fickle patrons. Even Rhen-folk have been spotted within these walls, which mark the west-

ernmost point of their annual migrations. These migrations culminate during the Festival of the Dead, held during Needfest, when the population of the castle and town swells to double its usual size.

The rest of Dorlin is carved up into various petty baronies and counties, all of which are enfeoffed by the duke to members of his extended family. These lands are not as well-worked or as richly harvested as the central marches of the kingdom, but have primarily agricultural economies nonetheless. Sleepy towns and villages dot the landscape, many of which are ruled by absentee lords. The people of these lands are meek and highly superstitious, often ascribing supernatural explanations to events that require none. Most Neheli are firm believers in the concept of *noblesse oblige*, but rulership that was once considered just and honorable is now seen as patronizing and neglectful. The Neheli, like their rivals the Rhola, abhor slavery (banned by the Founding Charter) and only a very limited form of indentured servitude is practiced in isolation.

The current Duke of Dorlin is **Cedrian III** (CN male human Wiz7/Ftr2), a young and ambitious lord who has worked hard to hold together his once-great house's somewhat flagging fortunes. At one time, the lords of House Neheli were the most influential in the kingdom, and it was largely from their wisdom that the Founding Charter of Keoland was fashioned. The last king before Skotti was Trevlyan III, a member of this ancient house and uncle to Duke Cedrian. This was three decades ago, after years of disease and disquieting rumors of madness damaged their prospects for a long-lived royal dynasty. The current duke has tried to reclaim his family's reputation from the incessant rumor mongers, for he styles himself a prime candidate to succeed Skotti on the throne one day. Chatter about midwives caught at the edge of the Rushmoors carrying freshly born children to be exposed in the wastes is not helping his cause. Cedrian's chief opposition within the family is from the ill-famed **Count Orloc** (NE human male Wiz4), a baleful lord who rules a small corner of Dorlin near the Rushmoors. In the Court of the Land, Cedrian numbers Baron Markos Skotti and other members of the current royal faction among his chief competitors.

The Middle Kings

- 236-(-193) CY Luschan I and II of House Rhola
- 230 CY Founding of Sterich
- 193-(-157) CY Malv II of House Rhola
- 161 CY Founding of the Gran March
- 157-(-121) CY Sanduchar I of House Rhola (The Navigator)
- 121-(-107) CY Senestall I of House Neheli
- 107-(-98) CY Lanchaster I of House Rhola
- 98-(-72) CY Lanchaster II of House Rhola (The Wise)
- 96 CY Incorporation of the Yeomanry
- 72-(-63) CY Senestall II of House Neheli
- 63-(-19) CY Lanchaster III of House Rhola
- 19-07 CY Luschan III of House Rhola
- 07-49 CY Malv III of House Rhola (The Explorer)
- 49-278 CY Neheli Dynasty of Cedrian I, II, Nyhan III, IV, & Trevlyan I, II (The Slumbering)
- 278-286 CY Gillum I of Neheli (aka The Mad)



Illus. Luis Vasquez

Morning in the Port of Gradsul

though the centuries-old rivalry with the Rhola still simmers, as always.

Duchy of Gradsul (3)

The Duchy of Gradsul is the Kingdom of Keoland's most populous province and sports its largest metropolis, the port of Gradsul (pop. 49,400) on the Azure Coast. This territory extends north and westward from the city proper along the western bank of the Sheldomar River to a point south of Jurnre in Ulek. The border extends to the Dreadwood in the southwest before continuing along the coast to the border with Salinmoor. Though Gradsul extends over a large area inland, it is dominantly a maritime province, with hundreds of miles of coastline, including the banks of the broad and deep Sheldomar. Gradsul's numerous coastal villages and towns make its character unique in the kingdom.

Gradsul has always been a possession of the nobles of an ancient Suel house known as the Rhola, who founded it almost a thousand years ago following the migrations. Its name literally means "Haven of the Suel" in the ancient tongue of the settlers, and the territory more than lived up to this mantle, becoming the primary destination of many surviving Suel families escaping devastation in what would become the Sea of Dust. Though once much larger than it is today, including portions of the modern day Ulek states, Gradsul has remained Keoland's most cosmopolitan and prosperous region. This may be due in large part to the attitude of the Rholans, which is often described as resourceful, forthright, domineering, and even covetous. Though they are well known for naval pursuits and their zeal for exploration, the Rhola are as frequently painted as having a lust for conquest.

The City of Gradsul, at the mouth of the Sheldomar, is the largest seaport on the Azure Sea, larger than both the foreign ports of Gyrax and Irongate, its closest rivals. The Duke of Gradsul maintains a large fleet year round in the vicinity to guard access to the mouth of the Sheldomar River and provide security for the numerous mercantile vessels along the Azure Coast. The city proper is divided into several distinct districts of individual character and utility. Behind the expansive wharves of the docks lies a vast quarter of flat-roofed warehouses interspersed with the occasional shop and tavern. The massive open markets of the city make Gradsul the undisputed mercantile center of Keoland, a gateway to traders from as far away as the Aerdi Coast and the Densac Gulf. Unlike Niolo Dra, the city sports a diverse population which is a close mixture of Suel and Oeridians, as well as numerous visitors from across the sea. The people of Gradsul are not as superstitious or provincial as their brethren in other regions of Keoland. The city is a haven for independent mages and is infamous for its dominant thieves guilds. Politics and culture the likes of Greyhawk and Dyvers are in full evidence here.

The Duke of Gradsul, whose family seat is the port city, is a powerful figure in the kingdom. The current

duke is **Luschan VIII** (LN male human Wiz9/Ftr2), who also heads the royal navy in his role as Lord High Admiral of Keoland. He is often thought of as second in influence only to the Throne of the Lion and the Council of Niole Dra (of which he is a prominent member). The duke is also traditionally allied with mercantile interests and until recently maintained close ties with the Prince of Ulek. The Archmage Drawmij, who is a distant relation of the duke, is a close advisor and can sometimes be found in his company. Duke Luschan, the latest scion of the Sellark family, is considered one of a handful of prime candidates to replace King Skotti, should the current monarch fail to produce a suitable heir. Many Dukes of Gradsul have been elected to the throne in the past, most notably the line of Tavish (287-488 CY) which inaugurated the kingdom's imperialistic phase over three centuries ago.

Daily rulership of the provincial capital has been left to a favored cousin (who acts as Lord Mayor of the City of Gradsul). Duke Luschan spends most of the year at the seaside palace of Sanduchar (pop. 4,890) located 40 miles southwest of the city along the coast. The towering Sanduchar was built during the reign of Tavish the Great. With its closed harbor and proximity to the Dreadwood, it has become the seat of the admiralty and main shipyard for the overhauled navy of Keoland. The fleet, which suffered a terrible defeat to the Lordship Isles five years ago in the harbor of Gradsul, is being rebuilt here under the direction of the duke. Ever since that ambush, the waters between Gradsul and Gryrax, which are heavily plied, have been the subject of numerous attacks by pirates. Duke Luschan, who once sponsored explorations of the Amedio Jungle and the Olman Isles before the wars, has steadfastly focused his attention on the threat now posed by the Scarlet Brotherhood and their allies. The duke strongly supported King Skotti's recent efforts in the south, providing key naval maneuvers in the capture of Westkeep, which has won him the support of hardliners in the House of Rhola. He argues the case for continued military readiness before the Court of the Land. Such actions have encouraged the duke's enemies, for many nobles see Luschan Sellark as a potential successor to Rholan Kings of the past in more ways than one, and they want no part of another bid for empire.

County of Flen (8)

The City of Flen (pop. 11,900), third largest in Keoland, is nestled in a small valley formed by the northwestern verges of the Good Hills. This city of low towers and squat dwellings is surrounded on three sides by steep bluffs. Its fortified walls guard the way to the major ford across the Javan leading to the Earldom of Sterich and its capital at Istivin. It was during the second century of Keoland's existence that the borders of the growing kingdom first expanded over the Good Hills, all the way to the Javan River. The Throne of the Lion desired a strong presence along this mighty riverway, which Keoish cartographers maintain is the longest in the

Flanaess (this is disputed in Furyondy, which maintains the preeminence of the Velverdyva). Two large city-states were subsequently founded along the eastern bank of the river valley. Later expansions would lead to the establishment of Sterich a century later, increasing the strategic importance of the northern province, called Flen. The county was awarded to a clan of primarily Oeridian descent, which promptly took a seat in the Court of the Land.

County Flen and County Cryllor have traditionally been strong rivals. While the Javan River is navigable by small sea going vessels all the way to Cryllor from the south, only shallow-drafted barges can approach Flen in either direction. Therefore, while the former styles itself as more of a port, Flen makes do as a crossroads, the major stop between Istivin and Niole Dra. No bridge can span the river near Flen. Instead, the Ford of Marich, located north of where the swift Davish joins the Javan near Godakin Keep, channels most of the traffic into and out of Sterich. A steady flow of trade trickles south from Hochoch, and elven traders can be found in Flen from as far north as the Dim Forest. Unlike its rival, Flen maintains very good relations with the gnomes, dwarves, and halflings of the Good Hills, who prefer to travel to Flen to sell their wares, much to the consternation of Count Manz in Cryllor. A great many demihumans make their home within the city and elsewhere in the county, and trade between Flen and the community of Black Top, located in the hills three days west of the city, is brisk.

The County of Flen has become more of an armed camp in recent years, with greater concerns over the security of the western border of the kingdom than traditional economic rivalries with its neighbors. Incursions by giants and other humanoids from the Jotens remain a constant bane to its lord, the wintry **Countess Allita Elgarin** (N female human Clr5 of Xerbo), whose family has ruled the county for centuries. Allita has been a strong ally of King Skotti, and she directly supported the recent recovery of Sterich, which brought raids to a relative lull in that state. The countess had hoped the invaders could be discouraged once and for all from harrying Flen, but activity picked up in the county two years ago after the hobniz village of Kilm was razed. Forces dispatched from Godakin Keep were too late to capture the raiders. Last year, a party led by the countess' son, the **Lord Garson Elgarin** (NG human male Ftr1), departed for the mountains on a mission to discover the source of the raids and put a stop to them. The party has failed to return, with no evidence of their fate, and the countess remains inconsolable.

