

The Chaos Society Magazine

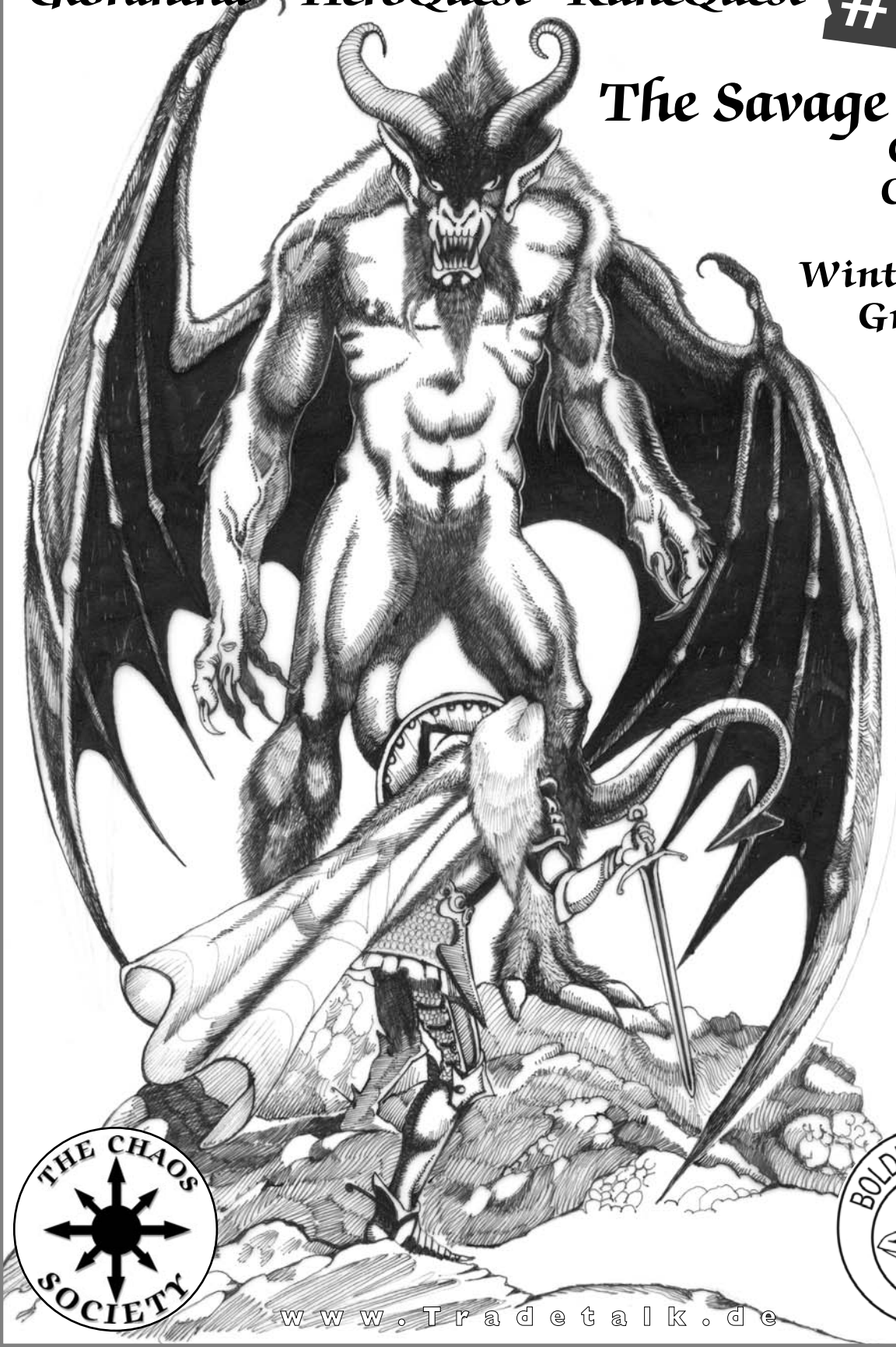
Tradetalk

Glorantha • HeroQuest • RuneQuest

#15

The Savage West

Giraine
Caratan
Zoria
Winterwood
Griselda!



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Tradetalk

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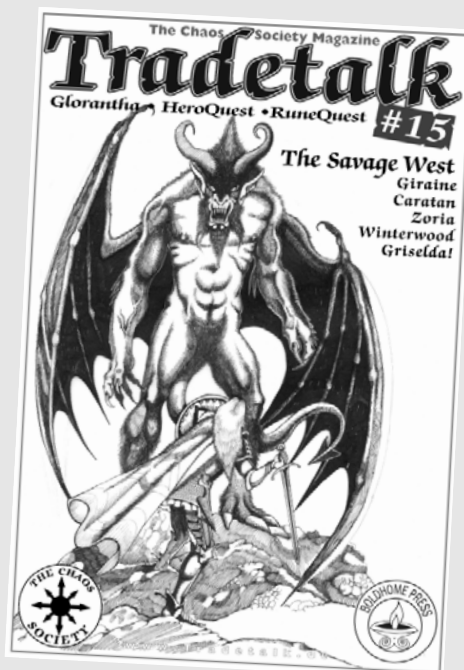
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Contributions – Contributions by fans of HeroQuest, RuneQuest, Glorantha, and especially artwork, are welcome. Each author or artist will be rewarded with a free copy of the issue containing their contribution(s).



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Editorial

The long wait is over, but finally we are back!

Tradetalk # 14 was published at Tentacles Convention in May 2004. It has been three years since then... let's catch up on the events since then...

The TT#14 was released at almost at the same time as The Unspoken Word's "Sons of Kargzant". Shortly afterwards "Beyond Pavis: Adventures along the valley of the Zola Fel River", the final Pavis Companion, was published. Issaries Inc.'s long awaited "Gathering Thunder - Sartar Rising, part 3", saw press not long afterwards.

2004 was an even year, which made it a Continuum year! A lot more books saw the light of day: The Continuum Convention support booklet "Magnus Liber Rerum", a scenario based supplement for "In Wintertops Shadow" called "Wintertops Fair" and 6 more beautiful maps; all published by the Unspoken Word. At the Convention the Chaos Society presented the third part of the full color comic series "The Path of the Damned", which ended the first story arc. "The Zin Letter # 2", featuring Loskalm, Kralorela & Daran, was published by our Finnish friends of Kalikos at the same time.

In August Issaries Inc. printed another 'Unfinished Work': "Arcane Lore: Heroquests and Heroquesting". This was also the period where Issaries required that all fan publishers suspended their publication schedules until a new fan policy could be established...Then there was silence.

In December, out of the blue seas came "Men of the Sea - Sailor Heroes of Glorantha", the first of a series of Issaries Inc. publication, which opened a new views of Glorantha during the Hero Wars besides held by the Heortlings and Lunars...The there was silence, again.

...

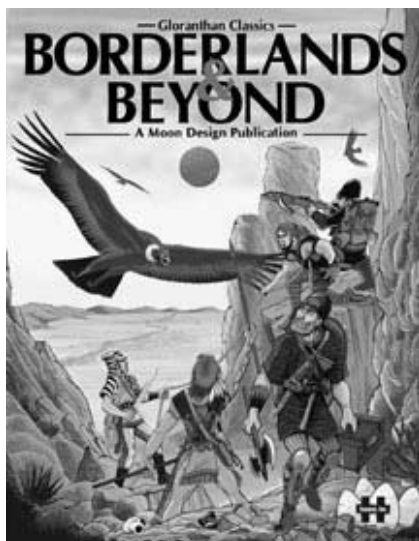
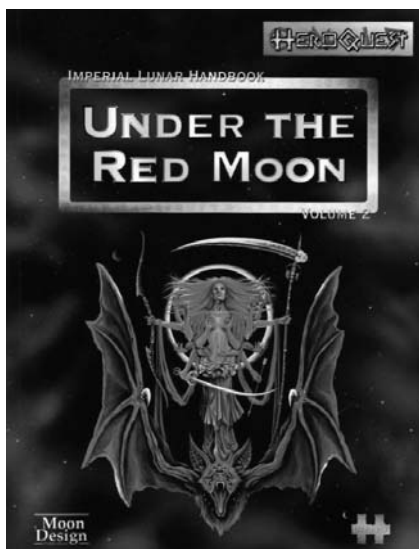
The only gloranthan happening in 2005 was the TENTACLES Grandanza convention, which saw the release of the freeform booklet "The Wulf Came in from the Cold", but nothing more...

...

The fan community waited... some patiently and quiet, some not so quiet, some not so patiently, but we waited...

Glorantha was continued in January 2006 with "Glorantha Classics Vol. IV: Borderlands and Beyond" by Moon Design Publication, and shortly after that the fan policy was out and contracts with Issaries Inc. signed. Everything worked out well, and everything could go on almost as before, except that this one and a half year gap was more a new start than a continuation.

In late december 2006 Greg Stafford decided to license out RuneQuest as well as HeroQuest, and to keep Issaries Inc. as mere copyright holder, so that he could concentrate on the thing he always wanted: write fiction... starting with Harmast Saga!



Rick Meints from Moon Design took over the license of HeroQuest, and continues the Glorantha's Third Age Hero Wars line that was started by Issaries Inc.

Mongoose Publishing got the RuneQuest license, with the idea that RuneQuest should be a system open to a lot of gaming worlds, but they also wanted to have Glorantha. So Issaries Inc. and Mongoose decided that it would be best if RuneQuest's Glorantha would be the Second Age.

At Tentacles X, the 10th Tentacles Convention, the fan community seems to have recovered, and more stuff was published: "Ye Booke of Tentacles Vol. VI", the "Griffin Mountain or Bust! FreeForm Booklet" handed out to the FreeForm players, and Moon Design's "Under the Red Moon - ILH 2", the first HeroQuest book under license of Issaries Inc., appeared in a TENTACLES X Debut Edition, supplemented by Greg Staffords "The Lives of Sedenya" booklet. Printed in the VERY limited amount of five hardcovers and ten softcovers, "Our Great Empire", a kind of unfinished work but in beautiful layout, appeared in the auction.

At Continuum 2006, Mongoose Publishing started it's RuneQuest license with the "RuneQuest" Core Rulebook, the "RuneQuest Game Master's Screen" and an special early print run of "Rune of Chaos", the introductory scenario.

Moon Design presented the final version of "Under the Red Moon - ILH 2" and a reprint of the main "HeroQuest" rulebook. The very limited "Our Great Empire" was published with extended informations, but with the typical unfinished work layout as "The Middle Sea Empire", and a new book with beautiful layout in VERY limited numbers of 10, "The Durengard Scrolls", informations on the Heortlings of the first and second age, was presented at the auction. An expanded version, but in Greg's usual unfinished work layout, would follow later that year.

"Mythic Russia", Mark Galeotti's RPG set in middle ages Russia, using the HerQuest engine, had it's debut at Continuum as well.

Almost at the same time Moon Design made some books available as PDFs: "HeroQuest", "Heroes Book", "Glorantha - Introduction to the Hero Wars", "Anaxial's Roster", "Thunder Rebels", "Storm Tribe", "Barbarian Adventures", and "Orlanth is Dead" were finally available at the service of Drivethru.

A month later, when "Glorantha - The Second Age", the background book for RuneQuest, was delayed, Moongoose decided to make the material available as PDF which was cut from that book due to space

restrictions. "Glorantha - The Second Age: Ralios" gave a sneak preview what to be expected from the Second Age source book.

The first third party publications of RuneQuest became available in

September:

OtherWorld Creations published two scenario packs for their world of DIOMIN for RQ: **"Danger in the city of Immer"** and **"Outpost Qether"**. More recently **"Taint and Sanity"** was added.

Seraphim Guard published four "plain wrap" PDF supplements: **"Five classic fantasy monsters"** and **"The Backstab Gang"**, **"The Celestial Chorus"** and **"Advanced Diseases"**.

With the end of September and the beginning of October Moongoose published four more RQ books: **"RuneQuest Companion"**, which supports and expands the main rulebook, **"RuneQuest Monsters"**, including, but not limited to Gloranthan creatures, **"Legendary Heroes"**, plunder items, artifacts, special abilities etc., and Robin D. Laws **"Glorantha - The Second Age"**, an overview of Glorantha in the Age of Godlearners vs. EWF.

Another third party publisher appeared on the RuneQuest market: Ronin Arts published three PDF booklets: **"Runic Fantasy: Expanded Professions"**, **"Runic Fantasy: A Dozen Legendary Abilities"**, **"Runic Fantasy: A Dozen Skeletal Foes"**, **"Runic Fantasy: Six Bizarre Creatures"**, **"Runic Fantasy: Six More Bizarre Creatures"**.

End of November/beginning of December even more RuneQuest books appeared: **"Arms & Equipment"**, the weapons and useful-stuff book, **"Cults of Glorantha Book I"**, describing the theistic cults of Glorantha, **"Magic of Glorantha"**, presenting the big magics of the two great empires.

The Fourth third party publisher, Scepture Games, published four books so far for MRQ (as PDF and paperback), using their own setting: **"The Lost Isles Part I: Exile"**, **"The Lost Isles Part II: Dryhaven"**, **"Petty-Magick, Petty-Sorcerers"**, **"Hedge Wizards"** and **"The Collected Character"**.

Two other ones bring the horror genre to MRQ with **"GORE (Generic Old-School Roleplaying Engine)"**, published by Goblinoid Games, and **"BloodQuest"**, published by Postmortem Studios. Both are only available as PDF.

In January of this year two more books were added to Moongoose RQ series: **"Cults of Glorantha Book II"** included the spirit and sorcerous cults, **"Lankhmar"** started the setting of Fritz Leibers Lhankmar series as the second world to play MRQ with.

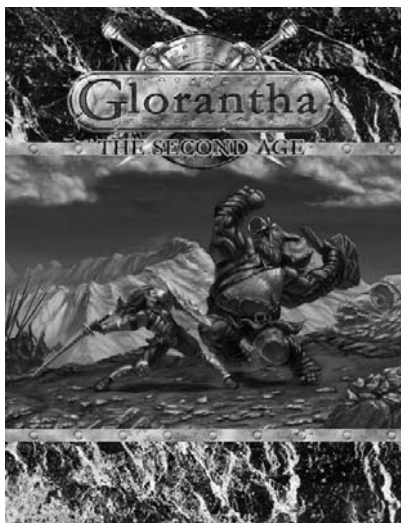
If everything went as smooth as Moon Design hoped for you should be able to buy **"Champions of the Red Moon"**, HeroBands and scenario ideas for the Lunar Empire, **"Blood over Gold - the Trader Princes of Maniria"**, campaign book for Wenelia and environs, plus **"History of the Heortling Peoples"**, the extended **"Durengard Scrolls"**, as the ninth volume of the **"Unfinished Work"**, which were renamed **"The Stafford Library"**.

Both Gloranthan RPG companies, Moon Design and Moongoose, have great visions of the future.

On the list of Moon Design are interesting titles such as **"Distant Shores"**, the sailor campaign, **"Heroes of Malkion"**, the basic book for westerners, **"Aldryami"**, the players book for elves, and **"The Guide to Glorantha"** an updated compilation of all informations of the old RQ Glorantha box, plus Pamaltela, plus Islands and seas, plus the Hero Wars Glorantha book, plus more... **"The Stafford Library"** will also see two more publications: the reprint of **"King of Sartar"**, and **"Orlmarthingsaga"**, a campaign log of Jeff Richards Heortling campaign. Additional to all this there will be a new rules book: **"HeroQuest/QuestWorlds"** will contain only the rules, and will open the game engine to more worlds than Glorantha. The Glorantha

informations of the previous edition will be republished in other books.

Moongoose Publishing will continue the RuneQuest line with more books as soon as their newly attached printing facility works: rule books (**"Necromantic Arts"** etc.), gloranthan books (**"Players**



Guide to Glorantha", **"Trolls"**, **"The Clanking City"**, **"Jrústela"**, **"Dragonewts"** etc., plus a series of three campaign books **"Blood of Orlanth"**, continuation of the series of Fritz Leibers Lhankmar (**"Newhon"**, **"Swords Against Sorcery"** etc.), a MRQ version of **"Slaine"**, a series of Eternal Champion books (we don't know how Chaosium is involved) but Moongoose have announced: **"Hawkmoon"** and a scenario to accompany it and there are also rumours of a science fiction setting, **"SpaceQuest"**.

Fan publishers will continue their support. The Chaos Societys **"Ye Booke of Tentacles Vol. VII"** will appear eventually, and Tradetalk will be published as long as we get interesting articles and scenarios. **"The Path of the Damned"** will be continued with the second story arc, and we still have the second gloranthan book by Penelope Love, **"Eurhol's Vale & Other Tales"** in our files...

I am sure we will see books from Unspoken Word, Kalikos, and maybe even a Best of **"Tales of the Reaching Moon"** by the Reaching Moon Megacorp at some point.

Third parties also have some plans for RuneQuest:

Seraphim Guard wants to do three more "plain wrap" supplements (**"Elemental options"**, **"Five unique fantasy monsters"**, and **"Grand Duchy of Twillingham"**), and then publish **"Gatecrasher 2371"**, a science fantasy setting based upon the Gatecrasher RPG background and the RQ rules.

Dancing Dryad Studios announced **"NovaQuest"**, another science fiction/space setting for RQ.

OtherWorld Creations will publish more supplements for DIOMIN: **"To Save a Nation"**, and **"Acceptance of Fate"** are the next two.

I am sure that the other companies will continue their lines too.

The Gwenthia Design Mechanism, is looking to create a rules set for their collaboratively shared world of Gwenthia, using MRQ. The project is being supported by Moon Design, and will create a new science-fantasy setting for the game. Several old friends including Loz Whittaker, Tom Zunder, Pete Nash, Simon Bray, Colin Driver, Dave Gordon and Dr Moose are behind this project.

We, the headmen of The Chaos Society, have decided that the News section of Tradetalk will report news on both, HeroQuest publications - and other games that use the HeroQuest engine - AND RuneQuest publications - no matter if it uses Glorantha as background or other settings.

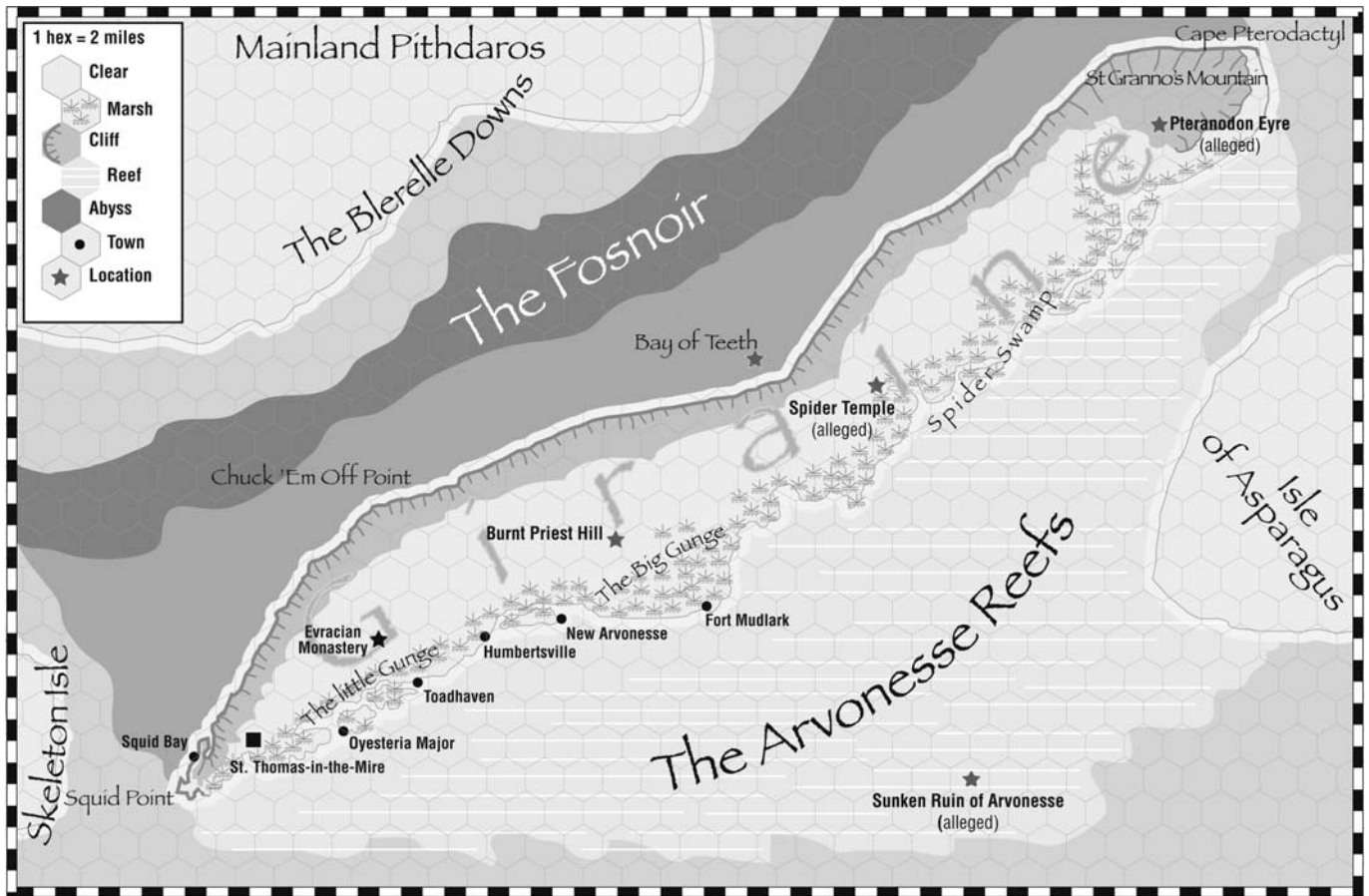
But we also have decided that Tradetalk as a magazine will stay pure. We will give the news about other settings, but we will only publish articles, background, and scenarios set in Glorantha, Third or Second Age.

After telling you this, it is time for a look into the future:

Tradetalk # 16 will be **"Heroes, Herobands & Cults"**, including HeroQuest informations for the characters of **"The Widow's Tale"** novel, and **"The Path of the Damned"** comics; Herobands of Dragon Pass and the Lunar Empire; and the Heortling view of Uleria.

Tradetalk # 17 will be a **"Thanatar Special"**, with two thanatari scenarios by Michael O'Brien, herobands, chacters and more.

The Isle of Giraine



GIRAINIE LIES a mere ten miles off the coast of Pithdaros, but was almost totally isolated for five and half centuries from mainstream Malkioni civilisation. This is still very much a land of mystery, with a feeling of brooding menace and ancient secrets perhaps better left alone. The natives regressed to near savagery during their long isolation and their suffering has left its mark in their mistrustful and vengeful religion, but what do these bizarre heathens really know? The upheavals on the mainland are making themselves felt among the colonists; here too church, state and the growing power of the merchants and burghers are causing conflict.

History

“Giraine is a land made by the Shattering, and though we know the Almighty Creator knew what he was doing when he allowed this tumultuous disorder to rule for a day, those who visit Giraine have been known to have doubts...”

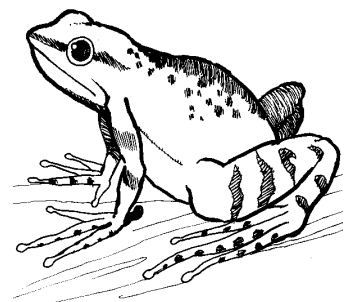
Simian the Simian, ‘A brief pamphlet on the Shattering’, (Banned by Order of the Ecclesiarch in 1618ST).

The island group southeast of Nolos and Pithdaros was formed during the apocalyptic break up of Old Seshnela at the hands of the Luatha in 1049ST (an event known in this area as The

Shattering). While the awful magical effects that killed or mutated most of the inhabitants of southern Seshnela did not reach this far, there were still tidal waves and devastating earthquakes which wiped out all but a handful of the populace.

Giraine and the other islands remained isolated from the mainland until the 1200’s when men from the west coast of Pithdaros and eastern isles of Pasos finally dared the terrors of the Closed oceans to try fishing from boats. They knew of the various islands and even landed on a few, but from the start Giraine’s clouds of pterodactyls, forbidding cliffs and frequent fogs gave it an evil reputation.

It was not until the opening of the oceans in 1581ST that Giraine became fully accessible. After a period of confusion as to precise ownership and jurisdiction, including a brief occupation by Smelchites, it was declared part of Pithdaros in 1585ST and the Duke set about trying to rule it.



Scenario Ideas

Why would a group of adventurers want to go to Giraine?

- One of them is granted/inherits a fief, possibly aquatic.
- They meet Wilbi the Frog Girl, take pity on her and try and take her home.
- They are commissioned by the Church to take the word of Rokar to the heathen.
- Hired by Big Ron as mercenaries.
- Sent by an enemy of the Baron to gather evidence of his unorthodoxy.
- Sent by a dubious wizard/sorcerer looking for God Learner artefacts/secrets allegedly in the keeping of the Giranois.
- Accused of heresy or other criminal activity and need somewhere to hide.
- Pursuing a criminal who happens to belong to the Dark Duke's Men.
- Spying for the Doge of Pasos in preparation for an invasion.
- Test a submarine built by the wizard-engineers guild of Nolos to plunder the riches of sunken Arvonesse

The Island

"I hear the Duke's offered you a fief – Oh its on Giraine is it? What have you done to annoy him old boy? It's bloody awful. Imagine a paving slab, stomp one side into a muddy puddle, that's Giraine. Your manor is on one of the dry bits isn't it? There are a whole batch of manors still on the books that have been under ten yards of seawater for five hundred years. Duke gives 'em out to ambitious merchants for a laugh and a sack of silver. Not that anything will grow on the bits that are above water; the natives have no idea how to farm, irredeemable heathen savages that they are. Suggest you get a very cheap steward to manage it old boy, that or sell off the peasantry as slaves and use it as a hunting lodge – some challenging if rather slimy beasts live out there I've heard..."

Sir Boamund,
Knight of the Order of the Leopard.

Giraine is a ragged strip of land some seventy miles long and ten wide. It was created when a huge chasm opened at the apex of the Blerelle Downs, and the land collapsed toward the southeast. A deep flooded canyon opened between the mainland and the newly formed island, which is now known as the Fosnoir or Black Trench.

Bordering the Fosnoir are cliffs some two hundred meters or more in height, riven by cracks and canyons. The hills above these cliffs are bleak and windswept moors, with outcrops of granite boulders and stands of straggling gorse and holly.

The land falls precipitately towards the southeast across rather unattractive plains from which the soil is being eroded at a rapid rate. There are numerous gulleys and scree slopes and rapidly changing streams. Flash floods are frequent here as ponds held in the chaotic relief of the ground collapse.

On the southeast side of the island the line between sea and land is indeterminate with salt marshes flooded by high tides. There are mudbanks for several miles off shore where the shallow sea covers what was once dry land. This area is called the Arvonesse Reefs, after the reputedly beautiful city that once stood here. On some of the mudbanks low tide reveals shaped stones and scattered bones. Fishermen have on occasion pulled up remnants of the lost people and settlements in their nets and the braver ones have risked quicksand to dig for loot.

