



Glorantha

THE SECOND AGE

RALIOS

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Contents

Credits & Contents	1
Ralios	2
The Eastern Wilds	3
<i>Saug & Delela</i>	3
<i>Keanos</i>	6
<i>Halikiv</i>	8
<i>Corolaland</i>	10
Vesmonstran	12
<i>Lankst</i>	12
<i>Telmoria</i>	25
<i>Ormsland</i>	27
<i>Karia</i>	31
<i>Ballid</i>	34
<i>Guhan</i>	35
<i>Nida</i>	38
Index	41

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RALIOS

Once home to the grim and mysterious Stygian Empire, Ralios is now a possession of the God Learner Empire. For many years it was ruled by dukes who, as vassals of the Emperor, owed revenues and soldiers to the imperial treasury. The region still reels from a war waged by the Emperor against his dukes and viscounts, who he accused of rebellion. Now imperial functionaries administer the area directly, fuelling local resentment.

Though the God Learners lay claim to all of Ralios, large portions of it remain ungovernable. Outlaws and troublemakers able to defend their own rights of person

and property can always make a life for themselves in these places, no matter how out of favour they might be with the putative authorities.

Apart from the city-states of Safelster, detailed in *Glorantha – The Second Age*, Ralios contains a tremendous variety of nations, wildlands and conflicts. This product expands the core campaign setting beyond Safelster and into the remainder of Ralios' lands, notably the Eastern Wilds (including Saug, Delela and Corolaland) and Vesmonstran (including Ballid, Telmorla, Guhan and Ormsland).



THE EASTERN WILDS

The eastern region of Ralios is less hospitable than Vesmonstran or Safelster. Orlanthi clans predominate here but are less comfortable than those of Lankst. Difficult soils make cultivation an unreliable enterprise. Cattle are hard to feed here; free-ranging sheep take their place, along with penned pigs and poultry. Tulas are larger than in comparatively fertile places like Lankst, yet at the same time less densely populated. Incursions from Dorastor, via Karia, infest their hills with Chaos creatures. The cult of the anti-Chaos god, Urox the Storm Bull, remains strong here. In some remote clans, Urox is treated as the main god, husband to an only partially willing Ernalda. The bullying influence of his devotees has had a coarsening effect on clan culture. Rules of hospitality are remembered in myth but flouted in reality. With resources in short supply, generosity is considered more folly than virtue.

Saug and Delela

The lands of Saug and Delela differ little. Both are rough, sparsely populated lands inhabited by desperate Orlanthi barbarian clans. They vary chiefly in their relationship to the great Empires. Delela bears the influence of the EWF, while the clans of Saug forge ties to the God Learners.

Other cultural differences, invisible to outsiders, mean a great deal to the Orlanthi of the East Wilds. Saug clans are patrilineal; brides move to their husband's clans. Delelan clans are matrilineal; grooms join the clans of their wives. In Saug, a man may ignore an insult to his honour by laughing at it. In Delela, this option is forbidden, with blood or silver required to regain one's good name.

Saug

The clans of Saug disdain tribes, associating them with the weakness and blasphemy of the Lizard Lover Empire. They consider fears of the God Learners overblown and view the EWF as the greater threat to Orlanthi independence. Perhaps this is because the scholar-warriors of the Safelstran universities leave them alone. The God Learners eschew studies into Chaos, and are conversely uninterested in Storm Bull and his anti-Chaos powers. Most contacts between Saug clan dwellers and representatives of the Middle Sea Empire take place in the arenas of trade and military alliance. Saug's rough-

hewn Issaries traders welcome Safelstran peddlers and merchants. To the Safelsteri these are desperate bottom feeders, unable to control markets in any but the most benighted backwoods of Ralios. To the rag-picking Saugites, they are bringers of splendid riches.

With food and basic goods in short supply but spears and swords plentiful, Saugites find it easier to raid merchant caravans than to peacefully trade with them. Hard-pressed merchants pay the strongest clans for protection, giving them a percentage of their wares to fend off banditry from others.

Banditry is rife here. Safelstran outlaws, along with a smattering of troublemakers from far-flung lands, gather into roving gangs who raid the eastern cities, Delela and even Halikiv. Some ride around the Mislari Mountains to strike in Maniria. Bandits operate out of clan lands. About two thirds of them seek the protection of a strong chieftain, paying a portion of their swag in exchange for shelter. The rest forcibly occupy the poorest lands of weaker clans. Saugite tulas are so spread out that not even the best-defended clan can patrol all of its territory. By recent custom, trails along tula boundaries have become common roadways, where bandits may travel unmolested. If not for these, honour would force the clans to defend themselves against the incidental incursions of passing brigands. Caravan captains avoid these roads, preferring to make their own routes through the lands of friendly clans.

In merchant circles, when we wish to euphemistically suggest a colleague's financial distress, we say: 'So and so is presently investigating promising new opportunities in the Saug territories'.

— Suidos, Burgher of Kustria

Militias funded by trading organisations have established friendly relations with several clans, paying them tribute in exchange for basing rights. They use these to launch attacks against bandits, including those holed up in the

The Walker's Curse

The clansfolk of the East Wilds suffer under an ancient curse laid upon them by St. Kus, after they rode through the countryside surrounding Kustria and engaged in indiscriminate slaughter. Now they cannot ride horses. Any attempt to place a saddle on a horse or to ride it bareback results in the immediate throwing of the rider. The curse ties to the sufferer's bloodline. Orlanthi from elsewhere, including Lankst, can still ride here.

The inability to ride restricts the effective range of travel, whether for raiding or trading. Consequently the tribes of the East Wilds seem isolated from the rest of the world. They display an ignorance of Empires and faraway culture which, whether sincere or feigned, remains unshakeable.

Foreigners on horseback are assumed to be an imminent and severe threat. They are attacked and driven off, their horses butchered for the feasting hall. Though brutal, the custom is not unwise; riding cultures enjoy a huge advantage in warfare against ground-bound opponents. Travellers familiar with the region walk alongside their horses, as a gesture of non-aggression.

Asbor, chieftain of the Lanksti Roldoling clan, has offered to show the Orlanthi of the East Wilds how to increase their travel speed by hooking horses up to chariots. His warlike reputation and the exorbitant reward he wants for demonstrating the secrets of his god, Mastakos, have so far deterred the East Wilds Orlanthi from pursuing his plan.



adjoining territory of Keanos. Saugite clans occasionally conspire to whip up hostilities between bandits and militias, then happily strip the battlefield of useful items after both sides have torn the other to shreds.

Notables

Saug's greatest Uroxi hero is **Jarn Sharpfinger**, so named because he once killed a jack o'bear with only his gloved hands. Jarn serves as chieftain of the Gori clan, which kills outlaws and bandits by forcing them to drink the Universal Nostrum. This potion, of which they

have an endless supply thanks to a stolen mostali device, supposedly spares the lives of true and honest men. So far no one to whom it has been administered has passed the test. Jarn himself is known to be infamously trusting and is therefore accompanied at all times by his cynical cousin, Pera Crimson-Tress. Her opinion of mankind is even lower than that of the Universal Nostrum.

The Safelstran trader **Heliern the Shiverer** has made a thriving business in Saug, where so many else have failed. He succeeds on the basis of his winning manner, genuine

Merein

Any bandit or militia group with the ill manners to show up on horseback arouses the murderous unity of all Saugites against them. The village of Merein, on the edge of Saugite territory, specialises in livery stables, housing the horses of bandits and bandit-hunters alike. They can leave their mounts here and travel into Saug proper on foot.

Village-spanning magics supplied by the village's temple of Elmal, the Orlanthi god of sun and horse, burns to a crisp any malefactor attempting to steal or harm a steed within its boundaries.

Merein's village headman is also its Elmal priest, Ingarro. He was outlawed from a Saugite clan, the Crackling Twigs, for endlessly inveighing against its Uroxi orientation. After years of dealing with Malkioni, Ingarro has inherited their concept of heresy. He believes that Uroxi clans are heretical and must reform themselves back into proper 'Orlanth and Ernalda' worshippers. If approached in a subtle way, he will provide underhanded assistance to adventurers acting against Uroxi clans.

By peculiar tradition, visitors in Merein are not permitted accommodations better than they would grant to their horses. Adventurers must be prepared to sleep in stables or to invite their horses into their barn-sized hotel rooms with them.

interest in the affairs of others and studious refusal to be drawn into conflicts. Many of his caravan guards have gone on to good careers as traders themselves. He must frequently hire on new warriors to replace those who go off to found their own caravans. Heliern conducts interviews at his warehouse in Merein. For a suitable fee, he may detail a reliable guard to act as guide and intermediary to an adventuring band travelling through Saug.

The Orlanthi Runelord **Harngar Aircarver** travels tirelessly between the clans whenever the prospect of tribal unification rears its head. He views this as the first step toward wyrmfriendification and argues staunchly against it. When not engaged in rearguard political action, he leads raiding parties into Delela and Ormsland. His sallies exact a high casualty rate and he is always looking for a few good adventurers to round out his attack force.

Svalgos Catchboot typifies the area's Safelstran bandits. He and his ever-changing force of no-gooders prey chiefly on the caravans of his countrymen. Svalgos' gang is a mixed bag of heretics, foreigners and renegade hsunchen. For a tidy 1,000 silvers a year, merchants can buy protection from him. Heliern pays him off, allegedly at a discount.

Saug's strangest bandit chieftain must be **Chikrikmik**, an arachan timit leading a raider band mostly consisting of his fellow insect men. Infamous for his ferocity, he slaughters all who resist him. He directs his attacks only against EWF targets, suggesting that he is subsidised by some Middle Sea organisation or another.

Delela

The Delelan clans unite into tribes and provide hospitality to EWF missionaries. Outsiders consider them wyrmfriends in all but name, yet the reality is more complicated. Delela's tribes are constantly splitting up, amalgamating, dissolving and going to war with one another. They make outlandish demands of visiting Hunting and Waltzing Bands, requesting draconic powers to use against their tribal rivals or militating for direct intervention by wyrmfriend forces.

Some Delelan tribes consist of only a handful of clans. At last count, there were eighteen of them in all. No doubt that number will change by the time your adventurers arrive there. The largest and most influential tribes are as follows.

The territorially discontinuous **Anzarti** tribe binds together the region's most militant Uroxi fanatics. They disdain regional bickering to concentrate on their holy battle against Chaos. To this end they ally themselves with Uroxi clans from Saug and welcome any Storm Bull followers from anywhere else. Their king is Orl the Flat, known for his curious ability to burrow into the earth.

The **Hillhad**, who style themselves the Pure Orlanth People, have always hated the Anzarti. They will attack their war parties whenever advantage permits, including when the Anzarti return wounded from a sally against Chaos. The Hillhad's enemies call them the Chaos tribe and spread rumours that their king, Henst, suffers from a variety of unspecified mutations.

The **Orlundi**, led by the glib King Randere Buttermouth, advocate Delelan unity. They claim that the region's

Heroes of Delela

Angheng the Winnower is a renegade missionary who learned just enough from the wyrmfriends to be dangerous both to his supposed masters and to his converts. He proclaims the worship of Urox the Dragon, whose hot fiery breath unites the world and cleanses it of Chaos. Initiates into his cult cede their worship energy to him; he uses it to boost his anti-Chaos powers. He chooses his enemies by a simple tenet: anyone who opposes him must surely be of Chaos. Both EWF and anti-EWF forces want him dead but his surprising powers have allowed him to triumph in the face of multiple ambushes.

Fedartha Ever-Die is a heroine of the Hillhad tribe. Some people call her a demigoddess. At the beginning of every Darkness Season, she dies and is placed in an earthen crypt beneath the Ernalda temple kept by her home clan, the Rani. On the first day of Sea Season, her priestesses open up the earthen mound and find her, breathing calmly and looking younger. She refuses to divulge her age but God Learner scholars have found references to her in a chronicle of the 3rd Century. God Learner spirit raiders have tried to kidnap her on three separate occasions, only to meet various grisly fates. The last time, they all died of instant starvation.

From a private stead granted him by King Kenstor of the Tarth tribe, **Gerado Arnadée**, a Malkioni convert to wyrmfriendism, plots the ascendance of his new cult among the people of Safelster. He claims to have discovered the God Learner's Secret, which is embodied in a fist-sized egg covered in reptilian scales. He keeps this safely buried somewhere in Tarth territory, protected by a crushing earthshaker spirit. Several dozen fellow Malkioni converts attend and protect him. Gerado can look into a person's soul and immediately grasp the subject's greatest weakness, worst memory and object of profoundest love.

fertility could be made to flower if all tribes put away their differences to engage in a great sacrifice to Ernalda. Seeing the unity offered by the EWF as a rival to his own, Randere denies hospitality to missionaries and preaches against their soul-sapping magic. A recent attempt on his life by flying lizards led him to offer a bounty for any Hunting and Waltzing Band members apprehended on Delelan soil.

Both Kenstor and Randere started out in different clans and entered the tribes they lead through marriage. This is entirely right and proper, and would never happen among the stickpicking Saugife sons of dogs.

— *Enlirath Casfing, God Talker of the Brown Deer Clan*

King Kenstor of the **Tarth** tribe is the estranged brother of King Randere and works night and day to thwart his sibling's ambitions. He has invited Hunting and Waltzing Bands to conduct worship of his tribe's lesser clans. Notably, he has so far forbidden them to proselytise his own home clan, the Brown Deer. He says that if the Orlundi tribe breaks up within two years, he will swear allegiance to the Inhuman King. They say that Kenstor has the evil eye and that any man he insults becomes doubly susceptible to spirits of disease. The continuing good health of his brother cuts against the veracity of this rumour.

The **Vanahar** tribe controls the Doskior river as it approaches the Safelstran cities of Marost. As such it has enriched itself by imposing tolls on merchants travelling upriver and is the

most prosperous clan of impoverished Delela. It fears Delelan unity, on the grounds that a true nation would drain its coffers, redistributing its wealth to the hungry hill clans. Its Queen, Asulanta, pursues a 'divide and conquer' policy. She gives money to other tribes when they war against each other and foments trouble when peace seems imminent.

Keanos, Land of Hunters

The region of Keanos acts as a buffer between Safelster and the East Wilds. The Orlanthi of the East Wilds believe that it was once a fertile land but that it was cursed during the First Age, when Orlanthi missionaries from Theyala met up with their Hrestoli Malkioni counterparts at a fateful crook in the Doskior River. The two groups promised each other protection and hospitality but something bad happened and a massacre resulted. The broken peacebond poisoned the land and now nothing cultivated will grow here at all. The Delelans believe that

the westerners broke the peacebond and slaughtered the Theyalans as they slept. Saugites say that it was drunken servants of the Orlanthi trickster god, Eurmal, who set both parties against each other. For their part, the people of Safelster care so little about this dusty, rocky patch of hill country that none of their records refer to any such incident.

The Odayla People

Proper Orlanthi clans are absent here. Keanos' indigenous population consists of a few thousand nomadic hunters. They worship the Orlanthi hunting god, Odayla, but otherwise depart culturally from their clan-bound cousins. They travel in extended family units, led by the best hunter, who is usually but not invariably a man. Orlanth and a few other of the Storm Tribe, like Yinkin the Cat and Humakt Deathdealer, show up in their stories, but do not receive significant worship. Kolat, the spirit talker, is the second most important god and is considered a wise older brother to Odayla. He helps the Keanosites negotiate with animal spirits. These spirits designate the sick and weak beasts to be culled. People of Keanos treat spirits with a deference verging on prostration and do not dominate or entrap them.

War between families is always bad news, wasting valuable time and energy that could be used gathering food. To steal the catch of another Odaylan is a despicable offence against the gods.

It is, however, perfectly acceptable to take food from foreigners. Odayla teaches that sneaking is better than attacking, though attacking is allowed when the alternative is hunger.

Killing other people, including non-humans, is permissible only to those who have submitted to the rites of Humakt Deathdealer. The penitent journeys to an isolated spot, fasts and engages in selective self-mutilation. If Humakt comes and marks the worshipper on the forehead with his symbol, he gains permission to kill. Deathdealers often leave their families for other lands, where they slake their lust for killing. Then they return and rejoin their people. The permission to deal death remains but the necessity of the impulse diminishes. Keanosite deathdealers are in high demand as scouts and wilderness assassins. Armed units of both Empires employ their grim services.