County of Cryllor (9)

The western County of Cryllor is one of Keoland's wealthiest and most strategically powerful provinces. The county stretches along the banks of the Javan, in a fluvial valley cut by the river between the Good Hills and the Little Hills, which border the lands of the Yeomanry League. The walled city of Cryllor (pop. 8,400), whose western district opens onto the banks of the Javan, is the fourth largest in the kingdom, after only

Gradsul, Flen, and Niole Dra. The city and its wealthy Suel lord benefit strongly from the river traffic and trade that passes just outside his walls on the road between Niole Dra and Longspear. Additionally, riches are still drawn from the lower Good Hills, much of which finds its way to the markets of Cryllor, where skilled artisans are known for their metalwork. The counties of Flen and Cryllor have been rivals for centuries, but while the rulership of Flen has been relatively stable over that time, the lordship of Cryllor has changed hands many times.

The current count is **Lord Ignas Manz** (LN male human Ftr16), a former warrior turned wealthy lord and civic magnate. His personality is often described as imperious, boorish, and unforgiving, and while Manz is often called a phillistine by rivals in the Court of the Land, this calumny he ascribes to envy, for his success and power in the region are very real. Manz styles himself a merchant prince, and his relative isolation from the rest of the kingdom has bred indifference to the politics of Niole Dra. Count Manz has made himself very wealthy from the ores he draws from prodigious mines in the valley, much to the chagrin of the gnomes of Plim's Delve, who find his methods unscrupulous. The Count is a firm believer in the concept of bread and circus, and he does not disappoint his citizens. He spreads around just enough of his coin to keep the people happy and his rivals among the lords of the county off balance. Toward this end, Ignas Manz has turned an annual swordmeet held during Brewfest, called the Tocsin of Kelanen, into a festival of competition which draws participants and spectators from across the Sheldomar Valley (and no doubt considerable coin into the count's coffers).

Count Manz has long harbored a desire to annex the rich highlands in the Little Hills, which are believed to hold unexploited mineral wealth, but has garnered no support to do so from his peers in the Court of the Land. He has made it clear to the Countess Elgarin that any alliance with Flen depends upon her support in this endeavor, which she will not give. The western half of the province of Cryllor, referred to as the Trans-javan, extends from the western bank of the river to the foothills of the Jotens and the Little Hills. Much of this land was acquired following the Greyhawk Wars, when forces of the count marched across the river, ostensibly to secure his lands from inva-

sion from the Jotens. Interestingly, while raids have continued in Flen and the Yeomanry, Cryllor has remained relatively unscathed. Manz has further provoked the Yeomanry by mining the foothills of the Littles in abrogation of long-standing treaties. There are rumors of the discovery of a vein of mithral well within Yeoman territory, but the location of this mine, if it exists, remains unknown. Its discovery would likely go greatly rewarded by the court of the Freeholder should it be revealed.

March of Middlemead (14)

The so-called Western Marches of the kingdom, from Mandismoor in the northwest to Blerfield in the southeast, formed the early western border of Keoland in the nation's first century. These marchlands were primarily settled by Oeridian tribes who migrated south from the Fals Gap into the Sheldomar Valley, driving hostile Flan and humanoids in their wake. These peoples joined with the migrating Suel houses, who had primarily congregated along the Sheldomar River, to form the core of the Kingdom of Keoland. Preeminent among these early marches is generally agreed to be Middlemead, the most populous and prosperous of the provinces. It is centrally located along the road from Niole Dra to Cryllor, east of the Good Hills.

The Margrave of Middlemead, **Lord Kharn** (LN male human Ftr3), is like most noblemen of the midlands primarily of Oeridian descent. However, the population of the province is relatively well-mixed, including some Suel and Flan enclaves. Middlemead's lands stretch across the breadbasket of the kingdom, where there are few communities of more than 2,000 souls, but numerous villages and thorsps. Instead, expansive manors dot the landscape, which administer large farms and grasslands for grazing. Agriculture dominates the economy, though Middlemead is also known for its woven goods, earthenware, and famous fermentations, which are standard fare in taverns throughout the kingdom. Kharn's domain is very representative of those of the Margraves of Blerfield and Sedenna, which abut his realm to the north and south. The prosperous town of Middlebridge (pop. 2,508) which is located along the small Zol River (where it runs into Middlemead from Sedenna) is the capital of the march.

Lord Kharn is the head of what is often termed the "Lords Faction" in the Court of the Land (sometimes mistakenly called the "Oeridian Faction," though this is clumsy, as Oeridian and Suel lords number among all the factions) along with fellow lords such as the margraves of Blerfield, Sedenna, and the Earl of Gand. As such, he is regarded as a proponent of limiting the powers of the Throne of the Lion and asserting the primacy of the independent lords in the Council of Niole Dra. It was the margrave's support that tipped the decision in favor of the election of Skotti to the throne some three decades ago. Lord Kharn hoped to gain an ill-prepared and disinterested monarch by choosing the Lord Baron of Grayhill. For the most part he got his wish, but recent events, including the retaking of Sterich and Westkeep, as well as the rise of the archmage Lashton as a power at court, have made Kharn sour upon the decision. It's unknown who he would support following King Skotti's reign, though many curry his

Imperial Keoland

- 287-346 CY Tavish I of House Rhola (The Great)
- 292 CY Peers of Ulek join the Council of Niole Dra
- 346-395 CY Tavish II of House Rhola (The Blackguard)
- 348 CY Wealsun Proclamation
- 395 CY Nemonhas of Neheli refuses crown (The Spurning)
- 395-414 CY Luschan Sellark IV of House Rhola (The Duke's Regency)
- 414-453 CY Malv Sellark becomes Tavish III of House Rhola (The Boy King)
- 433 CY Duke of Gradsul disappears in the Amedio
- 434-453 CY Rise of the Sea Princes
- 450 CY Prince Luschan Sellark VI dies in the Battle of Gorna
- 453 CY King Tavish III dies in the Siege of Westkeep (The Debacle)
- 453-488 CY Tavish IV of House Rhola (The Weary)
- 461 CY Ulek States secede from the Throne of the Lion

favor. It is well known that as Lord Kharn goes, so do most of the lords of the midlands.

Barony of Grayhill (17)

Grayhill is located in the northwestern corner of the Dreadwood, where the forest verges upon the Good Hills. The small barony is often described as an enchanted place, for it is a crossroads of human, elven, and gnomish cultures. It was in Grayhill, nearly nine centuries ago, that human and elven emissaries first met and exchanged words of peace under a starlit sky. This cooperation has continued ever since and the barony is now held by a minor noble house, known as the Lizhal, who migrated along with the Rhola and Neheli following the Twin Cataclysms. Unlike the majority of those two houses, the Lizhal are heavily intermarried with both Oeridian and elven bloodlines.

The village of Grayhill (pop. 985) stands much as it did centuries ago, a confluence of human and elven cultures. Despite its small size, this barony is noteworthy for having produced the current monarch, Kimbertos Skotti, as well as many of the most important advisers at court, including the Royal Archmage Lashton. The current Baron of Grayhill is the king's younger brother, **Markos Skotti** (NG male human Ftr7). Markos seems to prefer the politics of court to daily rulership of the arboreal barony, for he spends more than half the year in council at Niole Dra, pressing his brother's interests and leading the so-called "Royal Faction." It is no secret that should Kimbertos fail to produce a suitable heir before his death, the Baron Skotti would like primary consideration from the Court of the Land to be successor to the Throne of the Lion. In this effort, he has an ally of convenience in Lashton. Markos often leaves the governance of Grayhill to his wife, an able lady who is much loved by the elves (with whom she shares some minor kinship). **High Herald Cezar Bartos** (LE human male Wiz9/Ftr4) (called *Lykos* by his enemies) performs the day-to-day administration of the barony. It is widely suspected that the cold-hearted Bartos acts as the eyes and ears of Lashton in the province.

The fortress keep of Dourstone, seat of House Lizhal and capital of the barony, lies a handful of miles from the legendary site of Grayhill. It remains one of the few human fortifications in the forest, and its towers soar above the native trees of the Dreadwood. Other human villages dot the northern hills of the barony, but the elvish settlement of Silglen (pop. 780) in the southeast remains the second largest settlement. In the southernmost corner of the realm, where the barony gives way to trackless forest, lies the ancient tower of Valadis. The spire has tantalized and daunted the people of the Barony of Grayhill for centuries, for it is rumored to have once been a place of wondrous magic as well as great death. The elves will not approach it, and rangers in the service of the king keep most people away. Warded carefully by the Silent Ones in centuries past, the spire is currently claimed by the archmage Lashton as a personal retreat, a right only afforded to him by his current high offices. However, it is well known in sorcerous circles that Lashton has been unable to penetrate beyond the base of the tower to its rumored dungeons that snake beneath the forest floor.

Barony of Axewood (20)

Located on the western bank of the Sheldomar River in the northeastern part of the kingdom, the Barony of Axewood includes that portion of the forest west of the great river, plus some open land south to the border of the Duchy of Dorlin. In ancient days, the forest was much more expansive, its verges reaching nearly to the outskirts of Niole Dra. However, prodigious logging of the wood by the Keoish slowly consumed the timberland. Such activity was eventually banned when the Duke of Ulek assumed a seat in council, leaving the forest with the name it ironically bears to this day. That portion of the forest east of the Sheldomar within Ulek is entirely sylvan, home to many spriggans, treants, and unicorns. This is only somewhat less true of the western half of the forest in Keoland, where more elves makes their homes beneath the boughs and humans interact with the peripheries of wood by foraging and hunting sparingly, under the supervision of a local council.