The Creatures of Giraine

"A pterodactyl just took a lamb! A huge shadow swept over me, I thought it was a wyvern or dragon or something, then pow! Squawks bleats and flurry of bloodstained wool and it was off! Brothers, I fear our

Abbot has sent us to an evil place. Prayer won't suffice, I want crossbows and a lance and a nice sturdy helm if I am sent out on shepherd duty again, those things have got beaks like broadswords and breath from the pits of hell!"

Brother Adsel, Evracian Monk.

The native animals of Giraine were mostly wiped out in the cataclysm that created the island, and the Giranois say that a few species, such as wolves and snakes, were deliberately exterminated not long after. They are reticent about where the more unusual fauna came from. Some species found on Giraine are not seen anywhere closer than Halikiv.

The first thing any visitor notices are the Pterodactyls (called Sclavora in the native tongue). There are several different species: a small 1m wingspan type which lives in cliff nests and dives for squid in the Fosnoir; a larger species with a 3m wingspan climbs up and down the cliffs stealing eggs from smaller dactyls and seabirds and scavenges widely over the island itself, taking lambs and kids; another medium dactyl with long legs and wing claws lives as a wader on the southern shore and the rarest and most dreaded is the mighty Pterandon, a monster with a 10m wingspan that eats anything it can fit in its pelican-like beak pouch.. These curious beasts share their coastal habitat with vast numbers of birds, which live off the abundance of the sea and the mudflats.

Inland herbivorous Grass Beetles about 1m long graze on the tough tussocky grass of the plains. Their shells are attractively mottled in black, brown and iridescent green and are a major item of trade for the Giranois. Goats and the island's dwarf subspecies of Roe Deer browse on the shrubs. Giraine's cliff toads don't just lurk in the highlands, they live everywhere, including a relatively long legged species that can make a fair fist of chasing a goat and large armoured types that answer for alligators in the salt marshes. More feared are the giant wolf spiders, which have fast acting venom that can paralyse in seconds. The Giranois say these creatures are as intelligent as a man and that they hunt cooperatively and take paralysed sacrifices back to their spider goddess's temple, though outlanders scoff at this.

The sea creatures of the Fosnoir are famously horrible. This bleak stretch of sea always appears to be under an overcast sky even during high summer, and is subject to frequent storms. Fishermen say it has no fish at all, only ammonites, squid and octopi. Most of these are normal sized but on one infamous occasion a merchant ship blown off course was taken with all hands by a vast squid with a sad expression on its semi-human face. There are also reports of mosasaurs and elasmosaurs being seen in the channel, though no one knows where they nest as there are no beaches nearby. Every now and again really ugly large decaying things get washed up on beaches in Pasos and Pittharo; local fishermen always say they came up from the Fosnoir, the bottom of which, as everyone knows, lies in Hell itself.

There are persistent rumours of giant Walktapi being seen, and of native Giranois with



scaly skins and gills who appear to be half newtling or fish or something. These are often put down to people unwisely partaking of the Giranois' favourite tippie, turnip spirit.

There is truth to one of the rumours at least – the fish-like natives are really there and are in fact Waertagi. They live in caves at the northern end of the island and if the players ever find them will discover they have an amazing story to tell. Their ship went down into Magasta's Pool after the Battle of Tanien's Victory against the Jrusteli nearly a thousand years ago. They sailed the seas of Hell, but this particular group fell out with their captain and were set adrift on a small boat. This sank in a storm and they found themselves washed up here around five years ago. They think this is in fact somewhere in one of the so called higher hells, and will be amazed to find out that it is Genertela itself, and even more amazed to find that the Jrusteli Empire is long gone. As far as they knew they have only been away from the world a few years.

The People

"Why y'askin about the frog fu- err frog people yer honour? Jus' a load of higgerant heathen savages. Ugly fu- ahem - folk too, reckon there's more frog in 'em than man. Waste of time a larned gentleman like yourself going up to save their souls, they

hain't got any I heard, threw 'em off a cliff years ago, that being their way with anything and anybody they don't like. What don't they like? Any fu – folk from anywhere else but one o'their muddy little villages. What they do like? They like tea I hear, they do like a cup of tea. With slugs in."

Johar the Bodger, burgher of St Thosos

The Giranois are the descendants of those who survived the earthquakes and tidal waves that accompanied the Shattering. They are a small island population that had had virtually no contact with the outside world for over 550 years until 40 years ago.

They are a very inbred population and all look very similar to each other. They are pale skinned and have large round eyes, small noses and wide lipless mouths; the only feature they have that marks them out as relatives of the mainland Pithdarans is their curly hair, and even that is rather sparse. Many appear to be slow and stupid, and many are, but a few individuals are extremely clever and cunning and put on an act to fool outsiders.

They live by a combination of hunting and herding goats. They take their herds up into the hills each summer and down to the plains and coasts each winter. They plant cabbages, turnips and lettuce in small plots near their winter homes, abandoning them over the summer and returning to them in

winter.

They are skilled hunters, and will use nets to capture birds in the salt marshes and climb down the cliffs above the Fosnoir to take eggs and nestlings from the pterodactyl rookeries, and will fish with rods and lines.

Their material culture is very simple; many of the skills and arts they knew before the disaster have simply been forgotten. They know nothing of metal work, though a few elders have ancient bronze tools and gold coins recovered from ruined villages, and make their own rather crude stone arrow and spear heads. Most will possess a cheap bronze knife acquired through trading.

They are also very poor at woodwork, having no timber supply beyond a few shrubs, and use simple hand looms to make cloth from fibrous reeds. They can build well in stone, using a dry stone walling technique to make their small square huts that are roofed in turf.

Religion

Y How Saint Granno Saved His People (after Iubertus Dislexus)

The wrath of the earth god smashed the land and the wrath of the sea god washed it clean of the works of the wizards who had abused the world. All men were evil and all would have drowned if it wasn't for Granno.

Scenario Ideas
What events could overtake them?

- Island put under ecclesiastical interdict, Big Ron is excommunicated.
- The Friends of the Sinners' Saint discover who is behind their troubles, trickster-thieves descend on Giraine en masse.
- The Inquisition arrive with a gang of fanatic crusaders, do they sort out Big Ron or the heathen up country?
- An earthquake either brings the sunken areas of land back to the surface, or pitches the island into the Fosnoir and the pits of hell.
- All out war between the colonists and Giranois.
- Pasos invades, Ron and his men run off to the hills and join the savages.
- The long promised salvation of the Old Gods happens—but what exactly is coming up out of the Fosnoir?
- Uzzi the Scuzzi succeeds in growing the Golden Poppy of Beauteous Dreams and the ramshackle Evracian monastery becomes very wealthy very quickly.
- Much to his delight the Bishop of Arvonesse succeeds in holing his new cathedral on the ruined spire of the old cathedral – could the old lands really be rising again?
- Revolution in the villages results in the richer peasants being despoiled and evicted and self-governing egalitarian communes being established.

Granno swam through the wreckage of the flood picking out the people with souls, who had in them the blood of the gods, and took them to the shore. He told them of their sacred ancestry and they redeemed themselves by fighting against the evil ones who had chained the Old Gods to the bottom of the Fosnoir. With the help of the servants of the old gods who came out of the sea St Granno's people slew all the surviving wizard-preists and their soulless slaves. The last wizard was Yomil, and the battle against him was long and hard. Granno's people ate Yomil's people to stop them coming back from the dead, and Granno faced Yomil alone at Burnt Priest's Hill. To win Granno was forced to sacrifice his soul, and afterwards told his people that he had become as evil as the wizards were and that he must leave them and give his body and mind to sustain the gods. Weeping and wailing the people followed Granno up to the cliffs and watched as he threw himself off. Granno told the people that they had to be good and punish all injustice, for only then will the Old Gods be released from the bottom of hell and paradise be re-established in the world.

lubertus Dislexus has collected what is known about the religion and legends of the frogmen in his slim volume 'The Manie and Currius Errores of the Frogge-men'. lubertus, a heresiologist by profession, says the Giranois religion owes its origin to the Danbalist and Dualist heresies of the late Imperial period and suggests that a God Learner with a knack for manipulating spirits of darkness founded it. Only three copies of this work exist, all in the execrable handwriting and spelling of lubertus himself, as no professional scribe will touch the manuscript with a ten foot quill.

lubertus did not collect this information personally, he picked it all up from travellers who had visited the island who had spoken to the colonists, all of whom have at least one tale of how superstitious, treacherous and ignorant the natives are.

There do seem to be clear doctrinal differences as to how to deal with outsiders, especially wizards and priests, which in the Giranois' view extends to anybody who is literate. The most conservative regard all outsiders as soulless zombies and eat them. This was how they dealt with any shipwrecked sailors over the centuries and sees no reason to change. More flexible and pragmatic types accept the general humanity of foreigners and settle for enslaving them after suitable punishment for heresy, but magicians among them are ceremonially burnt on Burnt Priest's Hill. Others again think the bodies of outsiders may be of use to their drowned deities and throw them off the cliffs into the Fosnoir. The most liberal of all settle for castration for males

and adoption into the tribe for females (after a suitably unpleasant ritual to replace their soul with that of sacred toad or Pterodactyl), with burning, drowning and/or eating of wizards and priests as preferred.

Toads are regarded as the messengers of the gods. Giranois will on occasion capture a live toad, tell it all their sins in toad speech and then burn the creature alive, asking it to communicate to the Old Gods their sins and to ask forgiveness for them. Elders will keep live toads tied to long forked sticks and treat them as oracles.

The Giranois also firmly believe that outsiders will spontaneously return as undead unless dealt with appropriately. This has led to lot of bad feeling as some are sufficiently exercised by this possibility to sneak into colonist's graveyards and exhume corpses, burning them on the spot or taking them off for some other ritual.

This belief goes back to the very origin of the Giranois. After the Shattering the survivors on Giraine separated into two groups, one under a history student named Granno, the other led by a necromancer. The second group decided to make use of the one resource that the island had plenty of and resurrected numerous drowned corpses as slave labour to rebuild civilisation. Even after Granno's group slew them they would be reanimated again and again, and even dead members of Granno's tribe would be stolen to join this labour force. If they were to survive they had to resort to desperate measures. Granno's religion was part of this; though very inexperienced he went into a mediumistic trance and contacted the Old Gods. He genuinely thought he had reached back to ancient deities of Pamaltela, but instead he had reached an ancient spirit of darkness worshipped by his other ancestors, those who intermarried with the Agimori settlers who arrived in Pithdaros during the second age. This deity, The Deep Mother, Lady of the Dripping Pool, was worshipped by the aboriginal inhabitants of Pithdaros before the Brithini introduced Malkionism, and her bloody and secretive cult was not finally expunged until Arkat's crusade. Other deities revived by Granno include Tanosh, Ever-Youthful Lord of the Red River and Loidar, the Skinless Prince of the Great Volcano.

The Giranois will not use these names in front of outsiders, but it should be possible to glean enough information to realize that their gods have nothing to do with any known Pamallean deity, and a scholar with a deep knowledge of the Gbaji Crusade period might spot some parallels with these almost forgotten pagan monsters. What they do with this knowledge is up to them - they could set themselves up as prophets to the Giranois, or they could use the old records to Heroquest to defeat them once again and close the rift to hell at the bottom of the Fosnoir.

The hordes of undead defeated by the old Giranois may not be entirely vanquished. The ground in Giraine is unstable, but enough of the catacombs of the old wizard towers remain to shelter a few zombies and skeletons. At one site there is also a very unpleasant beast, an undead troll which has had an extra pair of arms and the wings of a wyvern sewn on. This creature guards the unburnt secret library of this (hopefully) long gone sect of sorcerers and their manskinn tomes of necromantic surgery.

Social Organization

“Dano and Dani, our native guides, spotted a group of their fellow tribesmen in a gully. At first they seemed friendly enough, walking up to each other and showing each other the hems of their cloaks in the native greeting. Dano and one of the others talked at great length, pointing at various bird skulls, bones, stone beads and feathers attached to their cloaks. I asked Dani what they were talking about.

‘They are arguing is it just for Dano to spit in the face of Urko who has three times dishonoured his half aunt with consent twice when Dano has stolen Pisk’s kinsman’s arrows, which merits a wound with a spear and payment of five beetle hides to each of his brothers eldest daughters, or three hides if there is no daughter’ she said.

This was clear as mud to me, but the question seemed to have reached some kind of conclusion when the two men suddenly drew their knives and began rolling around in the mud in a vicious fight.”

Gothrim of Peelo,
merchant adventurer



The Giranois live in family groups of between four and eight adults but any wider social organisation is defined by the tradition of the blood feud.

Feuds are regulated by a vast system of rules allegedly passed on by Granno as part of his injunctions to punish injustice, and for everyman to 'be his own judge'. Giranois will spend their evenings endlessly discussing feuds and their potential resolution, and have many fond tales of how a given conflict was resolved in particularly apt or bloodthirsty manner.

When an event occurs that could occasion a feud an amulet is chosen such as a bone or knotted twig, and all those who are participants in the feud (this varies depending on the severity – avenging being spat on is a matter for one man and his eldest brother against the spittee and his wife; a cold blooded murder involves half the island’s population in one way or another) will tie the totem to the edge of their goatskin cloak.

At any one time a Giranois will have at least a dozen such amulets relating to feuds of all sizes, durations and severity. When two people meet they will examine each other’s cloaks to see if there is any due cause to attack one another, and if so how vehemently, with what weapons, and whether they are required to capture the other alive and throw him off a cliff.

On occasion a feud will leave a person with few living relatives, no home or no livelihood. In such a case it was usual to commit ritual suicide by throwing yourself off a cliff, but since the arrival of

the outsiders it has become possible to merely go into exile by settling as near one the villages as they will let you.

Outsiders have become embroiled in this kind of conflict too. When the villagers of Humbertsville killed a Giranois for stealing a sheep they were initially baffled when an elder sneaked into their town at night and left a bunch of broken crow feathers on each houses threshold. A Giranois exile told them it was a formal declaration of a feud. The villagers entered the conflict and wore their totems with pride, overruling their priest who said they should not get involved in pagan ritual and should follow the written law of their land.

There are a few ritual sites of importance. Burnt Preist’s Hill, a blackened hummock in the middle of a wide swathe of toad-infested bog, is the best known to outsiders. There are several sites up on the cliffs that are especially popular for sacrifices. These are marked by stone cairns and some have one or more stone houses nearby for the convenience of the celebrants and the detention of captives. There are also accursed sites which are said to be the remains of the evil wizards’ towers.

It is not known how many Giranois there are; estimates vary from a few hundred up to five thousand. There are lots of ruined and empty stone homesteads and goat pens, so presumably in the not too distant past there were a lot more of them than there are now, not that anyone has taken much interest in what might have happened to a load of crazy cannibal savages. The arrival of the Smelchites

Scenario Ideas

What could they get once there?

- Trade with the Giranois for beetle shells.
- Dig up a ruined village either on land or out on a sandbank.
- Hunt pterodactyls and wolf spiders and find out the truth about the giant walktapus and spider goddess.
- Investigate the Fosnoir and fight a gigantic squid.
- Get involved in a Giranois blood feud.
- Discover the truth about the Old Gods and seal the Fosnoir.
- Try to establish a village on the muddy and ever shifting plains.
- Start an affair with the lonely Baroness.
- Start an affair with the gay Baron.

Giraine Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available
Herder, Hunter, Elder.

Native Abilities

Geography of Giraine, Speak Giranois, Giranois legends, Understand Toad, Debate Feud, Deceive Outsider

Typical Personality Traits

Taciturn, Suspicious, Hate Wizards, Fear Sorcery, Distrust Foreigners, Hate Foreigners, Cunning, Slow witted.

Typical Relationships

To family, to clan, To St. Granno.

Magic

Common magic only

Common names

Men—Gran, Pitor, Dan, Wilb, Ilk, Wilbo, Pitro, Danno, Ben, Ferg.
Women—Grani, Pitri, Dani, Isoli, Hurd, Pisk, Ilk

Origin

We were pulled from the dead flotsam that was left after the vengeance of the gods passed over the land. We are the ones whose veins ran with the blood of the gods, and we were the ones who killed the wizards who destroyed the world. One day we will rescue our divine parents from the Fosnoir, and on that day let all men fear as we cast them all into hell and rise into heaven as the elect.

Common Religions

SAINT GRANNO

Saint Granno was our saviour, he taught us the mystery of our descent and why we were saved and how to look into the pits of hell without fear to divine the future. Only Elders can know the inmost secrets of Saint Granno and remain sane.

R Charms—Understand Toads, Read Stormcloud,

after the opening of the oceans spelled doom for most of the Giranois, there was a wave of diseases that the inhabitants had long lost any immunity to and 70% of the population died. This die-back has stopped, for the moment, but as more people from ever farther afield arrive on the island there is a chance that a new epidemic may take hold and reduce the wretched remnant even further.

The Giranois tea ritual is one piece of local lore that all visitors get to hear about. If you visit a Giranois house or camp you will be offered a bowl of a steaming brew made by boiling up bitter herbs and a few other nastier ingredients such as slugs, snails and toad blood. If you refuse it you will be deemed to have insulted Giranois hospitality and you may well have a fight on your hands. This is in fact a lie. Twenty years ago a Giranois elder heard about hospitality customs from a Wenelian trader and invented his own version. It makes it very easy to poison foreigners should you so wish, and if you don't it is always amusing to watch an arrogant foreigner gagging on a bowl of slug and senna pod soup.

The Colonists

“Baron? Ronalio is no Baron! He’s a merchant who trades in blood, idolatry and heresy! Not even the serfs call him Baron, they call him Big Ron, and praise his name for giving them gold then stealing it back from them! He suffers the heathen to live and heretics to prosper, he lets monks starve and missionaries die at the hands of the ungodly! All this in the name of a chimerical ‘freedom’ that will lead to Chaos! Yes, Chaos! Ronalio may try to hide his broo horns under an elegant Safelstran hat, but we all know they are there...”

Rubert,

Vicar of St Thosos-in-the-Mire

In the Duke of Pithdaros' library is a map of the Duchy as it was before the Shattering, including all the parishes, bishoprics and county towns southeast of the Blerelle Downs. This quaint fiction is still the basis for the Duke's administration and several officials in his employ have been granted estates that have been occupied by nothing but fish for centuries. One particularly whiny emissary from the Whyte Wyzards was very pleased when the Duke and the Archbishop of Nisarowal installed him as the Bishop of Arvonesse. He now sits in a small fishing smack decked out with holy triangles and stained glass windows imploring the Invisible God to raise the city high enough out of the waves for his 'cathedral' to at least run aground on his diocese. He lives on a diet of fish thrown at him by angry fishermen who he importunes for church tithes from his pulpit, which is mounted on a mouldy rowing boat. He is a familiar sight to visitors arriving by ship at St Thosos who regard him as a very holy hermit or an utter nutcase as their religion dictates.

Baron Ronalio was not daft enough to be fooled by this scam and made sure all his manors were on land. You don't survive twenty years as a

mercenary fighting for and against the Kings of Seshnela and various fractious aristocrats in Ralios by being that easily taken in. He was awarded the title of Baron partly in payment for services unspecified but probably related to the mysterious death of Count Tumba de Hescille, and partly to buy him off when he led his experienced company of bandits and freebooters into Pithdaros to claim payment in kind when the Duke's treasury turned out to be empty.

Ronalio is the sixth Pithdaran Baron of Giraine. Most of the previous incumbents have been incompetents or absentees but Big Ron, as the populace call him, has worked diligently since he was appointed in 1619 to make this unprepossessing land a viable fief for his son to inherit.

He rules from the port of St Thosos in the far southwest of the island. This town is really just a glorified fishing village with around a hundred inhabitants, plus forty assorted mercenaries and vassals serving Ronalio's court and stronghold. Baron Ronalio is building a tower keep and a stone town wall, and has opened a quarry in the hills a few miles away to provide stone. The town has two churches, St Thosos-in-the-Mire, presided over by Deacon Thristane d'Ombiri and St Dormal's Chapel. St Thosos is. Thristaine spends as much time as possible playing ecclesiastical politics at the Archbishop's palace in Nisarowal, and it is his Vicar Rubert who is de facto head of the Giraine church.

The other major landholders in Giraine are the Evracian monks who have a ramshackle half built, half ruined monastery ten miles from St Thosos, and the Duke himself, who has appointed the Baron steward and overseer of his local manors. The Evracians, an order founded to push back the boundaries of civilization by breaking in unsettled land, use their cloister on Giraine to hide the most corrupt and useless of their brethren. The Abbot of the Giraine house recently threw himself off a cliff, possibly in despair, possibly drunk, and the current head is Brother Superior Usculus Botanicus. Usculus is trying to cultivate a certain variety of Kralorean poppy he has become inordinately fond of as incense. Uzzi the Scuzzi, as his not very admiring flock call him, is continually suffering withdrawal symptoms, but his pale sweating visage and bloodshot eyes make a fine impression when his friend Rubert invites him to preach hellfire and damnation at St Thosos-in-the-Mire. Strangely the natives do not attack the Evracians despite their isolated position and obvious connection with the hated religion of the mainland. If asked the Elders will say that the only magic spell these evil wizards appear to know is how to make ten barrels of beer disappear in half a day and that kind of magic is not much of a threat.

Most of these manors are just empty stretches of untouched grassland or seabed. The population is almost entirely confined to six fishing villages built on artificial islands just off the coast, and these are all theoretically under the control of Ronalio. The Church does not like Ronalio at all, as the terms under which he holds Giraine are nothing like the traditional feudal arrangements and have many dangerous innovations. Instead of pledging military support to the Duke he has been allowed to get away with promising to provide a given quantity of gold. This is not scutage, as paid by many vassals to their lord when they are trying to avoid

knightly service, but rather tax farming. For his part the Duke will not provide military support to the Baron as such, but will give an interest free loan to pay for mercenaries should the Baron need to hire them to defend the island. This, in the view of the clergy, is a dangerous innovation that replaces the holy bonds of sacred oaths and mutual support with nasty soulless cash.

If that wasn't bad enough, Ronalio has a pretty liberal attitude to his serfs. He does not force them to pay tax in labour or kind, and allows them to trade freely in a permanently open market. He takes a slice in customs duties if they want to import or export goods, and asks for a monetary land rent. He does not even sit in the traditional manor court, but lets the villagers themselves organise their own communal councils in return for a small council tax levied on the community as a whole. On the other hand he does not send his troops out to defend them from assault unless they are willing to pay mercenary rates.

This freedom has attracted most of the serfs on church and monastery lands to Ronalio's villages, and he refuses to accept the traditional labour law and send them back. Most peasants are pretty pleased with Big Ron, as they call him, and some are becoming dangerously assertive. The burghers of St Thosos have even written to the Archbishop of Nisarowal asking that Deacon Thirstain be replaced, as he is 'not providing value for money'. Divisions are emerging however. Even though the new regime has only been in place for a few years some peasants are already getting wealthier than others and this is causing resentment.

The kind of regime Ronalio runs in Giraine is called a Nolos fee, and an example of what the mainstream Rokarian Church finds so disturbing about the Quinpolic league. The whole business may yet blow up in Ronalio's face however as the Duke is being leaned on by the Church to give the entire island over to an ecclesiastical feudatory, by the Army of Tomorrow who want St Thosos as a naval base and by the Duke of Pasos, who has made it known that he could invade or blockade the place easily if he had to as Pithdaros has no navy. He is trying to charge the Duke and/or Baron a tax for naval defence, so far unsuccessfully.

Ronalio has also taken a scandalously relaxed attitude toward heathens and heretics. He has made no effort to convert the Giranois, and done nothing to take revenge when these odious heathens dispose of yet another missionary; this is because Ronalio does not want to start a guerrilla war – he has fought barbarians in Otkorion and knows that he could never win. Ronalio also allows heathen sailors to wander around town unaccompanied, and it is said that at least two of his men are outright followers of Humct. Even worse than heathens are heretics; Ronalio himself is suspected of Stygianism and has taken no action to root out alleged Perfecti who have settled in his lands. The Inquisition has made numerous applications to come and ensure his fief has a clean bill of spiritual health, but he has refused them all. The Archbishop of Nisarowal has a bill of interdict banning clergy from performing any services ready to be signed and sealed. Big Ron is popular with the mob, but will they still support him if their very souls are at stake?

Ronalio has a big secret he does not want any inquisitors to find out – he is homosexual. In some parts of Genertela this would not be a serious problem, but in the monotheistic west, and especially among the Rokari, this is an offence punishable by impalement. The Baroness is not Ron's wife, she is married to his twin brother Reginaldo who lives on the mainland and Ron's son, the Young Baron Lorenz, is his nephew. The Baroness is not at all happy about this arrangement and is kept a virtual prisoner in Ron's tower. Reginaldo sends her many beautiful presents, but she is desperately lonely. The locals in St Thosos are sorry for her, but as far as they know this purdah is the way all Safelstrans treat their wives. Many of Ron's followers are very dapper and good looking young men, a few of whom have liaisons with local peasant girls, but none are overtly 'gay' in the modern sense and players may be inclined to dismiss some of the insinuations by Rubert as nationalist nonsense.

Reginaldo is working for the Duke of Pithdaros on a very secret mission, attempting to take over the criminal underworld of Pithdaros and if possible the other states of the Quinpolic League. The Duke has huge debts and has mortgaged much of his land to money lending monastic orders in Nolos, he has no legitimate sources of income left, and faces rebellions every time he tries to exact further dues from his people. So he is turning to crime to make money, with the secret help of Reginaldo. This has the added benefit of removing the current criminal gangs, the Friends of the Sinners' Saint, a badly organized and louche crew of anarchist troubadours who follow the deeply suspect heretic Saint Bolongo. These people have flaunted the authority of Duke and Church in the most outrageous way too many times. One even stole the Bishop of Oradaros' penis! And returned it at the pig market in very very embarrassing circumstances! (Ladies of the waterfront said a chicken would have been more appropriate, but they are scurrilous lying Bolongites one and all). The operation also enables him to undermine Pasos and Nolos, and thus try and maintain the fiction that he is an equal partner in the Quinpolic League.

Reginaldo sends operatives who are facing too much heat from the authorities off to Giraine to cool off while Ronalio trains new 'soldiers' for this underground criminal war, keeps the treasury and smoothes the way for smuggling operations. PCs may notice a continual turnover of personnel at Ronalio's little court, hear rumours of the 'Dark Duke's Men' terrorizing the mainland, or even catch Ron and co during a smuggling or training operation. 'Reggie' does visit St Thosos to have blazing rows with his wife, but does so in deep disguise. Not even Rubert knows about the criminal side of Big Ron's operation, as far as he is concerned the skulking about in the middle of the night and shadowy characters sneaking up to the keep are all evidence of traffic with pagan deities.

Detect Sorcery, Hell Vision,
Sacrifice to Old Gods.
Old Gods Cunning
The Old Gods were worshipped in the most ancient past by the ancestors of the Giranois in Pamaltela. They were abandoned when people became slaves of the wizards who caused the destruction of the world, but St Granno found them and saw how they could be rescued and paradise restored. The Old Gods teach their children many useful things.

R Talents—Find Lost Goats, Track by Scent, See Well at Night, Stalking, Silent Shot.