It is never wise to contemplate too closely one's use of a Keanosite deathdealer, to question the nature of his faith or to look too intently into his eyes.

— Helin D'fiskos, Captain of the Rightness Army

Deliberately bringing about the death of another Odaylan is always murder, no matter whose family he belongs to. He who commits it must indenture himself for three years and a season to the family of the slain. Self-defence mitigates the crime. If the accused can prove it to the satisfaction of a wandering priest or shaman, the penalty need not be paid.

Each family includes a priest or initiate of Odayla, who grants Divine Magic for community use. Most hunters are shamans. Powerful priests of Odayla and shamans of Kolat separate from their families to serve the entire culture, as do the very rare servants of the healing goddess, Chalana Arroy. They roam from one family to the next, as needed. When a wandering priest arrives, one must have food to give her or suffer three years and a season of shame and bad luck. No matter how malnourished a family might be, no priest is cruel enough to shame a family by turning down its offered food.

Bandits

The Odaylan lack of territoriality and disinclination to attack makes their hilly land an ideal haven for bandits and fugitives. Many of its hills, particularly those nearest the Mislari Mountains, are pitted with fissures in which small gangs can camp and hide. As long as they bring in their own food and put little pressure on the local wildlife, outlaws can coexist peacefully with the locals. Smart fugitives leave out food, so the Odaylans feel no need to creep into their camps.

Our god tells us never to steal food from the same foreigner three days running. Elsewise, we lose the will to hunt and his nourishing food becomes a trap.

— Garorlomas, Head Hunter of the Argradu Bloodline, Keanos

Bozh Bojat, Keanos Bandit Leader



The Odaylans give bandits little trouble but are just as tolerant of war parties who come to kill or capture them. The bandits who hide here can raid as far as Ormsland, Safelster, Lankst, Delela or Saug, so those who hunt them come from any of these places. Bandit hunters may be less aware of Odaylan culture and more prone to cause unnecessary trouble with them.

Notorious bandits known to hole up in Keanos include:

- ☒ **Koleng**, a former king of the Delelan Hillhad tribe, who got caught trying to dig up Fedartha Ever-Die before her ritual re-emergence. He claims he was possessed by an evil ghost at the time and harbours an unquenchable bitterness against his tribe for dethroning him. His gang is also Delelan. He raids Hillhad lands in preference to others, but will opportunistically attack any poorly defended trade caravan.

- ☒ **Bozh Bojat**, a trollkin, formerly of Halikiv. His all-trollkin gang specialises in attacks against other uz. He has sworn an oath never to harm a fellow enlo, unless that enlo harms him or another of his band.
- ☒ **Auguel the Wrong**, former steward to the deposed Duke of Col – and also his illegitimate son. His attacks on compilers of the Emperor's tax rolls are so savage that even the exiled nobles have condemned him and offered a reward for his capture, dead or alive. Now Auguel claims to be fighting for the restoration of the Autarchy, attracting the assistance of several banished members of the Guhan Guard.

Halikiv, Land of Trolls

Tucked in the jagged, stony crook where the Mislari Mountains meet the Western Rockwood range is the ancient uz stronghold of Halikiv. A vast, blackened edifice rises from the centre of the territory, its height rivalling the nearby peaks. This is one of the fabled Castles of Lead, a nearly unassailable tower raised by the uz in the glory days of the Great Darkness. Its windowless reaches allow not an glimmer of light inside, allowing its troll inhabitants to remain active during brightest daylight. Coruscating clouds of darkness wreath its lower reaches. When attackers approach, these coalesce into reaching, wormlike tentacles, which pierce or strangle those who would defile this holy uz redoubt.

The Castle of Lead is a kygerlith. That means it's an incarnation of our goddess, Kyger Litor. So if you mess with it, you are a fool. And soon you be a dead fool.

— Gor Kargor, Matriarch of Guhan

The Castle of Lead leads deep down into the earth, connecting to a twisting, centipedal network of passageways, where uz of lesser status toil, spar and eat all they can. Included among their number is a writhing legion of wretched trollkin.

Slaves Pens of Halikiv

A forest of chains, fences and cages criss-crosses Halikiv's rocky surface. Blackened, deteriorating bunkhouses house tens of thousands of human slaves. During the day, they sleep, dosed by a will-sapping potion called

pluh, a main ingredient of their rancid porridge. At night, they work as foragers and harvesters, picking clean the surrounding scrubland of all plant and animal life they can grasp in their bleeding, twitching fingers. They fill their heavy baskets with gorse, moss, grubs, mice, eggs, switchgrass and other meagre delicacies. In Halikiv's few scraps of genuinely arable land, they tend quick-growing crops, overseen by uz warriors mounted on giant insects. The combination of depressant intake and back-breaking labour keeps most of them dully compliant and incapable of worship – and thus, unable to gain spells to rebel against their masters. Those few who display the wherewithal to rebel are fed to the giant praying mantises who act as outrider guardians for the settlement during the daytime. Halikiv's uz adore the taste of free-ranging human but will eat slaves only in a pinch, as the build-up of *pluh* in their systems can render a diner indolent for days.

Leadership

Halikiv, in contrast to Guhan, stands a bastion to uz traditionalism. Its rulers are grand matriarchs, a troika of Mistress Race trolls born during the early decades of the First Age. Sometimes called the Three Queens or individually titled as Princesses, they are:

- ❑ **Sorenteli**, who was burned by the evil sun when it blasted back into the sky and is hairless and bitter.
- ❑ **Toolani**, who is always at least somewhat pregnant and bears fewer trollkin per litter than any other uz.
- ❑ **Dachargro**, who is famous even outside of Halikiv for her long list of lovers. Legend has it that she dallied with Arkat and maybe even Talor the Laughing Warrior (Malkioni who revere Talor as a saint fiercely deny this calumny). Sometimes she ventures out of Halikiv to seek a new, strange partner to tryst with. Survivors of her embrace acquire weird darkness powers.

Only the clan matriarchs, the senior females of Halikiv's many clans, ever meet the Three Queens snout-to-snout. On those rare occasions when the grand matriarchs feel the need to intervene in the kingdom's administrative affairs, they convey their orders to the clan matriarchs, who transmit them to the soldiers, officials and dogsbodies who run their extended families.

Relations with Guhan

Although the two uz communities of Ralios arguably have interests in common, contacts between them are minimal. A few uz of Halikiv fought alongside Arkat and were rewarded by him with land in the kingdom of Guhan. Most, however, came from the Shadowlands.

The matriarchs of Halikiv have always viewed Guhan as a preposterous human institution staffed by idiotic males, who have never been able to manage their own affairs. Also, Halikiv blames the Guhan Guard for inflaming local human animus against the uz during the heyday of the Stygian Empire. That the Guhanites are generally better fed than the Haliviki does little to quell their spite. The Guhanites, feeling the sting of their undisguised contempt, hate to interact with them.

Warriors of Halikiv

Adventurers are more likely to encounter Halikiv's champions than its leaders. The roster of its most feared warriors reads as follows.

Arganga Xok, the Moth Rider, derives her powers from the insect goddess, Gorakikki. She rides a giant moth into battle, at the head of a platoon of ferocious warrior-women, also all moth-mounted. She can spew a sticky web-like substance from her mouth and hands. It envelops her enemies and quickly hardens to the strength of bronze.

Volanergg is an indomitable devotee of the death god Zorak Zoran. He animates dead human slaves into a zombie and skeleton army that defends the borderlands of Halikiv during daylight hours, when uz find it hard to fight. Volanergg upholds his faith by prosecuting a bloodthirsty hatred for all sun worshippers. He finds them aplenty among the solar worshippers of Corolaland's Enlightenment Alliance.

A lifelong lust for inedible riches afflicts the stealthy **Thongimus Silver-Stealer**, who sneaks into adventurer's encampments along with his personal retinue of shadow spirits. He always pilfers their purses before attacking – assuming that combat appears on his agenda at all. The Three Queens often use him to execute reconnaissance missions.

The wide, dark eyes and infantile features of the enlo called **Dichen the Liar** exert a powerful subconscious influence on any humans who encounter him. They instinctively treat him as a cute, helpless creature in need of their nurturing protection. Dichen pretends to be a mistreated trollkin rebel escaped from Halikiv's sadistic slave masters. He promises to act as a scout for adventurers intent on penetrating the troll kingdom. In truth, he always leads them to the slaughter. A child of Princess Toolani, Dichen enjoys the highest status of any enlo in Halikiv.

The human witch **Drimentos** heads a small cadre of free humans granted asylum in Halikiv. She is a Spolite darkness sorcerer, a member of a secret society that dominated Peloria before the EWF took over. She hopes to use Halikiv as a base to launch a Spolite resurgence as soon as the wyrmfriends falter. Her entry to Halikiv came when the Zorak Zorani Runelord Volanergg caught her in the act of skinning a Yelmatio warrior alive. On the spot, Volanergg declared her his honorary sister, a connection they sealed with a subsequent blood ceremony. She later won the maternal affections of Princess Sorenteli, which are not often given, especially to a human. No uz attacks the sun worshippers of the Enlightenment Alliance as enthusiastically as Drimentos.

Corolaland

Wedge uncomfortably between the barren hills of Saug and the troll country of Halikiv is a sliver of land known as Corolaland. This unwanted patch of scoured earth serves as the headquarters of the Enlightenment Alliance, an ad hoc organisation of disparate factions who find common cause in their war against the trolls.

The Enlightenment Alliance was founded 20 years ago, by the Dara Happan noble Luvarharmos. He created it as an outlet for young Dara Happan men who wanted to fight for their god without taking a stand on the legitimacy of the Dragon Emperor. By fighting the trolls of faraway Halikiv, they neither challenge nor support the Golden Dragon. Neither threatened or thrilled by its agenda, the EWF council allows the Alliance to exist, as a useful safety valve. It draws Dara Happans who might otherwise rise in rebellion against them to disperse their energies in a distant and useless cause.

Luvarharmos' force includes adherents of the best-known solar war cult, Yelmatio, as well as obscurer

supporting sun deities, such as Polaris and Antirius. His men are noted for their youth, unbending deference to authority, bravery and lack of imagination. Their leader is a kindly, cautious fellow who takes pains to project a fatherly demeanour. He is easily flattered by requests for advice, to which he responds with a ready supply of platitudes.

If Luvarharmos tried an invasion of the Shadowlands, a trollish territory under the wyrmfriend wing, he would see our tolerance for his folly instantly evaporate.

— *Ervaling Scalemaker, Wyrmfriend Priest*

Luvarharmos has since built his organisation across cross-cultural lines, uniting solar adherents of various faiths. Other members include:

Arganga Nok, Moth Rider



- ☒ The Elmal peoples of the East Wilds. Before Luvaharmos came, Corolaland was occupied only by a few eccentric Orlanthi-style clans who followed Elmal as their main male god and husband to Ernalda. The Elmali, unaffected by the Walker's Curse, are among the best riders of Ralios. Like anyone else, they travel on foot through Saug and Delela. As ancestral foes of the trolls, they easily found common cause with the Enlightenment Alliance. The chieftain of the Elmal tribe is Elus the Listener, a calm and mediating figure among the various glowing hotheads of the Alliance.
- ☒ An extended clan of Pentan nomads, displaced after the EWF conquest of their territories, slashed their way through the continent until they wound up here. As their khan, Gika Perekasya, approached Luvaharmos, killing hatchet in hand, he experienced a blinding vision sent by the great sun spirit, Kargzant, who ordered him to remain here and lay waste to the trolls. Commanded by his god, he bowed down before Luvaharmos, declaring him an elder brother in matters of war.
- ☒ The Qa-Ying, or eagle hsunchen, from the Shanshan mountains in Kralorela. Brought here by God Learner scholars intent on finding mythic commonalities between them and the various hsunchen of Ralios, they grew quickly bored and lit off in search of a suitable nesting site. After finding one in the Mislari Mountains, they were raided by uz. The survivors threw in with the Enlightenment Alliance, seeking vengeance. Their current leader is Rui Qin the Night Eagle, who in his eagle form shines a blinding light from his wing feathers.
- ☒ The Institute For Darkness Studies, a God Learner front organisation created solely for the purpose of attracting the partnership of the Enlightenment Alliance. Its purported mission is the penetration and exposure of darkness cults everywhere, including the uz. Really it wants to steal uz myths and secrets for its own use. Its dean is the crane-thin, pernickety sorcerer Milmar. His students, more interested in a pulse-pounding scrap than dry mythic studies, enthusiastically lend their Sorcery to the Alliance's sallies against Halikiv.

As fusty as he may seem, Luvaharmos is scarcely an idiot. He knows to trust his God Learner partners only insofar as their magics prove useful to the cause.

— *Bramardharim, Lieutenant-at-Arms of the Enlightenment Alliance*

Adventure Hooks

The default Corolaland adventure is a raid against the trolls, conducted either in concert with, or under the sponsorship of, the Enlightenment Alliance. Other adventures might include:

A Drunkard's Vow: Loup Milharo, wastrel son of a wealthy family of Safelster, got drunk in a tavern and signed on as a volunteer for the Enlightenment Alliance. He showed no particular animus toward uz before striking up this sudden barroom friendship with his new buddy, the charismatic Dara Happan exile Bramardharim. The Milharo family hires the adventurers to intercept Loup and bring him back, kidnapping him if necessary. They require the party to sign a secrecy agreement, punishable by an onslaught of madness spirits. Once the documents are signed, they reveal the secret they want kept from the world. If Loup is not returned before Wildday, he will turn into a wolf, revealing the entire family as descendants of cursed Telmori.

Bright Delivery: The adventurers hire on as couriers for a Dara Happan noble, who wants them to convey a family heirloom, the Solar Staff, to his son, a fighter for the Enlightenment Alliance in Corolaland.

Under Cover of Brightness: Huddux Urgug, patron of Kustria hires the adventurers to take part in a hazardous hoax in Corolaland. They are to escort Trietoia, a Spolite darkness witch, to that territory. Once there, she will arm them with temporary darkness magic, which they will use to chase her into an Enlightenment Alliance camp. She can then pose as a Spolite defector, gaining asylum behind their lines. Then she can act as double agent. Once the adventurers deliver her, the rest of their task is simple – all they have to do is evade pursuit by the Alliance's best trackers, through their home turf.

VESMONSTRAN

Vesmonstran is Ralios' northern region. In contrast to the urbanised, densely populated Safelster area, it is a sparsely inhabited territory where humans jockey for survival with dwarfs, elves, trolls, werewolves, dragonewts and Chaos creatures.

Lankst, Stronghold of Orlanthi

The hilly land of Lankst stands as one of two places where the traditional Orlanthi ways still reign supreme. The other is Hendrikiland, which only recently threw off the yoke of wyrmfriend rule.

Clans and Empires

Lankst has been an independent Orlanthi stronghold since the fall of the Stygian Empire in 740. The Autarchy's destroyers, the God Learner Empire, officially declare hegemony over the area. The situation on the ground contradicts their imperious claims. The Empire sends exploratory delegations into the area and occasionally makes noises about making a census. However, it does not impose its laws, exact taxation or maintain order. Military outposts erected in the late eighth and early ninth centuries now languish, abandoned.

The Empire's lack of control over Lankst is a cause of controversy in the capital. God Learners want to leave it as a sort of theist preserve, where they can go to learn undiscovered myths. They feel they get better information from contacts in Lankst than from urbanised Orlanthi in Safelster.

Opposing them is the Rightness Army, which seeks either the conversion or eradication of the Orlanthi peoples, depending on which brand of fanaticism holds sway in

the organisation at any given moment. Rightness Army raiding parties stage occasional forays into Lankst. These tend to be the fiercest of the army's hotheads.

To bolster their intentions toward Lankst, God Learner leaders engage in a long-term plan to use the Orlanthi as a catspaw against the EWF. Their agents foment conflict between the Lanksti Orlanthi and their draconised counterparts of Ormsland. With Lanksti harrying tactics pinning down the wyrmfriends, the God Learners can convincingly argue that they should be left alone to unwittingly serve the Empire's strategic aims.