The current Baron of Axewood is a half-elven lord who once owed fealty to the Duke of Ulek, which makes him one of the rare demihuman members of the Court of the Land outside of the Good Hills. The Neheli have largely eschewed the racial mixing common to almost everyone else in Keoland since the kingdom's founding. The only exception seems to be the olvenkind, to whom the Neheli have always shown a liking. The Barony of Axewood sports the kingdom's largest elven population outside the Dreadwood, including many half-elves. The majority of these half-elves dwell near or in the capital, the town of Linnoden (pop. 1,840) at woods edge near the river. The Lord Baron of Axewood is **Anladon II** (LG male half-elf Ftr8/Wiz2), a half-Neheli and kin of both the Duke of Ulek as well as Duke Cedrian III of Dorlin, sired when



Illus. Michael Dubisch

The Axewood east of the Sheldomar is completely sylvan

Spring, 591 CY September, 2000

relations between the two duchies were more amicable. But the Baron withdrew his small northeastern barony from the Duchy of Ulek when the latter separated from the Keoish Throne in 461 CY. Recent relations between the Baron and Grenowin of Tringlee, however, are very good.

Anladon is very old, even for a half-elf, and is generally deemed a font of historical knowledge in the kingdom. His experience and memories date back to before the dissolution of Keoland's brief empire in the last century. As a young man he took part in the defense of Hookhill against the Knights of the Hart at the tail end of the Short War and later participated in the ill-fated invasion of Geoff in 450 CY with Prince Luschon (who died on the battlefield). Anladon and Kimbertos are strong and fast friends, and the monarch can often be found in retreat here in Axewood. The king claims it reminds him in many ways of Grayhill, particularly when compared to the artificial gardens and carefully coifed arbors of Niole Dra. Anladon is one of the king's closest confidants, a fact which needles the Archmage Lashton and the king's brother Markos both, for they fear the baron advises the king at cross-purposes to their own. Anladon was a former Watcher, but some unknown falling out with the order causes him to want no part of the knighthood now.

Barony of Dilwyth (22)

The small barony of Dilwyth, sandwiched between the vast Duchy of Dorlin and the northwestern marches, is ruled by a lord considered eccentric even by Neheli standards. The barony is avoided by the major roads of the kingdom and is therefore eschewed by most travelers. However, Dilwyth was once a part of the greater Duchy of Dorlin, seceding from the latter in the last century over a petty squabble now long since forgotten save by the Barons of Dilwyth, who have trumpeted their independence ever since.

Its seat of government, the ostentatiously named *Castle Draconis Imperious*, sits on a low hillock near the center of the barony, mere miles from the village of Dilwyth (pop. 504). This quiet hamlet is the epicenter of an anemic agrarian economy that lumbers to sustain itself amidst the prosperity of its neighbors. There is little evidence of true ambition in Dilwyth and trade that was brisk in centuries past has slowed to a trickle. Perhaps this neglectful attitude extends from its ruler, the self-described **Lord High Baron Draconis Eternal, Malweig I** (CN Ftr8/Brd7), who spends more time expanding and decorating his jumble of a palace, with its angled walls and leaning towers, than seeing to the welfare of his citizenry.

The obscure Lord Malweig has presided over the barony for a couple of decades, though he has only officially assumed its leadership in the last dozen years. It is a widely whispered scandal that the baron had his late father embalmed, perfumed, and propped up on the throne of the barony for years following his actual death. This forced visiting heralds and other guests of the baron to hail the ghastly cadaver and osculate its signet with tightly pursed lips. Only a rare visit by the new Duke of Dorlin in 578 CY put an end to the practice. An appalled Cedrian ordered the bishop of

Dilwyth to bury the dead baron in the dark of night for the sake of decency. The baron's son has been the titular lord of Dilwyth ever since.

Malweig, who traveled the length and breadth of the Flanaess in his youth, now spends much of his time festooned in Baklunish silks, wandering his halls and playing his servants against each other in a mockery of the politics at the royal court. He is always on the lookout for strangers or seemingly important visitors to his province, inviting them to his castle for a celebratory banquet and regaling the guests with tales of his supposed exploits (the baron styles himself a former explorer). Malweig entreats them to give an account of themselves, hoping to extract wondrous tales of adventure. To those who are considered worthy are given his so-called "letters of marque." These colorful documents enlist the bearers to missions or adventures on behalf of the Lord High Baron Draconis Eternal. While most of these quests are inscrutable or absurd tasks, a small number over the years have actually resulted in the unearthing of great treasures or the solution of profound mysteries.

Lord Malweig is considered mad, though generally harmless, by his peers (even for a Neheli, whisper the margraves on his western borders). He no longer attends council in Niole Dra and is entreated by few of his fellow lords. Instead he sends his High Herald, one **Thaddeus Pliq** (CN human male Brd4), a high-pitched and haughty buffoon who spends more time entertaining young pages in his apartments in Niole Dra than he does engaged in the politics of the capital.

Viscounty of Salinmoor (24)

The Viscounty of Salinmoor, located between the southeastern Dreadwood and the Azure Coast, is one of Keoland's most forlorn provinces. It was virtually abandoned following the Siege of Westkeep, which saw the Keoish Throne lose its former southern possessions to the piratical Sea Princes in the last century. This left Salinmoor and its nominal capital, the coastal town of Seaton, as the kingdom's southernmost possession. However, lacking much in the way of natural resources or strategic importance to the Throne of the Lion due to its distance from Gradsul and close proximity to insurgent Monmurg, it was virtually forgotten over the years by the bureaucracy in Niole Dra, whose introversion is legendary.

Salinmoor was founded more than three centuries ago, prior to the start of the kingdom's imperialist phase, as an adjunct possession of the Rhola of Gradsul. The land and its environs are often described as gloomy, helped in large part by the warm mists which waft off the nearby marshes south of Bale Keep and combine with the briny air of the sea to produce a persistent miasma. Fishing, including some whaling, dominates the local economy, which also sports small farms and some cattle grazing. The viscounty has seen more than its share of misfortune over the years, including a plague in the late 490s that wiped out nearly a quarter of the population. The frequent storms which cross the Azure Sea north of Fairwind Isle to strike the western coast of the Sheldomar Valley often seem to hit this region the hardest.

The people of Salinmoor have a complex relationship with the sea, viewing it as both source of life and bringer of death. These settlers, who are a mixture of Suel and Oeridian bloodlines, are very superstitious and are often described as overly anxious. It often appears to outsiders visiting Salinmoor that many families here act as though they have something to hide. But Salinmoor is not only a place of sinister secrets. It is often the destination of many seeking to avoid scrutiny in the north, making it a conduit of unwanted notoriety. Much of this portrayal is surely exaggeration by haughty northerners, but examples of this behavior are often cited. For instance, the part of the Dreadwood which constitutes the northern verges of the province is generally avoided, as it is believed to be haunted or cursed, depending on whom one consults. The marshes in the south, they say, are home to demons and other foul spirits which feed upon the souls of the living, often reaching out to them in their dreams.

The House of Secunforth, which is a distant relation of the Neheli in the north, was appointed to stewardship of the province during the reign of Tavish IV, when Rholan interests in the south fell into decline. They reluctantly arrived to oversee the construction of Bale Keep, and the Secunforths have belatedly ruled these lands ever since, often displaying the deportment of prisoners in their own land. The Secunforths had been well known for their prosperous endeavors in Dorlin, but the transplanted family became infamous for interfering too late in the witchhunts of 501-502 CY, which saw many killed before the hysteria subsided. The Secunforths, now led by the Viscount Cronin Secunforth III (LN male human Ftr-I), have merited responsibility for maintaining the puritanical atmosphere which is pervasive here. They have seen their own house's fortunes fall

with that of the province and have done little to reverse this trend, for they see themselves as cursed. The recent retaking of Westkeep by forces of the king has brought more traffic to Seaton in the last year, offering hopes of an economic and political revival in the region, but this still remains to be seen. Cronin Secunforth, who has never personally been in council at Nirole Dra, is planning a visit to the capital next year upon the urgings of the Duke of Gradsul.

Viscounty of Nume Eor (25)

This region, located southwest of the Dreadwood between the river Javan and the Hool Marshes, has changed hands frequently over the last three centuries, being at times part of the Kingdom of Keoland and at times part of the Yeomanry. It served primarily as hinterlands to both nations, until a treaty in 461 CY established the Yeoman border officially at the eastern banks of the Javan. Responsibility for the territory has fallen to the Keoish ever since, who largely ignored the region for the last century and have only recently eyed it with renewed interest.

Once a far-flung dependency of the kingdom known as the County of Eor, it was generally disregarded, as was the province of Salinmoor in the east. This was due to the isolation of these lands south of the Dreadwood following losses further south by House Rhola in the last century to the nascent Sea Princes. A new line of Neheli kings in Nirole Dra chose a more isolationist course, and this introversion left these provinces virtually independent. The county eventually fell to raiders from the Hool Marshes, when incursions by the teeming lizardmen of the swamp finally harried the leaders of the small populace into submission. The province stood unfortified and lawless for years afterward, being trampled by brigands and yeoman alike.



Illus. Luis Vasquez

Makaster House, outside Saltmarsh, is just one of many supposedly haunted locales throughout Salinmoor.

The aftermath of the Greyhawk Wars finally turned the attention of the Throne of the Lion back to the south. Four years ago, in Patchwall of 587 CY, King Skotti reclaimed these lands formally by force of arms and granted the province to a cousin in the House of Lizhal. The new viscount, **Richart Jorgos** (LN human male Fir12), has the royal backing needed to reestablish the realm as a full member of the Court of the Land. This includes a contingent of men-at-arms finally strong enough to repel most of the denizens of the marshes. Regular trade has been reestablished with the Yeomanry from the newly sired town of Kimberton (pop. 980) on the Javan, and relations are greatly improved. However, incursions across the river from the Little Hills and into the Dreadwood remain common, as the bulk of the new settlement is going on in the southwest and the local Yeoman in the north are reluctant to give up the practice. Viscount Jorgos has announced a small bounty on every lizardman skull redeemed in Kimberton, and the grisly proclamation has attracted a number of bounty hunters and freeswords to the region.

Dreadwood Preserve (26)

The vast leafy forest known as the Dreadwood stretches between the Azure Coast and the Javan River near the Yeomanry, across southern Keoland. While claimed by the kingdom, it would be presumptuous to call it a true possession of the crown, as scarcely more than a third of its boughs are controlled by allies of the Throne of the Lion and chief among these are the elves of the wood, who are semi-independent. But there are places in the heart of the dark forest even the elves will not go. More than half of the great expanse is unpatrolled and is widely believed to be the home of bandits, humanoids, and even cultists. Such denizens, as well as the dark history of the place, all contribute to the origin of its name.