REASONS TO HAVE LEFT HOME

Giraine is a backward, poverty stricken clod of mud stuck on the lip of a pit which connects to the lowest level of a very slimy and betentacled hell. The native inhabitants are inbred lunatics who stab each other in the back for fun, and whose half-witted attempt at civilisation is threatened by a more 'advanced' crew who think all too readily in terms of torture, stakes and burning. Why on earth would anyone stay? As yet no Giranois has taken the plunge and deliberately left their island. One or two were taken by Smelchite slavers decades ago and more recently Wilbi the Frog-girl has been an exhibit in a travelling freak show in Nolos. Refugees from feuds have tended to stop at the gates of the colonists' villages.

Caratan

"Now is the time for the sons and daughters of Aulor to rise and claim their destiny"



A nation stands on the threshold of change. They await no less than the return of their rightful king, the one who will unite the four tribes and cause the world to give them the respect that they deserve.

But who will that one be, and how will the heroes help or hinder their causes?

Will the Auloring rise to meet the challenge, will they stay trapped in their own quiet ways, or will they be wiped out in the conflicts that shake Glorantha?

And, ominously, the tricksters are risking their lives and gathering once more, and this time it's in Caratan...

**“Respect is earned and respect is given;
respect your leaders
and earn their respect.”**

AT THE WESTERNMOST EDGE of Maniria lies the land of Caratan. Similar in size to Sun County or Black Horse County it is surrounded by the Pralorelan hills, cut by the mighty Noshain River, and extends as far as the New Fens. Sandwiched between the Tarinwood to the west and the lands of Wenelia to the east Caratan is predominantly a low-lying bowl, dotted with woodland and shallow meres, broken by the great river's many tributaries. Here and there rise a few ranges of higher ground, barely worthy of the label of hill. The river that bisects it, for good or ill, brings food and flood, prosperity and poverty, life and death, and indelibly shapes the life of the land and its people.

At the end of the Imperial Age Caratan was simply another, rather backwards, wind-blown land inhabited by Orlanthi barbarians. There was little to attract anyone to it, or in fact, to encourage anyone to leave it. However, as the age closed the world was changed with the Closing. In Western Maniria, with the sinking of Slontos some lands were drowned by the waters, and others that had been hilly and elevated become coastal lowlands. Thus Caratan was born, close enough to the new coastline to be flooded and changed, wiping out most of the native inhabitants and destroying much of the Orlanth's power over these now hostile and damp lowlands. The goddess of the land, Carra, remained and became known as the goddess of the damp earth among the remnant barbarians. Another migrant tribal group brought their chief god with them and so Hibour, a minor god of lowland flooding, took Orlanth's role. Subsequent newcomers continued the process and thus the Auloring Nation, was born, a loose confederation of tribes and clans.

Caratan's leading settlement of Vison Town is based around the famous Auloring Marchay—the first marketplace in Caratan founded by Trueword Vison in 1368ST. Adjacent is the hierarchical center of the cult of Wesrod, the Low Temple, and a number of further temples and holy places. Nearby is Merover's Fort, built sometime before 1400ST and enlarged in 1469ST when Hiboursfis Alphons moved the Seigneurs' Court to Vison Town. Foreign travelers first record the name of this small city in 1383ST, less than a generation after the founding of the market. Hostile forces have never taken it, the last attempt being made by an alliance of the Princes of Ralios in 1474ST. The city was saved by the intervention of L'Etranger Modrain in the creation, overnight, of Lake Vison and the subsequent Battle of Drowning Waters.

Situated just to the east of Lake Pennan, Aulor's Cut is a large drainage channel that is rarely needed. Only in the worst of floods do the waters rise high enough to bring it into use as a supplementary channel for the Noshain. In Auloring idiom for “Aulor's waters to flow” is a sign of the Taker's influence and a poor omen.

Located in the lands of tribe Lenra, Carrglise is home to the most sacred spot to

Carra, which despite being in the lowest lying and flood prone portion of the tribal lands is never flooded (but always remains damp underfoot). According to myth, Carra's son, Aulor, was born here, and the waters from Carra's womb soaked into the earth here, sanctifying it. The lands around the site, known as Carra's Blessing, are used as a flood refuge in extreme weather. Carrglise was also the original site of the Seigneurs' Court, founded by Farsighted Sigebear.

In the south, before the Noshain joins the New Fens, there is the large inland Lake Pennan, home to a species of giant animal that gives the lake its name. Related to beaver and mink, these giant “Fishers” (Large 6W2) will attack just about anything smaller than themselves that refuses to acknowledge their territorial rights, either by submitting to their mastery in the form of a sacrifice, or by engaging in some form of trade with them, whether that be of food, knowledge or magic. Watersmeet Heler aided them during the god time and they will not hinder his traders. Normally they remain confined to the southern and deepest end of the lake, and thus pose little hazard to the fishers of Clan Romast.

The area of relatively high ground in the lands of the Gringath tribe marks the site of the settlement founded by Yrsa Longarm and her compatriot Orlanthi exiles from the County of Bastis, during the founding years of the Trader Princes' dynasties. Despite the heroism (or desperation) of Yrsa's band the small settlement of Yrsa's Stand was sacked and destroyed by the Gringath in 1537 after the Battle of Blood Fen. In the following year, the Auloring Nation and the local Orlanthi subsequently agreed to honor each other's lands, setting the border as the New Wenelian Road. It is largely avoided by Auloring, being held equally as a place of haunting and ill omen, and of respect for the fallen of both sides. Only in the most extreme of floods will Auloring gather here in any numbers.

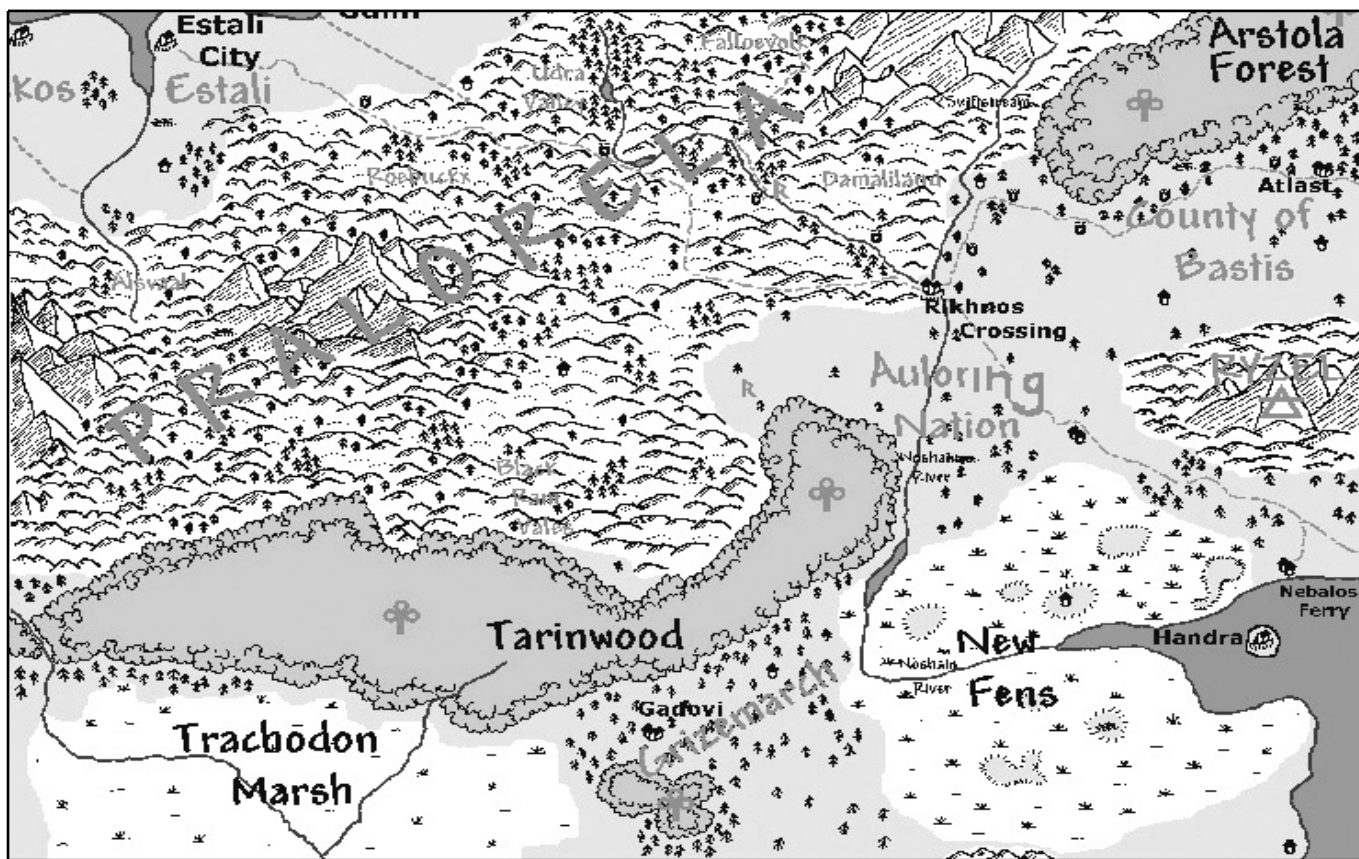
Situated on the border between tribes Gringath and Sangrold the twin lakes of Orlderpiay and the gentle lands between are the holiest of Hibour's sites. The chief priest of Hibour and all his staff live here, along with a small town and marketplace. Traditionally the lakes mark the exact place where Orlanth stood amidst the rising waters of Hibour's tide and lost power of the lands of Caratan. No one who is not a follower of Hibour and his pantheon is permitted onto the land between the lakes, on penalty of death by drowning in the sacred pool at the centre of the High Temple - the traditional fate for captured and unredeemed Orlanthi foes.

Most of the year, the town of Pellam's Moorings is little more than a well-maintained boatyard surrounding the great Hall of Pellam, a fortified roundhouse larger than any other in Caratan. Here Tribe Sangrold, among others, gathers for meetings and merriment, and for shelter during poor weather. Despite being suspended 15 feet above the ground on piles erected by a friendly giant, the hall has been flooded on a number of occasions and the boatyards are not only engaged in the construction of trading vessels, but also entrusted to care for the of the great arks kept for the

*** Respect**

One critical difference between the Auloring and many other barbarian groupings is how they speak of themselves and others. While they freely extol the virtues of others, they never speak well of themselves. Stormflood, enthusiastic son of Hibour, is their classic stereotype to prove that you can have too much of a good thing. Imitation of the gods is double-edged. Emulate the good, but never imitate the bad! The fact that Compt Fivelives Lothair sets the best breakfast table throughout the whole of Caratan may be agreed by all, but in response to gratitude for his kindness or praise for his provision he would simply respond deferentially. “Obviously my meager reputation has traveled further than I deserve. Do not thank me. The Giver has been kind this year.” He deflects the glory, and passes it on to another. This understanding of modesty could have some interesting complications when it comes to relationships between the Auloring and the Orlanthi. The visiting warrior who boasts of his prowess is likely to receive the cold-shoulder from those he meets, as well as a visitation from a heavily armed war-party! Similarly an Auloring who receives gifts will heap praise upon the giver, who will promptly deny the value of the gift! An Auloring will expect no less and take no offence, but a foreigner might not take it that way.

The need for respect to be given by others, not “bought” by oneself can lead to some interesting side-effects. A heroic deed must be witnessed. If no one was there to recall it, then the deed might as well never have happened. It counts for nothing! Auloring myths tell of no heroes performing lone deeds of valor or wisdom. Auloring heroes should be especially careful in ensuring the survival of their followers, sidekicks and allies. Given the importance of the witness, it is considered a vile offence to lie about another's deeds, since this denies their due reputation. (One unduly flattered and undeservedly praised is, however, in a very difficult situation). An individual may conceal the whole truth about their own doings on occasion, but never about another's



achievements. The bravery of the subordinate sent on a task is not to be denied, but the wisdom of the one who sent him to his doom is closely guarded. After all, conceding one's faults is likely to have an adverse effect on one's reputation. This is not seen as lying, or even as particularly unusual. Instead it is the truly virtuous Auloring who confesses his faults and errors of judgement. Let others sing your praises, but you are better hiding your failings! A good way to introduce this concept is in the formulation of character stories. If players use the narrative method to define their characters, encourage them to do it in the third person, as if told by another, such as Pendlbas' story. Similarly at the beginning of an episode, encourage the players to introduce one another rather than themselves. If they say anything noteworthy and consistent that is added to the description, consider keeping it for use later. For an exceptional introduction, you may wish to award a hero point to the hero that provides it too. You may, of course, need to monitor this if the players start to abuse it!

worst excesses of the Taker.

Often known as Crossroads, the city of Rikhnos Crossing lies just beyond the northern borders of Caratan. It is the largest settlement between Estali in the west and Bastis in the east. Situated where the Old Wenelian Road meets the Noshahn River on the borders of Pralorela it stands at the northern limit of navigation for trading vessels coming from Handra on the Mournsea coast. It is notable for its ancient bridge, built overnight by the eponymous city founder, the hero (Ralian Sorcerer) Rikhnos, in response to a challenge from a haughty Pralori chief. An ancient meeting place, it provides a safe center for trade and commerce between the Wenelian tribes and towns to the east, the Hsunchen peoples to the west, and traders from the shores of the Felster lake to the north, the Auloring from the south and the exotic Durulz, and newtlings from the New Fens and the Mournsea coasts.

The lands just to the south of the escarpment of the Pralorelan hills are unusual in Caratan for both their dryness and for the large amount of outcrops and stone pavements. The area never suffers from lasting flood problems as all the run-off from the nearby hills drains straight into the fissures and flows away beneath the surface. Several large cave complexes are known and many systems that are more extensive are reputed to exist.

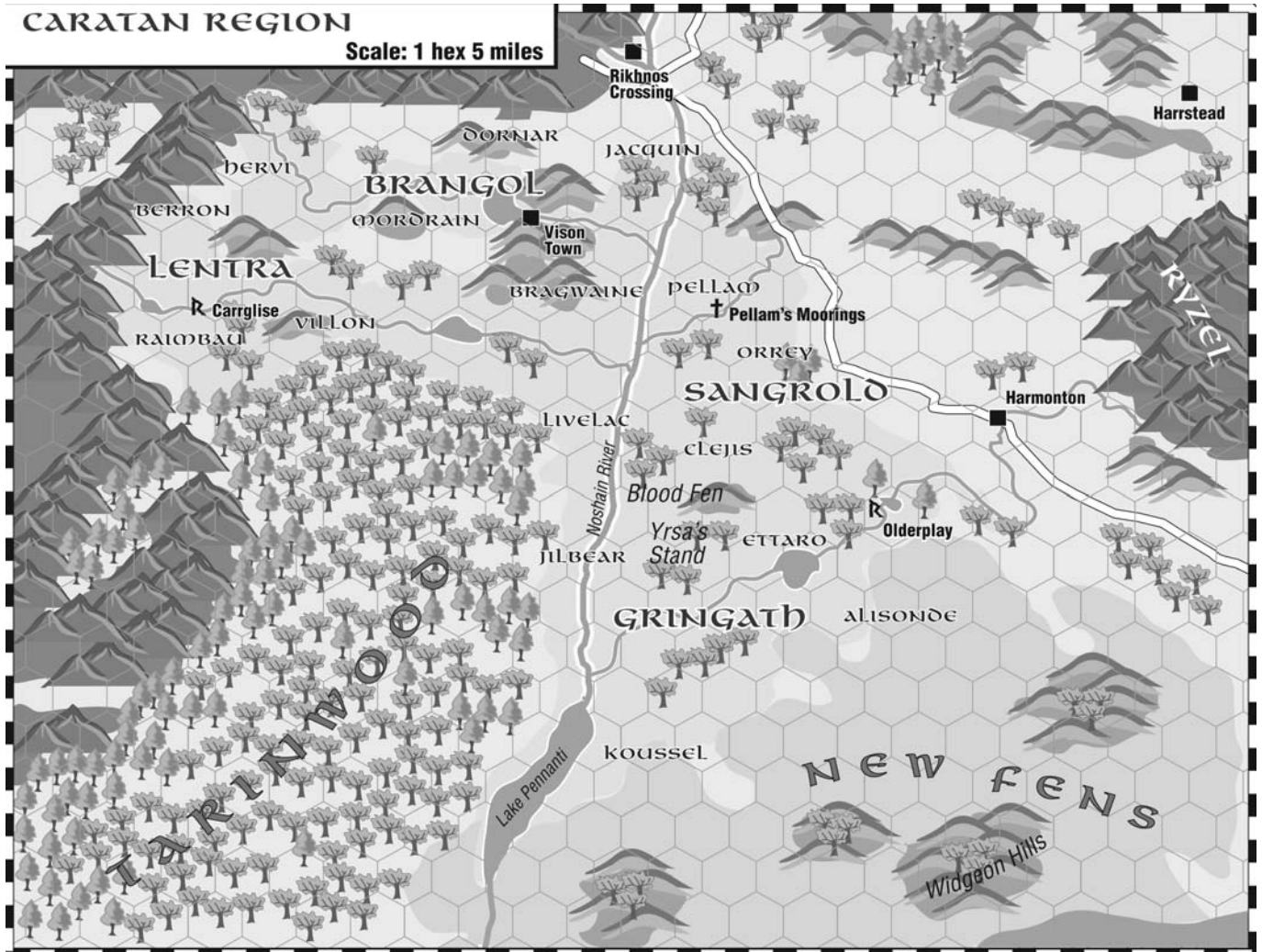
The Auloring draw their livelihood from a mixture of farming, fishing, herding, and hunting. The exact mix of these forms is dependent upon the portion of Caratan they inhabit. These basic occupations are supplemented to some degree by

trading, both within and beyond their lands. Some clans exhibit a large degree of seasonal movement in pursuit of their livelihoods, but life is based around some permanent sites of habitation, although these are rarely larger than villages.

In the areas most prone to seasonal flooding farming is in fields enclosed by earth banks and supplied by irrigation systems. These physical systems are supplemented by the magic of their deities. In areas with more reliable water supply, such as the ranges of the Brangol and the Lentra, there are even a few settled fields and orchards.

Fishing also contributes to the Auloring diet, and is practiced in all tribal areas, though it takes most prominence amongst the Sangrol and Gringath. Catches are made by line, net, and trap, depending on the prey, and supplemented by stocks from artificial ponds. Herding plays a lesser role than in many barbarian cultures, but is not entirely absent. Some clans have herds of the only local species large enough to survive the flood-prone conditions, the raphi (capybara). These provide meat, milk, hide, and fur. Hunting and foraging provide a fourth source of food, with plenty of small game, bird-life, and the occasional marsh deer being found in Lentra lands. In addition, skilled Ustelmi are known to imitate their god and hunt for fish in rivers by swimming and catching their quarry, as well as working alongside their companions the giant mink. Some of the trees produce reliable supplies of nuts, while berries and fungi are also freely available to those who know where to look.

In common with most Thelayan cultural groups, the clan is the primary unit of society,



controlling land and respecting tradition. The Auloring Nation is formed of four tribes, each of three to five clans, membership of which is voluntary but mutually beneficial, and supported by the group's place within a common mythology. Three of the four tribes are patrilineal, with the remaining one following the maternal line. The leader of each clan is known as the Compt (or Comptess). Tribal governance is by a strong leaders (Salar) and council of elders known as Plumerey. These individuals occupy a similar position to thanes amongst the Heortlings. On a mundane level, the word of the Salar is law for the tribe in any particular situation and he is accountable for his actions. It is not uncommon for weak or failing leaders to be replaced by popular acclaim and/or personal challenge, or be a sacrificial offering to appease an angry god. The post of Salar is not hereditary; sons may succeed their fathers but only with the support of the Plumerey.

The Auloring value four qualities in an individual. Foremost is Modesty. Their experience of the seasonal flooding, so necessary for their wellbeing, is that although too little is difficult, too much is positively dangerous. Better to imitate Hibour's modesty than to boast and invite the Taker. Secondly, they hold to the importance of Loyalty. All the Auloring are bound by some degrees of obligation, indeed part of the rituals

that mark the transition from child to adult involve practical demonstrations of loyalty and obedience to orders. An adult is one who can be trusted to be loyal, just as Hibour and Carra can be trusted to provide the necessities of life. The third virtue is Endurance, to be resolute in the face of adversity, steadfast through the lean times and through faithful service to earn the respect of those around you. The Auloring know that while there are lean years and hard years the patient will see the provision of Hibour. The final, fourth, virtue is Hard Work. How else could you earn respect? That which is given to you for your labors is not a gift, but a wage. In an earning culture, the only ones allowed to give a gift beyond price can be the gods. To gift too extravagantly could be an outrageous action. If the Orlanthi attitude can be summed up as "no one can force you to do anything" then for the Auloring "Respect is earned and respect is given; respect your leaders and earn their respect."

These traits are reflected across the whole of Auloring culture, whether that is in the consumption of food and drink, the giving of gifts or praise, in ornamentation and dress and even in language and conversation. Extravagance of any sort is seen as rather vulgar and in bad taste. Deeds and quality will show themselves; leave it to the storytellers to spread reports of them, do not presume to do it yourself. If the Auloring are

* So who is this mysterious Aulor?

Understanding the nature and fate of Aulor is the key to understanding the past and future of the Auloring.

There is a degree of uncertainty about who Aulor's father is. About his mother, there is no doubt, Carra. But the myths of Caratan and the researches of the Godlearners leave his father in doubt. Some would say that Aulor is the son of Orlanth, the last vestiges of the storm's passing.

Most would claim that Aulor is another child of Hibour, a sibling to the Giver and the Taker, known to some as the Ruler. Yet, there are hints and rumors that he is the son of Heler, and even that he is Heler.

One myth tells of how the Trickster wormed his way into Carra's embrace. Given the Trickster's role in Caratan's history this is ironic to say the least. Aulor was the first, and to date, only true king of the land.

*** The Role of the Trickster**

Trickster has always plagued the Auloring. The actions of his followers sank Slontos, giving birth to Caratan. It was because of one of his pranks that Aulor died, before being able to establish an undisputed ruling dynasty. Trickster disrupted the heroquest of Alphons de Brandgor in his attempt to unite the Auloring, leaving the task unfinished, and so causing its partial failure. It would seem clear that without the intervention of the Trickster Caratan would be a very different place. Instead of the quiet Auloring Nation, there would be a strong and unified state; a kingdom standing astride the Noshain, benefiting from trade in all directions and mediating the meeting of the barbarian lands with the monotheistic West. Nevertheless, the irony continues: the uniqueness of Auloring culture has been protected by their inability to strenuously exert themselves beyond their own heartlands. In failing to become a mighty nation, they have instead become a rather different model of what it means to be great.

Y Pandalbas Story

"I am Leonar of the Bragwaine, father of Pandalbas. I speak of his deeds for his modesty forbids him. Born on Two Floods Day, he has heard the River calling him ever since. He learnt swimming before walking, boating before running. Pandalbas' dream is to break the Unjust Wizards spell so he can travel Noshain's full length. During his adulthood rites he met a Dreadlock who showed him the location of the Crystal Coracle, inside was a boy. Pandalbas named him Clovis, adopting him as a brother he patiently taught the boy how to fish. Recently, Pandalbas has spent time in a the New Fens with his friends the Otter-people seeking a diviner who can scry out a way to restore Noshain to full health."

unwilling to mention "the Taker", for fear of attracting attention, how about reticence in mentioning "the Giver" too? Gifts are by definition un-earned, and therefore modesty would limit talking over-much about them. Indeed, to directly name the giver of a gift to another party might cause embarrassment and/or offence to the giver.

There is a similar degree of respect and mutuality among the Auloring to that found amongst Orlanthe. If anything, there is a greater flexibility of role, especially with women hunters, farmers and fishers, and male hearth-tenders. All adults in the tribe are expected to be able to survive and find their own food in the wild, (be it animal, fish or plant) as part of their initiation requirements. With a significant number of weapon-trained females to bolster the males, the Auloring are more than capable of defending their lands, and are skilled in guerrilla warfare.

Descent is normally traced through the father, except in the Lentra tribe, where the mother has precedence. Marriage is frowned upon within the clan, but is uncommon outside of one's tribe. There is, however, no prohibition in either direction.

The Auloring typically dress in smock and trousers usually made of leather and coarse linen for the more rugged tasks of hunting and farming. Some wear shirts although this is not common. Sometimes the smocks may be worn to below the knee, and in this case, trousers may not be worn. Lighter, looser smocks woven from the jonkrush are more typical for those whose occupations are water-based, although often a simple loincloth will suffice. Sandals are preferred to boots. Hats are not commonly worn; if protection from the rain is required, a hooded cloak is the norm.

In common with their cultural modesty, decoration and style are usually matters of subtlety and understatement, for example, a different color stitching in a simple pattern or a colored border on the cloak. Even on the most expensive of goods the maximum acceptable ornamentation would be a strip of embossed leatherwork covering a seam or the fringe of a smock. The only area where this restriction is rather more relaxed is in the case of methods of securing clothing. Ornatly carved wood or bone toggles are commonly used to secure clothing, supplemented by leather straps and thongs (often with ingenious quick-release mechanisms for use in an emergency). However, the use of metal clasps or buttons is rare, and usually considered excessively showy.

Both men and women wear plain and undecorated jewelry, in the form of ear- and finger-rings. Usually such jewelry is of bone, although bronze is not uncommon. The wearing of a carved wooden bangle by one or both of the partners signifies marriage. Such a bangle should usually last the lifetime of the partners. Thus, a common divorce custom involves the destruction of this token in the presence of the spouse and witnesses. Related to this marriage bangle custom is the thong-marriage, a temporary union, lasting only as long as the leather strap used to signify it, typically no more than a year. If the partners wish to remain together after that it is considered

scandalous not to engage in a "proper" wooden-bangle marriage.

Among certain segments of society there is also the practice referred to as the reed marriage. This is not a marriage at all, merely a practice intended to legitimate sexual relations intended purely for pleasure and indulgence!

The typical Auloring settlement is the hamlet or villages. These comprise a number of huts enclosed within earth banks and palisades, grouped around a larger building. Each family lives in one hut, close to which are suitable animal enclosures. Unmarried but mature offspring remain with their parents, either within the main hut or in a secondary building. Thus in larger settlements extended families form whole neighborhoods. At the center of each community is the roundhouse, a circular hall-like structure often surrounded by its own palisade and fortifications, and usually raised above the level of the surrounding village. The roundhouse is large enough to hold most of the community, at least within its own enclosure, or bailey. Within this enclosure, there are usually shrines to Hibour and Carra, a house for special guests and the village headman's hut.

Most buildings are circular and constructed of wattle and daub (reeds woven around a few strategic posts, and covered by a mixture of mud, straw and animal dung). Roofs tend to be of reeds. The use of logs or planks is unusual, due to their relative scarcity. The interior of such huts is remarkably warm and dry, with drafts excluded from the entrance by means of reed matting and/or heavy woolen blankets for most dwellings, or by a door and curtain in higher-class dwellings.

Settlements larger than villages are rare and there are few towns. Few centers of population exhibit evidence of planning. Most sites have been settled for hundreds of years, especially those with substantial earthen banks, even if the buildings within them are regularly replaced. Where placement upon higher ground is not possible, settlements are constructed on piles, well above the normal seasonal flood level.