The Lanksti require little prodding to regard the followers of Orlanth the Dragon as worse threats than the God Learners. Draconised Orlanthi, ever more anxious to fuel their own magics with fresh recruits, continue to send missionary parties into Lanksti clan lands. So desperate are they that they violate Orlanthi rules of hospitality, crossing tula boundaries with impunity. When their people are held for ransom, they send all manner of foreign menaces to retrieve them, from dragonewts and earthshaking dinosaurs to Pelorian hoplite brigades.

A Haven for Exiles

Fiesive has recently earned a reputation for uniting adventuring parties of absurdly disparate backgrounds. Lankst has become a haven for various foreigners with a grudge against the EWF. Exile communities cluster in the growing town of Fiesive, whose chief export is rebellion. Groups represented include Dara Happan nobles, Carmanian dualists and Spolite darkness witches. Under other circumstances, these groups would have their fingers clamped around each others' throats. Mutual hatred of the wyrmfriends have made strange bedfellows of them.

Local Orlanthi attitudes toward the exiles vary, according to each clan's tradition of innovation and tolerance. Militantly isolationist clans prey on them as they would any other crazy outsider. More accepting communities trade with them and even coordinate raiding activities. Luckily for the exiles, the former tend to be clustered in the northern hills, with the friendlier clans arranged on the banks of the Upper Tanier River.

The high leaders of the Rightness Army have bigger fish to fry than the Lanksti wind worshippers. They pretend to be fixing for a war on the EWF but their true goal is the overthrow of the heathen-loving God Learners.

— Gurek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster

The tribes split because of Arkat! Some thought he was still a trustworthy Orlanthi at heart, while others knew he was an accursed troll-friend. So they fought each other, instead of him.

— Kenna Harthstaling, Talking Woman of the Blue Bull Clan

Tribes and Kings

The biggest current conflict within the Orlanthi communities of Lankst revolves around the issue of tribal unity. Whenever the Lanksti have been powerful relative to their neighbours, it has been as a handful of unified tribes, as opposed to a scattering of disparate clans. During the Dawn Age, Arkat conquered the Lanksti after internal conflict split apart the tribes.

The Autarchy kept the Lanksti from forming tribes, suppressing them ruthlessly whenever they opted for political unity. After the fall of the Stygians, tribes formed briefly, then fell apart again.

This happened when EWF missionaries first trickled into what had previously been closed territory. In their own territory, they organise clans into large tribes. Their composition is decreed from without. Priests are put in charge of the tribes, leaving the traditional warrior-kings out in the cold.

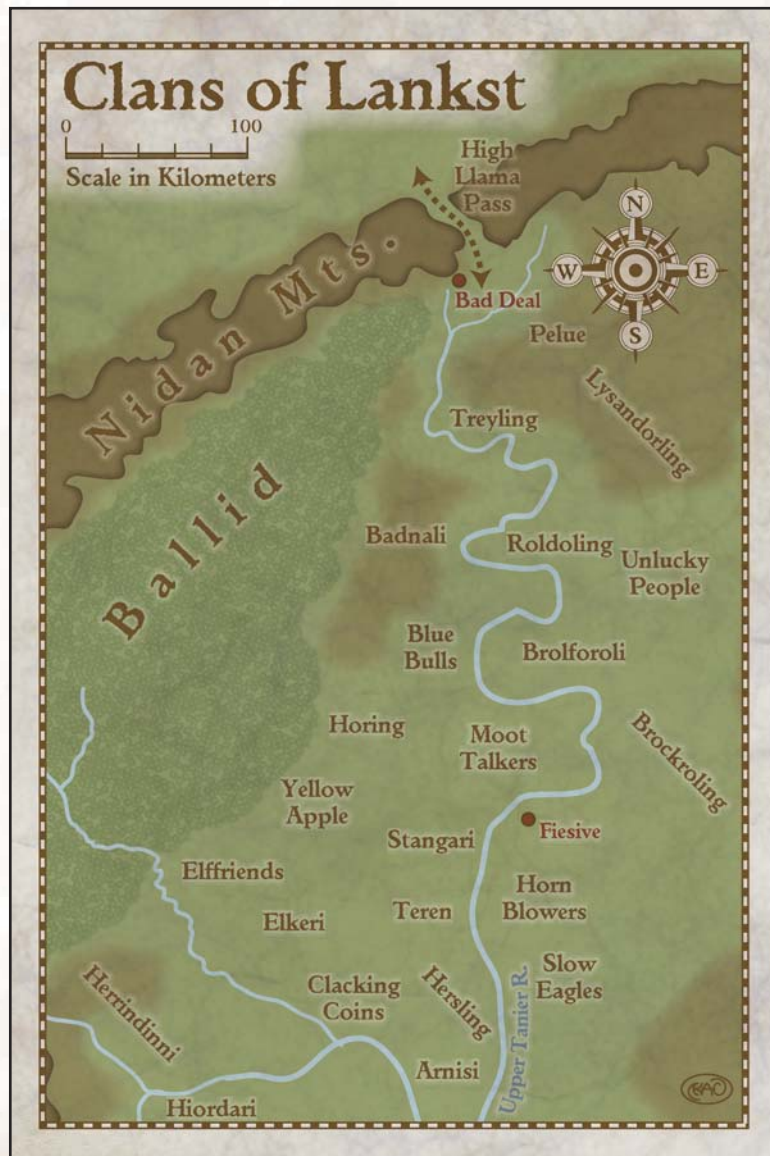
In the minds of a large faction of Lankst's Orlanthi, the very concept of the tribe is inextricably linked with draconic blasphemy. Advocates of tribal unity argue that this attitude dooms them forever to defeat. If the enemies have tribes, they need them, too.

Individual ambition complicates the equation. The foremost proponents of a return to tribalism unsurprisingly envision themselves as the founding kings of these new tribes. Unfortunately, they all lack the

popularity and charisma necessary to win themselves the thrones they seek.

Clans of Lankst

The **Arnisi** earn fame as Lankst's most competitive game players. They always win at kite contests, arm-wrestling and foot races. They maintain a shrine to Mastakos, the running god. The Arnisi chieftain, Dori Enalos, has six sons by six different lovers. Each expertly wields a different weapon and sports a different hair colour. When they raid together, they are mightier than any single hero of the Upper Tanier Valley.



The **Blue Bulls** are known for the righteous viciousness of their women who, in adherence with their ancestral ways, insist that feuds be carried on even when the men have grown wounded and weary. They have a bigger pig herd than anyone else and keep a shrine to Mralota, the obscure goddess of that animal. Their chieftain is Leik Push-Between, who has never seen an argument between third parties he did not wish to intervene in. The greatest magician among them is Kenna Harthstaling, a Lhankor Mhy priestess who wears a false beard of thorny wicker.

The **Badnali** clan campaigns tirelessly for tribal formation. Their chieftain, Kag the Gloomy, is an oddly dour follower of the Talking God, Issaries. His main argument for tribes is that the Lanskti will be utterly and horribly destroyed if they don't adopt a robust defensive posture immediately. He fully intends to be King of Lankst but lacks the bold confidence necessary to an Orlanthi ruler. Kag spent much of his youth in the city of Kustria. His comrade from those days, a Malkioni warrior named Gerdret, is a frequent visitor to the Badnali tula. Kag's opponents point to his friend's influence as proof that he is in the pay of the Seshnegi myth-stealers.

Ever since the founding of the clan, the **Brockroling** have been staunchly independent. Celebrated for their hospitality and penchant for feasting, they welcome the exiles of Fiesive to their tula to swap stories and hatch plans against the EWF. Don't mistake them for friends of the God Learners, though. They oppose the southern Empire with equal fervour. They favour the formation of a tribe, although their chieftain, Orl Wax-Skin, disclaims all interest in thrones or regalia. The Brockroling are a peace clan and as such are dependent on the goodwill of their more warlike neighbours.

Orl Wax-Skin has some terrible disease that will take years to kill him. If you accidentally brush up against his bare flesh, you will feel its chilly touch.

— Kenfakos, Champion of the Elkeri Clan

Now that there are Dara Happan sun worshippers in the nearby town of Fiesive, the **Brolforoli** make an annual raid on the town, just before Sacred Time. Their objective is to take prisoner a high-ranking Yelmite priest or warrior. After a successful raid, they drag the captive back to their clan hall and force him to participate in

Kenna Harthstaling



their ceremonies. At the ritual's climax, they release him, mimicking Orlanth's Lightbringer Quest. The people of Fiesive, Dara Happan or otherwise, are understandably unhappy about being invaded on an annual basis. They not only vehemently defend themselves when the time comes but launch pre-emptive reprisal raids against Brolforoli lands throughout the year. Tensions between clan and town have ratcheted even further since their chieftain and thundering hero, Korlmar, slew the town's mayor during last year's sally.

The **Clacking Coins** are a trading clan whose primary rivals are the Badnali. Because the Badnali support tribal unity, they oppose it. Unlike their rivals, the Clacking Coins trade avidly with delegations from the EWF. Thanks to this connection, they conduct a brisk trade in exotic goods from Maniria and Peloria. They say they are only interested in trade and do not listen to the wyrmfriend godtalkers. Their chieftain, Robar the Younger, has however recently been seen with a serpentine necklace dangling between his ruddy chest hairs.

The **Elffriends** occupy lands on the border with the aldryami forest of Ballid. As their name suggests, they maintain good relations with the plant folk. They keep an unusually large portion of their lands forested, supplementing their food supply through hunting. They negotiate with the elves before cutting trees and act as mediators in dealings between them and other clans. Their chieftain, Faryth Close-Counsel, hopes to enlist the aldryami in the inevitable clash with the EWF.

Gartos Goldhand, chieftain of the **Elkeri** clan, has sworn to split the skull of the next person who mentions the word 'tribe' to him. The Elkeri, famed for their healthy cattle herds, are widely reckoned to be the richest clan in Lankst. He and his close-mouthed people will boast about any achievement other than their wealth. Their clan champion is the fresh-faced, lantern-jawed spearman Kentakos. In a gesture atypical of freedom-loving Orlanthi, he has vowed to remain celibate until his wedding. He says he has yet to find a woman beautiful enough to marry.

Famed for their openness, the **Herrindinni** have allowed a troop of Rinliddi bird people to inhabit an undeveloped portion of their territory. They now participate in raids alongside their Orlanthi hosts, frightening neighbouring clans with their giant, carnivorous avians. The Rinliddi leader, Sarsarm Redfeather, seems to be sweet on the chieftain's daughter. Other clans find it scandalous that he does not object to the dalliance but Markor Brownbeard has always gone his own way.

Hundreds of years ago, the ambitious **Hersling** clan allied itself with the Stygian conquerors and aided them in ruling over their fellow Orlanthi. The other clans of Lankst have never forgiven them for it. Perhaps to make up for their permanently sullied reputation, Hersling warriors have led the resistance against God Learners and EWF alike. Their hero and chieftain, Robangor Purple Coat, once led an EWF earthshaker platoon into the path of a Rightness Army invasion force, then stood on

a hill to sing and stomp throughout the ensuing carnage. If Robangor were anything other than a Hersling, his tireless advocacy of tribal unity might take him all the way to a throne.

The **Hiordari** have always hated the Hersling. It is a rare year when they do not prosecute a feud against them. For a while they were against the idea of a tribe, because the Hersling were for it. Then their chieftain, Mandan Squaresail, decided it would be more satisfying to argue for a tribe, then take the crown Robangor Purple Coat so thirstily covets. Mandan's neighbours admit Squaresail is a great hero, especially with his ability to fly around on a man-sized kite he brought back from the Other Side. However, they have no wish to make him king just to spite one of his enemies.

The **Horing** always do things differently than everyone else. Their clan ring is made up of five elders only. Also, a worshipper of Orlanth and one of Ernalda serve as co-chieftains. Currently the mild-mannered Harnd the Glutton and the sour-tempered Minga Haranvaling fill these positions. Strangest of all, they keep dogs, an animal generally loathed in Orlanthi culture, and kill any alynx they find on their lands. So it should come as no surprise that they have welcomed the wyrmfriend priests into their midst. Minga Haranvaling has allowed one bloodline of her clan to worship Orlanth the dragon, to see what happens. In return for this boon, the dragonewts gifted the Horing with a three-horned earthshaker beast, which they use to plough their fields.

Farkalda the Red, crafty chieftain of the **Horn Blowers**, uses the tribal unification issue to enrich her struggling clan. She accepts lavish gifts from leaders on both sides of the issue, carefully modulating her reactions so that each thinks she will swing their way if only they demonstrate a touch more generosity. The Horn Blower tula is home to the Harosord bloodline, a family that produces a great hero every generation. Its current champion is Ortag Scrollreader, a Runelord of the sun god Elmal who is literate in every language except his own.

Foremost among the opponents of tribal rule are the arch-conservative **Lysandorling** clan, who despise the EWF with a passion and fear rule by priests. Its own god talkers are permitted to speak only when spoken to. They may never question the leadership of its intimidating chieftain, Sarran. He is nicknamed the Ear, because he can hear everything that is said about him, even miles away. This

We have a saying in our clan: 'Trust a Hersling once, you are good at heart. Trust him twice, you are an idiot'.

— Kenna Harthstaling, Talking Woman of the Blue Bull Clan

wealthy war clan fattens itself by exacting tribute from its neighbours. It maintains its influence with generous gift-giving. Sarran regularly visits his neighbours to shore up support for his anti-tribal stance.

Sarran's best argument against tribes is Sarran himself, because if we did have one, he would surely wind up as its king.

— Kenna Harthsfaling, *Talking Woman of the Blue Bull Clan*

The name of the **Moot Talkers** clan harkens back to the most recent tribal period, when a collection of lowly stickpickers distinguished themselves as great legal minds. They hired themselves out as advocates to speak for other clans at tribal legal proceedings or moots. When they successfully argued to spare the life of a trickster, he arranged to gift a large section of another clan's land to the stickpickers. Over the generations the other clan dwindled and the Moot Talkers expanded. The Moot Talkers, who still hire themselves out as heralds and negotiators, believe in tribes but are not convinced that the conditions are right for one just yet. 'A failed tribe would be worse than none at all', says their chieftain, the mellifluous speaker Orkalo. He hopes to broker a peace arrangement between the EWF and God Learners which will leave Lankst as a neutral territory neither power is permitted to dominate. He regularly receives legations from both sides. Each is more interested in making a firm ally of him than in signing on to his pet project.

To the **Pelue**, the Orlanthi virtue of generosity has always been better honoured in the abstract. They control the Lanksti side of the High Llama Pass, earning a cut of all caravan goods travelling into Ralios from the land of Fronela which is on the other side of the Nidan Mountains. They also trade extensively with the mostali, extending protection to the town of Bad Deal. On the subject of tribes, they remain studiously neutral. To control a tribe, they would have to share their wealth with lesser clans. Before they agree to such an arrangement, they would have to be convinced that it would be good for trade. Their chieftain, Dandril, always drinks himself into a near stupor before going off to raid his Telmori werewolf neighbours, and invariably comes back with at least one wolf pelt hanging from his belt.

The warlike **Roldoling** reckon that the promise of tribal unity offers Lankst's only hope against wrymfriender encroachment. Their chieftain, Asbor, has revived an ancient vehicle, the chariot, as a symbol of Orlanthi traditionalism. The Roldoling dye their close-cropped hair a rusty shade of red and stiffen it with an egg mixture so that it sticks straight up on their heads. Their goldsmiths are second to none, producing weapon hilts and other implements inscribed with a distinctively intricate whorling pattern.

The **Slow Eagles** allow a champion of Orlanth the King and one of Orlanth the Dragon to engage in ritual combat outside their clan hall every Sacred Time. If the traditionalist wins, they remain staunchly anti-draconic until the next year's ritual rolls around. If the dragon comes out on top, they adopt draconic symbols and grant their worship energy to the wrymfrienders. They maintain the region's largest temple to Orlanth. This year it is decked out in serpent icons. These are all placed on hooks for easy removal. The Slow Eagle chieftain is Bartand the Snorer, whose bloodline exiled him to sleep in a hut far from their stead. He hates to be mocked on this point, especially by outsiders.