Illus. Luis Vasquez

Bullywugs haunt the Hool Marsh Protectorate.

Those small portions of the Dreadwood contained in the Barony of Grayhill and the Duchy of Gradsul, near Sanduchar, are the only ones regularly logged and hunted by humanity. Incursions from the Yeomanry across the Javan and into the southwestern wood are still common, but the rest of the southern and central woods, where the thick canopy can often blot out the daytime sun, is virtually trackless. Only stalwart rangers and foolhardy treasure seekers are found here, though not often for very long. The northern woods are held primarily by the elves and their allies. These sylvan inhabitants of the forest have no single leader, but are divided into numerous enclaves, each led by a noble olve, variously called lord, lady, and steward.

As he is the former Baron of Grayhill, the elves of the wood are strong supporters of the current king, Kimbertos Skotti. The Great Druid of the Sheldomar Valley, **Reynard Yargrove** (N human female Drd14 of Obad-Hai) also makes her home in the forest, though the exact location of her hold is not widely known. While Yargrove makes no formal allegiance to Keoland, she is also on good terms with the king, as both shared a friendship in their youth. Skotti has generally followed her counsel that no further exploration or settlement of the forest should be allowed to proceed given the dangers and dark secrets of the place, which according to legend once swallowed an entire house of the Suel early in the migrations.

Hool Marsh Protectorate (27)

The Hool Marshes have long been both a boon and bane to the people of Keoland. The vast expanse, produced by the confluence of the Javan and Hool rivers, is primarily a trackless marsh filled with too many dangers to settle and civilize. And while the marshes are most notable for their bottomless bogs, tribes of lizardmen, and countless monsters, the natural terrain has also protected the southern border of the kingdom from widespread invasion from the south for centuries.

King Tavish the Great was the first to march around these marshlands to conquer the wilderness between the Hellfurnaces and Jeklea Bay (now called the Hold of the Sea Princes). Until the 3rd Century, these lands were controlled by isolated Suel brigands (based at Port Toli) and largely inhabited by Flan and humanoid tribes. The new Kеоish conquerors changed all this. Tavish I established the port of Monmurg in 301 CY and set about cultivating the central lands between the Hool River and the Azure Coast. After abolishing slavery in these new territories, he ordered built the fortress city of Westkeep (304 CY) in order to shield the central lands from incursions from the swamp and facilitate widespread settlement of the south. The rise of the Sea Princes in the following century (434-453 CY) proved fateful to the Kеоish efforts in this quarter, and these lands eventually fell to the usurpers under the reign of Tavish III. His ill-fated attempt to regain the lands from the pirates resulted in the Siege of Westkeep (453 CY). Over the ensuing decades following this debacle, the border of the Kingdom of Keoland slowly retreated northward to the Dreadwood, where it remained until very recently.

Tavish IV attempted to guard the kingdom's southern frontier with the marshes by constructing a chain of small

forts in the 460s CY, but most of these edifices have long since been abandoned as indefensible, save Bale Keep near the border with Salinmoor. The marshes themselves remained a formidable barrier, effectively separating the kingdom from the dissolute hold of the Sea Princes. Conflicts between the two nations were restricted to the sea. Some years ago, however, the notorious wizard Baltron of Linth was banished by the Throne of the Lion to the marshes, and he took one of these abandoned forts near the heart of the swamp for himself. A magical catastrophe that later destroyed the mage resulted in the eerie glowing green beacon that can be seen for miles and still bears his name. Secretive cults are now thought to have taken residence in this part of the marshes, many of them drawn to the malevolent light.

In 590 CY, after years of internal conflict in the Scarlet Brotherhood-controlled Hold of the Sea Princes finally weakened that realm, forces of the King of Keoland recaptured the fortress city of Westkeep. This effectively stretched the kingdom's southern border to the banks of the Javan for the first time in more than a century. Now fully a third of the Hool Marshes fall within Keoland's claim, though this is a tentative one at best, given the dangers of the interior marshes. Westkeep, with its high warding walls, has been made the capital of a military government which directly serves the Throne of the Lion. King Skotti's generals in Westkeep rely on naval support for reinforcements and supplies. Keoish warships now regularly patrol the great meanders of the Javan, between the Yeomanry and the Azure Coast. However, any efforts to secure anything more than the fringes of the marshes have been met with swift resistance from its denizens.

Other Provinces

Even Keoland's smallest and least influential provinces hold ancient secrets and ambitious lords. A wise traveler learns as much as she can about not only the high and mighty, but the low and meek, as well.

Earldom of Gand (4)

Gand was once a province of Gradsul, but centuries ago became an independent province in the kingdom. The town of Gand (pop. 2,840) is a noted haven to rogues, many of them escaping justice in Gradsul. The province is also infamous for being the headquarters of a meddlesome though flourishing cult of St. Cuthbert, brought back to Keoland by soldiers during the occupation of Veluna two centuries ago.

Earldom of Linth (5)

Linth, located south of the city of Niole Dra, is an old province dating back to the founding of the kingdom. While the population is primarily of Oeridian descent, the earldom is the home of the House of Linth, an obscure Suel house generally considered to be in decline. The capital is the town of Segor (pop. 4,540), on the Sheldomar River. The northernmost plains of the province, near the tower of the Silent Ones, is decidedly desolate.

County of Nimlee (6)

The lands of Nimlee extend directly west from the outer precincts of the city of Niole Dra all the way to

the main north-south road of the kingdom. The **Countess Lissen Rheyd** (NG female human Clr8 of Lydia/Ftr2), of Oeridian descent, benefits greatly from the trade that passes through her province and its capital, the town of Craufield (pop. 1,740). Goods from Middlemead and the other western marches travel primarily through Nimlee to the capital.

County of Marlbridge (7)

The way to the Gran March passes through the lands of the Count of Marlbridge. This county was once a province of the Duchy of Dorlin, but became independent following the Short War with Furyondy. The town of Marlbridge (pop. 3,160) on the northern border derives most of its revenue from the traffic over the great stone bridge that spans the so-called "Rushflow" on the road to Shiboeth.

Good Hills Union (10)

Demihumans have ruled these hollowed halls since before the arrival of the Suel and Oeridian migrants in the Sheldomar Valley. It was during the first century following the formation of the Kingdom of Keoland that humanity and the demihumans of these highlands were able to come together in peace, largely through the intercession of neighboring Oeridian settlers. The many enclaves of these hills now elect speakers to argue their interests in Niole Dra. These various speakers, who are typically more than a dozen in number, gather together in council at Black Top (pop. 760). There they elect one of their own to act as First Speaker in the Court of the Land. Currently this office is held by **Blaif Rinnar** (NG male gnome Ftr6/Rog2), a gnome from Plim's Delve.

March of Mandismoor (11)

Located in the far northwestern corner of the kingdom, distant Mandismoor guards the road to Geoff. The lord of this frontier province is a renowned Knight of the Watch who is on constant vigil for incursions and other attacks from the north, particularly the Rushmoors, which are a constant bane. The infamous fortress of Ravonnar marks the northernmost extent of the march.

March of Sedenna (13)

The fair province of Sedenna is ruled by **Margrave Erlich Derwent** (LN male human Ftr11) from his capital at the town of Plampton (pop. 1,920). Sedenna is located north of the heart of the kingdom, between the Good Hills and Niole Dra and is famous for its vineyards and the wines they produce. Sedennan wines are exported as far as Perrenland and Ahlissa. The small Zol river flows down from the heights in the west, forming most of the southern border between Sedenna and Middlemead. ★

The New Kings

488-510 CY Nyhan IV of House Neheli (The Listless)
510-539 CY Senestall II of House Neheli (The Dilettante)
539-564 CY Trevlyan III of House Neheli (The Afflicted)
564- CY Kimbertos Skotti of House Lizhal (The Commoner)

Enchiridion of the Fiend-Sage

(FIRST REPORT)

BY SEAN K REYNOLDS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAM WOOD

My dread lord,

Coldeven, 591 CY

As instructed, I have enclosed the first of a series of reports on lesser-known and unusual creatures native to the Flanaess. My spies continue to send me progress reports and (in some cases) preserved corpses of these creatures, always with an eye toward how the study of these beings might bear to your plans. I shall, of course, continue to devote the majority of my work to observing the dealings of powerful extraplanar beings within the "Great" kingdoms of Xavener and Crenell. Things in those regions are not so pacified as the Raoans would have us believe, alas....

I am also pleased to report that an Abyssal ally of mine, Yach-Tek the cambion, has finally lent me the Triangular Tome of Kugatzmor (which he stole from its yugosoth owner) in exchange for one hundred slaves and information on one of his rivals. Please send a detachment of soldiers to claim the book at your leisure, as it tends to attack lone creatures.

Your humble servant,
The Fiend-Sage Rel Astra

Greyhawk Dragon

The discovery of this variety of dragon proved most difficult because of its intelligence and natural tendency to conceal itself. My agents now know for certain that one lives in the city of Greyhawk, and another in (of all places) Kalstrand, although both have surely changed their identities by the time you read this and their exact whereabouts are not known. Given their temperament, it is unlikely that we would ever have to consider one our enemy unless we mistakenly took overt actions against its home.