The diet is a mixture of cultivated crops, such as the jonkrush and the eureed, supplemented by herbs, berries and nuts, meat from either the raphi or hunting, and fish caught in the pools, streams, and rivers. The exact balance varies somewhat between the tribes and clans. The fleshy seed heads of jonkrush make nourishing, if bland, food usually more used for animal fodder. Some varieties of eureed are particularly prized for their sweet stems, which are refined by the Auloring into a potent alcoholic beverage.

The Auloring favor skirmishing tactics over open battle. They excel most at guerrilla warfare, where their supreme knowledge of the land and their excellent hunting skills can be turned against their opponents. The followers of Ustelm jealously guard a number of specialist hunting techniques including the use of drug-tipped blow-darts. Some of the Auloring magics can be particularly effective against large groups of armored opponents, especially Carra's powers of Create Mire and Open Earth, as well as Hibour's Flood.

Y When Orlanth Got His Feet Wet, or, How Hibour defeated Orlanth

HIBOUR, IS OUR GOD, and many would call him but a small god. It is true that his sphere of influence is small, not extending far beyond our beautiful watery land of eureeds and raphi, mink and jonkrush. But surely no minor god can get the better of Orlanth, whose followers say he is the King of the gods.

On a time, many long years ago, there lived in the foothills of Caratan three small tribes. Their lands were unusually wet and took their bounty from Carra, daughter of the Earth, who fed her children with plenty. Orlanth, mighty god of storms was their chief, and none challenged his rule. After all, who would challenge the one who could slay the sun?

Our ancestors are the sons and daughters of Carra's son Aulor. They lived a simple life in the foothills, somewhat unruly, unguided by lore or law. Nevertheless they were happy and untroubled, save by the occasional attacks of chaos, the incursion of the kindred of the blazing sun, and the twice-cursed spawn of the Trickster, who is not to be named.

One day the sun rose, as it was wont to do, and Orlanth swept forth over his lands, as he also was wont to do. As he flew onwards he came to the portion of Carra, a wife he rather neglected. Lovely she was, but gentle and peaceful, damp and bedewed. From his place atop the breeze he noticed one he did not recognise intruding upon his domain and flew down, all the better to find out who this one was, friend or foe.

"Hail, stranger! Who comes this way, to a place that is not allowed to all? Do you come as friend, or as a foe?" blustered the mighty god of storms.

The stranger stopped, looked around, then upwards, as if not expecting a greeting to come from the skies, and with a voice like the gentlest of waters replied. "Greetings, great one. I come as friend, of course! For who would oppose mighty Orlanth, slayer of the Bright Emperor, Liberator of Justice, god of the raging storm, fierce in battle and generous in victory?" (Yet even as he spoke thus his voice was like a laughing mountain stream, passing over the rocks.)

"Greetings, stranger", replied the mighty one, somewhat put out at being pre-empted in his boasts of his prowess. "I truly am Orlanth. Yet if you are a friend, tell me your name," said he, settling on the damp ground.

"I am Hibour, distant son of Magasta of the waters, but a small god of the coastal lands," replied the stranger, his voice mirthful as the snow's meltwater.

At this revelation Orlanth was intrigued, and not a little bemused. What was a son of the waters doing so far from his homelands? Yet he had no reason to refuse the least of hospitality to Hibour, whom he could clearly see was but a small god.

"Then you are welcome here, if only for the sake of Brastalos, and despite our old quarrels," spake he, feeling a little more sure of his strength. "I offer you water, to quench your thirst in your far-traveling." (Yet even as he said this he felt the tremor of uncertainty - not noticing the water oozing forth from the ground where his feet were planted.)

"You would offer water to a son of Magasta?" laughed the

small god Hibour. "And yet I thank you for your gracious hospitality. Would you seek aught of me, who draws upon the deeps?", asked he in reply (sounding more than ever like the rumbling roar of a river in flood).

The mighty god of airs was annoyed: annoyed and yet intrigued. Who was this who teased him so, and yet refused to boast of his greatness and power? And only then did he notice the water gathering around his feet, soaking through his boots and wetting the hem of his heavy woolen cloak.

"So, distant son of Magasta of the waters, I see you have no needs of food, for to you the waters are as a feast," replied mighty Orlanth, in haste, caught off his guard and not totally thinking of his words.

Hibour, the smallest of gods, laughed long and loud, yet this time there was little mirth, sounding as it did like the racing torrent of a suddenly melting glacier high in the Mislari mountains around Boar Peak.

"That is so," he boomed, far louder than he should by rights. "Water as a feast!

Will you enjoy such a repast?" he replied, his voice like that of the mighty breakers that sweep ashore from Magasta's realm, pounding the coasts into submission.

And Orlanth looked around, aware for once that he had been caught off guard. And behold, around his feet the waters streamed inland; the hills looking all the more like sand-bars before a coastal flood-tide. The leather of his booted feet was soaked and the water crept up his heavy woolen cloak, weighing him down, even as he sought to rouse himself to the fight against so strange an adversary.

And Hibour, the least of gods, laughed long and loud, like the thunder of the storm-tide rolling inshore as the dunes burst, sweeping aside all in its path. "And so, mighty Orlanth, god of storm, what would you have me do? Would you care to visit my domains, and do you come as friend or foe?"

And Orlanth, mighty god of storm, knew he was bested, and rising with difficulty on the winds, flew off to where the foothills still were such, and the mountains still reared tall into the sky. And when he reached his stead in the Storm Realm once more he looked, and saw the truth, and heard the tales that Watersmeet Heler brought of the lands he had traveled. Yet even there Hibour's gentle laughter reached to his ears, like the chiming drip of the melting ice high in the mountains of Orlanth's lands, and the mighty god of storm laughed loud and long. "Hibour" he cried, between great belly-laughs, each strong as the Storm season gales, "you win. Mighty you are, though you would say it not aloud. Carra is yours, and so are her lands, at least for this time."

Maybe when Time has moved on and gods or sorcery, trickery or Fate changes the lands again, Orlanth will reclaim the Auloring Nation and the lands of Caratan. Yet we believe he's more likely to learn modesty first. Until then we, the Auloring, Hibour and Carra's children, will delight in the waters and the damp earth, and will harvest the jonkrush and care for the raphi, and let others tell of our prowess and our god, who bested Orlanth and won us this land without so much as lifting up his hand.



Dates and Events

1050 The sinking of Slontos, massive change in coastal shape, highlands become coastal plains. Much of the population drowns or flees. Few small clans (formerly subjugated) remain, faithful in their worship of Carra. Worship of Orlanth declines.

c.1075 As steady trickle of immigrant groups continues, uniting around the worship of Carra the land begins to be referred to as Caratan.

c.1125 "Orlanth gets his feet wet". Whiteface Helin unites clans to form the Gringath tribe, under the worship of Hibour.

1149 Raphimere shows Earthblest Pelinoris how to herd the capybara..

c.1220 Birth of the Red Goddess in Peloria

1318 Farsighted Sigebear institutes the Seignurers' Court at Carrglise

1368 Trueword Vison establishes the Auloring Marchey, within a generation Vison Town has grown around it.

1392 L'Ustelm Onrey kills Raymon Ettard in personal combat. Tribe Sangrold founded by L'Ustelm Onrey.

1459-66 Ralian Malkioni Warlords plague Caratan, attempting to exert sovereignty
1467 Alphons de Brandgor partially succeeds in a Heroquest to unite the Gringath, Sangrold, Brangol and Lentra with the aid of Hibour. He takes the name Hiboursfis. Auloring Nation born

1469 Hiboursfis Alphons moves Seignurers' Court to Vison Town

1474 Battle of Drowning Waters. Auloring defeat forces of Princes of Ralios before Vison Town with the aid of L'Etranger Modrain. Lake Vison created overnight. Alphons Hiboursfis and the Auloring Nation allow L'Etranger Mordrain and his followers to settle, founding Clan Mordrain. They introduce the tradition of St. Brouward, (who comes to be known as Buruwehaar of the Protecting Mist).

1537 Battle of Blood Fen and death of Yrsa Longarm.

1580 Dormal the Sailor opens the Oceans

1620 The Present Day

New or Modified Occupations

DIVINER



The Auloring nation is a non-literate culture. Its laws have been established by a combination of carefully memorized precedent (oral law and mythic lore) and by seeking fresh guidance where there is uncertainty. The Diviners (Ordoners) are responsible for the correct interpretation of both these methods. As such, they are a combination between lore-masters and fortune-tellers, relying as much on intuition and subconscious clues as memory or discerning the will of the gods.

Each Diviner specializes in the particular method of divining his truths, usually by using some form of the Earth and Water element, such as water or mud scrying, or the casting of rocks.

It is an Auloring custom that a Diviner should never seek the will of the gods for or against his own family. Once they complete their apprenticeship, it is common for the new Diviner to move to a nearby clan's village and work for that clan for the rest of his life. If no clan has space for a new Diviner then they often wander the land as independent practitioners.

A Diviner is a member of the Respected Free class and so is expected to take up arms and assist in the defense of the clan when needed, thus Diviners are not as defenseless as typical barbarian scholars.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Diviners might be apprentices who, having completed their training, find that they have no patron under which to continue their work. Moving on from their settlement is the best way of finding patronage. It is also possible that an independent diviner will offer his services for entirely mercenary reasons. However, they can offer valuable insight to hero bands, and as such are welcome companions.

Typical Abilities: Bluff, Command Attention, Concentrate, Emphatic Gestures, Know Precedent, Mythic Lore, Oral Lore, Read

Body Language, Scrying in [Specialist Field], Tact.

Fighting Skills: Dagger Fighting.

Typical Personality: Authoritative, Insightful, Obsessive, Thoughtful.

Typical Relationships: to Diviners' Association, to Patron or to adopted Clan.

Typical Followers: Apprentice, bodyguard, or uncommonly, a trained animal.

Magic: WaterSeer Wesrod.

Standard of Living: Common.

Typical Equipment: Divining equipment, hooded cape, dagger, small house in village.

FISHER



Fishers (Diral) catch fish, crayfish, and all other similar bounty from the waters according to the methods of laid down by Noshain and keep domestic fish stocks in man-made pools. Their fishing techniques include the use of nets, traps, and spears. Fishers have the skills to handle small, usually single or two man vessels.

Beginning Hero Suggestions: Fishers tend not to travel too far from home. However, they may have been swept along by fate, or storm and flood, to take their part in the wider world. Such is, after all, the lot of heroes.

Typical Abilities: Boating, Endure Weather, Find Prey, Fishing (Net, Spear, Trap), Know Fish Habits, Know River, Manage Fish Farm, Predict Flood, Set Traps, Swim, Tie Knots

Typical Personality: Introspective, Observant, Patient,

Typical Relationships: to Association.

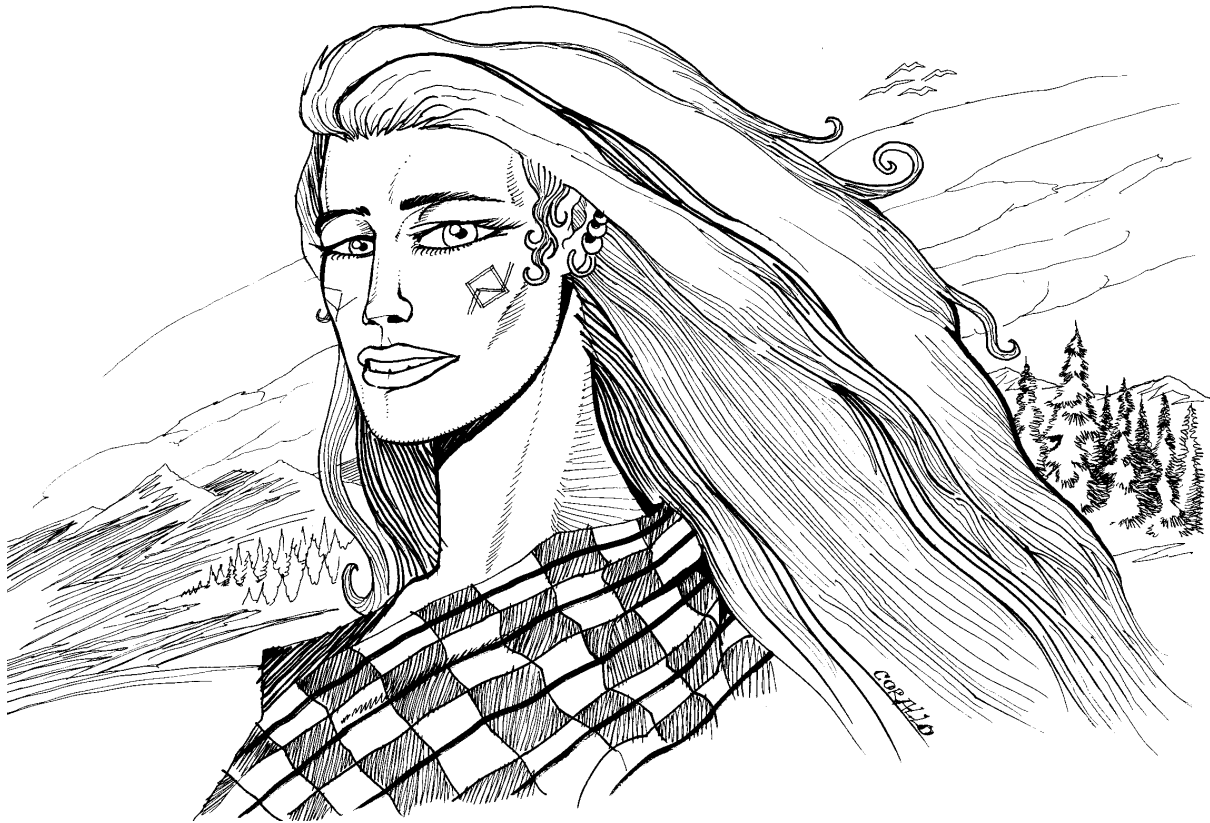
Typical Followers: family members, apprentice, Freeman watermen

Magic: Diral, Noshain.

Standard of Living: Common.

Typical Equipment: Appropriate fishing gear, fresh, dried or smoked fish. Leather Helmet, Shield, Spear, Small house on riverbank, Small boat (coracle or similar).

What My Brother Told Me: A Personal View of Auloring Culture



Who are you?

I am Childeric, oldest son of our father Lambear and mother Aliss.

Who are we?

We are Clan Jacquin of Tribe Brangol. Many call us the Strongbows, and say we are great. We occupy the lands of Hibour and Carra, which strangers call Caratan. Our lands are rich and lush, sheltered from the strong winds and blessed with fertility.

Are we a great people?

Greatness is something others decide, not what we claim for ourselves! Other clans, even from different tribes, praise us highly for our skill with our bows. Let it be said that we fulfil our ancient responsibilities, and more. Our friends of the Evelac clan still gift us with feathers for our arrow quills in memory of our help against the Woodfolk at Gwillaum's Ford, when we came to their aid as we had promised. That was before our father was born.

What is the difference between men and women?

Men are fathers and women are mothers, of course! But beyond that there are no differences. Throughout our lands any skilled woman may fight, herd, or weave, just as any talented man may fish, or sew, or tell tales. There are only two exceptions: just as only women may bear children, so only men may bear the bodies of the departed to their final rest. In this way, all things remain in balance.

Where do we live?

This village, Lowclere, is our home. We live here most of the year, but especially during Dark season and Storm season, when the weather is poor, and when the Taker comes. It is the biggest village belonging to the clan. See that hut, the sturdy wooden one beside the roundhouse? Our chief lives there.

How do we live?

We live on the bounty of Hibour and Carra. When the weather is good we find our food by hunting wild game, gathering fruits from the woodlands and fishing for

trout and crayfish in the streams. Some of our kin live in wetter lands and herd the raphi for meat and fur, but we do not keep animals. Of course if any deer stray from the northern hills, they are ours, and very tasty they are too! In poor weather we shelter in our houses, live off what we have stored in better weather and go out when the floods recede.

What is important in my life?

Be loyal, be modest, endure and work hard. Remember the four virtues of Aulor, wisest child of the gods,

*“Be loyal to your chief and your people,
for only the fool stands alone.
Let others tell of your worth
as you gladly tell others of theirs.
Endure all that’s gods’ sent,
for plenty’s the harvest of patience.
Work hard and with all that you have,
let your scars prove the praise of your fellows.”*

Who rules us?

The wise and powerful Compt Lothair Five-Lives governs us. We owe loyalty to him, just as he owes loyalty to Salar Dagobert of the Bright Axe. The Plumerey, the wise men and women of the clan, advise him. Our uncle Rojere is one of them, but it is the Compt’s decision that counts. He has not failed us in a score of years. Robear the Ill-fated, who ruled before him, saw the Taker come twice in five years, and gave his life to Hibour for us shortly after.

What makes a man great?

A man is not made great by empty boasts, but by service and skill. It is not right for a man to boast - that only encourages the Taker. Better let others recognize what you are, and be great only in your modesty. Obey your leaders and your loyalty will be your record. As Hiboursfis Alphons, our greatest hero said, “Respect is earned and respect is given; respect your leaders and earn their respect.”

What is my lot in life?

Now you are young, and should concern yourself with learning all you need to take care of yourself, and with obeying the orders of your betters. Soon you will need to prove that you can be trusted, not to me, but to the priests and leaders. Then one of the gods will choose you for service. I hope that you will be called for one of our gods, although we do recognize the value of some foreign ones like Issaries. Most likely Ustelm will call you, and be a better hunter than I am. Until we know, I will teach you the ways of hunting the game that swarms in our land.

How do we deal with others?

If you are confronted by outsiders deal with them with respect until you are sure whether they are worthy friends. The most important thing is for you to pass information back to the clan

as quickly as possible. At present, you are a hunter, and not one of the Plumerey. If you see someone you do not recognize in our lands, you should report them to the Plumerey. They will know whether they are to be fought or whether they are friends.

Of course, because we do not challenge all strangers immediately many outsiders think we are weak, but this is not true. We simply want to be sure. Only the Taker destroys without asking questions. To follow his example is very bad.

Who are our gods?

We worship Hibour and his wife Carra. He provides us with the life-giving waters each year, to provide strength and vigour for the land. Carra blesses our lands and increases the harvest of the jonkrush and the eured. Ustelm, god of the mink, empowers us as we seek for food and gives us the example of how to fight our enemies. Lambear our father, to help him in guarding our village and our chieftain, follows Buruwehaar, god of the Protecting Mist. Some of our kin follow other gods. Our cousin Richar is drawn to death and destruction, worshipping the Taker, but we will not speak of him!

Who are our enemies?

Hibour and Carra bless us—we have few enemies who would raid us or plot to cause us harm. But you must be on your guard! We have few real friends either. Hill and hollow, marsh and dry land, all have their share of danger. Hate chaos, respect all worthy of respect, and remember who we are!

Who are our neighbors?

The Orlanthi view us with suspicion, they dislike us for Hibour’s cleverness in outwitting their god. It is true that their manners are strange and their boasting is dangerous but they are good fighters. Never forget that they would like our lands, even if they do not know how to look after them! You must be careful in all your dealings with them.

The Woodmen are tricky. One day they may be like the grass of the fens, bountiful and friendly; the next as the thorns in the croplands, obstructive and hostile. Their word once given may be trusted until the next day’s end. If their fruit is friendship treat with them; if bitterness, mingle their blood with the damp earth!

To north and west are the Pralori Elkpeople, who wear hide and antler as easily as skin and hair. They generally do not come into our lands except in search for lost kin. Remember: where the four-legged are, then the two-legged will be. The elk are ours if we can get them first!

To the south are the Pigmen. These poor and humble ones deserve our respect and friendship, for their lords give them none and are violent and filled with hate. Give haven to the humble, welcome their lords only with death.

Then there are the strange ones, who worship one god, in many ways. They value Carra’s land only for what they can take away, and Noshain only for his path to the sea. Be on your guard. Repay good for good, evil for evil, but never trust them. Their greed tempts the Taker, do not aid in calling him!

Homeland: Auloring

“Respect is earned and respect is given; respect your leaders and earn their respect.”

The primary inhabitants of Caratan are the Auloring, a Theyalan culture originated in the Dawn Age. They are the westernmost example of Barbarian Culture in Maniria.

They live quietly and are little known far beyond their lands and they provide an interesting contrast to the more familiar and better known Heortlings. Physically they appear little different, but their culture is far from similar. They speak Auloring, which has little connection with that of the Heortlings and follow gender equality. Most obvious is their different pantheon. The gods of the damp lowlands have proved their worth over the airy deities of the higher lands.

The tribes draw their livelihood from a mixture of farming, fishing, herding, and hunting. While sheep and cattle are not unknown, the Auloring prefer to herd and eat their own unique native species, the raphi—a large amphibious rodent. Their giant mink companions, equally at home on land or in water aid them in the hunt. The exact mix of each clan's livelihood is dependent upon which portion of Caratan it occupies. Each clan's life is based around at least one permanent settlement, even though these are rarely larger than villages. This is true even for those clans that exhibit a large degree of seasonal movement in pursuit of their food and fortune. The only population center widely known beyond Caratan itself is Vison Town, which ranks as a small city.

Yet however quiet and reclusive the Auloring may seem, who knows what role the Hero Wars may thrust upon them, and what destiny they may be called upon to fulfill!

Auloring Homeland Keyword

Auloring society is a meritocracy, generally comprising four broad social ranks. These are Thralls (Esclav), Cottars (Freemen), Carls (Respected Free) and Thanes (Eleve). Theoretically, anyone, no matter what the rank of their parents, can rise to become the Salar, the tribal chief. This homeland entry covers the occupations of the Respected Free, respectable free citizens, full members of society. Having completed apprenticeship in one of the ten respected professions, they are trusted to show initiative and use their trade for the good of the community. The ten respected occupations: Boater, Crafter, Diviner, Farmer, Fisherman, Healer, Herder, Hunter, Trader, Warrior.

Native Abilities: Auloring Customs, Auloring Myths, Battle Axe and Shield or Spear and Shield Fighting, Farming or Hunting or Herding or Fishing, Geography of Caratan, Javelin or Self Bow, Speak Auloring, Wilderness Survival.

Note: Each clan has a distinctive skill or ability. For example all members of Clan Jacquin the 'Strongbows' Clan gain +4 to their Bow Ability, while all members of the Dornar 'Distillers' Clan gain Alcohol Tolerant 17.

Typical Personality: Fear Dragons, Modest, Loyal, Resolute, Hard-Working .



Typical Relationships: To family, to clan, to tribe, to Association, to Compt, to Salar.

Magic: Vierhost (Common magic), Hibour Pantheon (Theism).

Common Names: Many names are similar to Heortling or Wenelian ones. Animal or other epithets are common.
Men - Albear, Bernar, Charl, Childebear, Dagobear, Eudes, Francis, Gilbear, Herbear, Leonar, Merovan, Ricold, Sigefrid.
Women - Aliss, Elaine, Ettard, Guenever, Igraine, Isoud, Liley, Margawse, Morgana, Nimuey.

Common Religions

Vierhost (Old Man)

Vierhost was the First. He is the father of the Auloring. All real people are descended from him; anyone who claims descent from another is not a real person. Vierhost gives his magic to the Auloring to help them in their daily lives.

↳ **Sample Talents:** Attack Enemy Spirit, Conceal Object, Deflect Magic, Fair Trade, Find Rodents, Giver's Help, Heal Body, Hide Self, Hold Breath, Mist Sense, Protect from Ancestor, Protect from Flood, See in the Dark, Swim Far and Deep, Swim Fast and Silent, Taker's Touch, Talk to Ancestor, Walk on Water.

Specialised Religion—Hibour Pantheon

Hibour, his wife Carra, and their companions and friends are gods of the damp lowlands. In the past Carra was recognized as a consort of Orlanth, but in the changing of the land Hibour, small though he was, proved himself better. Hibour and Carra are worshipped together, usually by the males and females respectively, and have equal prestige. Carra is the goddess of the damp earth and all that supports the staple crops and herds. Hibour is responsible for the seasonal inundation waters that bring new life to the plants, fish, raphi, and waterfowl. Sometimes two of his children claim the task. Stormflood the zealous son, whose enthusiasm and boisterousness brings destruction and grief, and so he is called "the Taker." Sweetwater "Giver" is more generous than her father, and more restrained than her brother, her coming brings special blessings.

Hibour Pantheon Keyword

Abilities: Know Auloring Myths, Worship Hibour Pantheon.

Virtues: Cautious, Cool, Curious, Polite.
Magic: Divine Aid.

Other Side: Among the lands of the Mistmarch where Earth and Water meet, lies the Blessed Isle where Hibour, Carra and their friends live. There are many places where Caratan is close to the Mistmarch, maybe sometimes too close...

Sample deities of the Hibour Pantheon

Diviner: WATERSEER WESROD
Wesrod is the sayer of secrets and giver of law. He instructs all good Auloring in the ways of justice and fairness. His followers can read the waters and the silt to determine his will.
Affinities—Moist Earth, Knowledge, Law.

Farmer: RUSHMOTHER CARRA
Carra ensures that all her children are fed and

clothed with the bounty of her land. Her friends know that they need never go hungry if they trust her wisdom and provision. Both men and women worship her.
Affinities—Bless Family, Farming, Fertility.

Fisher: DIRAL THE FISHER
Mere-wader and hunter, his followers fish the meres and waterways.
Affinities—Flood, Boats, Marsh.

Healer: SWEETWATER CARRASDOL
The Giver's blessings of water are for the crops, animals, and all swimming things.
Affinities—Moist Earth, Healing Waters, Curing Earth.

Herder: HERDMOTHER RAPHIMERE
Carra's daughter taught the Auloring how to herd the raphi, which are so abundant in the land. For this they honor her and invoke her aid in all their doings with their livestock.
Affinities—Moist Earth, Rodent, Herding.

Hunter: MINKSGOD USTEML
Ustelm the Mink is the whiskered killer, hunter of wild game, fleet swimmer, and fish-taker. Joyous and lustful in life, cunning and quick in the chase he has a tendency to excessive violence when he gets over-excited.
Affinities—River, Hunting, Lust.

Merchant: WATERSMEET HELER
Heler is the god of where the waters of the skies, the lands, and the deeps all meet together. His followers are traders, peacemakers, storytellers, travelers, and ferrymen to the realms of the dead. Heler's worshippers ply the Noshain and its tributaries in their sacred barges, sometimes spending years on end without sleeping upon the ground.
Affinities—River, Travel, Trade.

Warrior: MISTGUARD BURUWEHAAR
Striking from behind his cloak of mist, Buruwehaar's fighters are skilled at harrying any foes that dare to invade their lands. If they wish to be seen, they will see you first, and if they see you first, then beware. Just as often, however, raiders will fail to find the settlements that Buuwehaar's followers defend.
Affinities—Fog, Combat, Defend.

Warrior: STORMFLOOD
Stormflood is The Taker. Those drawn to the power of death, and unafraid of their own ending, are attracted to him and the terror he brings. He comes without warning and unseen, takes all that stands in his way.
Affinities—Flood, Combat, Death.

Bad Omens and Bangles



Narrator's Summary

Synopsis: In the damp and fertile lowlands surrounding the mighty Noshain River are the lands of Caratan, home to the tribes of the Auloring Nation. So far it's been a good year in Lowclere, and for the Dornar and Jacquin clans as

they look forward to a visit from "The Giver". Tonight the heroes are guests at a banquet held to celebrate a forthcoming marriage when things take an unexpected turn. With brains, brawn and bravery can the heroes restore good fortune, avert conflict between the clans, and deflect the wrath of "The Taker."