Although their neighbours dispute it, the **Stangari** claim that the town of Fiesive sits on their territory. Their young folk enjoy the strangeness and variety of the people there and spend much of their free time learning of the ways of civilisation from its motley inhabitants. Their affection does not stop their elders from demanding yearly tribute from the townsfolk. The Fiesivites either pay up or fight back, often with the help of the Brockrolings. Ganorlev the Argumentative, the hair-splitting Stangari chieftain, fancies himself a skilled debater. He opposes tribal unity on the grounds that Fiesive would surely be made a tribal capital and definitively made the property of all.

The unyielding battlers of the **Teren** clan keep a small temple to Humakt, the god of war. They hate both Empires with equal fervour. Whenever a Teren child is orphaned, he or she is dedicated to Humakt, forswearing love and family in exchange for terrible death magics. The Tereni hire out as mercenaries and willingly train outsiders in the ways of their forbidding god. To qualify, once must complete a rite of severance from one's clan and family. Applicants of other cultures can join the death cult, too, provided they also sever themselves from their old traditions. To the discomfort of other Lanksti,



Bad Deal

The mostali and their Pelue clan allies regularly try to change the name of the town to something more encouraging but everyone who comes to trade here persists in using its traditional appellation. The mostali, who gather in a large cement-covered plaza in the middle of this small, snow-swept community, cannot help but drive hard bargains. They tantalise traders with offers of strange technologies but never quite deliver the latest model or most potent alchemical concoction.

Bad Deal's permanent residents include a coterie of mostali, various service providers and an outer circle of rejects and outcasts.

The town's mostali are vaguely discreditable examples of their hard-working race. Though not overtly rebellious, they suffer from character flaws that cause more straight-laced mostali to look down on them. They are drunkards, lackwits, layabouts and questioners of authority. Their merchant compatriots spend as little time in their company as possible.

Service providers include tavern keepers, a blacksmith, a healer, several livery operations and a family of shamans for hire.

The outcast population supports itself with odd jobs or the occasional foray into mercenary work. It includes Orlanthi outlaws, Telmori pariahs, Fronelan émigrés and the last remnants of the forgotten Cult of the Shattered Eye. This sect, dedicated to the lost secrets of Nysalor, maintains a lonely shrine to their dismembered god.

The town headman is Korl Kand. Local Orlanthi assume he is Safelsteri, while visitors from Safelster take him for an Orlanthi. Glum and perpetually soused, he reacts to all complaints with a weary, fatalistic shrug, as if to say that one can expect nothing but disappointment in a town called Bad Deal.

they allow these adoptees full rights within the clan. Astonishingly, their chieftain is not even human. Dan-Lor-Jar is a humanoid being with a cruelly porcine face who rides a gigantic boar into battle. His lance has been known to impale two foes at once.

I know what kind of being Dan-Lor-Jar is; I seen his kind back home, in Dragon Pass. He's a Tusk Rider! If that don't scare you, obviously you ain't from Dragon Pass.

— Perik Toadstool, Refugee from the EWF

With Chaos in retreat through most of the world, many Orlanthi have forgotten Orlanth's unruly brother, Urox the Storm Bull, who beat Wakboth the Devil and bestows anti-Chaos powers on his worshippers. Among the **Treyling** clan, Urox is still accorded full respect. The bullying warriors of his temple get drunk and cause trouble in Big Deal and Fiesive when they are not staging hair-raising expeditions into Karia, where the evil of ruined Dorastor still oozes. Their chieftain and war leader, Jarnbor the Yawler, speaks inarticulately at the best of times and is reduced to grunts and hisses at times of special excitement. The Treyling are not alone among the Lanskti in keeping slaves but no clan is more dependent on captive labour for the tilling of fields and harvesting of fields. Notorious for the mistreatment of their thralls, they shrug callously when one drops dead of overwork. When their labour supply runs low, they simply send a war party out to capture wayward traders or unwary wyrmfriend missionaries.

The aptly-named **Unlucky People** eke out a desperate existence on an infertile plain. Its inviting flatness in an otherwise hilly country makes it a welcome mat for invasions. Raiding parties from Ormsland, Telmorla and even chaotic Karia frequently overrun it on their way to more lucrative raiding targets. Whenever a storm or flood hits Lankst, the Unlucky People are the worst hit. Its barren reaches are haunted by angry ghosts and weird spirits. However, a prophecy made on the day of Arkat's apotheosis has it that the eventual survival of the Lanskti Orlanthi depends on the continuance of the Unlucky People. One day, a great hero will arise from among their humble ranks to deliver them from destruction. Many of the clan believe that the EWF is this enemy – but then

they always think fulfilment of the prophecy is right around the corner. Their chieftain is Aski the Ragged, named for his threadbare robes. The Unlucky People are disproportionately represented among the Orlanthi émigrés of Safelster; they leave hoping to find a better life in the cities.

The first time I heard that Gordangara Rockstaff, the favourite priestess of Kustria's backwoods Orlanthi, was an unlucky person, I didn't understand that was the name of her clan, back home.

— Gurek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster

The people of the **Yellow Apple** are friends with the trolls and foes of the elves. Their bond with the trolls dates back to the Great Darkness. When the Stygian Empire came, this connection won them protection from harsh measures. Yellow Apple people are quick to explain that they accepted privileges without betraying their fellow Orlanthi, unlike the stinking Hersling. Their enmity with the elves was also earned in ancient times, when they raided the trees that grew intelligent fruit and baked them into pies. To this day the Yellow Apple raid the wild orchards of nearby Ballid Forest. This puts them at odds with the Elf-friends. Often they and the trolls of Guhan team to fight the aldryami and Elf-friends. Their chieftain is the witty, sharp-tongued Ernaldan priestess Orlgartha, who says: 'The Earth Mother made fruit for us to eat. What the elves have is ours'. The Yellow Apple oppose tribal formation because they would probably be forced to co-exist with the accursed Elf-friends. Their main hero is Saranth Nightsounder, who wields a flaming axe given to him by the uz. This weapon, Sapdrinker, proves particularly potent against elves and their kin.

Clan Attitudes

The Clan Attitudes table encapsulates the general attitudes of each clan toward the political movements and entities of the day. Like the wind, Orlanthi are ever-changeable. Although their magic remains strongest when they hew to the attitudes of their ancestors, they can nonetheless change allegiances quickly. Player Character activities could easily harden or loosen a particular attitude. The Clan Attitudes table demonstrates the general attitudes a clan has to tribes, foreign exiles, the EWF and the God Learners.

Clan Attitudes Table

Clan	Tribes	Foreign Exiles	EWf	God Learners
Arnisi	Animosity	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Blue Bulls	Animosity	Neutral	Animosity	Animosity
Badnali	Favourable	Neutral	Animosity	Favourable
Brockroling	Favourable	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Brolforoli	Neutral	Animosity	Animosity	Neutral
Clacking Coins	Animosity	Animosity	Favourable	Neutral
Elffriends	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity	Neutral
Elkeri	Neutral	Neutral	Animosity	Favourable
Herrindinni	Neutral	Favourable	Animosity	Favourable
Hersling	Favourable	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Hiordari	Favourable	Neutral	Animosity	Favourable
Horing	Animosity	Neutral	Favourable	Neutral
Horn Blowers	Neutral	Favourable	Animosity	Neutral
Lysandorling	Animosity	Animosity	Animosity	Neutral
Moot Talkers	Neutral	Animosity	Favourable	Favourable
Pelue	Neutral	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Roldoling	Favourable	Neutral	Animosity	Neutral
Slow Eagles	Favourable	Favourable	Favourable	Animosity
Stangari	Animosity	Favourable	Animosity	Favourable
Teren	Neutral	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Treyling	Neutral	Animosity	Animosity	Neutral
Unlucky People	Favourable	Favourable	Animosity	Animosity
Yellow Apple	Animosity	Favourable	Favourable	Favourable

Travelling through Lankst

Aside from its rivers and the towns of Fiesive and Bad Deal, Lankst lacks public thoroughfares. Roadways scarcely exist. travel through Lankst requires the sojourner to move from one clan tula to the next. If, say, you want to get from Fiesive to the Yellow Apple clan lands, you must move through either the Moot Talkers, Stangari or Teren tula to get there.

The reception one gets when travelling through clan territory depends on one's grasp of Orlanthi etiquette and on the disposition of the clan members toward you. Simply being an Orlanthi is no guarantee of a friendly reception: many clans hate their own neighbours much more than they do their long list of other enemies.

Clan boundaries are marked, sometimes with fences, walls or other fortifications but most often with an arrangement of painted stones or wooden posts. These are typically marked with clan-specific runes. Unless you enjoy a strong, positive relationship with the clan,

etiquette dictates that you stop and wait to be hailed by patrolling warriors. Peaceful clans may not thoroughly patrol their boundaries. It helps to blow a long, lowing note on a horn of salutation. If no one shows up to be hailed, you may proceed with weapons sheathed until you encounter a clan member.

When spotted, the visitor performs a perfunctory version of the Orlanthi greeting. This indicates that your intentions are friendly and that you understand, and intend to abide by, the laws of hospitality.

Recipients of the informal greeting may accept it, granting you permission to travel through the tula to present yourself to the chieftain. Or they might refuse it, in which case you must back off, leaving clan lands in a calm and expeditious manner. They might even attack you, if they do not like or trust you.

Assuming you pass this first muster, you are taken to meet up with the chieftain. Should he be unavailable, an elder, usually a ring member, stands in for him. You then

perform the longer form of the Orlanthe greeting. This is a simple combination of words and gestures in which you identify yourself, boast of your achievements, state the nature of your business in the area, and request hospitality. The chieftain reciprocates, identifying himself and his people, and boasting of his own accomplishments or his clan's historical deeds. He may then opt to quiz you more closely on your intentions. When he finishes speaking, you speak admiringly of his boastworthy acts.

The chieftain must now choose whether to extend hospitality or have you escorted to the clan boundary. Even if he rejects you, you will be allowed to depart unmolested, unless you've somehow revealed yourself as a deadly enemy.

The Orlanthe greeting ceremony offended me when I was first expected to perform it. I was taught that a superior man's qualities are inherent to him and go without saying. In Lankst, I learned that a man is only as good as his last great deed.

— Marbarazham, Refugee of Dara Happa

When a chieftain grants hospitality, he is honour-bound to provide food and shelter, and most importantly to guarantee the guest's safety from attack by members of his clan (and their servants and intermediaries, if any). To enhance their reputations, most clan leaders go beyond these minimal requirements, treating their guests to lavish meals, entertainment and copious quantities of drink.

By asking for hospitality, you undertake a solemn vow to act peacefully toward your hosts. Guests known for violating hospitality will be driven away from any tula they approach. This principle is so central to Orlanthe life that clan members will refuse you entry even if the hospitality you violated was that of their worst enemies.

Fiesive

The ramshackle, improvised town of Fiesive is claimed by four neighbouring clans (the Moot Talkers, Brockroling, Horn Blowers and Stangari) but controlled by none. Its people sustain themselves by providing services to merchants travelling up or down the Upper Tanier River. Traders come from Fronela, through the High Llama Pass, or from Safelster, to the south.

Freebooting serves as the town's secondary industry. Adventuring parties bivouac here, collecting runes and treasures throughout Vesmonstran and the East Wilds. When war breaks out between Lanksti clans, adventurers are occasionally hired as mercenary reinforcements. Losing clans may even recruit elite warriors from Fiesive's inns and ale halls, fully adopting them into lofty positions in their clans. One day's bedraggled outcast might be the next day's thane (warrior noble).

Shops

Though barges laden with trade goods float past Fiesive every day, little of their cargo stops here. Adventurers eagerly await the arrival of meagre weapon shipments at the town's sole armoury shop. Its proprietor, the garrulous, half-crazy **Gerdret**, charges anywhere from 20 to 30% more than usual for common items. Rare or hard-to-find items fetch anywhere from half again to double the price you would pay in Safelster. Gerdret conducts a brisk trade in used weapons, armour and adventuring equipment. He maintains a strict indifference to the origins of any items that might cross his counter, even if slightly notched or bloodstained. If confronted by an angry owner, he blandly deploys his standard catch phrase: 'If I thought you were still alive, friend, I would never have bought your gear'. Fiesive's warriors tolerate Gerdret's eccentricities because, without him, there would be no source of supplies in town at all. Every few years an enterprising adventurer decides to compete with Gerdret. Each of them fell prey to a seemingly unrelated accident, which either killed them or forced them to leave Fiesive.

Gerdret says he's a shaman but never offers any evidence to back it up. Supposedly he draws power from Kest, the local spirit of purse strings and treasure holes.

— Gurek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster

Lodgings

Fiesive's so-called inns fully live up to their reputation for wretchedness.

The **Big Bowl** is a mostali dome of unknown purpose converted for use as a sleeping hall. It is an inverted copper bowl about 30 metres in diameter, with an apex seven metres in height. The Big Bowl's completely

leak-proof dome provides an absolute protection from precipitation. Rough, bare cement covers its floor. Graciously, the proprietress raises no objections if patrons bring in their own bedding material. She is a haggard ex-Kustrian named Urfesa, who keeps a wooden shrine to St. Xemela by her own bed near the door. On cold nights, Urfesa lights fires to warm the place up, dousing them after the smoke becomes chokingly thick. Her charges vary by the prospective guest's apparent ability to pay, always a somewhat arbitrary determination.

Jarnkipe's Place is a sprawling network of musty, rotting cottages. Their roofs are infested with either pigeons or rats. Muddy water seeps up through the floorboards of the cottages near the river. Jarnkipe himself is an Eurmali, a worshipper of the unreliable Orlanthi trickster god. He may tootle tunelessly on a homemade flute in the middle of the night or slip a human waste into your boots while you sleep. To stay here, one must pay one silver per night and agree to a no-complaints policy. Jarnkipe insists that any who violate this rule will be cursed by the Trickster. Anyone who knows anything understands that this is not a threat to be trifled with.

Benadéo, a noble of Col banished from Safelster for the murder of his sister, runs the most pleasant lodgings in Fiesive. It is an old warehouse divided up into cubicles, divided by slats of junk wood salvaged from wrecked

Some say Benadéo killed his sister because she shamed the family by dallying with a commoner. Others say it was Benadéo himself who wanted to share her bed.

— Curek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster

How To Offend A Chieftain

An adventurer with a knack for annoying clan chieftains soon finds travel through Lankst to be nearly impossible. Those who hope to be run off like dogs whenever they hail a Lanksti patrol should undertake the following simple steps:

- ☒ Insult your host, his patron gods and heroes, his ancestors and his clan.
- ☒ Display humility. Pride is an Orlanthi virtue. People who will not boast of their accomplishments are trying to hide something.
- ☒ Refuse your host's offer of food, drink or gifts. Generosity is an Orlanthi virtue. By turning down his largesse, you might as well be telling him that he is poor and pitiful.
- ☒ Instantly reciprocate your host's generosity. The only bad time to give an Orlanthi a gift is right after he gives you one. That again looks like you think he is poor and cannot afford what he has given you. Wait for another occasion, then give the gift.
- ☒ Indicate allegiance with an enemy. Expect to be refused if your intention is to cross a tula to do business with a hostile clan. On a similar note, most clans cherish their ancestral enmities toward one or more foreign or inhuman cultures. If a clan hates trolls and you are an uz, they have little choice but to drive you off or try to kill you. To do otherwise weakens their wyter, the clan spirit that ensures their survival.

To avoid giving offence, learn in advance about the clan you are encountering. If they dislike foreigners or regard you as an ancestral enemy, you would be well advised to plot an alternate route.

boats. It hardly leaks at all, shelters no vermin worse than ants or field mice and offers modest meal service in the morning. It costs 5 silvers a night. Adventurers with something to hide learn to avoid its comparative splendour. Benadéo, a compulsive informant, tells anyone about any of his guests for a handful of copper.

Healing

Fiesive's wounded enjoy a choice of two competing healers. **Abera**, a sallow, sweating, trembling sister of St. Xemela, sits weeping in a windy shrine to her virtuous saint, waiting for customers. She can perform a Magnitude 4 Heal spell, for which she charges 80 silvers. Why does she weep? For the sadness of the world, of course.