GREYHAWK DRAGON (AIR) BY AGE

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	AC	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Breath Weapon (DC)	Fear DC	SR
Wyrmling	S	4d12+4 (30)	15 (+2 size, +3 natural)	+4	+4	+3	+3	1d6 (12)	6	16
Very young	S	7d12+7 (52)	16 (+1 size, +6 natural)	+8	+6	+5	+6	2d6 (14)	6	18
Young	M	10d12+20 (85)	19 (+9 natural)	+12	+8	+6	+1	3d6 (16)	6	20
Juvenile	M	13d12+26 (110)	22 (+12 natural)	+16	+10	+8	+10	4d6 (18)	6	22
Young adult	M	16d12+48 (152)	24 (-1 size, +15 natural)	+20	+12	+9	+11	5d6 (20)	16	24
Adult	L	19d12+57 (180)	27 (-1 size, +18 natural)	+24	+14	+11	+15	6d6 (23)	19	26
Mature adult	L	22d12+88 (231)	29 (-2 size, +21 natural)	+28	+16	+12	+16	7d6 (25)	21	28
Old	L	25d12+100 (262)	32 (-2 size, +24 natural)	+32	+18	+14	+19	8d6 (27)	23	30
Very old	H	28d12+140 (322)	35 (-2 size, +27 natural)	+36	+20	+15	+21	9d6 (29)	25	32
Ancient	H	31d12+186 (387)	38 (-2 size, +30 natural)	+40	+23	+17	+24	10 d6 (31)	27	34
Wyrm	H	34d12+238 (459)	39 (-4 size, +33 natural)	+44	+25	+18	+25	11d6 (33)	29	36
Great wyrm	H	37d12+296 (536)	40 (-4 size, +36 natural)	+48	+28	+20	+28	12d6 (36)	32	

GREYHAWK DRAGON ABILITIES BY AGE

Age	Speed	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Special Abilities	Caster Level
Wyrmling	60 ft., fly 150 ft. (average), swim 30 ft.	11	10	13	10	11	12	Polymorph self, poison resistance	1st
Very young	60 ft., fly 150 ft. (average), swim 30 ft.	13	10	13	12	13	12	Minor arcane shield	3rd
Young	60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 30 ft.	15	10	15	14	13	14	Moderate arcane shield	5th
Juvenile	60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 30 ft.	17	10	15	16	15	14	Enthrall	7th
Young adult	60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 30 ft.	19	10	17	18	15	16	Damage reduction 5/+1	9th
Adult	60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 30 ft.	21	10	17	20	19	16	Charm person	11th
Mature adult	60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 30 ft.	23	10	19	20	19	18	Damage reduction 10/+1	13th
Old	60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 30 ft.	25	10	19	22	21	18	Suggestion	15th
Very old	60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 30 ft.	27	10	21	22	23	20	Damage reduction 15/+2	17th
Ancient	60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 30 ft.	29	10	23	24	25	20	Mass suggestion	19th
Wyrm	60 ft., fly 250 ft. (poor), swim 30 ft.	31	10	25	24	25	22	Damage reduction 20/+3	20th
Great wyrm	60 ft., fly 250 ft. (poor), swim 30 ft.	33	10	27	26	27	24	Mass charm	21st

Greyhawk Dragons

Greyhawk dragons are sociable, clever, and curious.

Their bodies are somewhat feline but their faces are very expressive and humanlike, surrounded by spines that vaguely resemble hair and a beard. However, their true appearances are rarely seen, as Greyhawk dragons prefer human form to their own, using their special abilities to infiltrate human society, masquerading as sages, scholars, wizards, or other intellectuals. Endlessly curious about the art, culture, history, and politics of civilized races, Greyhawk dragons live among humans and similar beings, keeping their true nature a secret (they are always able to recognize each other, however).

At birth, a Greyhawk dragon's scales are a deep blue-gray with steely highlights. As it grows to adulthood, its color lightens to a lustrous burnished steel, gaining increased shine as it continues to age. In human form, a Greyhawk dragon always has one steel-gray feature, such as hair, eyes, nails, or sometimes a ring, tattoo, or other ornamentation.

Greyhawk dragons rarely live in caves, as they prefer to assume a human lifestyle and therefore live in a human dwelling such as a mansion, castle, or other place of sufficient size to have a strongroom where they can keep their treasure. In their natural form, they smell of wet steel. They prefer to dine in human form, although they need to eat enough to maintain their true mass and so they make monthly trips to hunt in dragon form, explaining these absences in ways consistent with the roles they take in human society (for example, a dragon in the guise of a historian would claim to exploring records in another city's library).

Greyhawk dragons prefer treasure that they can carry in their human forms, such as jewelry, valuable coins, and magic items useable by Medium-size creatures. They hate creatures that disrupt normal life in cities or despoil natural hunting grounds. Within a city, they rely on local authorities to deal with troublemakers, but prefer swifter forms of justice in the wilderness.

Combat

Greyhawk dragons prefer talk to fighting, but if forced into a conflict, they usually begin with spells and avoid actual melee. If seriously threatened, a Greyhawk dragon reverts to its draconic shape and uses its breath weapon. They try to use their spells and abilities to incapacitate foes unless their opponents have obvious lethal intent and the ability to inflict serious harm. If outmatched, it tries to *teleport* away or assume a human guise and become lost in a crowd.

Breath Weapon (Su): A Greyhawk dragon has two types of breath weapon, a cone of corrosive gas or a cone of poisonous gas. Creatures within the latter must succeed at a Fortitude save or take 1 point of temporary Constitution damage per age category of the dragon, repeating the save one minute later to avoid taking a similar amount of damage. The dragon may create an area smaller than its maximum, if it so chooses.

Minor Arcane Shield (Su): The dragon gets a +10 bonus to its SR against 1st- and 2nd-level arcane spells.

Moderate Arcane Shield (Su): The dragon gets a +10 bonus to its SR against 3rd- and 4th-level arcane spells.

Poison Resistance (Ex): Greyhawk dragons get a +10 racial bonus to all Fortitude saving throws against poison.

Other Spell-Like Abilities: Five times a day—*polymorph*

self; once a day—*charm person*, *enthrall*, *mass charm*, *mass suggestion*, *suggestion*.

Skills:

Climate/Terrain: Any city (rarely any hill, plain, or forest)

Organization: Solitary (with humanoid companions)

Wyrmling, very young, young—solitary (with humanoid companions) or clutch (2-5) Juvenile, young adult, adult, mature adult, old, very old, ancient, wyrm, great wyrm—solitary (with humanoid companions)

Challenge Ratings: Wyrmling 2; very young 4; young 4; juvenile 5; young adult 7; adult 8; mature adult 11; old 12; very old 13; ancient 15; wyrm 16; great wyrm 18

Treasure: Wyrmling, very young, young, juvenile, young adult standard

Adult, mature adult, old—double standard

Very old, ancient, wyrm, great wyrm—triple standard

Alignment: Usually lawful neutral, often lawful good

Advancement Range: Wyrmling 5-6 HD (Small); very young 8-9 HD (Small); young 11-12 HD (Medium-size); juvenile 14-15 (Medium-size); young adult 17-18 (Medium-size); adult 20-21 HD (Large); mature adult 23-24 HD (Large); old 26-27 HD (Large); very old 29-30 HD (Huge); ancient 32-33 HD (Huge); wyrm 35-36 HD (Huge); great wyrm 38+ HD (Huge)

Nauskiree

These creatures are becoming more common in Blackmoor, the northern lands of Iuz, Stonefist, and the Suel barbarian lands. The Flan legends say that the leg bones of the nauskiree, if carved and heated in a fire, become spears as hard as metal, and a few of these legendary weapons have been handed down through generations within a tribe. Experiments have proven this myth to be true, and while creating more of these weapons is impractical because of their scarcity, I am certain that such a weapon could be enchanted to become a frost weapon more easily than other materials.

Huge Aberration (Cold)

Hit Dice: 12d8+60 (114 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 14 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural)

Attacks: Bite +9 melee; slam +4 melee

Damage: Bite 2d8+8; slam 1d6+8

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 5 ft./15 ft.

Special Attacks: Trample, torpor

Special Qualities: Cold subtype, heat intolerance, scent

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +9

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 13

Skills: Hide +14-8size+1dex, Listen

+4+2alertness+1wis, Spot +4+2alertness+1wis

Feats: Alertness

Climate/Terrain: Cold forest

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement Range: 13-24 HD (Huge); 25-36 HD (Gargantuan).



Nauksiree

Nauksiree are tall, bizarre monsters thought to have migrated to the northern Flanaess from Telchuria before the Twin Cataclysms, figuring into old Flannaic tales of that region. Solitary hunters, they act much like trap-door spiders, hiding for long periods of time until prey approaches, then striking out with magic and teeth. Although they hunt alone, they are sometimes enslaved by frost giants and used as guardians.

Nauksiree appear almost bipedal, their torsos being larger than their pelvis. However, their extremely long limbs and greater weight on their forward half make it hard for them to lift both forelimbs for more than a moment, and so the creature gets about on all fours. Its skin is gnarled like bark, and colored in a random pattern of dark gray and white that resembles snow clinging to the trunk or branches of a tree. Its skull-like head and some of its joints are surrounded by stringy gray hair resembling dead grass or pine needles.

Nauksiree are physically incapable of speaking anything but a rudimentary form of Auran, but those who develop the habit of feeding upon speaking creatures sometimes learn to understand a few words of the local language.

Combat

Nauksiree hunt by hiding within the forest and waiting for prey to approach, their long limbs resembling bare branches and their bodies hidden in the lower branches of the nearby trees. When food comes near, it strikes with its torpor attack and melees with a creature that succumbs to its power, its head darting down from the relative safety of its torso. If seriously wounded or very hungry, it grabs a creature that has been affected by its powers (making a grapple action with its bite) and flees.

Torpor (Su): Twice per day a nauksiree can make a torpor attack. Those within the 15 ft. spread must make Will saves (DC 16). Those who fail suffer the effects of a *confusion* spell, a *slow* spell, and 4d4 hit points of cold damage. Those who succeed ignore the *confusion* and *slow* but take half damage from the cold. The spell-like effects of the attack last 12 rounds.

Trample (Ex): A nauksiree can trample Medium-size or smaller creatures for 2d8+8 points of damage. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the nauksiree can attempt a Reflex save (DC 24) to halve the damage.

Heat Intolerance (Ex): A nauksiree temporarily loses 1 point of Constitution for every hour it is in an environment where the temperature is above 50° Fahrenheit (46° Centigrade), dying when its Constitution reaches 0. Lost Constitution is recovered 1 point per day it spends in its normal cold environment.

Cold Subtype (Ex): Cold immunity; double damage from fire on a failed save (see page 2 of the *Monster Manual*).