Sample Heroes

'Strongarm' Adalbear

Adalbear is the largest and strongest man in his village; he is the local Smith as were his fathers before him. Owns Shaper the family Great Hammer. Makes tools and weapons for a living and jewellery for fun. Travels widely to sell his jewellery and buy books, his other passion, including two tracts on diseases and one on Mallia that cost him a year's profits from his outlander friend, Otto a Lhankor Mhy sage.

He hates Mallia after encountering her work on one of his journeys. His friend and lover Morgana, a Stormflood follower, normally accompany him.

KEYWORDS: Auloring Nation, Clan Smith and Healer. Initiate of Healer Carra.

'Waterfils' Clovis

Clovis Niloc, adopted by the Bragwaine Tribe aged 5, was found in a coracle, alone, scared silly, with the "net of plenty" the only clue to his true home. He thinks of himself as an outsider, because of this he follows the way of Vierhom. Was a fisher but after winning the "Eye of Krayor" by slaying the chaotic beast, his luck changed.

Makes his trade travelling the Auloring Nation and Wenelian tribelands with Liley his earthspirit follower, offering his combat services to all. The Dornar Clan gifted him the "Spear of Points" for such services rendered. He is foolishly brave on land but panics on water, especially when land is a long way off.

KEYWORDS: Auloring Nation Homeland, Clan, Warrior, Follower of Vierhom

Sample Heroes

'Blackname' Dagodent

Dagodent was highborn and influential in his youth before his family was slain in mysterious circumstances. Since then he has been hounded by rumours and accusations pertaining to the dark secrets he carries.

He has served many clans but his reckless nature and sometimes malicious conduct means he's ran ragged from pillar to post, travelling through fens and dale, swamp and woodland. Dagobear is clever and thoughtful and is always dedicated to whichever clan he serves at the time. He is very talented, forecasting from water and from the Ginlacht Bones he stole from an ancient Compt's Sacred Burial Pool.

Keywords: Auloring Nation Homeland, Clan Diviner, Waterseer Wesrod initiate.

'Wintermane' Isoud

Isoud may look beautiful and sing sweetly, but that hides her true nature as the grim and daring defender of her people. Tall and lithe, this initiate of Buruwehaar is a calculating and shrewd opponent, moving fast and striking silently. In battle she wields the axe Shadowcleaver.

She can swim far, climb high or wait patiently in ambush to defeat her enemies, hidden by her Cloak of Mist. Over the years she has fought many foes, bearing a particular grudge against the Pralori, who maimed her young brother, Charl. Her adventurous warrior cousin, young Gilbear, assists her.

KEYWORDS: Auloring Nation Homeland, Clan Warrior, Initiate of Buruwehaar

The episode is one of investigation to find out whether a wedding should be stopped. The player heroes will need to travel the local region to contact certain people who will be able to give them information. There are a number of set piece situations, opportunities for diplomacy and conflict, although no serious combat is necessary. Travel between the various locations takes the best part of a day in each case, with suitable minor modifications for appropriate skill use. Ideally, the encounter with Geoffrey Good sight and the excursion through the Mistmarch should come as the penultimate event as the drama builds—certain modifications might be necessary should this not be the case. The episode should culminate before the assembled clans and couple on the seventh night.

If the marriage is allowed to take place the long term results could be disastrous for the clans, but have rich potential for further episode. At the best the Taker will visit this year bringing death and destruction. At worst it will mark the start of Childebear making a concerted grab for power, which may well end in warfare between the clans.

Childebear and Elzabet have had on-off relationship for quite a while, probably more off than on of late. A month or two back Childebear persuaded Elzabet into sleeping with him. She doesn't really want to marry him, but because she thinks she's pregnant she feels too ashamed to do anything else. She does not have to, and Auloring culture has no stigma attached to unmarried mothers, it is just her personal reaction. The narrator should feel free to drop hints in whichever manner he or she chooses, and to decide whether she really is pregnant or not. Childebear's parents Baudua and Aliss are happy enough with the proposed marriage, as it appears to be keeping Childebear out of trouble. Fivelives Lothair seriously distrusts his nephew and welcomes the marriage as valuable distraction. Francis and Morgana, Elzabet's parents, are flattered by the attention that Childebear gives them and their daughter, but have not really seen how shallow and manipulative he is, although they are beginning to have their doubts.

Players' Introductory Information

The heroes are members of Clans Jacquin and Dornar of the Brangol Tribe. The two clans are neighbours, both of average wealth and importance in the tribe. Clan Jacquin does not raise herd animals, instead making a living from a mixture of agriculture, gathering wild plants and some hunting. Its lands lie close to the mighty Noshain River and its tributaries, making it slightly more vulnerable to flooding than most of the other clans. There are rather more followers of Ustelm, the mink god, in the clan than is usual. As a clan they tend to favour violence as a solution to problems rather more than is average among the Auloring, even to the extent of execution for serious crimes. By contrast Clan Dornar practises rather more agriculture, but still has no herds. Their lands include higher ground, some of which is beyond the risk of even the most significant

flooding. The cult of Carra Rushmother has rather more prominence than in some clans. The Dornar are more peaceable, and given to generosity and negotiation more than is average, even forgiving major offenses if the wronged party so wishes.

The clans enjoy friendly relations, trading game for fish and the like, and shared hunting parties are not unusual, along with a gentle rivalry over whose hunters are the best. Marriages between families of the adjoining clans are not uncommon. It is not unusual for the clans to share in cultic rituals and observances.

Scene 1: Prologue

The episode begins in Lowclere, the largest settlement belonging to Clan Jacquin, and a familiar stopping point for travellers coming to Vison Town from settlements further north, like Rikhnos' Crossing. Within the earthworks, topped by a stout wooden palisade, reside maybe as many as 300 people, guarded day and night by warriors standing duty at the single entrance point.

So far it's been a good year in Lowclere, and for the wider tribe. The weather has held, the omens are favourable and faithful are praying for a visit from the Giver. Yesterday Tiboul (Dornar's priest) and Anglide (Jacquin's priestess) sought the blessings of Hibour and Carra for the year ahead and the feast went well. Nobody drank too much, boasted too much or tempted the Taker, and the laughter lasted long into the night.

Tonight the roundhouse is occupied once more. Not quite as loud or busy as yesterday although two feasts in a row might be seen as a little excessive. Still, you have little else to do, so what's the danger in that? After all, you're here to celebrate with two of your companions, who not long ago, in the sight of the assembled feasters, swapped wooden bangles as a sign of their intention to marry. Quicktongue Childebear is the nephew of Compt Fivelives Lothair, the chief of the Jacquin Clan, and Faireye Elzabet is the daughter of Barrelmaster Francis one of Clan Dornar's lesser plumerey.

The Compt is sitting in his usual place at the high table, accompanied by his plumerey, and his half-brother Strongarm Baudua. Much of the noise is coming from the high table as normal, especially Baudua and his rather brash son Childebear. Elzabet a dark-haired and clear-eyed young woman simply sits quietly, occasionally glancing at Childebear. Any hero that succeeds in a simple contest of Perceptive or similar ability: it is actually considerably less busy than last night. Compt Lothair is still at the high table, accompanied by his seer, his brother, and little of the plumerey, but his smile looks somewhat forced. Quite a few people are noticeable by their absence now you come to think of it. Elzabet doesn't really look too happy either.

Any hero that succeeds in a simple contest of Auloring Culture: swapping bangles as a sign of marriage is very common and has great symbolic value. If the bangle should break or be lost it's considered bad luck, maybe a sign of unfaithfulness. Swapping betrothal bangles is unusual and only normally done by people of very

high status, tribal chiefs and the like.

If asked. "Strange really, Childebear doesn't really seem suited to Elzabet. She's strong but silent, he's rather vain and shallow and loud with it"

The noise level has been growing all evening and Childebear's sudden bursts of laughter, thumping of the table and boasts of what a fine husband his beloved will have are becoming more frequent. Any hero that succeeds in a simple contest of Auloring Culture will know this is bad form. If players don't pick it up others will for them – shaking heads, mutters of disapproval, pious gestures.

In the midst of yet another gale of indulgent laughter there's a loud splintering noise and Elzabet leaps up with a start, almost knocking over her chair. Her betrothal bangle has split and broken, seemingly all by itself, and falls from her wrist to the table, and then to the floor.

Pandemonium breaks loose. Strongarm Baudua swears, Compt Lothair turns white and you can see quite heated discussion taking place as Elzabet collapses on the floor. Childebear looks suddenly very scared, and then very angry. Babble of consternation.

Any hero that succeeds in a simple contest of Lip-reading, Acute Hearing, or similar ability discovers Lothair arguing with Baudua about how this had been a bad idea from the beginning, he protests his son's innocence, Lothair "the boy's a nuisance. We don't need this now!"

Lothair commands his seer, Deepseer Sigefrid. "Ask Wesrod. What do the waters say? What's the meaning of this?" The Diviner asks Blackname Dagodent to ready the nearest seeing bowl. After the appropriate invocations he cannot get an answer. "The water is cloudy. Wesrod gives no answer."

People are drifting away. Heroes can stay or go as they please.

Any hero that succeeds in a simple contest of Perceptive sees that Francis is comforting Elzabet. Baudua and Childebear are nowhere to be seen. If they express interest Lothair [Perceptive 7W] will lock eyes with the nearest hero, nod to himself and leave. If one is so impertinent as to ask, Lothair will laugh mirthlessly. "You and the others, come to me tomorrow at sun up."

The feast breaks up in confusion. The players should be left in no doubt as to how seriously bad an omen this is.

The heroes should have breakfast with the chief, and the following information will be divulged over a period of two hours or so.

The wedding is due to be held in the evening seven days hence on the roundhouse in Lowclere. For the safety and security of the tribes Fivelives Lothair needs to know whether the events last night were simple chance or a sign of deeper trouble. Either Childebear or Elzabet could call the marriage off, but Lothair could stop it if he has reason to believe something is wrong.

The heroes have seven days to investigate – and the wedding will happen unless they can prove there is good reason to stop it.

Scene 2: What is Going On?

Typical speech: "The boy's a damned nuisance, but his father's too valuable to the clan to upset. And relations with your clan are very important. You should know, you grew up with the boy. Find out what happened and why. Is it simply chance, or is something else going on? Sigefrid (the seer) will want to speak to you too. This is important. Does the wedding need to be stopped for the good of our peoples? Now, get to it."

What can be learned anywhere

DO-IT-YOURSELF DIVINING

A Diviner might seek an answer by scrying. This takes the form of a simple contest with a resistance of (hero's skill+10). Modifiers: +1 per hour (max +5); At Holy Site: +1 to +5; others include quality of equipment (a puddle makes a poor window into the past and future than a sacred bowl, for example.)

A marginal victory or below will make the hero realise that Sigefrid should have been able to do this. It's a bit beyond you, but should be well within his abilities. Maybe he'd drunk too much at the feast.

A minor victory will reveal the above, and give a brief flash of Elzabet looking sad and uncertain, speaking to another girl. The other's face is hidden, her back is turned.

A major victory will reveal a brief flash of Elzabet in floods of tears, speaking to another girl. You can see the other's face and build, enough to remember her by. A member of Clan Dornar may recognise her as Silverhand Lynet (Resistance 3W).

A complete victory reveals the above, and a snatch of speech: "I didn't want to. I think I might be pregnant..."

Any answers the scryer receives will still need to be verified by other information – a divining hero will not be the clan diviner, and carries insufficient weight to force the issue.

What can be learned in Lowclere

DETECTIVE WORK

A close search of the area under the high table, made the same evening, will reveal a portion of the broken bangle. It's a pretty crude piece of work, certainly nowhere near the standard you would expect. Any hero with any craft skills will be able to tell that the break is not along any points of weakness in the wood – the breakage is not natural. The following day Sigefrid will have it, after that it will be thrown into the communal waste pool. [Any hero that succeeds in a simple contest of Auloring Culture: not as high-class as it should be, given the rarity of the Betrothal Ceremony.]

[Any hero that succeeds in a simple contest of Scrying: the presence of the remains of the bangle will add +4 to the Diviner's effective skill]

ASKING AROUND

Speaking to witnesses will reveal the basic facts mentioned above: Childebear's swift departure, the discussion between Baudua and

Sample Heroes

'Webfoot' Pentalbas

Born on Two Floods Day, he has heard the River calling him ever since. He learnt swimming before walking, boating before running. Pentalbas' dream is to break the Unjust Wizards spell so he can travel Noshain's full length. During his adulthood rites, he met a Dreadlock who showed him the location of the Crystal Coracle, inside was a boy. Pentalbas named him Clovis, adopting him as a brother he patiently taught the boy how to fish. Recently, Pentalbas has spent time in the New Fens with his friends the Otter-people seeking a diviner who can scry a way to restore Noshain to full health.
Keywords: Auloring Nation
Homeland, Clan Fisher,
Initiate of Noshain.

'Bloodtooth' Robear

Speedy in water and on land, Robear Bloodtooth, is a fearsome hunter, as ruthless as the mink god he serves. Slow of speech and thought, patient in the hunt, he can be hot tempered in dealing with others and is treated with caution in his tribe. This is partly because of his great strength.

He has travelled far and wide in search of game, and knows many hidden paths.

He treasures his amber flamingo feather, elk-skin bundle and the red arrow, which he carries constantly. Many years ago, he met the Witch of Gadovi and suffers deeply from unrequited love.

Keywords: Auloring Nation
Homeland, Clan Hunter,
Initiate of Ustelm.

NPC Cast

Compt Fivelives Lothair
(Brangol tribe, Jacquin clan).
Character: Brave, Lucky, Wise.
Significant Abilities: Brave 5W, Diplomat 2W, Escape Trouble 3W, Lucky 11W, Perceptive 7W, Warrior 13W, Wise 8W

A canny and wise leader Lothair, now in late middle age, is renowned for his ability to walk away from situations that would leave many others lying dead.

Strongarm Baudua
(Brangol tribe, Jacquin clan)
Character: Loud, Jovial, Un-ambitious

Significant Abilities: Distill 1W, Warrior 6W, Cautious 1W, Dice 17

Notable Flaw: Poor Parenting 19

The younger half-brother of the Compt, Strongarm could have contested the position, but chose not too. Instead he seeks to use this to influence clan policy, much to his son's (hidden) displeasure.

Quicktongue Childebear
(Brangol tribe, Jacquin clan)
Character: Ambitious, Brash, Evasive, Rash

Significant Abilities: Axe and Shield Combat 20, Brash 1W, Bully 20, Charm the Women 2W, Hunt 18, Impulsive 9W, Quaff 5W, Schemer 17

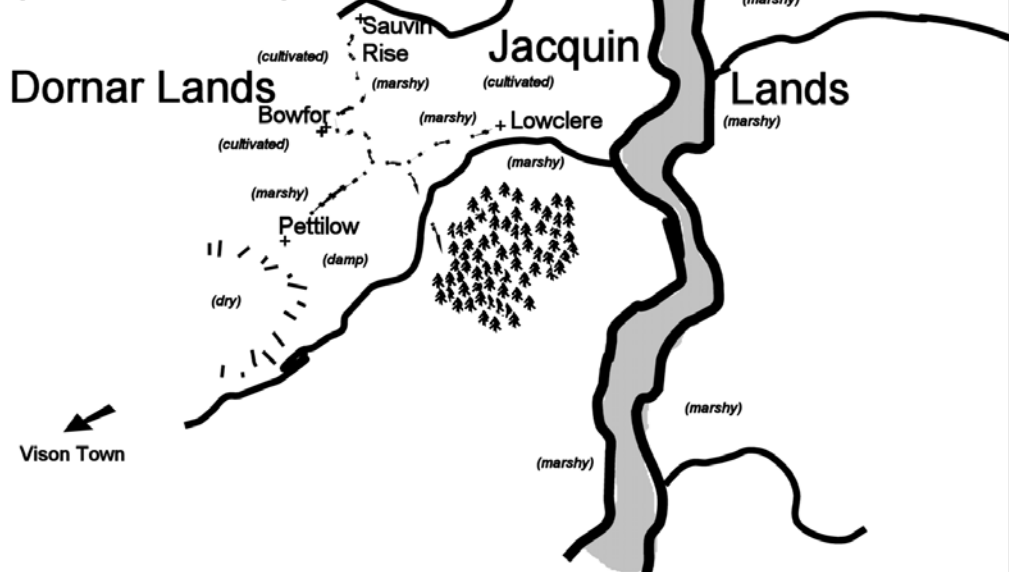
In his late 30s, Childebear is a tall and handsome rogue, with a nasty temper. He feels his father was deprived of his rightful post as Compt (and thus he of his inheritance also, no matter what tradition says).

Faireye Elzabet
(Brangol tribe, Dornar clan)
Character: Friendly, Nervous, Warm.

Significant Abilities: Compose Poetry 5W, Honourable 19, Sing 20, Swim 19, Weave 1W
Noteable Flaw: Low Self-esteem 18

A talented, but somewhat shy girl, Elzabet would make a fine wife for a young warrior, if only she had the confidence to realize it.

Jacquin and Dornar Clan Lands (Not to Scale)



Lothair. Baudua's place in historical terms is highly significant. He is the son of the former chief, Clovis, by his lover, rather than his wife and had a good chance of becoming Compt, but instead supported his elder half-brother Lothair.

Faireye Elzabet, along with much of the Dornar contingent left for home at first light. This is not particularly unusual behaviour.

Quicktongue Childebear is Brash 1W and Evasive 17 with it. So evasive in fact that he took off last night with eight of his rowdies on an extended hunting, fishing and drinking party. An investigation of his hut will show it to be a typical bachelor pad, untidy and cluttered. There are all the signs of a speedy departure (missing blankets, no hunting spears and the like). It will take at least a day to find him, should the heroes try, and they will get nothing of substance from him. As far as he is concerned the breakage of the bangle wasn't his fault. He certainly will not accompany them without a fight, and has plenty of support from his rowdies. He is no more than a bully, who because of distant connection with the chief, thinks he is far more important than he really is. If the marriage goes ahead that self-importance will grow, and could result in him plotting to seize power himself, especially since he feels that his father should have been chief, rather than his uncle.

Typical speech: "It was just one of those things and there's no need to worry. Excuse me, I have some hunting to do..."

Strongarm Baudua. To get to Baudua the heroes will have to get past his wife, Aliss, and will need to succeed in a contest requiring Charm or Persuasion [Resistance: Stubborn 19]. Baudua only responds with a good deal of persuasion [Cautious 1W]: he is an important member of the plumerey and they are very much his juniors. If the heroes can win his trust, by promising their service in the future, perhaps or maybe by

showing their skills at Gaming [Dice 17] he will admit that he has reservations. The process will take several hours.

Typical speech: "the boy's old enough to marry, and hard-headed too. I'd rather have him as a friend, like Lothair, than as a foe."

Deepseer Sigefrid is open and friendly, and will insist that the heroes join him for a drink of some extremely powerful spirit [Potent 1W]. He will freely admit to any diviner to being drunk at the feast [Likes Drink 5W], but to others he will be far more guarded and far less communicative (Resistance: 15). He will insist on talking for at least 2 hours, and plying the heroes with drink. Failure to resist the alcohol will render heroes at a -3 penalty to all tasks for the rest of the day (only -1 if successful).

Typical Speech: "See if you and your friends can sort this out. It'll be good fun, and I'll put in a good word for you. Go and see my former teacher Good sight Geoffrey. He's usually over in Pettilow, although he does get about a bit. Anyway, if he cannot find the truth, no-one can. Now, do you fancy a drink?"

Scene 3: The Journey to Bowfor

A lost stranger

An hour out from Lowclere the heroes will meet a wandering (Orlanthi) Issaries trader, with a strange animal the heroes may never have seen before (a mule). He is somewhat the worse for drink, staggering along the trail and singing, badly! He is lost on his way to Vison Town, having over-indulged on the local drink.

Proper behavior demands that he should be escorted to the nearest settlement, in this case Lowclere. The encounter is simply a time-wasting nuisance. Malicious actions will have no immediate effect on the play of the episode, but could compromise the heroes. Help beyond the

expected measure has no immediate impact in this episode either, but would earn a friend and contact of value in the future.

Bowfor and what can be learned there

This is a rather smaller settlement, but following a similar pattern to Lowclere, a stockaded village on a slight rise, with a smaller roundhouse in the centre.

ASKING AROUND

Elzabet: To reach Elzabet the heroes will have to need to get past her father, Barrelmaster Francis, one of Clovis' lesser plumerey [Protective 15] and mother Morgana [Hospitable 1W]. This will entail being cordial, affable and able to hold their drink. (Morgana's homemade spirit is Potent 4W, with similar effects to the one that Deepseer Sigefrid possesses). The first thing the heroes will notice about their hut is how many trinkets and gifts there are, some of quite high quality and obviously from a considerable distance away. These come from Childebear in his efforts to win their friendship. Despite their future son-in-law's generosity they have their suspicions. Childebear is a little too brash and off-hand, and Elzabet has not been quite her usual self lately.

Typical Speech: "She's always been a quiet girl, but she's become rather withdrawn of late. And then of course there's that Childebear, shame he's not more like his father. Still, he is generous and good mannered, so he must be able to provide for her in turn. She could do worse. Still, unless Lothair or our sleepy Clovis say anything there's not a lot we can do."

Elzabet's quarters are accessible only from her parent's, via a doorway covered with a heavy blanket. If the heroes are able to convince her parents (and Morgana will insist on accompanying them) they will find themselves in a small, tidy and rather sparsely furnished room, quite in contrast to the one they entered from. Elzabet is fast asleep in her bed, beside which is a wooden flask of unfamiliar design, one-third full of a liquid that smells vaguely herbal. (Any hero that succeeds in a simple contest of Herbalism, Medicine etc, Resistance 1W, will reveal it to be a powerful sleeping draught that's not readily available locally. A Healer would also know that it is a potential abortifacient. (Elzabet does not know this, she just got it from Silverhand Lynet to help her sleep). The potion has rendered her Unwakeable 1W3. She is in no danger, as Medicine or First Aid would reveal, but is unlikely to wake for up to 8 hours

The whole encounter will take at least 3 hours.

Scene 4: On the way to Pettilow

A Giant Mink

An hour or so out of Bowfor the heroes encounter a badly mauled and partially eaten carcass, entrails spilling out onto the blood-soaked ground. Even non-hunters can tell it met its end suddenly and violently. Clear tracks in the damp ground lead off into scrubby vegetation. [Herding, Auloring Customs, Animal Lore, or similar abilities identify it as a giant raphi, and the

assailant probably as an unusually large giant wild mink].

A brief search will reveal both a crude collar on the neck and a brand-mark on hindquarter. [Herding, Well-traveled identifies it as belonging to Clan Mordrain, one of your tribe. You are not friendly with them, but neither are you enemies. Auloring Myths etc. Even wild mink, under the governance of Ustelm, avoid harming that which belongs to Hibour or Carra. Therefore this is most unusual.] Raphi are somewhat rare in these parts, Mordrain are the only Brangol clan to have any significant number, although they thrive in the lands of the Lentra Tribe to the west. Wild mink aren't exactly common either.

The heroes may choose to attempt to follow tracks and discover the creature who attacked the raphi. To do so will require the use of Tracking (Resistance: 19), and reveal the presence of multiple animals.

There are actually three creatures to be found, a Minor Spirit Mink and two Greater Mink followers, working together. The spirit mink has crossed from the Mistmarch, in resonance with Childebear's actions—taking what is not his to take.

It is entirely possible that they may ambush unwary heroes, especially if they do not take any hunting precautions in following the trail. The mundane Greater Mink are easier to approach, and could be won over, by trapping, magical friendship/charming, or braver actions such as wrestling them into submission. However this cannot happen without a conflict with the controlling Minor Spirit Mink. Winning it as a companion would be a truly heroic feat. Combat is not inevitable, though, unless the heroes are stupid enough to appear weak and/or allow themselves to be ambushed.

If the heroes should choose to fight the mink it will attempt to use Bloodlust to go Berserk, increasing the damage it inflicts but losing its Cunning skill. It may also attempt to summon 1-5 Greater Mink (Resistance: 17) to aid it in combat. Any hero who has a mink companion will need to resist this, at +4. Note, however, that the Spirit Mink is intelligent, and so might be open to Persuasion, either to seek out Childebear, who inadvertently summoned it by his actions, or to testify before Compt Fivelives Lothair as to why it is present in Caratan.

Mink Daimone

Weapons and Armour: Bite and Claw 4W.
 Significant Abilities: Ambush 4W, Bloodlust 1W, Cunning 20, Dodge 2W, Large 18, Move Silently 1W, Sprint 4W, Swim 10W.
 Innate Magical Abilities: Command Mink 20.
 Ustelm's Affinities: River, Hunting and Lust, all at 20

Greater Mink

Weapons and Armour: Bite and Claw 15
 Significant Abilities: Ambush 18, Bloodlust 14, Cunning 18, Dodge 18, Move Silently 14, Sprint 14, Swim 1W.

Silverhand Lynet

(Brangol tribe, Dornar clan)

Character: Adventurous, Outgoing, Shrewd.

Significant Abilities: Bargain 2W, Gauge Value 20, Hide

Emotions 19

Unusually among the

Aulorings Lynet is apprenticed to a foreign god, Gultha Goldentongue. She is good friends with Elzabet, and already know enough of the truth to work out the story. She is short and unusually dark-haired.

Barrelmaster Francis

(Brangol tribe, Dornar clan)

Character: Efficient, Hard-working, Quiet.

Significant Abilities: Protective 15

Francis is a quiet hard-working man, who by dint of his efficiency is one of the clan's lesser plumerey. He keeps himself to himself, and rarely initiates conversation, leaving much of it to his wife wherever possible.

Morgana

(Brangol tribe, Dornar clan)

Character: Open, Honest, Talkative

Significant Abilities: Distilling 20, Gullible 18, Hospitable

1W

A fat, homely woman, with more than enough time to relate the faults of neighbours!

Deepseer Sigefrid

(diviner for Jacquin clan)

Character: Cheerful, Hospitable, Talkative

Significant Abilities: Bluff 10W, Water Scrying 10W

Notable Flaw: Lazy 8W, Likes Drink 5W

Middle-aged, ruddy-faced and with a strange yellow pallor to his skin, Sigefrid knows how to enjoy himself, and usually does – too much. While a decent enough diviner when he can be bothered his laziness and tendency to excess are getting the better of him. Soon he may find himself without a job.

Goodsight Geoffrey

(master diviner)

Character: Fleet of Foot, Dry

Sense of Humour, Stubborn

Significant Abilities: Close

Combat (Dagger) 20,

Perceptive 5W, Reluctant

1W, Water Scrying 3W2.

Geoffrey is a thin, silver-haired and wiry man with the disturbing tendency of looking past whoever he is talking to, all the while wearing a half smile. This is true to some degree as he is always seeing things other do not, while some of it is just a well-cultivated bluff. He is somewhat reluctant to engage in what he sees as the petty concerns of individuals rather than matters which affect clans and tribes.