The Chalana Arroy healer **Orestana** severed herself from the Treyling clan when they would not censure their chieftain, Jambor the Yawler, for entering a ceremonial hut where women's magic was performed. People who deal with her for any length of time may conclude that

her abrasive personality played a pivotal role in her clan's failure to back her up. Orestana is grouchy, easily insulted and a shameless dispenser of unwanted advice. She makes no attempt whatsoever to conceal her contempt for adventurers, even as she reattaches their severed limbs. She can perform a Magnitude 8 Heal spell and charges 18 silvers per point of Magnitude used. Orestana applies a surcharge to adventurers who have offended her in the past, adding 1 silver per point of Magnitude per incident.

Wandering war bands momentarily resident in Fiesive often include healers, though their availability to tend to others for pay may be limited.

Law, Justice and Authority

Claimed by rival clans and populated by exiles and outlaws, Fiesive is a place where the bonds of authority are loose to nonexistent. In times of crisis, the town's various war bands gather in tense colloquy to appoint a mayor. This official's authority is typically limited only to the immediate problem, dissolving entirely when it is dealt with. No one has occupied the position since the last mayor was slain in a Broforoli raid. Disputes between residents are resolved frontier-style, through violence. Feuding war bands occasionally resolve disputes by submitting to the mediation of an Issaries worshipper, if one happens to be travelling through town.

Communities

The typical exile community consists of a few dozen people. The Dara Happan and Carmanian contingents are larger than the others, numbering around a score apiece.

The longwinded **Iskanst Snakeslayer** heads a woebegone community of Orlanthi refugees from Dragon Pass. They are the beaten-down vestiges of an already obscure cult, that of Orlanth Dragonbreaker. This cult takes as its central myth a battle between Orlanth and a dragon called Aroka, which had swallowed the rain god, Heler. As soon as it discovered the existence of anti-draconic Orlanthi cult, the wyrmfriends set out to exterminate all of its followers. A prophecy motivated Iskanst's great grandfather to come to Ralios, where the Dragonbreaker cult would be reborn, at the time of most pressing need. The verses instructed worshippers to remain distinct unto themselves, remaining clanless until the new Dragonbreaker came. Over the intervening years, many descendants of the original refugees have drifted away, joining clans through marriage or as recruited thanes and

farmers. Iskanst makes a poor showing as high priest, pawning his silver regalia when he loses at dice. His followers are likewise a pack of dispirited layabouts. They hide their shrine in a sinkhole whenever suspected EWF agents come to town.

One of the Dragonbreaker cultists once offered to show me the whereabouts of their hidden shrine for ten silver. He thought I was EWF. I forget his name, now...

— *Curek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster*

Six nobles comprise the nucleus of the town's Dara Happan group. They are attended by junior family members, servants and hangers-on. Their leader is **Marbarazham**, whose grandfather was Chief Falconer to the last rightful Emperor of Dara Happa before the Golden Dragon took over. A ramrod-straight young man of palpable rectitude, he fled his homeland three years ago, when EWF priests told him to order his servants to convert to their wyrmfriend religion. He finds Fiesive a trying place, where a good man's virtue and patience are continually tested. Marbarazham wants to unite with the local Orlanthi against their common EWF enemies but finds this hard to do when the Broforoli clan tries to kidnap him once per year to enact one of their drooling barbarian rituals. He and his warriors could serve as valuable allies to anyone capable of dissuading the Broforoli from further sallies against them.

In nearly any other circumstance, the town's Spolite witches would be at the throats of the Dara Happans and vice versa. They belong to a darkness cult that overran much of Peloria prior to the EWF years. The wyrmfriends, invited into Peloria to help drive them out, then took over themselves. The Spolites of Fiesive are third generation wanderers who have never seen their homeland. They settled here about a dozen years ago, supporting themselves with sporadic mercenary work. The Orlanthi clans treat them as pariahs, assuming that their unfamiliar magic is Chaotic. Their leader, **Hebdoloriam**, is a smoky-eyed provoker of trouble whose physical allure regularly reduces hard-bitten male mercenaries to stuttering awkwardness. Where the Dara Happans still dream of a return to home and power, the Spolites have been born and bred on defeat. They want merely to make a life for themselves and feel at home somewhere. Fiesive is not

Hebdoloriam



much, but it is all they have got. To this end, Hebdoloriam argues to give the place the attributes of a proper town, including a charter, regular authorities and a system of laws. For this reason the nearby clans consider her an enemy. She maintains contacts in distant clans with an open attitude toward foreigners.

People fear the Spolites but I like them better than most in Fiesive. My buddies tell me it's my desire for Hebdoloriam talking. No, I tell them, it's on account of my soft spot for underdogs.

— Curek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster

Fiesive's Carmanian exiles fled the EWF when the wyrmfriends introduced serpentine imagery to the worship of Idovanus, the single god of virtue in their dualistic religion. Some struck back at the dragonfriends

and were hounded from their homes. Others exiled themselves pre-emptively, to plot their return and the reinstitution of their faith. The first group have put down roots in Fiesive, operating a river navigation firm that constructs, rents and pilots barges. **Ulifentor**, a comfort-loving patrician spurred by boundless optimism, leads this group. His second son, **Hadalbarun**, leads the rival faction, a cluster of hot-headed young bravos intent on mastering Indovanic war Sorcery and returning to the homeland to scourge it of reptiles and their friends. The father and son argue bitterly whenever they encounter one another. Hadalbarun and company are always up for a raid on Ormsland. Any enemy of the EWF is a friend of theirs – they will help Player Characters go up against the wyrmfriends by supplying intelligence, maps and war stories. They might even coordinate raids, hitting EWF forces in one place while the adventuring party takes them on in another.

The newest exiles in town are a gang of about a dozen Pentan horse nomads. These worshippers of the fierce sun god Kargzant quickly proved their bravery and brutality, rescuing a God Learner myth-gathering expedition from bandits. They slew every bandit and brought their heads back to town on the ends of long iron poles. None of them, including their stony-visaged leader, **Bularin Amalar**, has bothered to master more than a few words of the local language. Negotiations with them must take place in mime. They make the most of their fearsome reputation, keeping other residents at bay with feints and snarls. If they have any plans beyond making a living with their blades and bows, they have yet to show any signs of them.

Fiesive's equally small and rugged Praxian community stays on the other side of town from the Pentans. They are Bison People, the last remnants of a clan that waged ill-advised war on the puppet authorities ruling their homeland for the EWF. Their kahn, **Naptwal the Drummer**, is named after the magic instrument slung over his back. Its head is covered in the hide of the White Bison Hachwaluna, who rode the plains of Prax when the Dawn came. This mighty spirit speaks in booming percussion notes whenever the clan faces danger. While in the presence of his people, Naptwal is a confident, commanding figure. When he thinks he is unobserved, his posture slumps and a haunted expression creeps stealthily across his sun-worn face.

Defeat has etched itself on poor Napfwal's hide like a tattoo. When drunk, he howls at the stars, cursing them for what they allowed to happen to his people.

— *Curek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster*

Notables

Amid the exiles and passers-through, a handful of solitary individuals make permanent lives for themselves in Fiesive.

Thestigor Blue-Helm was outlawed from the Yellow Apples for raiding the neighbouring Horing after a peace settlement was established between the two clans. He is always recruiting for his adventuring party, Kestigor's Delvers, which specialises in finding buried artefacts for God Learner patrons and then fighting his way through whoever owns the land he and his comrades are digging in. The Delvers post an astonishingly high mortality rate but Kestigor always escapes without a scratch. His recruits are invariably new to Lankst and have never heard of him before.

Askia Whitestreet was born in the city, the daughter of an urbanised Orlanthi woman and a Malkioni priest. Unrecognised by her father and ill-treated by her mother, she fled to Lankst at a young age. Out in the woods, she encountered wind spirits sent to her by Orlanth's brother, Kolat. As a shaman, she exists both inside and outside local traditions. Thus she remains torn in two directions, as always. She makes her living by performing auguries and exorcisms, both for town residents and for the clans of Lankst. She is brusque and dismissive when dealing with strangers but anyone making a sustained effort to win her respect gains a loyal friend.

Pen Pendoka is an Agimori tribesman captured by the God Learners and taken to the Arkat Archive in Tiskos to act as a guide into the Pamaltelan parts of the God Plane. Hoodwinked by a cruel trickster, he fled in the wrong direction, winding up in Lankst. He wishes to depart for his homeland but the spirits he keeps in the fetishes around his belt tell him to stay, to fulfil an important destiny. As he waits for the defining moment to arrive, he kills time by joining adventuring groups on a one-off basis.

The God Learner defector **Triabel Duileau** supports himself as a sorcerer-for-hire and hopes that his enemies from the Pythos University faculty never find him here. Thanks to a carefully maintained lattice of regenerative spells, he looks middle-aged, even though he is well over a hundred years old. He participated in the Goddess Switch experiment of 848. Decades later he suffered a bout of second thoughts and wrote an anonymous pamphlet warning of dire repercussions from the project. Unfortunately for him, his colleagues immediately recognised his florid writing style and summoned intelligent bolts of lightning to hunt him down. Duileau fended these off, faked his own demise and made haste for the worst backwater he could afford to transport himself to. Duileau is an assumed name.

A God Learner name of Milharo told me to meet him in Fiesive, where he'd tell me about a lucrative assignment. When I got there, he'd been and gone. The last anyone saw of him, he was greefing Triabel Duileau like some kind of old friend.

— *Curek Runespear, Mercenary of Safelster*

Adventure Hooks

Player Character groups new to Lankst might participate in adventures like these:

- ☒ **Bejand Renier**, a callow would-be adventurer from a wealthy Safelstran trading family, got himself captured by the notorious Treyling clan on his very first outing (his friends did worse: they were all killed). Bejand has been turned into a lowly thrall and will soon die from overwork and maltreatment if the adventurers, hired by the Reniers, do not get him back.
- ☒ Legend has it that there is a spring in the middle of the wretched wastelands where the Unlucky People live. If you go there and say the magic word of power, OUROBOUROS, it will spurt forth a geyser of gold coins. To keep them, one must kill any of the clan members you see on your way out of their tula. This rumour has resulted in the deaths of many Unlucky People over the years. One of their number, the feeble old peddler Fanth, found out that some idiot, possibly that accursed innkeeper, Jarnkiipe,

told Fiesive's Pentan exiles this false legend. His people are too weak to fight for themselves, so Fanth will give them a valuable treasure map if they go to intercept the murderous Pentans before they arrive at his home.

- ☒ Naimer the Leper, a foe to EWF and God Learners alike, has been spotted in Lankst, near Bad Deal. He started out as a God Learner, then converted to wyrmfriendism, bringing an awful curse on himself in the process. He suffers from regenerative leprosy. His outer extremities rot and fall off, then grow back, only to again become corrupt. Unlike normal lepers, Naimer is hideously contagious. The adventurers are hired by either Empire to find and kill him – or by an enemy of either, anxious to capture him and discover what he knows about them.
- ☒ The God Learner botanist Huontos has just won funding approval for an expedition to the Ballid Forest to gather specimens of a particularly interesting plant. The vegetable snake is a creeping vine that slithers rootlessly across the forest floor. The elves do not like God Learners studying their weird plants, so the adventurers he hires should anticipate strong resistance. Huontos has arranged for them to enter the forest through Yellow Apple lands. He provides a silver ingot to present to their chieftain as payment for the privilege.
- ☒ The Kustrian merchant Adrios Eus was once captured by Telmori wolf men and held for ransom. Incarcerated with him was the ill-tempered death worshipper Sardal, of the Teren clan. Babbling in terror, Adrios repeatedly and accidentally insulted the Humakti warrior. To shut him up, Sardal told him this: every year, on his birthday, he seeks out and kills someone who insulted him. He strongly hinted that he was adding Adrios to his list. Knowing that Sardal's birthday is fast approaching, Adrios hires the adventurers to find him before he leaves his clan lands and launch a fatal pre-emptive assault on him.
- ☒ Two years ago, adventurers working for the God Learners stole one of the sacred chariots of the Roldoling clan. They have been searching for it ever since. From a passing trader, they have just learned that it may be in Marvelmaze, in Kustria. None of the Roldolings know cities all that well and they are looking for a group including an urbanised but loyal Orlanthei to spearhead the recovery effort.

Telmoria, Land of Werewolves

The densely forested hill country of Telmoria lies wedged between Lankst and the dragonewt territories of Ormsland. Its inhabitants are the Telmori, commonly known to outsiders as werewolves. This term originates in the widespread misconception that all Telmori are cursed to turn into wolves every Wildday. They are falsely thought to be tainted with Chaos and even to transmit lycanthropy like a disease.

The inhabitants of Telmor are hsunchen animal people. Aided by shamanic magic, they can change forms between wolf and man. They run in packs with actual wolves, who they communicate with and treat as their brothers. These creatures are larger and smarter than those found elsewhere. To the Telmori, some wolves have two legs and others have four but this is a distinction of only minor relevance. None of them are human; all of them are wolves. Children grow up playing with cubs. At their coming of age ceremonies, each is paired with four-legged wolf, their wolf brother (or sister, as the case may be). Your four-legged brother is as irreplaceable as any literal kin; if he dies, you cannot just replace him, as a city child would a pet dog.

'Hsunchen' is a Kralori term for the animal people. As these cultures bear the same traits throughout Clorantha, we apply it to all of them, whether they be the Basmoli lion men of the Wasteland, the Rathori bear people of Fronela, the eagle people of the Shanshan mountains or any of the other major and minor man/animal hybrids. Of these, none is more loathed and feared than the accursed Telmori.

— Vansfigos Evermead, Tutor of Umathela

Like other hsunchen, the Telmori hew steadfastly to a stone age hunter-gatherer way of life. They raid their neighbours in Lankst and Ormsland, stealing sheep and cattle. They do not keep these animals; they slaughter them on the spot and haul the meat back. For this reason the Orlanthei consider them wasteful and cruel, though in fact they strip the entire carcass in minutes, taking all useful meat and hide.

If the outside world despises the Telmori, they wholeheartedly return the sentiment. People who live in cities or towns and who use metal implements are soft and weak. They exist only to be preyed upon. Like any wolf pack, Telmori culture employs a hierarchy based on courage and physical dominance. When faced with a challenge, whether from inside or outside the pack, an individual must either show superior strength and resolve, or shamefully submit. Telmori interactions with outsiders begin with threat displays, from bared teeth to haughty insults. Telmori may not involve themselves in liaisons with non-Telmori, treating such acts as instances of bestiality. Other taboos include murder, eating a human or wolf, and using foreign magic. Rune Magic is not considered foreign.

All Telmori are members of the cult of Telmor by birthright. Their shamans communicate with their wolf god through spirits. On death, they leave their loved ones exposed to the elements, so their spirits can reincarnate into new bodies. These may be either two- or four-legged, as chance dictates. It does not matter.

Since the Arkat-Gbaji war, some Telmori became Impure. They involuntarily adopt wolf form every Wildday. This curse provides the basis for the werewolf myths surrounding the people of Telmoria. Actually, only about 15% of Telmoria's wolf folk are cursed; the remainder are Pure. Cursed Telmori are found in greater numbers over the mountains, in Dorastor.

Telmoria stoutly resists invasion by either nearby Empire. EWF missionaries find them unlikely and inhospitable converts. God Learner expeditions to the region rarely return with a full complement of survivors.

With Empires baying at the borders of its territory, Telmoria's lack of a centralised political structure works in its favour. There is no single authority to conquer or subvert.

Notables

The packs of Telmoria acknowledge a king but his position is essentially ceremonial. He is the winner of an annual tournament of ritual combat carried on every

Myths of Telmor

In the Green Age, everyone could change shape. Most lost this ability during the Golden Age but the Animal Tribes did not. Instead they retained fluidity between man and animal forms.

There were many different kinds of animal folk but the Telmori were the strongest, because they travelled in packs and possessed a natural method of arranging themselves from mightiest to lowliest. Also they were hungrier than anyone else, which made them fierce. Telmor, their god, was leader of this hungry pack. He hunted freely on other folk, especially the contemptible Dog People of Balazar.

He bit off more than he could chew when he swallowed the sun. This brought snow and dark skies. This time was bad, because food grew scarce, but liveable. Then monsters came, who could change their shapes too, but never to anything good or wholesome. You could tell they were evil because they kept on attacking even after we submitted.