Skills: A nauksiree gains a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks in forested areas.

Sons of Kyuss

Sons of Kyuss are a disgusting form of cursed undead created by a powerful evil cleric named Kyuss, who has since been rewarded for his service to a dark deity and has achieved a small portion of divinity. They can appear anywhere, but are known to be found more frequently in the Amedio Jungle, where Kyuss spent some time decades ago. Completely mad and working without apparent reason, the sons of Kyuss wander caverns, crypts, and sometimes even the open countryside in search of victims.

Sons of Kyuss look very much like well-rotted zombies. It is only once they are within 20 feet that writhing green worms can be seen crawling in and out of their skull orifices. They are usually clad in rotted clothing, although a rare few wear pieces of armor that have not yet decayed enough to fall off.

A 16th or higher level cleric may use the *create greater undead spell* to create new sons of Kyuss. Doing so requires maggots from the corpse of a leper in addition to the normal material components for the spell.

Combat

Sons of Kyuss never travel more than three together, splitting into multiple smaller groups if creating spawn causes them to exceed this number. Occasionally a larger creature falls to their curse and follows after them as a normal zombie. Unlike zombies, sons of Kyuss are not limited to taking partial actions only in a round, but they are intelligent enough to pretend to have restricted movement until they are ready to attack. They normally use their fear aura to scatter their victims, chasing them down singly until all have been caught.

Skills:

Fear Aura (Su): Sons of Kyuss are shrouded in a zone of *fear*. Creatures who enter this area (or if the son brings the area to the creature) must succeed at a Will save (DC 16) or be affected as though by a *fear* spell cast by a 7th-level sorcerer. A creature who makes this save is immune to all *fear* auras from sons of Kyuss for 24 hours.

Kyuss' Gift (Su): Supernatural disease—slam, Fortitude save (DC 12), incubation period 1 day; damage 1d6 temporary Constitution/1d4 temporary Wisdom. Unlike normal diseases, this disease continues until the victim reaches 0 Constitution (and dies) or receives a *cure disease spell* or similar magic (see "Disease" in Chapter 3: Running the Game in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*). The disease causes a rotting of the flesh and dementia. A diseased victim gets only half the benefits of natural and magical healing (divide all healing by two).

Fast Healing (Ex): A son heals 5 points of damage each round. If reduced to 0 hit points in combat, a son collapses but continues to heal, rising 1d4 rounds later to fight again. Only fire, electricity, holy water, or the touch of holy or blessed weapons keeps it from rising in such a manner (these attacks may be applied while the creature remains fallen or be the cause of its fall).

Son of Kyuss

These repulsive things are responsible for the death of several of my agents sent to learn about them. Few are found in the Abyss, as their transformative power has no affect on demons, but some demon princes who favor undead (such as the blasphemous Yeenoghu) are known to keep a few as pets, dispatching them to Oerth to punish mortal spellcasters who attempt to void agreements. One spy reports limited success in making these creatures with the create greater undead spell, using such ingredients as crushed emeralds seeped in the ichor of diseased purple worm larvae. It is thought that the legendary cleric Kyuss, he of the tenebrous creatures of the Wormcrawl Fissure, first created these monstrosities.

Medium-Size Undead

Hit Dice: 4d12+3 (27 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 11 (-1 Dex, +2 natural)

Attacks: Slam +2base+4Str melee

Damage: Slam 1d6+4Str

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Kyuss' Gift, create spawn

Special Qualities: Undead, regeneration 5, turn resistance +2

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +4

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 9, Con —, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 14

Skills: Hide +4-1Dex, Jump +4+4Str, Move Silently +4-1dex, Spot+6

Feats: Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground.

Organization: Shamble (1-3) or horde

(1-3 plus 1-6 huge or larger zombies)

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement Range: Small 5-6 HD (Small); Medium-size 5-8 HD (Medium-size); Large 5-10 HD (Large)



Create Spawn (Su): Sons of Kyuss create more of their own kind with the green worms crawling through their bodies. Each round that a son is in melee combat, one of the worms leaps from its host to land on the son's opponent (make an attack roll using the son's slam attack value). The worm has AC 10 and 1 hit point. During this time, the worm can be killed by the touch of iron or by any sort of attack that a son could not regenerate. On the son's next turn, the worm burrows into the flesh of its target, making its way toward the brain and causing 1 hit point of damage per round until it reaches the brain 1d4+1 rounds later. When inside a victim, the worm can be destroyed by *remove curse* or *remove disease* (or spells that duplicate these effects); *dispel evil* or *neutralize poison* delays its progress for 10d6 minutes. These spells affect multiple worms within the same victim. Worms cannot survive outside of a host for more than 1 round.

Once the worm reaches the victim's brain, it inflicts 1d2 points of temporary Intelligence damage per round until it is destroyed or the victim reaches 0 Intelligence, at which point the host dies and rises as a son of Kyuss 1d6+4 rounds later. Small, Medium-size, and Large creatures become sons of Kyuss as described above; smaller creatures quickly putrefy, larger creatures become normal zombies. Spawn (and spawned zombies) are not under the control of their parent but usually follow after whatever son created them.

Any creature who touches a son with an unarmed strike or other natural weapon is immediately attacked by 1d4 worms.

Curative Transformation (Ex): A *remove curse*, *remove disease*, or more powerful versions of these spells transforms a son of Kyuss into a normal zombie. Touching a son in this manner does not draw additional attacks from worms because the spell's power kills any that try.

Xvarts

Xvarts are small humanoids living primarily in the Bandit Kingdoms, former lands of the Horned Society, the Bone March, the Pomarj, near Verbobonc, and the Vesve. Although xvarts have a primitive society compared to humans, it serves them well and allows them to support large tribes on limited resources. As a whole they are not a threat to civilization, as they fear humans and prefer to occasionally take out their aggression on kobolds. Goblins often use xvarts as spies for warbands, and xvarts often act as mediaries between goblins and kobolds.

Xvarts have bright blue skin and vivid orange eyes. Tolerant of most weather extremes, they dress in little more than loose cloth doublets. Xvarts of both sexes are mostly bald, having only a fringe of wiry black hair on the back and sides of the head that connects with their eyebrows. Their ears are large. Xvarts claws look impressive but are insufficient for combat, and their teeth are no larger than those of a human child.

Xvarts speak Goblin; those with Intelligence scores of 12 or above also speak Draconic.

Combat
Xvarts prefer to ambush and overwhelm their opponents, resorting to superior numbers instead of fairness. Although they fear humans and only attack them if they have a tremendous edge in numbers, xvarts hate halflings and almost always attack them, even if their numbers are equal.

Xvart officers sometimes have better armor (preferring a chain shirt to anything more cumbersome). Sergeants are trained in the use of the net, and other officers learn the net or Two-Weapon Fighting with a dagger or another short sword. Hunting parties use scouts to drive prey toward a readied net, and ambushes usually involve at least one net and enough xvarts to pile upon every person in a group.

Speak with Animals (Sp): Once per day a xvart can speak with animals as a 1st-level druid to communicate with rats or bats, including dire varieties.

Skills: Xvarts gain a +2 racial bonus to Move Silently checks and a +4 size bonus to Hide checks.

Xvart Characters

A xvart's favored multiclass is fighter; xvart leaders tend to be fighters or fighter/clerics. Xvart clerics choose two of the following domains: Animal, Evil, and Trickery. Xvart clerics prefer spells that summon rats and bats or create fire.

Xvart Society

Xvarts are tribal. Their leaders are generally the strongest and most clever creatures in the tribe. They live in a communal existence, with hunting parties leaving the lair daily to bring back food for the entire tribe. If hunting is poor, they sometimes resort to stealing livestock or crops from farms. They war with enemy humanoids for territory but never with their own kind, preferring to move or eliminate a common foe when the population grows too high. Xvarts rarely raid unless a powerful leader has driven them to a cause, such as avenging many deaths by adventurers or the encroachment of humans. When they take prisoners, it is only for torture and ransom, as the xvarts have little need for laborers.

These creatures live in caves underground or in deep and remote portions of forests. Their camps are well-patrolled by xvarts, bats, and rats, and are kept reasonably clean, particularly when compared to goblins. Often a tribe is allied with one or more wererats, with the tribe providing shelter in emergencies and the wererats ferrying ransom notes. Xvarts with lycanthropy are greatly respected by their peers. Other tribes form close alliances with goblins, although these pairings never involve worg mounts, as the canines tend to eat the rat guardians.

Xvarts worship the god Raxivort, who teaches that xvarts will eventually come to dominate and rule all of the small creatures of the world, aided by rat and bat allies and using the tools of fire and the sword as their means to this goal. ★

Xvart

My spy in the court of "overking" Grenell tells me that a division of xvarts from the hills near Bellport have visited that town, bearing gold ore and a few small nuggets of adamantite, trading these riches for food, wood, and rum. Grenell has ordered Patriarch Halldrem to encourage this sort of thing with these xvarts, hoping to acquire more of the rare metal from the deeps. The xvarts themselves, like all of their kin, are easily bullied by humans, and are of little worth to the Naelax prince.

Small Humanoid

Hit Dice: 1d8+3 (7 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 20 ft.

AC: 14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

Attacks: Short sword +0 melee; or dagger +2 ranged; or net +2 ranged

Damage: Short sword 1d6-1; dagger 1d3-1; net entangle

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., speak with animals

Saves: Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

Skills: Hide +2+4size, Move Silently +2+2 racial, Spot +2

Feats: Toughness

Climate/Terrain: Any forest and underground.