Scene 5: Nobody Home

Pettilow is a very small settlement, little more than a small hall that serves as home to one family and as a meeting place for hunters, gatherers, fishers and the occasional traveler. There is a small stockade protecting the entrance to the hall itself, and come evening a few strange animals can be seen there (Far Traveled etc will reveal them to be mules) If the heroes arrive during the day the place will be very quiet, but a foreign trader, Carloman Farwalker and his apprentice, Silverhand Lynet, will arrive at nightfall, and several locals will also be present. The owner of the hall, or just about any local will know of Goodsight Geoffrey, in fact they are a little awed by him. He isn't in Pettilow at present, he has gone to the holy place of Sauvan Rise, where it's his turn to oversee the shrine.

Silverhand Lynet: Lynet is the only person who knows the whole truth of the relationship between Childebear and Elzabet. She will not divulge this lightly, however. The fact that the heroes know of her will grant them a welcome, but she will attempt to trade with them at first (Bargain 2W) what can they offer her?

If told of the incident with the bangle in full she is more disposed to help (+2 modifier), and if the diviner had Major or Complete Victory result, she is more willing still (+4).

The only way that she can come to Lowclere in person is if she can persuade her Master that the trade opportunities are good enough.

Scene 6: Journey to Sauvan Rise

The Stray Elk

While traveling, the heroes will encounter a lost elk (Wrestle with Antlers 18+2, Dodge Attack 15, Large 18, Nervous 12, Strong 18). They may choose to ignore it, or seek to kill it. Far Traveled or Auloring Custom will remind the heroes that wherever the elk are then the Pralori will not be far behind, and so warn them of the dangers. If the heroes attack, without taking suitable precautions, they will receive a surprise in the form of a group of party of Pralori hsunchen trying to return the elk to their ranges. The Pralori will attack with surprise, (the heroes must succeed in a contest of Alert, Spot Ambush or similar ability, Resistance 1W to not be surprised) and attempt to drive off or kill the heroes. Pralori with surprise will be fully prepared for combat. The Pralori will disengage and flee (Run Fast 17) if their leader is killed or incapacitated or if 2 or more are Injured.

Pralori Hsunchen

Hunter Leader: Spear Fighting 5W, Archery 14, Move Silently 1W, Listen 18, Track 1W.

Typical Augments: Elkstrength for +4 (Strong 18), and seek if necessary to Sprout Antlers (Wrestle with Antlers 18).

Hunters: Spear Combat 2W, Archery 1W, Heal Wound, Move Silently 18, Listen 15, Ride Elk, Track 19.

Sauvan Rise

Sauvan Rise is little more than a shallow pool, some 4 metres in diameter, besides which is a small shelter that doubles as a shrine and refuge for followers of Wesrod. Geoffrey is friendly, but not easy to convince. Contest against Reluctant 1W. He thinks the matter trifling. If the heroes mention Sigefrid he will be much more amenable (+4). And promises to perform a task will certainly help (+4).

He will wait until the most auspicious time, sunset, and require the heroes to join him in a ritual divination, asking them to position themselves in a circle around the pool and join him in ritual chanting, all the time circling the pool in a clockwise direction. As the divination continues the heroes will see the waters of the pool take on the appearance of a mirror. In it they will all see brief scenes of a feast, the Spirit mink attacking the raphi, Faireye Elzabet and Silverhand Lynet together, and what appears to be fighting around the village of Lowclere as the roundhouse burns in the night. Geoffrey will be visibly shaken at the end of the ritual, and mutter something about "shades of the Taker."

He will ask the heroes to join him in a trip through the Mistmarch, the "other side". He will offer them all a drink from a lidded-tankard before they start their journey. It is water, with a poor taste, full of silt and requires a basic contest to finish the mouthful. The water comes from the Mistmarch. Drinking any of it will give the hero a +4 bonus on swimming rolls for the journey. If the hero finishes Geoffrey offers to divine the hero's future from silt residue sometime in the future.

He will simply then say "follow me" and dive into the pool. As the heroes swim deeper and deeper the narrator should emphasise the "otherness" of it all – from the surface the water looked no more than waist deep, but they are swimming a long way down in growing darkness through silt and weeds. At some point the heroes will notice that they are breathing the water without any ill effects. They will be unsure of the time they are spending doing this. Geoffrey will lead them horizontally through underground channels into another, roughly square pool. Looking up they can see daylight, not the growing dusk that they left behind them, and at that point they really will want real air again, their lungs will begin to ache as they all scramble to reach the surface as soon as possible.

When the heroes surface they will find themselves in a light, but mist-shrouded landscape, full of the sounds of wildlife, like the lands they know but subtlety different. They are in the Mistmarch. Geoffrey will then lead them off into the gently glowing mist.

Scene 7: The Mistmarch

The Ghost Mink

"Was it one of you? One of you who set me loose? My cohorts are already taking, just as we were invited. Where is the offender? Give him to me to restore your fortune! Call me by name when you meet him. He is mine! And something of yours is mine too!"

The heroes are faced by a Giant, ghostly-white and semi-transparent mink, obviously a native of the Mistmarch, as it approaches out of the mist. A successful roll against Auloring Myths/Customs at 1W (Jacquin or other Taker clan at +4) will enable the heroes to recognize it as a Ghost Mink, a servitor of Stormflood, often sent to bring vengeance and to right wrongs. Those who know this will remember that a ritual combat is involved, even for innocent parties. As soon as it finishes its speech, it lunges at the heroes and attempts to strike them (Tooth and Claw 8W).

This should take the form of a simple contest. The Ghost Mink will attack each hero simultaneously, but each hero will only see their mythical opponent, not each other, as if the hero is the only one present. Heroes may attempt to parry, dodge or whatever else they think is suitable to avoid the strike. Successes will cancel out, as will failures. If the Ghost Mink succeeds in its strike one magical item possessed by the hero will lose its powers. If the hero succeeds in a weapon or shield parry they will gain a ghostly fragment of tooth, claw, hide or whisker. This fragment will be good for a one-off Summon Ghost Mink at 1W (which will destroy the fragment), but it is up to the narrator to determine whether there are any further properties to it.

Once each character has faced a strike they will all be aware of each other again, and the ghostly figure will snarl, "the offender is not here. Call me when you meet him, and he will pay!" before fading away into a cloud of mist.

The Potent Spirit

"Come to me! Come to me and be made whole! The broken must be healed, and the two made one anew. Revenge is not the way. Give and forgive, and the land will give its blessings!"

The first thing the heroes will notice is the smell of alcohol being distilled into Arak, the favored spirit of Carra. Then a large figure of a naked woman outlined in burning blue, as if covered in burning alcohol will appear out of the mist. A successful roll against Auloring Myths/Customs at 1W (Dornar or other Giver clan at +4) will enable the heroes to recognize it as a Potent Spirit, a servitor of Carra, sent to bring blessing, healing and to soothe the injured.

In a similar manner to the previous encounter the Potent Spirit will try to embrace each character (Soothing Embrace 2W). This can be resisted, but will result in chastisement in the form of -1 to relationship with Carra until forgiveness is sought from a priest. Any hero successfully embraced will be restored to full health and alertness, as if after the best night's sleep that they have ever experienced, and for the sacrifice of IHP will be Blessed of Carra at 1W. (Worshippers of Carra will know

this fact)

"It was not one of you, I perceive that. But I know what happened. The balance must be restored. If you call when the two are together I will come to bring healing."

Scene 8: Return to Caratan

Once the heroes have encountered both the Ghost Mink and the Potent Spirit, Geoffrey will then guide them to another pool and leave them to return to "reality" and go on his way. Typical speech: "You know all you need to know. You do not need me, but your clans need you. Go, and go with Wesrod's blessing. May you display Truth by your deeds."

The pattern for the return should follow that of their arrival in the Mistmarch, and will result in the heroes surfacing in a crescent shaped pool within sight of Lowclere that members of the Jacquin clan will know as Pietresmere. They will surface shortly before sunset, and will be able to hear the sounds of music and celebration, and see folks arriving in the village. No matter what day they entered the Mistmarsh with Good sight Geoffrey they will emerge shortly before sunset on the seventh day, and the marriage ceremony of Childebear and Elzabet is ready to begin....

Denouement: The Reckoning

By this point the heroes should have some idea about what has happened between Childebear and Elzabet, and will need to agree upon a course of action. It is possible that they might even disagree about what should be done, especially given the difference of opinion between the clans upon how justice is best served!

Members of Clan Jacquin will favour a more violent solution such as the execution of Childebear for the rape of Elzabet. After all, his taking has invited the Ghost Mink, the servitor of Stormflood into the world, and so has threatened the livelihood of all. Only giving the perpetrator to the Ghost Mink will solve the problem from their point of view. Once justice has been done he will return to the Mistmarch.

In contrast members of Clan Dornar will see the role and place of forgiveness as the solution to the quandary, and thus breaking the cycle of violence with generosity that is the trait of the Giver, Sweetwater. Persuading Elzabet to truly forgive Childebear, and enter into marriage with him, will seal the rift, and enable the blessings of Sweetwater to flow.

The most dramatic final scene will be if the heroes choose to interrupt and halt the wedding ceremony, although they will arrive in time to intercept the bride's and groom's respective parties, should they so wish.

The heroes will have to sort out the

problem. If Childebear is confronted with a powerful presentation of his rape of Elzabet he will break down and confess his crime. This in itself is enough to stop the marriage. That, however, is not enough. Justice must be done, and the assembled parties for the marriage will become an impromptu tribal gathering, ready to judge the couple.

The heroes will, ideally, have to succeed in two consecutive tasks. The first is to convince the assembly of the rightness of stopping the wedding. This should be fairly easy. The second is to pronounce judgement on Childebear, and convince both clans of the rightness of the decision. There are several possible outcomes. These include:

Summoning the Ghost Mink using a fragment gained in the Mistmarch. If this is done the mink will manifest in the midst of the gathering and swipe at Childebear, who will scream in terror as both he and the mink disappear forever. The one who invited the Taker has been dealt with, and so life will continue untroubled. Of course, unless the gathering has been convinced of the rightness of this course of action, difficulties might follow!

Summoning the Potent Spirit to bring blessing and healing on the couple. Childebear will become a different man, broken and changed by the power of forgiveness, and the firstborn child of the couple will grow to adulthood destined to be a great leader and peacemaker among the Brangol tribe. There may, however, be many in the gathering who object to such "weakness" and will plot to bring suitable vengeance, unless they have been suitably convinced beforehand.

Convincing Elzabet, and the gathering, to pronounce Childebear guilty of rape. She does not wish to see him killed, but neither does she wish to see him go free. A middle road, difficult for both clans (resistance 20) would be for him to be bound in servitude to the Jacquin clan for several years.

The narrator is, as they say, free to develop further matters as she sees fit...



NAME **ADALBEAR**
 epithets **STRONGARM**
 keywords **SMITH**

CULTURE **AULORING**
 homeland **CARATAN**
 age _____ gender **MALE**



HOMELAND (CARATAN) 17

- Auloring Customs 17
- Caratan Geography 17
- Know Local Area 17
- Speak Auloring 17
- Wilderness Survival 17

SMITH KEYWORD 17

- Endure Heat 17
- Find Necessary Supplies 17
- Geology 17
- Haggle 17
- Make Minor Equipment 17
- Redsmith 17
- Alcol Tolerant 17

OTHER ABILITIES

- First Aid 17
- Make Jewellery 17
- Know Healing Plants 13
- Large 14
- Mythology (Malia) 13
- Read Auloring 13
- Recognise Disease 13
- Strong 17
- Treat Disease 13
- Widely Travelled 13

COMMON MAGIC 17

Vierhost (Old Man) Common Religion
 R _____
 R _____
 R _____
 R _____
 R _____

WEALTH

- STATUS: Respected Free 13
- ITEMS: *Basic Travelling Clothes, 20 Books, Hut, Geese, Smithing Equipment, Healing Herbs*
- SHAPER, GREAT HAMMER 13
- MALIA MALFURICON (BOOK) 13

RELATIONSHIPS

- DORNAR CLAN 17
- Clan Chief 17
- (*Eyeclouse Clovis*)
- BRANGOL TRIBE 13
- Tribal Overlord 13
- (*Brithaxe Dagobear*)
- JAUQUIN CLAN (Allies) 17
- OTTO (Sage, Friend) 13
- MORGANA (Lover) 17

CONTEST SYNOPSIS

- Close Combat:*
- Ranged Combat:*
- Track:*
- Negotiate:*
- Vigilance:*

PERSONAL AUGMENTS

COMBAT

CLOSE COMBAT 17
GREAT HAMMER: +3

RANGED COMBAT 17
JAVELIN: +2

ARMOUR:

PERSONALITY

- HARD WORKING 17
- HATES MALIA 17
- INSPIRED 17
- LOYAL 13
- LOVES BOOKS 13
- MODEST 13
- PATIENT 17
- RESOLUTE 13

FLAWS

MAGIC 17

GREAT DEITY: HIBOUR
 INITIATE OF: CARRA THE HEALER

- Carra Mythology 17
- Hibour Mythology 13
- Worship Hibour Pantheon 17

AFFINITIES

- MOIST EARTH: 17
- HEALING WATERS: 17
- CURING EARTH: 17

FOLLOWER

- MORGANA, (Stormflood Warrior)
- Close Combat 1W
- Brave 13
- Tough 13





NAME CLOVIS
EPITHETS WATERFILS
KEYWORDS WARRIOR

CULTURE AULORING
HOMELAND CARATAN
AGE _____ **GENDER** MALE

HOMELAND (CARATAN) 17

- Auloring Customs 17
- Caratan Geography 17
- Know Local Area 17
- Speak Auloring 17
- Wilderness Survival 17

WARRIOR KEYWORD 17

- Endurance 17
- Guard Camp 17
- Know Pralori Tactics 17
- Listen 17
- Recognise Fighting Syle 17
- Recognise Foe 17
- Scout 17
- Levey Fighting 17

OTHER ABILITIES

- Battle Luck 13
- Bastis Customs 13
- Fishing 13
- Know Bastis Lands 13

COMMON MAGIC 17

Vierhost (Old Man) Common Religion

- R** Chaos Stand
- R** Detect Danger
- R** Disguise
- R** Hold Breath
- R** True Spear

WEALTH

STATUS: Respected Free 13
ITEMS: *Basic Travelling Clothes, Weapons & Armour*

- EYE OF KRAYOR 13
- NET OF PLENTY 13
- SPEAR OF POINTS 13

RELATIONSHIPS

- JACUIN CLAN 17
- Clan Chief 17
- (*Fivelives Lothair*)
- BRANGOL TRIBE 13
- Tribal Overlord 13
- (*Brithaxe Dagobear*)
- ADOPTED FAMILY (Niloc) 17
- DORNAR CLAN 17
- (Allies)
- ANCESTORS 13
- CHAOTIC BEASTS 13

CONTEST SYNOPSIS

Close Combat
Ranged Combat:
Track:
Negotiate:
Vigilance:

PERSONAL AUGMENTS

COMBAT

CLOSE COMBAT 17
SPEAR: +2
AXE/SHIELD +4

RANGED COMBAT 17
JAVELIN: +2
BOW & ARROW: +8

ARMOUR: +2



PERSONALITY

- BLOODTHIRSTY 17
- COOL 17
- FOOLISHLY BRAVE ON LAND 13
- MODEST 17
- RESOLUTE 17

FLAWS

- Outsider Complex 13
- Panics on Water 13

MAGIC 17

- GREAT DEITY: HIBOUR
- INITIATE OF:
- Hibour Mythology 13
- Vierhost Mythology 17
- Worship Hibour 13

NO AFFINITIES

FOLLOWER

- LILEY (Hearth Spirit) 17





NAME **DAGODENT**
 EPITHETS **BLACKNAME**
 KEYWORDS **DIVINER**

CULTURE **AULORING**
 HOMETLAND **CARATAN**
 AGE _____ GENDER **MALE**



HOMETLAND (CARATAN) 17

- Auloring Customs 17
- Caratan Geography 17
- Know Local Area 17
- Speak Auloring 17
- Wilderness Survival 17

DIVINER KEYWORD 17

- Command Attention 17
- Concentrate 17
- History of Caratan 17
- History (Recent) 17
- Know Precedent 17
- Luck 17
- Read Body Language 17
- Scrying in Water 17
- Tact 17

OTHER ABILITIES

- Alcohol Tolerant 17
- Clever 13
- Highborn 13
- Know Dales 13
- Knows Fenland 13
- Knows Swampland 13
- Knows Woodland 13
- Steal 13
- Thoughtful 13
- Well Travelled 13

COMMON MAGIC 17

Vierhost (Old Man) Common Religion

- R Conceal Object
- R Hide Self
- R Project Voice
- R Stay Warm & Dry
- R Transfix With Conversation

WEALTH

STATUS: Respected Free 13
 ITEMS: *Basic Travelling Clothes, Divining Equipment, Sharp Dagger, Writing Quills & Ink*

- GINLACHT BONES 13
- COMPT GRAVE GOODS 13

RELATIONSHIPS

- DORNAR CLAN 17
- Clan Chief 17
- (*Eyeclouse Clovis*)
- BRANGOL TRIBE 13
- Tribal Overlord 13
- (*Brithaxe Dagobear*)
- WESROD TEMPLE 17
- Jaquin Clan (allies) 17

CONTEST SYNOPSIS

- Close Combat (Dagodent)*
- Ranged Combat (Dagodent):*
- Track (Dagodent):*
- Negotiate (Dagodent):*
- Vigilance (Dagodent):*

PERSONAL AUGMENTS

COMBAT

- CLOSE COMBAT 17
- KNIFE FIGHTING: +2
- AXE/SHIELD +4

- RANGED COMBAT 17
- BOW & ARROW: --
- KNIFE: --

- ARMOUR: --

PERSONALITY

- AUTHORITATIVE 17
- CLEVER 13
- DEDICATED 17
- INSIGHTFUL 17
- MALICIOUS 13
- RECKLESS 13
- RESOLUTE 13
- THOUGHTFUL 17

FLAWS

- Has served many clans 13
- Hounded by Rumors & Accusations 5W
- Ran Ragged 13
- Family Slain in Mysterious Circumstances 13
- Dark Secrets 17

MAGIC 17

- GREAT DEITY: HIBOUR
- INITIATE OF: WATERSEER WESROD
- Hibour Mythology 17
- Wesrod Mythology 17
- Worship Hibour Pantheon 17

AFFINITIES

- Moist Earth 17
- Knowledge 17
- Law 17

NO FOLLOWERS





NAME **ISOUD**
 epithets **WINTERMANE**
 keywords **WARRIOR**

CULTURE **AULORING**
 HOMETLAND **CARATAN**
 AGE _____ GENDER **FEMALE**



HOMELAND (CARATAN) 17

- Auloring Customs 17
- Caratan Geography 17
- Know Local Area 17
- Speak Auloring 17
- Wilderness Survival 17

WARRIOR KEYWORD 17

- Endurance 17
- Guard Camp 17
- Know Pralori Tactics 17
- Listen 17
- Recognise Fighting Syle 17
- Recognise Foe 17
- Scout 17
- Levey Fighting 17

OTHER ABILITIES

- Alcohol Tolerance 17
- Ambush 13
- Climb 13
- Fast 13
- Singing 13
- Read Auloring 13
- Strike Silently 13
- Swim 13

NO COMMON MAGIC

WEALTH

- STATUS: Respected Free 13
- ITEMS: *Basic Travelling Clothes, Weapons & Armour*
- AXE SHADOWCLEAVER 13
- CLOACK OF MIST 13

RELATIONSHIPS

- DORNAR CLAN 17
- Clan Chief 17
- (*Eyeclouse Clovis*)
- BRANGOL TRIBE 13
- Tribal Overlord 13
- (*Brithaxe Dagobear*)
- JAQUIN CLAN (Allies) 17
- PRALORI TRIBESMEN 13
- (Enemies)
- BROTHER (Charl) 13

CONTEST SYNOPSIS

Close Combat
Ranged Combat:
Track:
Negotiate:
Vigilance:

PERSONAL AUGMENTS

COMBAT

CLOSE COMBAT 19
 AXE/SHIELD FIGHTING: +4

RANGED COMBAT 18
 JAVELIN: +2

ARMOUR: +4

PERSONALITY

- BEUTIFUL 13
- CALCULATING 13
- COOL 17
- CURIOUS 17
- GRIM 13
- PATIENT 13
- RESOLUTE 17
- SHREWD 13
- TALL 13

FLAWS

- Grudge Against Pralori 19

MAGIC 17

- GREAT DEITY: HIBOUR
- INITIATE OF: BURUWEHAAR
- Buruwehaar Mythology 17
- Hibour Mythology 13
- Worship Hibour Pantheon 17

AFFINITIES

FOG : 17
Hide friends and companions

COMBAT: 17

DEFEND: 17

FOLLOWER

- HERBEARFILS GILBEAR, (Buruwehaar Warrior)
- Close Combat 17
- Nimble 14





NAME **PENDALBAS**
 epithets **WEBFOOT**
 keywords **FISHER**

CULTURE **AULORING**
 homeland **CARATAN**
 age _____ GENDER **MALE**



HOMELAND CARATAN 17

- Auloring Customs 17
- Caratan Geography 17
- Know Local Area 17
- Speak Auloring 17
- Wilderness Survival 17

FISHER KEYWORD 17

- Boating 17
- Endure Water 17
- Find Prey 17
- Fishing (Net, Spear) 17
- Know Fish & Waterlife 17
- Swim 17
- Tie Knots 17

OTHER ABILITIES

- New Fens Geography 13
- Otter-People Customs 13
- Running 13

COMMON MAGIC 17

- Vierhost (Old Man) Common Religion
- R Fish Song
- R Giver's Touch
- R Hold Breath
- R Mist Sense
- R True Axe

WEALTH

STATUS: Respected Free 13
 ITEMS: *Basic Travelling Clothes, Fishing Gear, Fresh, Dried & Smoked Fish*

CRYSTAL CORACLE 13

RELATIONSHIPS

- JACQUIN CLAN 17
- Clan Chief 17
- (*Fivelives Lothair*)
- BRANGOL TRIBE 13
- Tribal Overlord 13
- (*Brithaxe Dagobear*)
- ANCESTORS 17
- DORNAR CLAN (Allies) 17
- FAMILY (Niloc) 17
- ADOPTED BROTHER (Clovis) 13
- FATHER (Leonar) 17
- UNJUST WIZARDS (Adversaries) 13
- DREADLOCK (Contact) 13
- OTTER PEOPLE (Allies) 13

CONTEST SYNOPSIS

Close Combat
Ranged Combat:
Track:
Negotiate:
Vigilance:

PERSONAL AUGMENTS

COMBAT

CLOSE COMBAT 17
SPEAR FIGHTING +2
AXE/SHIELD: +4

RANGED COMBAT 17
BOW & ARROW: +8
JAVELIN:
ARMOUR:

PERSONALITY

- CAUTIOUS 17
- CURIOUS 17
- HARD-WORKING
- MODEST 17
- OBSERVANT 17
- PATIENT 13
- SEEKS DIVINER 13

FLAWS

MAGIC 17

GREAT DEITY: HIBOUR
 INITIATE OF: DIRAL THE FISHER
 Hibour Mythology 17
 Diral Mythology 17
 Worship Hibour Pantheon 17

AFFINITIES

- FLOOD 17
- BOATS 17
- MARSH 17

No Followers





NAME ROBEAR
EPITHETS BLOODTOOTH
KEYWORDS HUNTER

CULTURE AULORING
HOMELAND CARATAN
AGE _____ **GENDER** MALE



HOMELAND CARATAN 17

- Auloring Customs 17
- Caratan Geography 17
- Know Local Area 17
- Speak Auloring 17
- Wilderness Survival 17

HUNTER KEYWORD 17

- Archery 5w
- Butcher 17
- Dodge 17
- Hide 17
- Hunting 17
- Keen Senses 17
- Know Animals 17
- Retrace Path 17
- Skirmish Combat 17
- Track 17

OTHER ABILITIES

- Great Strenth 13
- Speedy On Land 13
- Speedy In Water 13
- Travelled Far & Wide 13
- Know Many Paths 13
- Blowpipe 17

COMMON MAGIC 17

- Vierhost (Old Man) Common Religion
- R Conceal Object
- R Hide Self
- R _____
- R Stay Warm & Dry
- R _____

WEALTH

STATUS: Respected Free 13
ITEMS: Basic Travelling Clothes, Bow & Arrows, Blowpipe & Darts, Traps, Survival Gear, Assorted Furs & Game

- AMBER FLAMINGO FEATHER 13
- ELK-SKIN BUNDLE 13
- RED ARROW 13

RELATIONSHIPS

- JACQUIN CLAN 17
- Clan Chief 17
- (Fivelives Lothair)
- BRANDEGORIS TRIBE 13
- Tribal Overlord 13
- (Brithaxe Dagobear)
- DORNAR CLAN (Allies) 17
- WITCH OF GADOVI 13
- (Contact)

CONTEST SYNOPSIS

- Close Combat
- Ranged Combat:
- Track:
- Negotiate:
- Vigilance:

PERSONAL AUGMENTS

COMBAT

- CLOSE COMBAT 17
- AXE/SHIELD: +4

- RANGED COMBAT 17
- BOW & ARROW: +8
- KNIFE:
- ARMOUR:

PERSONALITY

- FEARSOME 17
- MODEST 17
- HARD-WORKING
- PATIENT IN THE HUNT 17
- RESOLUTE 17
- RUTHLESS 13
- SOLITARY 13
- WILY 13

FLAWS

- SLOW OF THOUGHT 17
- SLOW OF SPEECH 13
- HOT TEMPERED 13

MAGIC 17

GREAT DEITY: HIBOUR
 INITIATE OF: USTELM

AFFINITIES

- RIVER 17
- HUNTING 17
- LUST 17

No Followers



Homeland: Zoria

"Welcome stranger, to the city of Free Love."

WITH LESS THAN A THOUSAND inhabitants at first, Zoria was not a major competitor to the larger cities of the south. As the population of the city and its hinterland grew it remained aloof from the politics of the rest of Fronela, yet somehow managed to secure peaceful relations with the neighboring hsunchen tribes.

Over the last two centuries between the city's foundation and the fall of the Ban, people from the whole length of the Janube river valley came to settle in the city, as did a significant number of former hsunchen, mostly from the Uncoling, Black Bear Rathori, Akkari, and Stricort tribes. There were even a number of Loskalmi and Carmanians among the early settlers, with the result that modern Zorians may be of almost any Wareran body type, from tall and blond to squat and swarthy. The cold climate inevitably influences clothing fashions, with heavy fur coats and hats being worn outdoors for most of the year. In other respects, clothing is generally western in style.