Finally Telmor realised that he would have to cough up the big meal that burned his stomach. The sun came back out of his gullet and lit the sky. He retreated to a lair he could not return from, leaving behind spirits to communicate with us.

We lived and died for many incarnations after the sun's return. A new god who was not a wolf came to us and promised to relieve us of our hunger to commune directly with Telmor again, while we were still alive. Many of us sided with him, especially those closest to his lair in Dorastor. When enemies warred against him, we harried them. One of their cruellest warriors, Laughing Tanor, who they call a saint, scalded many of us with an annoying curse. Those struck by it turn into four-legged wolves all day long every Wildday, whether they like it or not.

Tel'moria



year at Sacred Time. The packs gather in Red Glade, a shallow valley about a hundred kilometres east of Bad Deal. Outsiders, if discovered, are leapt upon and torn to shreds. The alphas of each participating pack fight for supremacy, with each winner advancing to the next round. The winner is declared King of Tel'moria. Unusually, the current king, and champion for three years running, is a four-legged wolf, **Agnagar**. He is about the size of a lion and bears a lightning-shaped scar on his left flank. Outsiders attempting to negotiate with him must speak through a two-legged interpreter, unless they are somehow capable of wolf speech. Agnagar acts as an exemplar of Tel'mori strength and ferocity but neither issues commands nor settles disputes. Neither he nor his packmates feel any obligation to explain this to foreigners who come to lobby him. They are happy to accept any gifts of food they may lay at his feet, even if they can deliver little in return for them.

The foremost shaman of Tel'moria is **Ehrarmarg**, who wears a boarskin loincloth and is scarred from head to toe. His flowing grey beard is spotted with burrs and nettles. He belongs to no pack but dwells in a mossy cave inset into the side of the Nidan Mountains. After several incursions from parties of God Learner scholar-warriors he has learned to send out his devouring spirits first and ask questions later. Ehrarmarg's only interests are to provide spiritual guidance to pack leaders who seek it and to be left alone to subsist on his diet of voles and owl eggs.

Adventure Hooks

- ☒ Gartos Goldhand, of the Elkeri clan of Lankst, has offered a reward of 1,000 silvers to the mercenary band that avenges the death of his prize bull, Blackstorm. This magnificent specimen was summarily butchered by a pack of Tel'mori raiders. Oddly, the leader of the pack seemed to be a young girl. Gartos wants the girl brought before him alive, at which point he will hear her out and decide what form his vengeance should take.
- ☒ The God Learner sorcerer Jouquel's ear is missing, though he knows where it is: hanging around the neck of the great wolf shaman Ehrarmarg. The shaman leapt on him and cut it off when Jouquel approached him to ask a simple question about the myths of his people. Jouquel fears that the shaman can use the ear in dread lupine magics and wants it back. He does not want Ehrarmarg harmed, in case he later changes his mind about answering those questions.
- ☒ While skirting the borders of Tel'moria, the party is approached by a Tel'mori who haltingly speaks their language. A clan of dragon Orlanthi from Ormsland have captured his four-legged brother, possibly in retaliation for a raid on their sheep pens. He fears their magic but reckons the adventurers do not. If they get his brother back, he can show them a spot in his hunting territory where a big cache of useless and inedible gold coins lies buried.

Ormsland, Vanguard of the EWF

Ormsland consists of a bowl of grassland surrounded by craggy hills, some of which rise up into full-fledged mountains. Its rock formations mimic the figures and faces of dragons, dragonewts and reptilian creatures. The twisted spires of weird draconic cities rise like coral from

the vale, their walls exterior covered in gleaming scales. Ormsland's weather is peculiarly mild. In wintertime, its borders with Telmoria to the north, Lankst to the west and Karia to the south are visible as a sudden break in the snowline, with green grass growing on the Ormsland side.

Its mild temperatures make it an ideal haven for a community of dragonewts. This is an entirely separate dragonewt nation from the one at the heart of the EWF, with its own Inhuman King.

Neither the Inhuman King of Dragon Pass or that of Ormsland seem to possess given names, aside from 'Inhuman King'. To alleviate this confusion, we wyrmfriends refer to the Ormsland King as the 'Second King'.

— Ervaling Scalemaker, Wyrmfriend Priest

From Holdout to Dependent

The Ormsland king has always been more resistant to the EWF project than his Dragon Pass counterpart. Wyrmfriend missionaries did not arrive in Ormsland until the mid-7th Century. By then Ormsland dragonewts had already perceived a spiritual danger in allying themselves with the grasping humans. Only after extended negotiations between the two kings, who had never before had any reason to dispute with one another, were wyrmfriends admitted into Ormsland, as they had been to Dragon's Eye. Around 640, migrant Orlanthi from Dragon Pass began to flow into Ormsland, hoping to use it as a base to proselytise the Stygian Empire. When the Stygians responded to their Hunting and Waltzing bands by dispatching troops to conduct punitive raids on Ormsland, the so-called Second King expelled the

The EWF invaded Ralios on a trumped-up pretext. We sent only a few parties of peaceful scribes to humbly petition Ormsland's Inhuman King for answers to a few simple scholarly queries.

— Spolorfal the Arranger, Dean of Pythos University

wyrmfriends. For over two centuries Ormsland remained an embarrassing holdout to the EWF, a dragonewt territory where their missionaries were not permitted. It was not until 875 when the draconised Orlanthi got back in, when the God Learners launched an ill-advised military sally against Ormsland.

The Guiding Council dispatched a legion of soldiers, including Orlanthi windriders, Dara Happan hoplites and saurian earthshaker units, to repel the invasion. They remain in place to deter further incursions.

The politics between the two inhuman kings are impenetrable to morals, even those well-connected within the EWF. Is the Ormsland King pleased that forces associated with the Dragon's Eye King now occupy his territory? Do both of them disclaim responsibility for the actions the humans undertake in their name? Any number of Jrusteli nobles would pay handsomely to know this.

Whatever reptilian manoeuvrings occur behind the scene, Ormsland has become a vanguard for EWF penetration into Ralios. Hunting and Waltzing bands, hungry for converts, travel regularly to Lankst and Corolaland. They move covertly in Safelstran cities like Lustria, holding underground ceremonies beneath the very noses of the Malkioni authorities.

Settlements

In Ormsland itself, the reinvented wyrmfriends swiftly erected a series of urban communities. Using esoteric magic to radically increase the crop yields of a previously infertile and rocky soil, they presently support tens of thousands of people. Its major centres include Ophid, Greenshadow, Lortarn and Korl. Each is much like the other, a densely populated labyrinth of housing and worship centres, modelled on draconic architectural forms but constructed on the cheap, with mundane materials. Devotees of the wyrmfriend path easily navigate their twists and turns. Outsiders quickly give themselves away by becoming lost in their circuitous laneways.

The laneways of **Ophid** crawl with snakes. Locals have become adept at sidestepping them and are never bitten. Constrictors, vipers and other deadly specimens are far outnumbered by harmless species. The killer snakes act as an urban defence system, instinctively striking out at individuals hostile to the EWF cause.

Ophid, first-built of the four major cities, boasts the fanciest and sturdiest architectural flourishes. The local EWF leadership gathers here, treating the city as its unofficial capital.

On either the third or fourth Wildday of Sea Season, depending on the weather, the snakes of Ophid gather together by species, to engage in frenzied mating in enormous pulsing heaps. Not long after noting the annual incidence of the phenomenon, city residents began to celebrate it with a week of feasts and fetes. To the consternation of religious authorities, these have become wildly orgiastic, in a matter similar to the heron worshippers of the Pelorian city of Darjin. Worship energy that would normally be directed to the EWF leadership is either dissipated during this informal festival, or, more disturbingly, diverted to some other entity. Wyrmfriend priests have quietly posted a reward to any trusted servitor who can get to the bottom of this troubling mystery.

Greenshadow gets its name from the verdant undertone detectable in any shadow cast within its city limits. For this reason it has been adopted as a new home by the Kyger Reptile Clan, a renegade collection of uz, and humans who wish to be uz. Originally from the Shadowlands, they believe in the compatibility of wyrmfriend and uz worship. Wyrmfriend priests attempt to discourage them from attending public ceremonies, finding something dank, uncomfortable and polluting in the worship energies they provide. Their delegations to the uz strongholds of Halikiv and Guhan have been violently rebuffed.

Movement leaders are also troubled by the popularity of a breakaway wyrmfriend priest named Barlken. He claims to be the recipient of the Revelation of Personal Connection. According to his variant faith, it is possible to achieve a one-on-one mystical relationship with the high draconic consciousness without imparting one's worship energy to the priesthood. Barlken, an alternately withdrawn and blazingly defiant figure, narrowly escaped

Mark my words. Barlken is a bigger threat to us than all the nosy Malkioni scholars in the world. A wedge must be driven between him and the Second King.

— Ervaling Scalemaker, Wyrmfriend Priest

Ophid



a succession of suspiciously coincidental accidents last year. To the further consternation of local leaders, he then petitioned the Second King for protection. Now he spends more time in private chamber with the Lord High Dragonewt than do the EWF's official representatives.

Korl has blossomed as a centre for trade and industry. Caravans travel overland from Lanskt, bearing goods from Safelster to the south and Fronela to the north. The influence of money on affairs in Korl is such that its leading merchant, a follower of Issaries Doubletongue called Verosta, enjoys greater influence than Korl's guiding council. She is famous for her statement that: 'We owe the dragon on Godday and owe ourselves the rest of the week'. Verosta spreads her wealth generously to retard priestly influence on commerce.

Recent investigative efforts by priestly enforcers have found Old Ways traditionalists sneaking into Korl in the guise of caravan guards. Hiosson the Clutcher, a hard-hearted representative of the War Dragons, just arrived

The Wall

Shortly after the cooling of hostilities with the God Learners, Ormsgone's new EWF contingent faced a new threat. The Chaos creatures of Karia began to encroach on Ormsgone, which they had never done before. Apparently they found humans a more enticing prey than dragonewts. EWF engineers got to work erecting a wall spanning the entire Ormsland-Karia borderland. The wall itself became a target of Chaos attacks, slowing progress to a crawl. At present it is two-thirds finished.

The plodding, methodical Orlms Vandant serves as the project's chief engineer. Recently he received authorisation to divert funds from construction to the payment of bounties. These are payable for Chaos creatures encountered within thirty miles of the wall. The job of verification officer, who must physically examine Chaos corpses and determine fees payable, is the least coveted among Orlms' engineers. Adventurers, not all of them wyrmfriends, have flocked to the area to fight Chaos and claim the bounties. Orlms suspects that some of the beasts are killed further away but has not given up hope that the bounty will eventually speed completion of his life's great work.

in the city to root out their presence before it grows into a full-fledged insurgency, as the Empire now faces in Dragon Pass. Verosta fears that his crackdown will be bad for business. Onlookers whisper that in this diminutive, uncompromising enforcer, she may have finally met her match.

Lortarn houses a spanking new temple to Telmor Dragonwolf, a newly discovered divine aspect of the werewolf god. Its patron, the high priestess Rangalla, invites all Telmori to visit it and join the EWF way. She hopes to make inroads among the Telmor where other Hunting and Waltzing bands have failed. So far the temple has attracted only a smattering of sincere worshippers, most of them half-mad Telmori outcasts. Instead, outraged wolf people have targeted it for sustained raiding, on one occasion burning its outer façade. Their incursions have sparked a debate between the Lortarn priesthood and local residents, who have borne the brunt of these violent raids. Protesters demanding the relocation of the temple have been branded as Old Ways traditionalists and subjected to imprisonment and interrogation.

Mud pits outside Lortarn yield a coveted luxury product, a mud that retards the visible effects of aging when applied to the skin. A bottling syndicate led by the vehemently

self-protective Tonanda Jos employs thousands of diggers, glassblowers, merchants and overseers. A few months ago she offered a bounty for the scalps of Kustrian merchants who sneaked into the mud pits to take a sample home for alchemical analysis.

Notables

The Guiding Council has decreed the Clanking City of the Zistorites, in God Forgot, as the focus of their efforts. They have made Ormsland a comparatively sleepy second front. As a consequence, a combination of second-raters and unproven up-and-comers man its contingent in Ormsland.

Lorsan the Seeker serves as the Guiding Council's chief envoy in Ormsland. Technically he rules nothing and is merely first among equals as a guest of the Second King. For all practical purposes

he is the provincial governor of the area's wyrmfriend communities. A sincere believer in the draconic path, Lorsan spends as much of his time as possible in meditation, neglecting his mundane duties. As a result a general air of administrative incompetence permeates EWF operations here. A genial and welcoming fellow, he cannot understand why anyone would refuse to join the wyrmfriend faith.

His eerie older brother, **Estivos the Predictor**, manages the area's Hunting and Waltzing Bands. He concentrates his proselytising efforts on the clans of Lankst. Estivos covertly arranges for ill fortune to befall anti-EWF clans. He has seen his own future and is terrified that he might make a mistake and deviate from the path laid out for him by destiny. Under certain lighting conditions you can look into the irises of his eyes and see through them to whatever he is standing in front of.

The young wyrmfriend priest **Ervaling Scalemaker** has been assigned as steward to both brothers. He sees himself as a future member of the Guiding Council and aims to capitalise thoroughly on whatever opportunities arise for him in Ormsland. He wants to organise a quick and dramatic raid against a vulnerable target – any target – winning glory and a transfer to where the action is, at the Clanking City.

The word 'ambitious' is the favourite insult of the lazy and complacent. There is no accusation I am prouder to admit to.

—Ervaling Scalemaker, Wyrmfriend Priest

Endti Narrow-Hip serves as Ormsland's ranking EWF general. She is a devotee of Maran Gor, the fighting earth goddess who is Ernalda's elder sister. Even before her worship was draconised, Maran Gor possessed an affinity with earthshaker beasts (dinosaurs). The moody, impolitic Endti likes brontosaurus and triceratops more than she does people. In her office stands a large model of Ralios made out of painted flour and water, on which she plans her battles, moving about tiny wooden figures of her saurian shock troops. She possesses an instinctive rapport with the dragonewts, which is more than some of her civilian superiors can say. Endti is embarrassed by her willowy frame; no matter how much she eats, she cannot put on the massive rolls of fat expected of a Maran Gor priestess.

The unpredictable warrior hero **Heornar Wolfhound** is an indifferent follower of the wyrmfriend faith. He came to Ormsland for one reason only – to kill Telmori, the ancestral enemies of his clan. He recruits foreign mercenaries for his frequent slaying sallies into Telmoria. The severed heads of wolves and wolf-men decorate the private sanctum of his living quarters in Ophid.

Adventure Hooks

- ☒ An enemy of the EWF hires the adventurers to deliver an object to Darytha Fant, a resident of Greenshadow. She is a subversive, posing as a wyrmfriend priestess while cooperating with the group's patron. The object is fragile and must arrive intact. It is a portion of a very large broken eggshell. Supposedly it is a communication between the two Inhuman Kings, even though no runes or characters are visible on it. Only Darytha can decipher its meaning. But when the adventurers arrive in Greenshadow, they find that she has been taken away by the authorities on suspicion of treason.
- ☒ EWF officials suspect that one of the engineers charged with constructing the wall between Ormsland and Karia has been diverting supplies to building projects in Lortarn. The adventurers are hired to

spy on him and follow any peculiar shipments away from the site. Unfortunately for them, just when they are accumulating the evidence they seek, a wave of Chaos creatures makes a mad assault on the wall.

- ☒ The party runs across rumours of an old mostali tunnel under the Nidan Mountains, near the borderland between Telmoria and Ormsland. If it exists and is passable, it would provide a route from Peloria to Vesmonstran circumventing the Kartolin Pass. This alternate route is desirable because it avoids a dangerous overland trek through the Chaos-haunted danger zone of Dorastor. Information leading to its location would fetch an impressive price.
- ☒ Robangor Purple Coat of the Lanksti Hersling clan hires the adventurers to conduct the eccentric, scrofulous priest Gustako to the Telmori-Ormsland border. Gustako follows an obscure god, Valind the Glacier-Maker. He says he can reverse the magic that keeps Ormsland balmy during Sea Season, by cursing a series of draconic beacons hidden in the wilderness. Gustako must physical interfere with each beacon, which may eventually arouse the attention of EWF patrols.
- ☒ Elsewhere in the wilds of Ralios, the adventurers encounter a young woman fleeing a velociraptor and its wyrmfriend keepers. If they save her from her assailants, they find that her pursuers were trying to capture her and ransom her to her brother, a prominent member of the Old Ways traditionalists responsible for several successful raids on the outskirts of Ormsland. Knowing his vow to care for her, Ervaling Scalemaker figures he will turn himself in to win his sister's freedom. She tells the adventurers they will be rewarded if they can spirit her safely to an anti-EWF clan in Lanskt or even a Safelstran city. Her name is Orendri; her brother is Hengmar.