Organization: Gang (4-9), band (10-100, plus 1 leader of 4th to 6th level and 1 3rd-level net-using sergeant per 20 adults), or tribe (40-400, plus 1 leader of 6th to 8th level, 1-2 lieutenants of 4th to 5th level, 1-4 clerics of 1st to 5th level, 1 3rd-level net-using sergeant per 20 adults, and 3-30 giant rat guards)

Challenge Rating: 1/4

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually chaotic evil

Advancement Range: By character class





PLAYING PIECES:

The Despotrix of Hardby

BY FRED WEINING

The town of Hardby, on the Woolly Bay, has been associated with the city of Greyhawk for more than eight centuries—first as rival, then ally, and finally as subject to its northern neighbor. Shipping, along with fishing, serves as its primary trade, though much seasonal ship-traffic bypasses Hardby in favor of the larger markets of Greyhawk City. This is now beginning to change, as the economies of the two communities become more fully integrated. The alliance of merchants that ruled Hardby prior to the Greyhawk Wars has made some half-hearted attempts to reassert control over the docks, but such efforts have little lasting effect since the ruling Trade Council is dominated by agents of Greyhawk. In the past few years there has actually been a resurgence of influence by the Gynarchy of Hardby, which had for many decades existed only as a society of prominent local families of matrilineal descent.

Originally the Gynarchy formed the female-led government of Hardby, and their rule continued under the old Landstadt of the Selintan. Their leader was simply called the Gynarch, a title belonging to the matron of house Yragerne. But after the death of the last hereditary Gynarch a new leader was chosen,¹ and in 351 CY the first Despotrix was inaugurated on the *Throne of Wood*.² This government remained in power until the early years of the current century, when refugees coming from the Pomarj (in the aftermath of the Hateful Wars) managed to usurp authority over the militia and the town docks. These same refugees formed the Hardby Merchants' Alliance to legitimize their control, and held power here for almost 70 years—until they unsuccessfully attempted to resist annexation by the Free City during the Greyhawk Wars. Now the Gynarchy again has the upper hand, and the Despotrix intends to play it carefully.

Despotrix Ilena Norbelos, female human Wis13; CR 13; Medium humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 13d4-13;

hp 24; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (*bracers of armor +4*); Atk +4/-1 melee (1d6-2/1d6-2, quarterstaff); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 6, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 19, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +11, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (local) +12, Scry +20, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +20; Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Forge Ring, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (divination), Still Spell.

Possessions: bracers of armor +4, ring of spell turning, robe of eyes.

Spells Prepared (4/5/5/5/3/2/1): 0—*daze, detect magic, light, read magic*; 1st—*burning hands, color spray, magic missile, phantasmal force, sleep*; 2nd—*daylight, detect thoughts, invisibility, levitate, protection from arrows*; 3rd—*blink, dispel magic, hold person, lightning bolt, magic circle against evil*; 4th—*detect scrying, Evard's black tentacles, polymorph other, polymorph self, wall of ice*; 5th—*cone of cold, teleport, wall of force*; 6th—*chain lightning, globe of invulnerability*; 7th—*prismatic spray*.

The reigning Despotrix, Ilena Norbelos, is a frail, white-haired, 61 year-old woman with vivid blue eyes and an aristocratic demeanor. She has held her office for the past quarter of a century. The Despotrix is greatly admired by almost all the local people with the notable exception of the remnant of the Hardby Merchants' Alliance—as well as the mountaineers and marines of the Greyhawk militia. She is also well-respected in the courts of most of the neighboring states, including (it is said) Celene and the Bright Lands. On the other hand, her nominal superiors in Greyhawk's Oligarchy are particularly wary of her and the rest of the Gynarchy; in fact, the Lord Mayor and the Despotrix clearly hate each other, but political and military necessity forces them to cooperate for the security of the region. Ilena is far more circumspect than most in the domain of Greyhawk regarding the events of the Wars and their aftermath, and she takes nothing at face value.

In times past, Ilena was known to have a fine, dry humor and biting wit that would often sneak past her reserved facade, and she was a tireless opponent to the enemies of the Gynarchy. Unfortunately, her health has gradually declined over the last five years,³ and she has lost something of her previous spark. The gynarchs' concern for their leader is increased because of her obviously weakened state, and some of them wish to address the issue of succession. Several heirs to the Despotrix have been advanced as candidates for her office, but none enjoy the widespread popularity that Ilena has built for herself. Also, she has so far given no indication that she is willing to abdicate her authority. Ilena feels that she can best help the Gynarchy by remaining as Despotrix, and most of the gynarchs seem to agree.

The Despotrix also has claimed a seat on the Greyhawk Council of Mayors and Manorial Lords, which includes leaders from all the towns and settlements in the domain. She has become the most prominent member of this group, using her influence to encourage cooperation among her neighbors, and also to promote opportunities for more women to gain positions of authority in the region. As always, Ilena is watchful over the interests of Hardby's citizens, and she is devoted to the preservation of the Gynarchy in the face of increasing social and political challenges. The majority of the gynarchs are just as devoted to her, recognizing the advances that the Gynarchy has made under her leadership, and they continue to support her policy of cooperation with Greyhawk.

Javka Gerneskir, female human Clr3/Rog3; CR 6; Medium humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 3d8+6 + class 3d6+6; hp 41; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2Dex); Atk +7 melee (1d6+3/crit 18-20/x2, rapier +7), +8 ranged (1d8, crit 19-20/x2, light crossbow); SA Sneak attack +1d6; AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +6, Concentration +6, Decipher Script

+5, Escape Artist +2 (+8 with *vest of escape*), Forgery +8, Hide +7, Innuendo +5, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Open Lock +6 (+10 with *vest of escape*), Pick Pocket +6, Spot +5, Use Magical Device +6; Ambidexterity, Endurance, Run, Skill Focus: Forgery.

Special Qualities—Domains: *Magic:* Uses wands and scrolls as 1st-level wizard. *Travel:* For a total of 3 rounds per day, Javka can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement.

Possessions: rapier +1, *vest of escape*.

Spells Prepared (4/2+1/1+1): 0—*cure minor wounds*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mending*; 1st—*command* (2), *expeditious retreat* (1); 2nd—*locate object* (1), *silence*.

Javka Gerneskir is a small but very solidly-built young woman of 24 years. She has dark, wavy hair and an olive complexion, but with eyes of the brilliant blue so often found among the local people of Hardby. She is a cleric of Lirr as well as a rogue. Javka is a friend and personal servant of the Despotrix, and she has travelled to cities as far away as Dyvers and Leukish, usually on errands of information gathering for the Gynarchy. She might be encountered anywhere in Greyhawk's domain or the neighboring lands south of the Nyr Dyv. She usually accompanies the Despotrix on her journeys to Greyhawk, and is familiar with the oligarchs of that city. Like the other members of the Gynarchy, she has little affection for Greyhawk or its rulers, but sees the necessity of maintaining good relations with them for the time being.

She entered the service of the Gynarchy in early 585 CY, and her resourcefulness and diligence quickly brought her to the attention of the Despotrix. Javka is currently a didactrix¹ and is therefore not included in all of her superiors' councils. As a personal agent of Ilena, however, she has access to sensitive information regarding their plans, and a detailed knowledge of Hardby's political arrangements. As Ilena has grown more frail, Javka has found herself with more autonomy, and now considers herself the most important of the Despotrix's servants.

Those outside the Gynarchy attempting to personally contact Ilena will find it difficult to bypass Javka. As a result, the Despotrix seldom receives communications from potential allies, unless her young didactrix approves of them. Javka personally favors Tenser, having worked with a few of his agents on her past missions. She supports his avowed aims of eliminating strongholds of evil in the region, and does not understand Ilena's reluctance to make a formal alliance with the archmage. Though Javka is loyal to the Gynarchy, she is still young and has much to learn concerning the actual relationship between principle and power. ★

Notes:

1. With the death of the last hereditary Gynarch, her son, Zagig Yragerne—who was also the final Landgraf of the Selintan—became Despot of Hardby. However, his duties as Landgraf gave him little time to attend to the affairs of his mother's city, and after a dozen years he was persuaded to relinquish the office of Despot in favor of a leader elected from among the remaining gynarchs.
2. The *Throne of Wood* is an Ehlonnan artifact now held in trust by the Gynarchy, in remembrance of the other "amazon" societies that once flourished in the central Flanaess. By tradition, its powers are only to be used by the Despotrix (as Supreme Gynarch), when the other 39 gynarchs are also in attendance.
3. Ilena's illness began after the Striking of the Crook, an extensive ritual led by the priests of Rao in Mitrik which resulted in the Flight of Fiends. She had been persuaded by Tenser (despite warnings sent to her from the archmage Rary) to join in an arcane conjunction intended to augment the priestly ritual. Unfortunately, many of the participants in Tenser's rites have since suffered illness or other misfortune—with the notable exception of Tenser himself.
4. A junior member of the Gynarchy. Each gynarch has at least one didactrix, who usually serves as a combination of annalist and personal herald.



Illus. Michael Dubisch

The true power in Hardby: Despotrix Norbelos and her assistant, Javka.

Dispatches

NEWS FROM AROUND THE FLANAESS



Ahlissa (Innsa/Adri)

Prince Molif's claim on the Adri Forest east of the Harp River (backed up by the considerable power of his cousin, Overking Xavener of Ahlissa) is causing rumors that North Kingdom forces

operating out of Edgefield have designs upon the woodland. Scouts speak of troops massing close to the Adri's eastern border, and many fear invasion may be imminent.

Whispers in Innsa's slumtown suggest that the prophet Medarkus, who rallied hundreds of the oppressed in Vedaris Square last month, is none other than the missing-and-thought-deceased Anarkin, a former prelate of the Prelacy of Almor. If these rumors are to be believed, many high-placed members of Innsa society would pay dearly to know what he's up to.



Bandit Kingdoms

Reports from passing travelers concerning the disappearance of patrols loyal to Iuz's servant, Cranzer of Riftcrag, have many on edge.

Witnesses claim to have seen "disembodied hands boiling up from the earth to pull the soldiers underground, leaving no trace of their passing."

In Johrase, the people are up in arms over the rumor that Irunio, one of Cranzer's officers, is using extortion to force Myree of Ethelridge (relative to the famed Johrasian warrior and trainer Edridge) to give him her hand in marriage.



Bissel

The Margrave of Bissel has proposed a tax on citizens of Baklunish descent to help pay for the destruction caused by invaders from Ket during the Greyhawk Wars.

Although the proposal experienced a great deal of opposition, especially from barons of western Bissel, the council has agreed to the plan by an extremely thin margin. The monies will be allocated, under the direction of the Knights of the Watch, to restore the northern and eastern fortifications and to replenish the mercenary Border Companies. Many of the barons are against spending more money on the mercenaries, who already failed Bissel but a few years before.