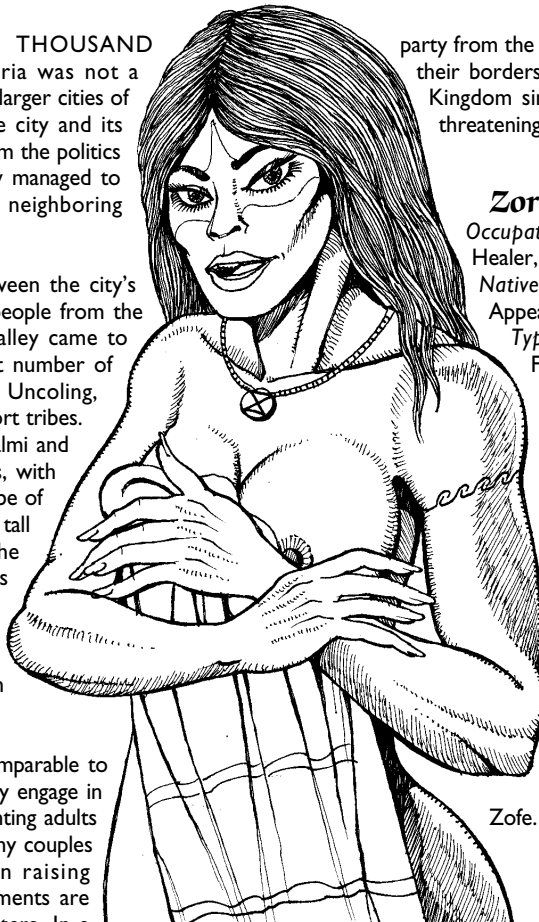
There is no institution directly comparable to marriage in Zoria; all adults can freely engage in sexual relations with all other consenting adults (regardless of gender). However, many couples do live together, especially when raising children, and temporary legal agreements are common to help arrange such matters. In a society where many people do not know the identity of their fathers, matrilineal relationships are much more important. Zoria is not strictly a matriarchal society, and both sexes have equal rights, but women do tend to be more influential than men within the family, as well as controlling the highest echelons of government.

Zoria is a theocracy, with executive authority ultimately resting in the Queen of the Kiss who speaks through the High Priestess of the Temple. The goddess selects the High Priestess herself, who thereafter only speaks when she is channeling the Queen. Her deputy, the First Mistress, has charge of day-to-day matters such as finance and civil administration. The Queen's main duties are to lead religious ceremonies and public celebrations and to speak on behalf of her nation with visiting foreign dignitaries.

For the most part, the priestesses of Uleria have little interest such mundane affairs as secular justice, economy, and civil engineering. Therefore, the First Mistress delegates her authority to a number of secular officials who she appoints with the Queen's approval.

In recent years, the Kingdom of War has grown to threaten all the nations of Fronela. Yet, along among them, the rulers of Zoria claim to feel no fear. "Love is stronger than War," they claim, and they make no visible preparations to defend themselves. Impractical and dangerous though such a policy might appear to be, the fact remains that, so far, not even one raiding

party from the Kingdom has yet attempted to breach their borders. Perhaps, argue most Fronelans, the Kingdom simply wants to concentrate on more threatening targets first.



Zofe.

Zorian Homeland Keyword

Occupations Available: Entertainer, Farmer, Healer, Merchant, Priest, Scholar, Courtesan.

Native Abilities: Mythology of Uleria, Sex Appeal, Urban Survival, Zorian Customs.

Typical Relationships: Ulerian Religion, Family, Zoria.

Typical Personality: Caring, Friendly, Lascivious, Peaceable.

Magic: Initiation to the sorcerous cult of Uleria is standard; animistic and sacrificial worship are also permitted, as are other compatible cults.

Common Names: **Men** – Adon, Abolar, Achrik, Beliam, Bowas, Deteny, Hodoz, Jadosad, Karvas, Lanhar, Megos, Ond, Otony, Palamber, Sentele, Sepel, Sopad, Vugor, Zarpad, Zarcad.

Women – Carolta, Erlidi, Gorgali, Hiroski, Jildiko, Lizeni, Mecia, Pironja, Pamni, Rajnal, Rili, Ruzanni, Sirag, Yicus, Zenchi, Zoma,

Origin

The first civilized settlements in the Upriver region date to the Second Age, but the harsh winters and the poor tundra soil prevented even small cities from being founded there until 1282. That was the year that the Queen of the Kiss, an avatar of Uleria, goddess of love, first appeared. She traveled through all the cities of the Janube, gathering followers and preaching about the power of Free Love. In the Sacred Time of that year, she brought her new devotees to the frozen Upriver valley because it was "the best place in the world to keep warm", and there founded the city of Zoria.

New Occupation

Courtesan

You are trained in the arts of love, to bring pleasure to others. Your skills and magic are more developed than most of your counterparts in foreign lands, for Zoria provides the very best teachers to learn from. You make a living by charging for your services, which include a full night's entertainment, with music and fine food as well as more carnal delights. You may be male or female, and may be native to some far-off land, having discovered in Zoria a place where your chosen lifestyle really can be glamorous rather than sordid.

Abilities: Apply Cosmetics, Beautiful/Handsome, Erotic Dancing, Make Small Talk, Please Customer, Play Instrument, Prepare Gourmet Food.

Typical Personality Traits: Seductive.

Typical Relationships: To house of courtesans (if any), to regular clients.

Magic: Commonly Tilna or Zeelia.

Living Standard: Common.

Typical Equipment: Revealing clothing, cosmetics, perfumes, jewelry, musical instrument, share in a house of courtesans or a private home with rooms for entertaining visitors.

Common Religion – The Glory of Love

Like the other city-states of the Janube River Valley, Zoria has its own 'City Glory', a manifestation of the city's personality and community that provides Common Magic to its citizens. The worship of the Glory of Love, also known simply as 'Zoria', is, however, virtually identical with the Common worship of Uleria found across many parts of Genertela.

✦ **Charms**—Calm Temper, Pleasant Fragrance, Soothe Sorrow.

✦ **Feats**—Appear Attractive, Bring Back That Loving Feeling, Reach Amicable Agreement.

✦ **Spell**—Warm Furs.

✦ **Talent**—Enchanting Smile, Find Compatible Partner.

Specialized Religion Uleria, the Great Goddess of Love

Uleria is worshipped in many ways across Glorantha, and represents different things to different people. In most localities, hers is a small cult on the margins of traditional society, but in Zoria, the people venerate her as a great goddess, with nine handmaidens offering their blessings to worshippers. Other forms of the goddess, as might be known in Sartar, for example, are also accepted in Zoria, but are much less common than the nine native sub-cults. Ulerians know that the handmaidens of the goddess are just different names for the eternal power of love, rather than truly separate beings, but that each is viewed through a different aspect of human personality.

Despite being sorcerers, Zorians do refer to Uleria as 'the Goddess', and in many ways, their rites look similar to those of theists, and have a substantial ecstatic component, too. They have no grimoires or formularies as such, instead learning their spells through verbal instruction and physical training. Zorian parents and priestesses raise children in a suitably loving environment from an early age, opening their minds to the true potential of the Goddess, so that they can learn the spells of the cult. Those raised elsewhere are usually unable to learn these spells, and may have to join the cult as theists or animists.

In rules terms, Zorian priestesses are Adepts, but use the Priest occupation keyword (HQ p.116), replacing the 'Lead Sacrifice' ability with 'Lead Ecstatic Rites'. Each set of spells listed below (that is, 'Love', 'Sex', and those for the individual sub-cults) functions as if it were a grimoire, although the Adept accesses its power through the practice of ecstatic rites, rather than by reading a physical book.

Worshippers: Citizens of Zoria.

Entry Requirements: None for Lay Members; priestesses must be female Adepts with Beautiful 18 or better (or some similar ability).

Abilities: Doctrine of Love, Public Discourse, Worship Uleria.

Adepts only – Create Portal of Power, Symbolic Sight.

Relationships: Member of Ulerian Community.

Virtues: Loving, Non-violent.

Spells:

✕ Love (Bring Joy, Calm Fear, Cure Sterility, Temper Hatred).

✕ Sex (Aid Contraception, Arousal, Erotocomatose Lucidity, Make Love Not War, Prolong Ecstasy).

Great Secret: Be Love. The user is translated to the plane of pure love to spend eternity in a state of blissful happiness, and is removed from play.

Secret: Love Overcomes All. The Secret for all sub-cults is

the infusion of an ecstatic sense of Oneness into the subject. This feeling of love transcends all barriers and lasts for several minutes. The exact form that this sensation takes depends on the subcult – it may be a sense of communal belonging and indescribable happiness (Ensora) or a powerful sexual orgasm (Tilna, among others). Regardless, the subject is unable to do anything while in its grip, and will have difficulty performing any deed that contradicts the feeling while in its afterglow (the Narrator should apply appropriate penalties for the remainder of the scene).

Other Side: The Node of Love on the Philosophy Plane is an idealized version of Zoria itself; a place of unimaginable beauty inhabited by beings perfect in form and mind, and suffused with an aura of peace and harmony. It connects to the realm of Uleria herself (equivalent to the Solace of the Malkioni) and to other nodes associated with the love of Uleria in her myriad forms across Glorantha.

Sample Subcults of Uleria

✕† Ensora, Handmaiden of Communal Love

Ulerians say that there are many kinds of love; Ensora represents the love that people hold for their community or nation. She represents civic pride, and the harmony that comes from a well-ordered and friendly society. Her worshippers smooth over problems, and allow for the rapid communication of ideas and feelings throughout the city such that troubles are shared and nobody has to feel lonely or abandoned.

Worshippers: Officials, 'good citizens'.

Abilities: Defuse Argument, Know Ensora, Love Community, Rule of Communal Love.

Virtues: Sympathetic.

Spells:

✦ **Community** (Ease Communication, Group Hug, Influence Emotions, Protect the Innocent, Send Combatants to Sleep, Sense of Belonging, Shake Prejudice, Share Troubles, Speak to Foreigner).

Representation: Ensora is shown as a beautiful, smiling woman, welcoming the world with open arms.

✕✕ Naleria, Handmaiden of Familial Love

Zorians know that all sane people love their family, be it their parents, siblings, or children. Those who wish to emphasize this form of love follow Naleria; the handmaiden who protects children and brings separated families together. Foreigners are often surprised to discover that hers is one of the largest cults in Zoria, but many people are content to nurture their families in peace and to raise the next generation of Zorians to be happy, well-adjusted people.

Worshippers: Homemakers, the elderly.

Abilities: Care for Children, Know Naleria, Love Family, Rule of Familial Love.

Virtues: Paternal or Maternal.

Spells:

✕ **Family** (Comfort Relative, Defend Innocence, Family Ties, Kiss It Better, Make Children Laugh, Peaceful Sleep).

Representation: Naleria is shown as an elderly woman, still showing signs of her youthful beauty, cradling a child in her arms.

✕† Ushanta, Handmaiden of Procreative Love

Ushanta represents the universal power of fertility. Animals, plants and humans are all within her dominion, as are all things that procreate themselves through physical means. Most worshippers use her powers to aid them in agriculture, although folk in Upriver also follow more widely known agricultural deities, such as Frona. This subcult is less common within the city proper than in the agricultural hinterland.

Worshippers: Farmers, midwives.

Abilities: Assess Pregnancy, Know Ushanta, Love Nature, Rule

of Procreative Love.

Virtues: Practical.

Spells:

♣ **Fecundity** (Animal Fertility, Birth Divination ritual, Bless Pregnancy, Blossom, Ensure Conception, Heal the Unborn, Plant Fertility).

Representation: A stout middle-aged woman, bearing a wheat sheaf.

✠ Lisetty, Handmaiden of Romantic Love

The feelings that a person holds for their special beloved are the domain of Lisetty. Hers is not necessarily a carnal relationship, although it may lead to that, but rather the emotion of affection and tenderness that two lovers have for each other. Followers of Lisetty may even be chaste (although this is really only likely in the Janubian states south of Zoria), and many feel love which is unrequited by the other partner, but all share the passion that their beloved's well-being is more important than their own.

Worshippers: Lovers

Abilities: Compose Love Poetry, Kissing, Know Lisetty, Love [named person], Rule of Romantic Love

Virtues: Romantic.

Spells:

III **Romance** (Anticipate Lover's Needs, Attract Lover's Attention, Enhance Beauty, Protect Lover From Harm, Please Lover, Sensual Kiss, Soothing Caress).

Representation: Lisetty is shown as a beautiful young woman, blushing demurely and holding a single flower.

✠ Zeelia, Handmaiden of Free Love

Where Lisetty represents the love of a single person, Zeelia represents the love of many people. Her dominion is the all-embracing love of humanity felt by those who especially dedicate themselves to the brightening of lives and to making the world more pleasant for everyone to live in. Followers of Zeelia give of themselves to all those in need, without demand for recompense – although traditional arrangements within Upriver allow for their remuneration in order that they may continue giving as much as they have to offer.

Worshippers: Healers, entertainers.

Abilities: Heal Trauma, Know Zeelia, Love Humanity, Rule of Free Love.

Virtues: Compassionate, Happy.

Spells:

♣ **Free Love** (Bring Happiness, Comfort the Bereaved, Feel the Love, Find Common Ground, Heal Others, Loving Care, Prick Conscience, Relax Inhibitions).

Representation: Zeelia is usually depicted as a woman in a low-cut and revealing dress, holding out a large bunch of flowers, and with more flowers entwined in her hair.

✠ Tilna, Handmaiden of Feminine Love

Tilna is the force of feminine sexuality worshipped by those women who wish to maximise their sexual experiences and make themselves indispensable to men, whether as a single partner, or in the context of a courtesan.

Entry Requirements: Must be sexually active female.

Worshippers: Courtesans, amorous women.

Abilities: Flirt, Know Tilna, Love Men, Rule of Feminine Love, Seduction, Sexual Virtuoso.

Virtues: Coquettish.

Spells:

♣ **Sexuality** (Avoid Social Disease, Break Affair Without Rancor, Enhance Own Sensitivity, Irresistible to Men, Learn Man's Desires, Perfect Physique, Stimulating Caress).

Representation: Statues and paintings of Tilna are rarely acceptable to the prudish. Even the more modest depictions show a voluptuous temptress in a diaphanous gown that conceals the bare minimum for decency.

Zoria

Type: Medium City 5W

Look and Feel: A beautiful city, and a near-utopia of free love and communal harmony.

Reactions to Foreigners: All are welcome in the City of Free Love. The inhabitants will try to win over those who come with hostile intent, or determined to cause disruption, but if all else fails, they will be politely, but firmly, escorted from the city.

Significant Abilities: Find Free Love 5W2, Shelter from Cold 5W, Welcoming 18W

Other Features: Decorative Architecture, Suggestive Street Plan

Resources

Trade Modifiers: -20 martial goods

Recruitment Modifiers: -20 all military occupations, +5 healers

Renowned Facilities:

Green Park—Beautiful Gardens 5W2, Calming Atmosphere 10W2, Erotic Statuary 12W, Exotic Birds 5W, Gentle Wildlife 10W, Magically Heated Stream 8W2, Wintertime Skating 18W.

House of the Seventh Bliss—Enchanting Music 5W2, Erotic Decorations 8W2, Exotic Dancers 10W2, Expensive 18W, Fine Cuisine 5W2, Foreign Delights 10W2, Skilled Courtesans 2W3.

Silver Plaza—Buy Daily Supplies 12W, Learn Local Gossip 10W, Obtain Foreign Goods 5W.

Street of Carnal Desire—Communal Gathering 10W, Fine Restaurants 15W, Pleasant Taverns 5W2, Skilled Courtesans 10W2, Stimulating Beverages 12W2, Theatres 15W.

The Steam House—Beautiful Carvings 10W, Clean Baths 17W, Natural Warm Spring 20, Sensual Massages 6W2, Saunas 5W2.

Other Facilities:

Street of Spiritual Bliss—Fine Clothes 18W, Jewelry 5W2, Love Trinkets 10W2, Perfumes 8W2.

The Embrace—Cheap Brothel 5W, Customs Station 10W, River Wharves 10W, Warehouses 5W.

The Palace of Communal Harmony—Civil Administration 5W2, Law Court 18W.

Renowned Inhabitants:

The High Priestess (channeling the Queen of the Kiss)—Ulerian Priestess 18W3, Adept 18W3, Deal with Foreigners 18W2, Divine Inspiration 10W2, Know Zoria 5W3, Spread the Love 10W3

First Mistress Sateshka—Ulerian Priestess 10W2, Adept of Ensora 8W2, Administration 5W2, Know Zoria 12W2, Supportive 10W

Sulci Ginnun—Zorian Courtesan 7W3, Adept of Tilna 12W2, Know What Men Want 12W, Voluptuously Beautiful 5W2

Security and Defenses: Magical Aura of Peace, Thick Walls.

The City Friends—80 Fronelan Foot Soldier (Irregular) 20, Calm Tempers 15, Unflappable 15; Broadsword +3, quilted gambeson and heater shield +2, badge of authority.

Temples and Shrines:

Mission of the Poor Brethren—Hrestoli Missionaries 20, Logical Debate 20, Malkioni Shrine 17.

The Temple of Uleria—Ambassadorial Lodgings 15W, Sacred Precincts 12W2, Sumptuous Decoration 5W2, Ulerian Ecstasies 15W2, Ulerian Liberation 2W2

Underworld contacts: -20 to all criminal contacts. Crime, organized or otherwise, is virtually unknown within the city.

The Queen of the Kiss (Guardian)

Functions:

♣ Awareness—Find Me Somebody to Love 18W3

♣ Blessing—Love is All Around 18W3

♣ Defense—Love is All You Need 18W3

A Day at the Races

by Oliver Dickinson

NOW IT IS A WELL KNOWN FACT that every joint in Pavis that has any class has its regulars, and Loud Lilina's is no exception. In fact, if you are paying any attention at all when I am telling you these stories, you will realise that guys such as Topknot and Sweet-Talking Shamus and Old Gil, and dolls such as Hanufa and Elsa from Adari, are regulars, and this means Lilina is bound to know what they like to drink and as long as their tab is not too large she will have one on the counter for them as soon as she spots them, with what passes for a cheery greeting with her, which is a grunt. And of course I am a regular myself, in fact I am a regular since Lilina's opens, whereas persons such as Topknot and Hanufa are only regulars from much more recently, and they are regulars because there is something about Lilina's that they like. But whether we are old regulars or new regulars, we all get to know each other and will fall into conversation, because after all there is nothing much else to do in a joint except drink, and most of us wish to stretch our drinks out and conserve our dough.

We will talk of all kinds of things, just as the mood takes us, so one day we will be discussing rumours of treasure in the Rubble, which is what most interests Topknot and Elsa from Adari, and another day it will be love and how it takes people, on which Sweet-Talking Shamus always has much to say, and then again we may have a beefing session, and this is always very popular. For there are plenty of things to beef about in Pavis if you are in a beefing mood, such as the taxes the government puts on practically everything, and the way the Lunar soldiers just naturally love to push everyone else around, and the heat for much of the year, and the cold for the rest of it, and the Trolls in the Rubble, and the Chaos monsters in the Rubble, and so on and so forth.

But all are agreed on one good thing about Pavis, which is that there is no shortage of ways for folks who have a little dough to get rid of it. For there are shops where you can buy all kinds of gear that is better than any you are likely to possess, and classy joints where you can spend a lot on good food and drink, and then of course there are plain bars, and gambling houses, and dives where you can get all kinds of entertainment, what with singers and dancers and actors and dolls who remove their clothes in a way that is calculated to excite the onlookers, and in the best places you can maybe get many of these things all together. And there are entertainments that do not need to be put on in a building, such as fights, and Trollball games, which

are just another kind of fight, the way I see it, and all kinds of contests and races.

Most everybody in Pavis who does not have a steady occupation is interested in races, for after all they give you something to do and no one charges you to watch them. Often such races are held by some of the nomads from out on the Plaines, especially the Sables, who stand good with the Lunars, and the reason why they hold them at Pavis seems to be that they hope to get people into betting stuff that will be useful on the Plaines, or money that they can use to buy useful stuff, and losing their bet. But persons living in Pavis will also get up races, which are sometimes official, on festival days, and sometimes they are nothing but two persons each betting that their horse or whatever is faster, and if such horses or whatever win more than one race they will become famous, and everyone will be interested in how they are doing and whether they will win the next race, and so forth. And I make it my business to know what everyone is saying in such cases, for often persons will be willing to hear such information and even pay for it, or they may tip their informant a portion of any bet they choose to make.

Now of course all kinds of persons like to make bets on races, and it is necessary to exercise considerable care about who you are giving information to, for some persons can be most unwilling to listen to reason when you are attempting to explain to them why a hot tip does not pay off. So I never offer tips to any of the really hard cases that I know around town, such as Carver Donan, and Wolfhead, and Snakefang, but I only tell them what I am hearing if they are asking most insistently, and I do not embellish it in any way whatever. And I do not need to worry about telling anything to Griselda, for she never asks me for information, or anyone else for that matter, but prefers to plan any bets she makes strictly on her own dope. Griselda certainly has a considerable fondness for betting on races, and will even travel out of Pavis sometimes to see them, and if she gives her opinion on the chances of some animal winning everyone will listen most respectfully. And she will sometimes discuss such matters with Hilda, who is now recognised by one and all as her sidekick, to see what she is hearing around and about, for Hilda is almost as smart as Griselda, and rather more cautious. So if I hear something good, I will pass it on to Hilda, for while Hilda is quite tough she does not scare me the way Griselda is apt to do.

Now it comes on a time when many of the Sable clans are gathering to stage some big races at

Author's Note: for those interested in envisaging this story or in my past suggestions, updated on the Griselda website www.griselda.org.uk from time to time, of casting the characters for an imaginary TV series ... Christina Ricci with dyed red hair or a wig remains my favourite for Griselda, Bruce Willis for Wolfhead, Matt LeBlanc for Sweet-Talking Shamus, and Matthew Perry for Avidius Tiro. The doll mentioned as with Shamus can be played by Lucy Lawless, and I offer as further possibilities, with special reference to this story, John Travolta for Topknot and Salma Hayek for Hilda. I will also settle on one of my suggestions for Loud Lilina, that is, Maggie Wheeler who played Janice in Friends, aged and fatted up a bit, and without her laugh (Loud Lilina laughs very rarely). For Hanufa I had suggested Mira Sorvino as one possibility (Lisa Kudrow was the other, but she is definitely too smart-looking); another who could do it, possibly, is Drew Barrymore, playing dumb. Gina Gershon was my original suggestion for Elsa from Adari, with her character Corky in Bound in mind, but a younger actress like Jennifer Garner might be better. Many of these castings were originally picked when they were younger, but unfortunately we are all ageing. Finally, I have no one very obvious in mind for Nobbler (Vinnie Jones?) or for Old Man Patroma, but they are types that could be readily cast if need be.

Pavis, and here is a situation where everyone is interested in anything that Griselda may have to say. For Griselda is known to stand good with one of the Sable clans, and even if they are not present she is likely to have a better chance of getting inside dope from any Sables who are present than the rest of us. And when Topknot, who is from the Plaines himself and figures to know such things, announces that he recognises evidence for the presence of the very clan to which Griselda is well known, the excitement in Lilina's is practically intense.

But of course we realise that we must proceed with caution, for Griselda can be very brusque with people who attempt to get information out of her that she is not willing to give. Some think that Hilda will be in a good position to tell us what Griselda hears, but there is a difficulty here, for none of us knows Hilda very well. For Hilda is seen uptown more often these days, because she is so pally with Griselda, and she is evidently confident that no one in law enforcement recognises her as the dependant of the Patromas who vanishes at the same time as the contents of Viridia Patroma's jewellery box, I or gives a cuss if they do recognise her. But she tends to slide into Lilina's quietly, and generally goes out again if Griselda is not there, without talking to anyone very much, and I for one get the idea that if Griselda does not hang out at Lilina's Hilda will not show up there at all.

Well, we are discussing how we can get Hilda to open up, and Sweet-Talking Shamus suggests that one of the women tries to get next to her and draw her into conversation. Hanufa flat out refuses to do this, because she has no liking for Hilda, and I guess that this is because she believes she is Griselda's best friend first and is jealous of Hilda. So we pin our hopes on Elsa from Adari, who is the only other regular who is a doll, and is as keen as the rest of us to get a hot line to a way of making some dough without too much effort, whereas Hanufa has little interest in placing bets, preferring to spend her dough on beer. And since Elsa has some respect for Hilda, she agrees, and the next time Hilda is in Lilina's, looking for Griselda, she does manage to detain her and get her talking for a while, but she reports to us that Hilda states that Griselda never utters a word in her presence that will be helpful in the matter of these races.

So the first day of the races goes by, and even those who know Praxian talk like Topknot cannot find out anything, for any Sable encountered is most unwilling to be revealing anything, and it is all most disheartening. For half the fun of a day at the races is trying to find out the inside dope, or who has the inside dope if you do not have it, and passing it around and discussing it from every angle, but if no one has any inside dope, of course you cannot do this. And those few persons who venture to place a bet based purely on their own estimation of form, or a hunch that derives from the animal's name or some such, all fail to score, and so no one is getting anything out of these races at all, and when we gather in Lilina's that evening there is much beefing on this score.

Hanufa laughs at us and says we will do much better to stay in Lilina's and have a few drinks and chew the fat or maybe sing, for this is what she loves to do herself. But we are not willing to be told what to do by Hanufa and ignore her, and are back at discussing how we can get any inside dope, when who should walk in but Avidius Tiro, and this is a most surprising sight, indeed. For Avidius Tiro once frequents Lilina's, but after he is taken backwards and forwards in a scam that is cooked up by Swifty but involves Topknot, and Elsa from Adari, and Griselda herself, though all these are taken by Swifty also, he is not seen at all in Lilina's, and is believed to harbour very bitter thoughts about all those involved. Indeed, Topknot and Elsa both look somewhat alarmed, for Avidius is by no means alone, but has a couple of hard-looking guys accompanying him.

He nods to us and looks around, and shows a disappointed face. "Where is Griselda?" he asks.

"She is not here," says Lilina shortly.

"I can see that," says Avidius rather testily. "Well, my associates and I are most anxious to speak with her, or with this woman Hilda who is her sidekick, so I understand. Are they likely to show up?"

"They come and go," says Lilina. "It is certainly a strong possibility. Maybe you and your associates will care to wait, and take a

drink while you are waiting?"

Avidius seems to sigh, but he must know that Lilina is most unwilling to allow persons to take up space in her joint if they are not buying drinks, so he purchases three beers. When I look him over, it seems to me that he is looking reasonably prosperous, which naturally makes me wonder where his dough comes from, since it certainly seems that Swifty's scam takes him for all he possesses, and then some. But of course I am too polite to ask questions about this, for the least you will get if you ask such questions in this man's town is a punch on the snoot, and even if Avidius does not give me a punch on the snoot his associates look as if they are ready to do this to anyone most any time.

Avidius looks around us. "I am guessing, from your sad faces, that none of you gets any inside dope on the races today," he says with a superior smile. "Not from Griselda or anyone else."

"We know better than to ask Griselda for inside dope," says Shamus. "Why, are you thinking of asking her? I will not be doing that if I am you, to be sure."

"Ah, but I have reason to believe she will be ready to tell me," says Avidius with a nasty look.

Well, this is most interesting, indeed, for it seems clear that Avidius hopes to pressure Griselda some way, and this will certainly be worth watching, and I am not the only one who thinks so, for we exchange glances. Avidius evidently notices this, for he laughs scornfully.

"You think I am on a bust, aiming to pressure Griselda, do you not?" he says. "But I have something up my sleeve that will prove a sure-fire winner." Then he grins. "Maybe you want to make a betting proposition of this? Does anyone wish to bet me that I cannot pressure Griselda?"

But Avidius seems so confident that I am unwilling to risk any of my hard-earned dough this way, and Topknot shakes his head and says, "I have no wish to bet blind in this way, without any knowledge of what you are holding back. But I am prepared to bet that at the end of it all you will not come out on top."