Karia (The Scourged Land)

As the war against Gbaji drew to a climax, Arkat and his allies battled their way through the region of Karia on their way to the climactic confrontation in Dorastor. Here, outnumbered by the legions of Nysalor's Golden Empire, Arkat unleashed terrible gifts discovered in the Hero Plane. He released the Unbinding Plague, the Corroding Righteousness and the Eating Everything Thing. These forces slew platoons of enemy warriors, along with thousands of Arkat's own men. They also devastated the surrounding landscape for miles around. Karia's rolling emerald hills, dotted with pastures and

croplands, transformed into to scourged and barren crags. Its rich soil turned to ashes and blew away. The wide and gentle Boratran River evaporated in an instant; its winding streambed folded in on itself and was swallowed by the gasping earth. Even the sky above Karia was discoloured and appears to bear a dripping, putrid stain.

After the war was over, Arkat, now founding Emperor of the Autarchy, attempted to undo the damage he had wrought. At the same time, he instructed his cultists to weave vast, intricate spells to seal the Kartolin Pass between Karia and Dorastor. These ensured that the remaining nest of Chaos beings in that accursed land could not pass into Ralios. These twin objectives turned out to be mutually exclusive; the magic that maintained the seal prevented the land's regeneration. Arkat accepted the loss of Karia as the price of continued protection against Chaos. Legend has it that he visited the place once a year, marking the terrible price of his victory with solemn ceremony and pained reflection.

Karia remained both uninhabited and free from Chaos for nearly two and a half centuries. Its situation gradually changed after 740, when the invading God Learners overthrew the Autarchy and extirpated the cult of Arkat. The sealing spells that kept Chaos from crossing through the Kartolin faded away. The Seshnegi king, Annmak the Peacemaker, divided Karia up into duchies, granting it to favoured nobles. Their attempts to resettle the land ended in catastrophe. Farmers starved. Children went mad. Knights were violated by broo and died spawning their offspring.

Karia was abandoned. Every generation or so, a new cocky school of God Learner sorcerers arises to try to undo Arkat's scourging. They never succeed. The Goddess Switch was originally conceived as a way of returning fertility

We God Learners are sometimes accused of madness but we have never tried to harness the power of Chaos. Now that would be mad.

— Spolorfal the Arranger, Dean of Pythos University

Imagine how much worse the effects of the Goddess Switch would have been if the Myth Stealers had tried it in Karia! One shudders at the mere thought of it!

— Brother Aran, Monk of Pombric

to Karia. This plan was abandoned on sober second thought.

Although Karia is now thought of as a Chaos haven, second only to Dorastor in danger and corruption, even those creatures find it hard to exist here for long. They

Hazards

Adventurers in Karia face malign, impersonal forces left over from the Arkat-Gbaji war:

Ghosts: The restless spirits of the soldiers slaughtered here still moan, groan and occasionally manifest themselves to appalled onlookers. Though few of the tormented spectres harm travellers physically, the sight of them can cause debilitating distress or permanent madness. Formidable shamans can ward them off or force them to do their bidding.

The Unbinding Plague: Inanimate objects can catch diseases in Karia, which slowly eat away at them until they fall apart. The land itself is infected with this plague. In a few places, its contagion still lingers and be carried off to other lands. It is not potent enough to scour the landscape but it can destroy weapons, armour and other equipment.

The Corroding Righteousness: Lingering energies of this Arkati magic cause physical harm, like that of a Disruption spell, to heathens and heretics. The effect defines these in the harsh terms of the strict pre-Hrestoli form of Malkionism.

The Eating Everything Thing: Occasionally explorers in Karia will simply vanish in a cloud of blood and bone, devoured by this trollish spirit from the Underworld. Its approach can be seen from miles away, as a gory red plume, not unlike a crimson sandstorm. You cannot fight the Eating Everything Thing. You can try to run away.

travel from Dorastor in search of prey. When their raids are complete, they retreat back to the safe environs of their haunted land.

Creatures encountered here include broo, walktapi, jack o'bears, scorpion men, gorp, charnjibbers and bestial humans blistering with Chaos features. Unique Chaos beings of bizarre aspect also commonly crawl, flop and wriggle across its eerie barrens.

Raider Gangs

Although none of Karia's monsters and villains are permanent residents, a few intelligent Chaos warriors do make it the object of regular forays. The most infamous of these are as follows.

Sheánn the Black Saint fought in the Arkat-Gbaji war, first on Arkat's side, then against him. Once a devout Malkioni, Sheánn turned on his mentor when he renounced the Invisible God to take on trollish qualities.

A cancer grew upon his righteous outrage, turning it to spite. He gathered a platoon of similarly disaffected Arkati and attacked his former leader during his march through Karia. As he engaged Arkat in personal combat, gruesome Chaos features erupted from his body. He fell to his knees and begged Arkat for forgiveness and a quick demise. Grim Arkat denied him both. Sheánn now wanders Dorastor and Karia as a tormented immortal, attended by other Chaotic humans. Razor-tipped tentacles sprout from his back and shoulders. His blackened metal armour has merged with his body, pulsing with translucent veins. It regenerates him and spews corrosive, disease-laden blood onto anyone unfortunate enough to injure him in close combat. He also continues to wield a wide range of war-oriented Rune Magic and Sorcery spells. Although still woefully alive, other Malkioni apostates are able to pray to him as if he is a saint, receiving potent but soul-corroding magic. His professions of hatred for his present existence do not stop him from seeking plunder or slaying any stranger who crosses his path.

Darengeng is a titanic broo, over three metres in height. He breathes backwards and can suck the air out of an opponent's lungs, causing asphyxiation. He nurtures a surpassing hatred for cities and has launched repeated assaults on the Ormsland settlement of Ophid. Attempts to destroy the Ormsland wall now occupy the bulk of his efforts in Karia.

The deluded, Chaos-corrupted ex-wyrmfriend priest **Lordros Neverwant** still thinks he heads a Hunting and Waltzing Band. He travels through Karia, eager to minister to the unwashed. His conversion ceremony involves a laying on of hands, which establishes a seed of malign physical change in the victim's body. Unbeknownst to him, Lordros' fevered brain has been colonised by tiny, monstrous minions of Pocharngo, the Chaos god of mutation. A retinue of equally crazed mutants attends him, mopping his brow when beads of sweat appear upon it and cradling him in a faeces-caked cloak when he shivers from the cold.

Sheánn, the Black Saint



ADVENTURES IN KARIA

This is not a place of intrigue, mystery or complicated plot hooks. Adventurers in Karia find horrible monsters, fight them, kill them and escape – if they are not killed themselves.

Ballid, Elf Forest

Scholars know the forest of Ballid as one of the six great elf forests of the west. Somewhere in its leafy depths lies one of the Great Trees, grown from the seeds of the First Tree, way back in the Green Age.

Its inhabitants pursue no great agendas; they wish simply to be left alone in the peace and harmony of their arcadian wilds. Alas, they are surrounded by prying neighbours who wish to rob them, probe into their secrets – or, in the case of the uz, eat them.

The aldryami of Ballid sided with Arkat during the wars that ushered in the end of the First Age, sending their legions to battle Gbaji. To this day they revere Arkat as a liberator who protected their forest against a corrupting force.

Enemies All Around

Uz: The Autarchy rewarded the allegiance of the aldryami by brokering a non-aggression agreement between them and the devouring uz of nearby Guhan. This was tested during the decadence of the Stygian Empire and finally broken entirely when the Middle Sea Empire destroyed the Arkat cult in 740. Now they must defend themselves against the depredations of ravenous trolls, as they had to do during the Darkness and early First Age.

Elfs are bitter and angry. They say we hate them but we do not. Elfs should not blame us for our hunger. Plants grow back, don't they?

— Cor Kargor, Matriarch of Guhan

Mostali: The mostali of the Nidan Mountain Decamony have posed an intermittent threat to the survival of Ballid. The dwarfs resent the nasty green growth on the side of their mountain. Every few years they launch a mass-scale effort to repair this blemish. They may assault the forest with axes swinging or send a cascade of noxious chemicals sluicing down the mountainside to poison the

trees. The aldryami fight back vigorously when invaded but are reluctant to venture into the Nidan tunnels to take the fight to the dwarfs. Instead, using the Elffriend clan of Lankst as intermediaries, they hire mercenaries to exact retribution on the mostali. They pay for these incursions by selling medicinal herbs to traders and with gear looted from the corpses of invading meat people. Because Nidan is the mostali stronghold of strongholds, they rarely expect their hirelings to invade it head-on. Instead their hirelings harry mostali convoys or sneak in for stealthy sabotage runs through tunnel entrances beneath the reaching roots of Ballid.

God Learners: As far as the elves of Ballid are concerned, any foe of Arkat is a friend of Gbaji. They view God Learner attempts to dissect their myths as a corrupting force similar to Gbaji.

Their chief God Learner antagonist is the sorcerer Pranton, who maintains the New School of Botanical Inquiry in Valantia. A determined fellow from a wealthy Jrusteli family, he has sunk much of his personal fortune into his researches. He hires the best mercenaries in the west to conduct spirit raids into Ballid. Although mildly interested in botanical specimens, what he really wants is a map of the tangled aldryami portions of the Other Side. To this end, he targets aldryami spiritual leaders for kidnapping and interrogation. After he is done asking questions, he offers to ransom surviving prisoners back to their people – in exchange asking for mythic secrets, instead of money.

Orlanthi: Like any aldryami enclave, only the fringes of Ballid are penetrable by outsiders. They can travel through its fringes but any trip of more than a day or so into its interior is invariably intercepted by an armed aldryami force or by the vegetation itself. An exception pertains in the case of the Elffriend clan. Their long-standing alliance with Ballid allows them to freely travel through the forest. However, the Elffriends obey their own Orlanthi rules of hospitality and would not dream of making their way through another's tula without approaching them to exchange greetings.

Their rival clan, the Yellow Apples, possess ancestral theistic spells allowing them to counter detection by elves and plants. Whenever the aldryami catch them in Ballid, they fall on them, slaying without mercy. With disrespectful enemies like these, they neither expect nor grant ransom.

Neither the Elffriends or the Yellow Apples have ever beheld the Great Tree, though both sides have boasted about it to the other.

Notables

The aldryami see to it that alarming meat people never lay eyes on their high leaders. They maintain a core of false leadership, who outsiders have identified as the forest's rulers. These masquerading representatives listen carefully to the false assumptions made by visitors, especially invading God Learners, and carefully perpetuate them. Entire bookshelves of God Learner reference texts now refer to the King and Queen Elf of Ballid forest, who only exist in their imaginations. The elves posing as these fictional entities can, through their connection to the song of the woods, communicate to the true elders of the forest, receiving instructions from them as necessary.

Posing as Queen Elf these days is a willow-haired entity named **Nidaya**. Distant and abstracted, she sways in the wind like a tree and takes long pauses between phrases, to listen to the woodsong. Though acting is an alien skill to her, she continually reminds herself to match the image of the imperious faerie queen promulgated by human legends.

I will consider your entreaties but the pathways from them are fangled as if by thick brush. You will stand and wait, mortals, as I consult the woodsong for its answer.

— *Nidaya, Elf Queen of Ballid*

King Elf, as currently played by the thorny, briar-like **Ifelon**, has the easier role. He merely sits scowling on his overgrown throne (a chair purchased from the Elffriends and covered with cooperative vines) and issues the occasional grunt or nod. He carries the Pod Staff, a piece of autonomous living wood from which dozens of round, fist-sized seeds dangle, fixed to it by so many precarious, dried tendrils. When Ifelon kills a non-elf enemy, the victim's soul travels into one of the seeds. It remains trapped there until planted, when it becomes a twisted, leafless bush. The aldryami ransom these souls in exchange for promises of protection or aid. When the bush is burned, the soul is freed, going on to whatever afterlife its culture decrees for it. Groups who

Ifelon, King Elf of Ballid



do not recognise the permanence of the soul, such as the mostali, are immune to its effects.

Guhan, Uz Hills

The territory of Guhan in western Ralios centres on the Uzgor Hills. It consists of a bare and rocky terrain, surmounted by two small mountain ranges. Guhan is not a natural home to the uz but one granted to them at the end of the First Age. It has taken them a long time to bind ancestral spirits to its jagged cliffs and inedible rocks. The spirits native to Guhan were hostile to the uz for many years but finally came around after decades of drum-banging entreaties. The insect herds were slow in developing, too: it took much breeding to create the hardy giant bugs capable of surviving on its meagre vegetation. Now the uz call it home and would never give it up.

Trolls and Empires

After his war with Gbaji, Arkat ceded the territory of Guhan to his trollish allies, most of whom hailed the Shadowlands, a troll enclave of central Genertela. They settled its wind-swept hills, maintaining their unity and

their mutually beneficial relationship with the Stygian Empire. Uz lived in Guhan, but were allowed to travel throughout Arkat's lands. When he had trouble, uz warriors fought to put down the rebels. They even made peace with the elves of Ballid, taking them off their menus entirely, because Arkat asked them to.

The uz did not feel for Arkat's successors as they did for him. They were only humans, while Arkat was part human, part troll. Still, the uz of Guhan found their job as the Empire's enforcers fruitful. It filled their bellies. Also, the Stygian kings funded good sorcerers, who tried to help them lift Gbaji's curse. As the decades wore on, the human kings of the Autarchy expected more from the uz while giving less in return. Trolls consulted their spirits of augury and saw that something bright, bad and blinding was coming their way.

The conquest of Ralios in 740 brought danger to their borders. To fatten themselves for the coming lean years, the uz relinquished their peace bond with the elves. They returned to eating the aldryami but had forgotten how nasty the plant men could be in a fight. They raided the wind-worshippers of the north and hit the small human settlements along the southern shores of the Nidan river. Uz even raided as far as the city of Col.

Hunger did come, because the new Empire, the God Learners, despite their claims of friendly intentions, wanted to change uz religion. This would have meant changing uz hearts, so the tribes of Guhan could not do it even if they wanted. They retreated to their borders and kept the sorcerers out as best they could. The Guhanites redirected their raids to the Orlanthi of Lankst, who were fierce fighters but easier nuts to crack than the city armies

Our life here is hard. We are surrounded by enemies and monsters. There are the plant monsters of Ballid and the stone monsters of Nidan. You humans can be monsters, too, whether from the stormy north or the noisy, smoky south. Worst of all are the enemies of Karia, because you have to fight Chaos things but you do not get to eat them afterwards.

— Cor Kargor, Matriarch of Guhan

of the south. They also went up into the mountains to eat mostali canned food and the dwarfs that made it.

Leadership and Organisation

When they settled Guhan, Arkat's favourite trolls broke with tradition to set up an apparently male-dominated leadership (an example of typical uz social organisation can be found on the other side of Ralios, in Halikiv). Arkat granted the land to the warriors who'd fought bravely by his side, sidestepping the matriarchs who would usually rule a troll enclave. They formed themselves into the Guhan Guard, a military caste responsible for maintaining unity inside the new nation and providing support to the Autarchy when needed. Its ultimate leader, the Bruznu, or High General, would be chosen by high-ranking officers of the guard, subject to the approval of the Autarchic Emperor.

During its glory days as an elite guard to the Stygian Empire, the Guhan Guard consolidated its influence over the region's uz. The carts of plunder they brought back from their various exploits were converted into food and used to reward coteries of loyal followers.

In the Autarchy's losing war against the God Learners, the Guard fought at the forefront, suffering severe losses. Its leading heroes were slain. Several Bruznu were, in short succession, elevated to high command only to be killed shortly thereafter. When the God Learners took the cities of Safelster, the Guard's surviving remnants, sensing the inevitability of defeat, withdrew to Guhan.