Dyvers

The city's merchants are frenzied over the closing of the Gnarley Road. As a result, public distrust of the Gnarley Rangers, who are believed responsible, is at an all-time low. Rumor has it the Rangers have more trouble than

they can handle in keeping the roads through the Great Forest safe for trade caravans, and the Dyverse Militia says that they have the answer—a standing military presence in the forest. Mysterious attacks have continued along all three major trade roads to the city, and many merchants are offering handsome rewards to those who can assure safe travel along these important trade routes.



Gran March

Vitness Tragorn, Warden of the Rush March, reports that the Flan barbarians of the Rushmoors have been restless of late. He issued a warning to be wary and avoid travel deep into the moors. The

road improvement between Buxton's Crossing and Hochoch is proceeding apace, having reached the edge of the Dim Forest. The work crews have been reinforced for the massive wood cutting and paving required for the next stage of development. Gault Stalmir, Warden of the Dim March, addressed concerns about increased goblin activity there. "Those who spread rumors of large numbers of goblins operating in the Dim Forest are happily misinformed. Our patrols have found only scattered, ragtag bands numbering fewer than a score."



Greyhawk

Local legend in Shacktown tells of a disgraced Rhennee lord known as Valos Timarkas, who allegedly abandoned his family to a malignant creature from the depths of the Nyr Dyv. According to local rumor, Valos is

thought by many to be a master of disguise who has brought no fewer than four barges to their doom in the Midbay within the past six months.

Though the watch has done its best to cover it up, the recent discovery of the abandoned headquarters of a cult of Incabulos in a warehouse near the Petit Bazaar has many merchants worried. A large store of allegedly diseased grain has been dumped into the Selintan, and many fear further contagion.



Highfolk

Highfolk mayor, Tavin Ersteader, this week announced plans for the annual Richfest festival, at the end of the summer. The celebration will last for an entire week, ending in the great competition known as the Race of Heroes. Teams have already begun forming for this yearly event. Meanwhile, strange stories are being told of fierce humanoid raids throughout the Vesse forest as far south as Ironstead. Mayor Ersteader advises caution to all travelers journeying through the vast wood.



Irongate

A recent discovery by dwarven explorer/miners plumbing the depths of Irongate's immense undercity has both the magical and mining communities talking. The discovery, two six-foot high stone tablets now referred to as the *Khul-Ak tableaux* (after the ancient clan to which the discoverers belong) is thought to reveal something of significance about the lands surrounding the free city in an ancient script that has as yet defied identification. Divination revealed both tablets as incalculably ancient, as well as highly magical. Current rumor suggests the bizarre writings to be the religion of some forgotten sect of subterranean Ur-Flan, though a figure no less prestigious than the visiting Bigby himself was overheard to describe the writing as "unfathomably alien."



Luz

A small luzite naval force, apparently based out of the town of Izlen on the western shore of Lake Whyestil, recently savaged the personal ship of the adventurer Hallock Esberen, a Furyondian hero of the Great Northern Crusade. According to contacts in Crockport, Esberen and his crew of five sought to cross the lake under the cover of magical mist, striking at the ghastly Grunlend Keep, on the lake's northern shore. No word was heard from the crew until Esberen's ship returned to Crockport smeared in the remains of two of the ship's crew. The whereabouts of Esberen and the other survivors, if indeed they did survive, is a hot topic in Crockport, and many would pay good coin to any brave enough to enter Izlen in disguise to suss out the hero's fate.



Keoland

A minor earthquake recently struck Niole Dra. While damage was limited, sewerjack patrols reported an upswing in the number of bizarre creatures encountered in the lowest levels of the sewer network. His

Lord Mayor, Pugnace Dillip, has refused to comment on the matter, except to reinforce his commitment to a zero tolerance stance toward lawlessness within the city. Satampra Zeiros, the renowned sorcerer and sculptor, unveiled a new series of works in his privately owned gallery in the Merchant District. The series, titled "Terrors from the Dark," features bizarre and otherworldly monsters rendered with Zeiros' fabulously attentive eye to detail. The show is the talk of the Noble District.



Ket

Arad Darkeye, hero of the war in Bissel, has left the service of the Ketite army under a dark cloud.

On a recent excursion into the Bramblewood, Darkeye's entire squadron was destroyed by monsters, leaving him the only survivor. He has refused to speak to anyone about the defeat, and speculation abounds as to what types of creatures could have slain so many armed men. Dark rumors suggest that the one-time hero may have played a sinister role in the fall of his squadron. No one knows Darkeye's plans, but it is presumed that he will return to his home, near the city of Falwur.



Nyrond

His August Supremacy, Altmeister of All the Aerdi, King Lynwerd I of Nyrond, by royal proclamation hereby sanctions the creation of Licensed Adventures for the Kingdom of Nyrond. These noble citizens will be

entrusted with special works and missions for the kingdom. This proclamation also rescinds, for Licensed Adventures, The Law of Reclamation, the ancient law that states that all treasures found in the king's lands belongs to the king. This now allows those licensed to keep 4/5 the value of goods and treasure found in the act of adventuring in the kingdom, and pay only 1/5 to the crown. Preparations continue for the King's Summer Gala, celebrating his 5th year upon the throne. Local and foreign nobility are to be invited to the grand celebration.



Onnwal

Fighting continues around Sornhill, on the Storm Coast. Rebels successfully retook the bulk of the town in Fireseek, 590 CY but hochebi Brotherhood forces, led by Kesh Kekarav Madi, still

hold the hilly western arm of Notxia Bay. Constant skirmishing is reported around Osprem's Light, a light-house-temple complex dedicated to the Lady of the Waves. The rebel's only stronghold in the west, it is held by a coalition of priests, marines and rebels. The fortress was breached last month in some of the fiercest fighting to date, and the defenders are thought to be in dire need of assistance.



Pale

A recent increase in incursions from the Troll Fens has led to a sudden rise in enlistment in the Prelatal Army, particularly in the northern provinces. Troop morale is high at this time, bolstered by a

series of decisive victories over the foul creatures. Adventurers from the capital have proven to be a strong addition to the forces in the Fens. One band was instrumental in delaying a band of the beasts, allowing the orderly evacuation of a nearby village. One battle-scarred veteran was overheard admiring the determination and prowess of these adventurers, while expressing a hope that they might be conveyed to Pholtus.



Ratik

Ratik is a land plagued by political turmoil. Since the fall of Archbaron Alain IV in the Bone March campaign, Guilds and nobles seek to claim the reins of power from his successor—and

widow—Lady Baroness Evaleigh. As factions vie for power, relations with the Frost Barbarians to the north falter, rumors of infiltration by Scarlet Brotherhood spies abound, and military opposition to hostile humanoid armies deteriorates. It seems that the abundant resources of Ratik may soon be available for the taking by one hostile enemy or another; whether from inside or outside her border remains to be seen.



Sea Princes

The Touv former slave known as Utavo the Wise continues to hold the town of Kusnir, on the shores of Lake Spendlowe, in the old Duchy of Berghof. A general call to his kinsmen in the north last

month led, it is said, to a doubling of his occupying force. Though tensions remain high among the Touv and Olman warriors and priests who have flocked to Utavo's banner, the new ruler has thusfar prevented serious bloodshed among his people. Utavo himself is said to have been intrigued by a tale of some of his more adventurous advisors, who claim that a great pass through the southeastern mountains might lead to the Amedio Jungle, and away from the chaos that has engulfed the Sea Princes. Whether or not Utavo will give up his newly won land for the old freedom of the jungle remains to be seen.



Shield Lands

After almost three years, the new Critwall Bridge is nearly complete. The original bridge was destroyed during the Greyhawk Wars, removing the primary land route between

Furyondy and the Shield Lands. Lady Katarina made rebuilding the bridge a priority after retaking Critwall during the Great Northern Crusade. Adventurers are being sent to guard the bridge during its final stages, because the army is spread too thinly along the border of the luzite occupied lands. The bridge is considered a primary target because its destruction would ruin three years of work and cripple the economy the bridge is sure to provide.



Sterich

The Marchioness, Resbin Dren Emondre, has declared the western barony of Astarian her sovereign property, thus dissolving the original charter on the land, held by the

thought-deceased Lord Baron Harker Elvenae. The move not only brings to an official end the struggle between the former baron's antagonistic cousins, Etrin Van-Malligan and Varrus Kline, but it also grants one of the richest tracts of farmland in the March of Sterich to the direct control of the Marchioness. Few believe that the feuding cousins will resolve their differences any time soon, but with the goal of their bickering now hopelessly out of reach (and in the hands of the sovereign in Krelont Keep), it is hoped that the matter is all but resolved.

Living Greyhawk Contact List

The LIVING GREYHAWK™ campaign is controlled by Regional Triads, groups of three RPGA GUILD-LEVEL™ members who keep an eye on local activities. The Point of Contact for each triad has been listed below. The overall campaign is managed by the Circle of Six, who oversee international plots, handle rules disputes and issues, and guide the entire campaign. Getting involved is as easy as sending an email to your Regional Triad's Point of Contact.

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KINGDOM OF KEOLAND PROVINCIAL KEY

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Royal District and City of Niole Dra | 10. Good Hills Union | 19. Barony of Riverwatch |
| 2. Duchy of Dorlin | 11. March of Mandismoor | 20. Barony of Axewood |
| 3. Duchy of Gradsul | 12. March of Mareman | 21. Barony of Mill Creek |
| 4. Earldom of Gand | 13. March of Sedenna | 22. Barony of Dilwyth |
| 5. Earldom of Linth | 14. March of Middlemead | 23. Barony of Raya |
| 6. County of Nimlee | 15. March of Blerfield | 24. Viscounty of Salinmoor |
| 7. County of Marlbridge | 16. Barony of Sayre | 25. Viscounty of Nume Eor |
| 8. County of Flen | 17. Barony of Grayhill | 26. Dreadwood Preserve |
| 9. County of Cryllor | 18. Barony of Westgate | 27. Hool Marsh Protectorate |

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