If the humans of the Autarchy had stayed as tough and ready as us, the God Learners never would have beaten them. Our allies got soft, so we lost.

— Shadowbreather, Warrior of Guhan

For a time the matriarchy reasserted itself. Then the God Learners appeared in Guhan, declaring the uz their subjects. Their spirit raiders demanded access to uz mythic secrets by right of conquest. The matriarchs, unused to rule, vacillated. A new generation of the Guhan Guard stepped forward to fight back. Their name still evoked fear in the hearts of the Seshnegi, who remembered the Guard's ferocity from when they were the vassals of the Stygians. Now the Guard fought by stealth, launching

nocturnal lightning raids against invading God Learner expeditions. After driving off the predatory humans, the Guard retook power from the stumbling matriarchy. Their rule continues to this day, as does their chilling reputation.

In Guhan we let the men debate and rule in public. But first they come to us and ask us what we think and we oh so gently explain to them what to do.

— Gor Kargor, Matriarch of Guhan

Beneath the veneer of military rule one finds a typical uz clan structure. Each of its six extended clans is headed by a matriarch. Male members of the clan answer to her in domestic matters, and to their Guard superiors in affairs of raiding, defence, and external politics. When in conflict between these two masters, the male uz obeys his guard superiors. Women answer only to the matriarchs.

Clans of Guhan

The clans of Guhan are as follows:

The **Fungora** clan lives on the border of the Ballid forest, where its leafy trees give way to a twilight world of giant mushrooms, morels and other fungal growths. They ferment an intoxicating beverage from its noxious toadstools. After drinking it, uz feel woozy in the morning. In humans and other beings of lesser fortitude, it may cause brain liquefaction. The Fungora oscillate between peaceful coexistence with the elves, who also revere the fungal forest. Their matriarch is Aran Orlar, whose head resembles a misshapen, gigantic squash. She wears a special platinum brace to prevent her neck from breaking.

The **Mong** occupy Guhan's western reaches, on the far side of the Nidan River. They know where the tributaries of that river go beneath the Nidan mountains, allowing them to raid up into the mostali strongholds

there from below. They are led by the matriarch Karo Kalis, who mischievously toys with EWF Hunting and Waltzing Bands by allowing them to demonstrate magic to her people but never quite accepts their doctrine.

The **Ondorp** occupy the eastern banks of the Nidan River. They break uz taboo by eating cooked food. They do not handle the fire themselves but instead employ human thralls purchased from the Treyling clan of Lankst. They treat their slaves better than the Treyling do but still devour them if the pie crusts are not flaky. Their matriarch is Anja Bimor, a no-nonsense leader who makes decisions quickly and never looks back. She wears a necklace of faintly glowing green stones known to cause fainting in importunate humans.

The **Rastalux** occupy the lowlands closest to Safelster. Lodal Fanos, the imposing fortress of the Guhan Guard, overshadows their territory. The Rastalux clan head, Chos Varal, is the staunchest supporter of the Guard and its agenda among the matriarchs of Guhan. A glutton for flattery, she prefers non-uz visitors to address her as the Queen of Rastalux and to bow down at her swollen feet. She counts the Bruznu, Makt Vatharg, as her favourite husband.



Heroes of the Guhan Guard

Makt Vatharg, Bruznu of the Guhan Guard, dutifully stokes the fearsome reputation of his organisation. At the beginning of every darkness season he selects an enemy of the uz people among the cities of Safelster and sends a raid deep into the heart of urban Ralios. The objective is always the same: to kidnap that person and bring him back to Guhan for interrogation, deprivation and torture. Then the enemy is released, so that he can go back and warn his compatriots of the dangers entailed in crossing the uz of Guhan. Makt Vatharg is humourless, unforgiving and perpetually annoyed. He basks in the honour of his marriage to matriarch Chos Varal but spends as little time as possible in her actual presence. He wears the Belt of Hheirrana, an artefact stolen from the aldryami. It doubles his strength and allows him to leap over trees and walls.

The hero known only as **Shadowbreather** executes his Bruznu's most daring raids. He moves in total silence and cannot be seen by firelight. His favoured weapon is the garrotte. One bad habit mars his legendary stealth: as he draws near to an enemy, he may forget himself and emit a throaty chuckle of cruel anticipation.

Known among humans as Blue Moon Pete, the warrior **Yolfol Karat** labours to show his people's benign side. He wanders Ralios looking for Malkioni and Orlanthi to dramatically rescue from danger. Then he travels with them for a time, arguing for the need for better understanding between people and uz. He is widely despised for his naïve softness but protected by his great-aunt, Gor Kangor.

Zarn clan lands encompass central Guhan. The matriarch of this, the largest clan, is Gor Kangor. Of all the matriarchs, the Zarn leader is the least tolerant of the Guhan Guard and its delusions of male supremacy. She is also the sole Mistress Race troll among the matriarchs, or all of Guhan for that matter. Gor Kangor hails originally from Halikiv, where people still blame her for leaving. She never deigns to disguise her contempt for Chos Varal. Her status as a Mistress Race uz from before the Dawn protects her from open reprisal by the so-called Queen of Rastalux or other local rivals. As a survivor from pre-Time, she arouses considerable interest from God Learners, many of whom would die for a meeting with her. And many of them do.

Nida, Home of the Mostali Decamony

Deep in the Nidan Mountains sprawls a subterranean complex of rigorous geometric wonder. Its twisting, straight-angled marble halls, chambers, barracks and factory floors comprise Nida, the headquarters of worldwide mostali orthodoxy. The Nidan Decamony claims to rule over all dwarfs everywhere. Its leaders make it their duty to stamp out heresies and malfunctions wherever they occur. They were staunch in their suppression of Openhandism in the First Age and are now as dedicated in the war against Individualism.

Its leaders could not be less interested in the affairs of Ralios. Instead they focus their attention on intra-mostali conflicts, especially

against the rebellious community of Greatway, in distant Balazar. Of recent concern to them is the Clanking City in God Forgot, where the mechanistic demigod Zistor further damages the world machine with the misapplication of their techniques. In uneasy alliance with trolls and dragonfriends, they lead a siege against him. Unfortunately those distant alliances do not seem to transfer to trouble-filled Ralios. With trolls coming to eat them, elves creeping their purulent fronds up the side of their mountain home and both EWF and God Learner magicians probing into their fabulous technological secrets, they must continually defend themselves against local enemies.

Both human Empires retard the restoration of the World Machine. When they are gone, we can hoist a long-forgotten moon back into the sky and commence the final eradication of all magic from the world.

— A dwarf of Nida, quoted on condition of anonymity

Governance

The term Decamony is used both to describe the entire mostali community of the Nidan Mountains and also its ruling council. The council consists of ten Diamondwarfs, mostali who have reached physical and mental perfection in harmony with the World Machine. It includes one Diamondwarf of each mostali category.

Alanerachanarg is a perfect Tin Dwarf. His model makes animate beings from living rock. He says: 'Let us build warriors to smash our enemies'. Of the Twelve Inefficiencies, he considers tardiness to be the worst and has had underlings stomped to death for repeated violations.

Chenspenanppa represents the alchemy practitioners, the Quicksilver Mostali. She says: 'When there is a deficiency in the world, it must be burned away with acid. This ensures that it never comes back'. An advocate of what passes for mercy among the high mostali, she argues that broken dwarfs should be submitted for repair and never extirpated entirely.

Kraganatinkobbi exemplifies the Iron Mostali, the blacksmiths and soldiers. 'Every problem is a nail', he says, 'and we are a hammer'. Non-dwarf enemies hit head-on with his massive mallet, Second Chance, regress to infancy.

The perfect Silver Mostali called **Kraskakostaka** represents sorcerers. 'Our magic is the only good magic', she says. In her view each form of magic must be eliminated from existence until the World Machine is fixed, starting with the lowest and finishing with the highest, Mostali Sorcery. At this point it will no longer be needed, because the machine will be working again. The lowest form is spirit magic, so she lobbies for attacks on shamanistic cultures. Not coincidentally, these include the elves and trolls, who are already the mostali's worst enemies.

Nanelamskirbi is a paragon of Rock Mostali, the diggers and tunnellers of mostali production. 'Undermine enemies', he counsels, 'dig from beneath them'. He wields the Angry Shovel, which steams through troublesome stone.

Ninkotargiras serves as a model for Copper Mostali, who make tools and certain weapons. 'To solve the problem', he says, 'we must identify the correct implement'. When he stands in profile the side of his face seems as flat as a shovel.

Alloyists and metallurgists look up to **Rakdinalogots**, the best of Nida's Brass Mostali. 'The exact blend of elements resolves any dilemma', he argues. He reached Diamondwarf status when he caught his predecessor engaged in heretical speculation and without hesitation struck the woeful impostor's head from his shoulders.

Totsaskpatutith exemplifies Lead Mostali, the plumbers and glassblowers. 'Failure', he says, 'comes from a flawed vessel. Before proceeding, we must see that our vessel – that is, our plan – is without flaws'. He became a perfect lead mostali when he dove into a fire and came out purified and immune from physical pain.

Gold Mostali, the teachers and sages, are represented by **Witzatzolanur**, who does not make proposals of his own but carefully dissects those of others for fatal failures of logic. He and Totsaskpatutith make common cause as advocates for caution and further deliberation.

Barayalargogo is the original kind of Diamondwarf, as forged before the mostali added a clock to the World Machine. As such, he is not a Clay Mostali of apparent flesh and blood but a literal being of solid diamond. He never speaks and rarely moves, except to shuffle from his personal chamber to the council hall of the Decamony. When his decision is needed to sway an argument among the other Decamony members, he tilts his head at an opportune moment, causing the light to sparkle across his faceted surface. This immediately indicates either his approval of, or opposition to, the measure currently under debate. When Barayalargogo deigns to intervene, the others defer to him as quickly as dignity allows.

Orders from the Decamony are transmitted by gold dwarf messengers to the relevant departmental overseer, who may be a dwarf of any of the nine models. This official in turn instructs the Control Officers of the various work units under his command, who will all be of his model. The Control Officers disseminate the orders to their crews, either directly or through floor stewards. Iron dwarf military units refer to departmental overseers as generals, control officers as lieutenants and floor stewards as sergeants.

Heroes of Nida

Few adventurers personally meet the members of the Decamony. They are more likely to interact with mostali heroes, who risk malfunction and contamination by thrusting themselves into the most broken portions of the World Machine.

Mabbanetaddi is the iron dwarf lieutenant authorised to conduct warfare against the aldryami. He offers the Yellow Apple clan of Lankst deals on trade goods to encourage them to keep up their raids against the forest of Ballid. He views his burning desire to enter personal combat with the Elf King as a regrettable example of Failure to Delegate, which is one of the dreaded Twelve Inefficiencies.

Noralebbachenso, master of multiple forms of Mostali Sorcery, oversees actions against the trolls. The last time he went into the mushroom forest of northern Guhan, he was overcome by fear and revulsion, and failed to activate his spells. He is determined to erase his shame by levelling the fungal forest with a cleansing agent supplied to him by quicksilver dwarfs.

BARAYALARGOGO



Vobibustajargalorm, an iron dwarf general, leads operations against the God Learners. To this end he has invented the directed bolt, a missile which can be fired from a crossbow and can change direction in mid-course to find its way into the flesh of any designated follower of an incorrect Sorcery school. On impact, it fills the victim's veins with a fast-acting poison paralysing the outer extremities. Vobibustajargalorm is proud of this invention and is sure that, as soon as he uses it to destroy a God Learner of sufficient stature, that it will earn him Diamondwarf status.

Kavomamivobigub, an iron dwarf general responsible for several dramatic sabotage attacks in the wyrmfriend cities of Ormsland, has been withdrawn from the field pending negotiations with the EWF. Although the mostali hate the wyrmfriends as much as they do the God Learners, they want the reptile lovers to continue to fight with them at the siege of the Clanking City. Kavomamvobigub waits with increasing impatience for a reassignment allowing him to pursue his flair for surprise explosive attacks.

INDEX

Abera 21
 Agnagar 27
 Alanerachanarg 39
 Angheng the Winnower 6
 Anzarti 5
 Arganga Xok 9
 Arnisi 13
 Askia Whitestreet 24
 Auguel the Wrong 8
 A Drunkard's Vow 11
 Badnali 14
 Bad Deal 17
 Ballid 34
 Ballid's Enemies 34
 Barayalargogo 40
 Benadéo 21
 Blue Bulls 14
 Bozh Bojat 8
 Bright Delivery 11
 Brockroling 14
 Brolforoli 14
 Bularin Amalar 23
 Chenspenanppa 39
 Chikrikmik 5
 Clacking Coins 14
 Clans and Empires Of Lankst 12
 Clans of Guhan 37
 Clans of Lanskt 13
 Clan Attitudes 19
 Communities of Fiesive 22
 Corolaland 10
 Corroding Righteousness, The 32
 Dachargro 9
 Darengeng 33
 Delela 3, 5
 Dichen the Liar 10
 Drimentos 10
 Eastern Wilds 3
 Eating Everything Thing, The 32
 Elffriends 15
 Elkeri 15
 Elmal 11
 Elus the Listener 11
 Endti Narrow-Hip 31
 Ervaling Scalemaker 30
 Estivos the Predictor 30
 Fedartha Ever-Die 6
 Fiesive 20
 Fungora 37

Gerado Arnadée 6
 Ghosts 32
 Gika Perekasya 11
 Governance of Nida 39
 Greenshadow 29
 Guhan 9, 35
 Hadalbarun 23
 Halikiv 8
 Harngar Aircarver 5
 Hazards of Karia 32
 Healing of Fiesive 21
 Hebdoloriam 22
 Heliern the Shiverer 4
 Heornar Wolfhound 31
 Herrindinni 15
 Hersling 15
 Hillhad 5
 Hiordari 15
 Horing 15
 Horn Blowers 15
 How To Offend A Chieftain 21
 Institute For Darkness Studies, The 11
 Iskanst Snakeslayer 22
 Jarnkipe's Place 21
 Jarn Sharpfinger 4
 Karia 31
 Kavomamivobigub 40
 Keanos 6
 Koleng 8
 Korl 29
 Kraganatinkobbi 39
 Kraskakostaka 39
 Lankst 12
 Law, Justice and Authority of Fiesive 22
 Leadership and Organisation of Guhan 36
 Lodgings of Fiesive 20
 Lordros Neverwant 33
 Lorsan the Seeker 30
 Lortarn 30
 Luvarharmos 10
 Lysandorling 15
 Mabbanetaddi 40
 Makt Vatharg 38
 Marbarazham 22
 Merein 5
 Milmarn 11
 Mong 37
 Moot Talkers 16
 Myths of Telmor 26
 Nanelamskirbi 39
 Naptwal the Drummer 23

Nida 38
 Nidaya 35
 Ninkotargiras 39
 Noralebbachenso 40
 Odayla 7
 Ondorp 37
 Ophid 28
 Orestana 21
 Orlundi 5
 Ormsland 27
 Pelue 16
 Pen Pendoka 24
 Qa-Ying 11
 Raider Gangs of Karia 33
 Rakdinalogots 39
 Ralios 2
 Rastalux 37
 Roldoling 16
 Rui Qin the Night Eagle 11
 Safelster 2
 Saug 3
 Settlements of Ormsland 28
 Shadowbreather 38
 Sheánn the Black Saint 33
 Shops of Fiesive 20
 Slaves Pens of Halikiv 8
 Slow Eagles 16
 Sorenteli 9
 Stangari 16
 Svalgos Catchboot 5
 Tarth 6
 Telmoria 25
 Teren 16
 Thestigor Blue-Helm 24
 Thongimus Silver-Stealer 9
 Toolani 9
 Totsaskpatutith 39
 Travelling through Lankst 19
 Treyling 18
 Triabel Duileau 24
 Tribes and Kings of Lankst 13
 Ulifentor 23
 Unbinding Plague, The 32
 Under Cover of Brightness 11
 Unlucky People 18
 Vanahar 6
 VesMONSTRAn 12
 Vobibustajargalorm 40
 Volanergg 9
 Walker's Curse, The 4
 Wall, The 30
 Witzatzolanur 39
 Yellow Apple 18
 Yolfol Karat 38
 Zarn 38