"Yeah," says Elsa, "I will second that."

Avidius looks at them with distaste. "So, you are giving me an opportunity to make back some of the dough that you swindle me out of?" he says. "How generous."

"We lose on the deal," says Topknot. "Swifty goes off with the jewellery, which costs us more to hire than we get from you. But this is all water under the bridge, is it not? You seem to be in funds again."

It is remarkable how confident Topknot is acting, but Avidius will hardly be wishing to start something out in the open like this, even with two hard guys to back him. In fact, he inclines his head and spreads his hands, as if he is saying, it is all old business.

"I learn a hard lesson," he says. "I am grateful, in a way. Well, what do you wish to wager?"

Topknot puts his hand in his pouch, pulls out some coins, looks at them mournfully, and shakes his head. "I hardly have enough for eating money, let alone the rent.. I guess I must make a scratch before making any such bet, after all."

Avidius grins unpleasantly. "All mouth and nothing to back it, eh? Well, what about you?" He looks at Elsa.

Elsa is counting her money up. "I bet you ten, Griselda will beat you in the end," she says firmly, holding out a bunch of silvers. "That's the most I can go for, for now."

"And I take your bet," says Avidius, pulling out some coins from his own pouch. "Will you trust my friend Nobbler to hold the stakes?" He indicates the guy to his right.

Elsa looks this Nobbler over. "Maybe someone who is more clearly neutral?" she says. "Lilina, will you do this for a good customer?"

Lilina growls a bit, but says she guesses she can handle it, and takes their money. It is just at that moment that Griselda and Hilda finally make an entrance.

"Ah, Griselda," says Avidius in an oily voice. "I and my associates are eager to speak with you."

"Well, I am not eager to speak with you," she retorts sharply. "I

cannot imagine that anything you have to say will be of interest to me.”

“No?” he says, raising his eyebrows. “How about this: I think the Patroma family will be very interested in the identity of your companion, and so will Constable Jorjar.”

Hilda gasps, and Griselda’s face goes very grim and she puts a hand to her sword-hilt like she is ready to draw. Avidius steps back a pace, his hands held up, and Nobbler and the other guy get up to side him, but Griselda does not blink, rather she just looks at them in such a way as seems to make them feel more than a little uneasy.

“M-my silence can be easily bought,” Avidius stammers. “All I and my associates wish for is a little inside information on the Sable races.”

Griselda glares at him. “And I am supposed to be easy with the fact that you are walking around with this knowledge?” she hisses.

“Come now, Griselda,” says Avidius, and he is suddenly sweating. “Surely some of these others must know.”

“I can trust them,” says Griselda, “but I have no reason to trust you, for I know you have a score to settle with me, and I am only surprised you do not use this knowledge to pay me out before,” and she looks at him with great suspicion.

“Maybe I will do, if I am not getting this idea,” Avidius admits.

“But I realise that the satisfaction to be had from revenge is not worth as much as hard cash in the hand, in the end. See here, I swear by the Seven Mothers that I will not reveal my information, if all goes well – but you must keep your end of the bargain.”

Griselda looks thoughtful. “You are wise to be offering me a deal,” she says. “It will certainly not be in your interest to take revenge on me by tipping off the law, for I have friends in this town who may get really excited, if Hilda and I get sent off to the Salt Mines or something.” Her voice is quite casual, but Avidius suddenly looks even more nervous.

“Okay,” Griselda goes on, “you have yourself a deal. I will do what I can.” She takes her hand from her sword-hilt and holds it out. “Clap hands on it.”

They clap hands, and then Griselda turns to Hilda. “Come, Hildy,” she says, “we have no time for leisure now. We must get to work.” And so out they go again, while Avidius sits down again with the other two and looks at us triumphantly.

“Say, mister,” says Shamus. “Are you ready to form a betting syndicate? Because I will come in with you, if you are, and bring in my friend, who has more dough than I do.”

“Yes,” says Topknot, “if you are willing to let bygones be bygones, I will contribute my handful of clacks also.”

“So, you wish to share any information I get for free?” says Avidius in pretended surprise. “No, I think I and my associates must be entitled to a percentage of any winning bet.”

And then they get down to haggling over the percentage, but I lose interest, for I feel that if Griselda is finding out information it may be easier to get it direct from her or Hilda, and furthermore I have a suspicion that Elsa from Adari is right, and Griselda will come out on top some way, though for sure Avidius has a good hold on her at present. But others are not so cautious, and several persons in Lilina’s make terms with Avidius to join in the betting syndicate.

Well, the next day one and all set out to see the races with high hopes, and we are keeping an eye out for Griselda, and Hilda, and Avidius and his two guys, and there is much excitement. Sure enough, Avidius and his guys are soon on the scene, and Griselda shows up with Wolfhead to give them a message, and those who are in the syndicate then make a beeline for them. But Avidius’s guys, who are now carrying hefty clubs, stand around and look most discouragingly at anyone else who dares to approach too close, so it is not possible to overhear what the message is. And when all the conferring is finished, those who are in the syndicate stroll away nonchalantly, and shake their heads at the rest of us when we try to get any information out of them, though Topknot allows he can sell a tip for five silvers, which is agreed to be most extortionate by those who are by no means in possession of such a sum, or are careful with their dough, like me. I am surprised that Hilda is not present, for these days she is next to

Griselda’s elbow as often as not, and I wonder if she is hiding out for fear of being spotted.

It seems that one of the races soon to be run involves a rider from the clan that Griselda is pally with, but what I cannot find out is whether the animal he rides is favoured to win, or to lose, or what, so in the end I give up and just try to get to a place where I can see what is going on, which is by no means easy for a short guy like me. But I finally wiggle through, and find that I am right next to a group of Sable braves, and it is plain that these guys do not take a wash for quite some time, but I put up with worse stinks before, so I can be where the action is, and I am bound and determined to stick it out. And this turns out to be a wise decision, for one of them says something to the one right next to me, who turns and says, in reasonable Tradetalk, “You the one who tell story about Little Moonhair?”

I am guessing that they mean Griselda, although her hair is by no means the colour of the Red Moon, but more natural. But I am not going to argue this with a guy who does not look to be anything special, but stands at least two hands taller than me and is holding a lance with a very sharp-looking point. So I smile at him most politely and allow that I am Olaf the Storyteller, at his service.

He grins. “My clan, we friends with Little Moonhair. What you give me, for good tip?”

I have no idea what a Sable guy will think is appropriate, so I suggest a silver.

“Two silver,” he says. “This real good tip.”

Well, this is the first hot tip I have in the whole meeting, and I am still in funds, so I fork over the two silvers, and he turns me round and points out an animal with the longest horns I ever see, being walked up and down behind us. “Bet that one,” he says. “Best runner in whole clan. Next race. But bet that one today only, not tomorrow.” He repeats this, like it is something really important, and I nod and thank him and say I will do that.

I thank him, and go looking for any guy who seems to be taking bets, and sure enough I find a whole bunch of guys, who seem to know everything that is going on, for there are Sable guys with them explaining everything. But when I get to discussing a bet I find out that this animal I am tipped is an odds-on favourite, and so I must wager two silvers to get one back on top of my stake, for a win, and at first I am reluctant to go for such a small return, but then the odds go to five for two back, so I decide that I will follow my feeling that this is a genuine tip and be content simply to increase my stake somewhat, and I lay out ten silvers.

Before the betting is over the odds go even shorter, for this animal is clearly the public’s favourite, and when it wins by several lengths amid much cheering I am pleased that I am getting my bet down when I do, for some are getting two for seven or even one for four back for their money. It seems that this is also the syndicate’s tip, and there are smiles everywhere you look, and much interest is expressed in whether this animal will run again, for it is like finding money in the street. Soon we are learning that it is called Black Lightning, and that it will run again before the day is out, for what we are seeing are heats within the clans, for animals of different ages, and then the winners of the heats will compete to represent their clan with a yearling, or a two-year old, or whatever, and tomorrow they will run races between the clans’ best in each year group.

Well, when Black Lightning comes to the line again everyone starts running at the guys who take bets all at once, and they quickly announce that they will not take bets on Black Lightning for any position but first, and you must wager six to get one back. But many people still consider this a reasonable proposition, and they are very happy when Black Lightning comes in again, even further ahead of the others if anything, and when I see Avidius he is beaming from ear to ear, and so are the two guys with him, and also Shamus and a doll hanging on his arm, who has dancer written all over her. She is one of the tallest dolls that ever I see, but she has one of the finest bodies that ever I see, also, though on a close look I see that she is by no means a real young doll.

“Tomorrow we must plunge on that one, Shamus,” she is saying. “I will get the other girls to invest also, or lend me money.”

Now Shamus and I go way back, and I do not wish to see him take a fall on this one, and lose his doll, no doubt, as well as his dough, so I sidle up and say to him like this, "Shamus," I say, very quietly, "do not bet that one tomorrow."

"Why, what is this?" he says, turning to me. "Do you hear something?"

"I do," I say, "but this is a secret, mind, so do not be telling anyone else, no matter what."

"My lips are sealed," he says, with a wink, and he walks off with his doll, speaking to her confidentially.

Well, as it turns out, this is the last race of the day, so we all walk back to Pavis feeling much happier than first thing that morning, for our pouches are heavier, and that night there is much merriment in Lilina's. Avidius and his guys are there, and they are buying drinks all round, and toasting Black Lightning, and I am thinking, they are being set up to bet on Black Lightning tomorrow, and something will go wrong, and they will lose all their dough, and I find this most perplexing, for if Avidius thinks he is set up he will surely turn in Hilda, and Griselda too as her accomplice, and I find I have no wish to see this happen. So in a quiet moment I say to Avidius, who is very cheery, that I have some private information to impart, and I tell him how I am warned to steer clear of betting on Black Lightning tomorrow.

"This is most strange, indeed," he says. "I am watching all the races, and I see the winners in all of them, and I figure the only way Black Lightning can lose is if someone dopes him before he starts or something, and I never hear that these nomads go in for such underhand practices. But our information warns us off the race that he is in entirely."

"Well," I say, "that is not quite the word that I am given, but I figure it best to pass it on." Then I have an idea. "Maybe some betting scam is being planned," I say. "Maybe there is an animal out there that is even faster, and we do not know this, because we do not see it run, but it is being brought in as a ringer for one that we do see."

He looks at me for a moment most seriously, and then nods. "Yes, such a possibility is well worth considering," he says. "Well, I am grateful for this word, and we will certainly consider it most carefully in the syndicate."

Now it is not long after this that I find that I am becoming a little overwhelmed by all the free drinks that I accept, and so I leave Loud Lilina's to head for my room, and I only step outside when someone goes "Hisst!" at me from across the road, and I see two persons in the alley that goes behind Geo's. They are not very large, and when I go over it is Griselda and Hilda, as I suspect.

"Do you get my message?" Griselda says.

"I do indeed," I say.

"And do you tell anyone else?" she goes on, looking at me very earnestly.

Now of course the smart thing to do is to say no, but the way Griselda is looking at me I find it quite impossible to do this, so I admit that I pass it on to Shamus, and also to Avidius, explaining that I am worried for her and Hilda's welfare, if Black Lightning fails to win and he and his associates lose their dough.

"And what does Avidius think?" she says, not looking mad but very insistent.

I tell her how we converse, and she suddenly grins, and gives me a great whack on the back. "Perfect!" she cries. "I cannot do it better myself. Now look, Olaf, I am giving the syndicate this, and I repeat it: whatever you do, do not bet on the race that Black Lightning is in. Do not bet on any animal, no matter what you think is going on. But you must not reveal that I tell you this, though if you can find a way to hint to any particular friends to stay away from the race, because it is too close to call or something like that, you have my permission to do so."

"Very well, Griselda," I say, "but what if Avidius bets on Black Lightning anyway, and it loses, and he thinks he is being conned ..."

"Do not worry your head about that," says Griselda. "I have my plan. Trust me, all will be well."

"Yeah, trust her, Olaf," says Hilda. "I do. It is a real good plan." She snickers. "It is one of your best."

So I tell Griselda I will do what she says, and wish them luck,

and go on to my rest, and I sleep a lot better than many persons who turn out for the races the next day, for they take even more drink on board and are complaining of feeling unwell.

Now there are many races on this final day, and Black Lightning is due to run in the final one, so I try to make estimates of form for the runners in all the other races, and as often before all of us regulars from Lilina's get together to do this, and this gives me an opportunity to ask Topknot how he is making out.

"Well," he says, "of course I can only invest very small sums with the syndicate, but at least I make enough to pay off my rent. That is one lightning-fast animal, all right. But are you hearing what we are hearing, that something will prevent it winning today?"

Now this is not quite what I hear, so I tell the plain truth and say simply that I am warned not to bet on it today, and I expound my idea that some kind of betting scam is being planned.

"That is what we are told in the syndicate," Topknot says, "and Shamus has the same story. But personally I am inclined to doubt it. There is no skulduggery at meetings that we Praxian peoples hold, or anyway not much. No, I think that someone wants the odds to rise on Black Lightning and is putting this story about to get us not to bet on him, and personally I shall be investing all I can on him, and I advise you to do the same."

Now this is a quandary, to be sure, for I have no wish to see Topknot lose his entire stake, but I cannot tell him right out not to bet on the race. So I think a little and I say like this.

"Well, Topknot," I say, "the word I get is not to bet on Black Lightning today. And I am going to steer clear of the race altogether, for I am warned that it may be a close call."

He looks at me as if he is understanding something different from what I am telling him. "And who is the source of this?" he says. "Are you getting this from Griselda?"

"A Sable tells me not to bet Black Lightning," I say, and I leave it at that, for if I mention my meeting with Griselda and Hilda he will want to know more. He nods again, with a knowing look, and then asks me if I have any spare cash lying around loose that I will consider loaning him, and as I know he will only go and bet it on Black Lightning and lose it, I regretfully inform him that my funds are fully committed, and it seems like he is expecting this, and he goes off to put the bite on someone else.

Well, by the time the race in which Black Lightning is running comes around, you can cut the atmosphere with a knife, there is so much excitement. I notice that there are now longer odds on Black Lightning, though they are still not so long, at that, but much more dough is being wagered on another animal called Ravenswing, which is indeed black as a raven almost all over, with only a few white markings on the face and just a streak down its belly. It is a fine looking animal, for all that, and in fact it looks so good that I am wondering if I am actually right and some clan is bringing in a ringer, for it seems to resemble an animal that I see win a race for older animals than Black Lightning the day before, but I cannot be absolutely sure that they are the same. Still, I am strongly tempted to put down a bet, but as I am hanging around by the betting ring, listening to the odds being shouted, the Sable who is speaking to me the day before comes up close.

"That Ravenswing," he mutters, jerking his thumb, "no good. Unlucky, bad markings. Do not bet, story teller."

Now this guy gives me a good steer before, so I figure, this may be part of whatever is going on, and I keep my dough firmly in my pouch, and step back. I see Avidius not too far away, and now he does not simply have Nobbler and the other guy with him, but nobody else but Old Man Patroma and a younger guy who figures to be a junior Patroma, perhaps his son, and they are all chatting away most amiably.

Now this race will be long remembered in Lilina's, for reasons that will become clear. More money is riding on it than on any other race, by a long way, and where this money comes from I do not know, but my guess is that some of it is Patroma money, invested through Avidius, and I am wondering what on earth will happen if the result is not as they expect.

Well, Black Lightning busts on top, but he is getting much more competition than in his previous races, and especially from

Ravenswing, and everyone is screaming and shouting, and I find that I am screaming and shouting too, though I do not have a bet on, and what happens in the end but Black Lightning takes it away in the final stretch, and it is like Ravenswing and his rider are so discouraged that they let two or three more get past them, and they end up nowhere. And this is all most disappointing for the people who bet on Ravenswing, and much dismay is being expressed all round, but Topknot is practically turning somersaults, because he goes right ahead and bets everything he has and can borrow on Black Lightning on his own. So he wins a handy sum and has to pay no percentage to the syndicate, and it seems that he persuades Shamus to see it his way, for Shamus's doll is jumping up and down with glee, and she gives Topknot a great smacking kiss when she can catch him. And a few others who must ignore all the rumours that are going round are also looking very happy, but I am feeling most annoyed that after all Black Lightning wins and I do not have a bet on him, and I wonder why Griselda does this to me, but I guess that she will reveal her reasons in time.

Now there is much shouting around where Avidius is, so I go over, and the shouting is from Nobbler, who is clearly a heavy loser and is blaming him very loudly for this, while the Patromas are looking most disheartened.

"I cannot see what goes wrong," Avidius cries, looking most unhappy. "Do I not lay it out for you? It looks perfect." He is looking around and he sees me, and suddenly he points at me. "You!" he yells. "Do you not tell me that there may be a ringer in the race?"

They all look at me sternly, and it takes me a moment to collect my wits and decide what to say, but finally I say like this, "This is just one idea that I am suggesting, to explain what may be going on in the race. The only real dope I have is not to bet Black Lightning, and also not to bet Ravenswing."

"Where do you hear that about Ravenswing? Why do you not tell me that?" he says, looking frantic.

"Why," I say, "this same Sable brave who is putting me onto Black Lightning yesterday, but is warning me off betting on him today, also tells me just before the race starts not to bet Ravenswing, because he is unlucky. So I think there really must be something odd about the race, and I do not bet at all."

Just then who shows up but Wolfhead, and he has Kroked and Fylchar with him as usual. He arrives in rather a hurry, and he is looking perturbed.

"Griselda is most worried," he says. "She thinks, from the amount of dough that is wagered on the race, that your syndicate must invest heavily in it, despite our warning you off betting on the race."

"You warn us off betting on the race?" cries Nobbler, looking very mad. "That is not what you tell us, Avidius. You tell us you have reliable word of this ringer, and let us believe that it comes from the same source as the dope on Black Lightning."

Avidius groans. "But I think I do," he says in a most disheartened tone. "A Sable brave tips me off early this morning that this Ravenswing is a ringer, and bound to win. But now it looks as if I am duped for some reason by the Sables." Suddenly he looks very mad. "Griselda figures to be behind this all!" he cries, and turns to me again. "Does not your Sable carry a Lunar scimitar, and wear the sign of the Red Moon on his tunic?"

"Why, no," I say, puzzled, "he carries a lance, and I see nothing special on his tunic."

"I cannot make head or tail of this," says Old Man Patroma gruffly, "but it seems clear to me that your assurances of the reliability of your information are wholly worthless. I am most displeased. Come, Lucius," and he marches off, followed by the other.

"Wait," cries Avidius desperately. "I can give you information on a known criminal, a thief from your family."

Old Man Patroma turns. "I will not take your word for it if you tell me it will be hot tomorrow," he says bitterly. "I wish to have no further dealings with you of any kind."

"Why, you sneaking ratfink," says Wolfhead to Avidius very hotly. "Griselda keeps to her side of the bargain, but you do not

follow our advice, and then to save your miserable skin you aim to break your word. I ought to slit your throat," and he produces a dagger.

Avidius backs away, looking ready to run, but he is grabbed by Nobbler and the other guy. "Hold on, Wolfhead," says Nobbler. "Not before we get whatever we can fetch from everything he owns, to pay back some of our losses. What I suggest is, you leave him to us. We will ensure that he disappears, and anything he knows with him."

"No, no!" cries Avidius. "Help, police!" he screams, but he is quickly tapped on the head by Nobbler, hard enough to be dazed, and then the other guy produces something to gag him with and they all move in around him. I look about, but the only law enforcement guys I can see are some distance away, and looking in quite the opposite direction, for I perceive that they are chatting with Griselda.

"Best not to kill him, I think," says Nobbler to Wolfhead, "but I am sure we can find a buyer for him somewhere. Of course, if he shows signs of wanting to keep giving people information they do not need, we may have to remove his tongue."

At this Avidius, who is making a lot of noise through his gag, suddenly falls silent. Then they all walk off with him, walking around him so he is hard to see in the middle, and that is the last time Avidius Tiro is seen in this man's town.

Now Griselda comes walking over to me, and Hilda seems to appear out of nowhere, and I realise that she is the person who is wearing a hooded cloak that I notice walking around and about before.

"Well," says Griselda, "that all works out well, does it not? And we make some dough too."

"You are brilliant," says Hilda, looking at her with profound admiration.

"You may make some dough," I say to Griselda, "but you shut me out of the chance, you are so particular about not betting on Black Lightning."

"If I tell you everything I am planning," says Griselda in a patient tone, "I cannot be sure that you will keep it to yourself, for when it comes to betting matters you cannot be trusted to keep stuff to yourself. It is not your fault, exactly, it is just naturally the way you are. But I am quite pleased with you, Olaf, for you help to set up Avidius, though you do not know you are doing this, really, which is what makes it work so well. I figure him for such a guy as will think he has it all worked out, when in fact there are big flaws in his processes of thought. So, anyway, I invite you to come and eat with me and Hilda at a place of your choosing, and you can pick the best, though I have to warn that they may not be willing to let us in, because we are not looking very high class. And Hilda can tell you of her adventures before she comes back to Pavis, which are most interesting, and also instructive, and maybe I will reveal some of my secrets to you also. But this is not stuff to go in your stories."

So that is how I wind up eating at the Golden Dolphin with Griselda and Hilda, and I have such a good time that I completely forgive Griselda for doing me out of a chance to bet on Black Lightning, for I consider that after all I am making some dough on him. And the next time I am in Lilina's Elsa from Adari is very eager to buy me a drink, because she gets the idea that I have something to do with Griselda defeating Avidius and allowing her to win her bet, and Topknot also wishes to buy me a drink, because somehow he gets the idea from our conversation that he should bet on Black Lightning, no matter what. So all in all I am sitting pretty, and in fact everyone is happy except Avidius. But he brings it on himself, for anyone in the street will tell him that it is a mug's game to attempt to put the squeeze on Griselda.

1 See **Bad Example**.
2 See **Serious Money**.

Legends of the Winterwood

From the Chronicles of Fethela Fodronu

by Shannon Applecline

IN THE SIX YEARS that I've been writing this column, the main purpose has been to prepare for writing an Elfpak book for HeroQuest. In the long gap since the last issue of Tradetalk, I've both started and finished that book. It's called *Elder Races: Aldryami*, it's a hefty 100,000 words long, and I hope it'll see print in 2007.

In the process of writing the actual book I developed some new ways to describe racial Homelands, and I totally revised my thinking about Aldryami magic, so expect some of the more mechanistic bits of previous articles to go by the wayside. However, at the same time the Aldryami mythology that's been showing up since Tradetalk #7 proved crucial to the writing of the book, just as I'd always hoped it would.

Among many other things the Aldryami book contains 1-2 page writeups of about 20 different forests, jungles, and swamps. For this issue of Tradetalk, and in connection with Fethela's discussion of Winterwood, I decided to include a writeup of a forest that's only briefly mentioned in *Aldryami*: the Maidstone Mountains. It's in the same format as those other forests, and the game stats should make more sense when you finally see Aldryami next year.

Shannon



«Of all the peoples I could write of, of all the Aldryami songs that I could sing, the greatest is doubtless that of the Shen Senae who stood strong in Winterwood, for it is they who gave birth to Vronkal, they who held back the ice, they who formed the first mighty Marching Aldryami, and they who ultimately regrew this world.

So now let me sing their song, and two tales of their heroism».

The First Snow

A Story of the Red Age told in Winterwood

We were not always green.

Now, looking out across the snow-covered wastes, and seeing brown, green, and white blend together into a garden of gray, it might seem hard to believe, but it is the truth nonetheless. Our oldest, stoutest pines remember the long ago days, and those who have passed through the cycle have occasional visions of what once was.

There was a day when the firs reached up to the sky dome, and they were still blessed with all the colors that were borne from Falamal. Our shining golden leaves paid homage to Halamalao, our lustrous brown leaves paid homage to Gata, and our beautiful blue leaves paid homage to Eron. We had red for Bebestor our new warrior and white for the hope to come of Veratha. And yes, we were green too, and that was our connection to mother Aldrya.

These were in the olden days, I should hasten to say, the days before The Taker took all we know, even before Vronkal rose up to become our leader. But they were bad times nonetheless, for already the Sky Dome had been cracked, we had let disease slip in, and the Red Age had begun. It was the time of the second seeding which had given rise to the three children of the Taker, the Darkness, the Stone, and the Dust.

In those days our greatest enemy was the darkness. We were at constant war with the hungry eaters who sought to devour not just us, but also the earth that gave us substance and the water that gave us nourishment. Our battles with the snouted folk would last tens of cycles, and even now we remember The Battle of Purple Hue, in which their darkness demons tried to blot out Halamalao, and The War of the Broken Dam, in which we gave up our lives in the thousands to release the horrible bondage which the eaters had imposed. But, in the end, we drove them beneath the earth and they were not seen again until for many generations.

With the eaters gone, we began to wonder of the two other sons of the Taker. We heard of the Stone, but it was Falamal himself who led the battle against them, far away, at the center of the world. As for the Dust, she was but rumor, a tale of nourishment used to frighten saplings.

Until the Day of the First Snow.

We still remember it with bitterness and anger, for Dust did not even deign to approach us herself. Instead she sent her slightest daughter, a wisp of a girl who was no bigger than a maul of the eaters, who could not wield the axe of the Stone. She was as pale as the flower which lives beneath the ground, as insubstantial as the spirit of a cut tree. Her name was Iniri.

Iniri would not greet us. She would not attend our council. She had no use for Aldryami ways and no respect. She sought only to corrupt and taint. Within her we saw disease.

We sent our best daughter out to greet her, and Iniri struck him down with a single blow, and then she began to dig in the Earth.

We sent our best diplomat out to speak with her, and Iniri struck him down with a single blow, and then she began to leech Eron's blood out of Gata's soil, and she left behind only ashen dust.

We sent our best warrior out to kill her, and Iniri struck him down with a single blow, and she released Eron's blood into the air.

But, she had changed Eron's blood, it was no longer the life-giving substance that we know. Rather, it had become diseased and wrong. The warmth was taken out, and left behind there was only cold. The movement was taken out, and left behind there was only stasis. The love had been taken out, and left behind there was only uncaring.

And so Eron's tainted blood began to fall from the sky. It was the first snow.

And it began to fall upon we Aldryami of Winterwood and as it did it froze and hurt, it maimed and mutilated.

It fell heavy upon our limbs, and we could no longer feel the warmth of Halamalao, and so our golden leaves were lost. It piled up around our trucks, and we could no longer believe in the protection of Gata, and so our brown leaves were lost. It froze us down to our root, and we could no longer sup upon the love of Eron, and so our blue leaves were lost. Worst, it seeped into our hearts and our brains, and so we lost our hopes for the future, and with them our red and our white and so much more.

But as Iniri's first snow continued to pile upon us, as she offered her prayers up to the Taker, to the Dust, and to the diseases which had been unleashed upon the world, as she thanked them for giving her victory over us, we found victory within ourselves.

Though Iniri had taken away our gods, though she taken away our hope and our future, she had not taken away that which was most dear to us: ourselves. We were still bound together, we Aldryami of Winterwood, and so we could still hear her voice.

Aldrya.

And so we began slowly to lumber forward, to shake off the shroud of snow which lay upon us, and this time we saw fear upon Iniri's face. This time we did not just send our best daughter, but all of them. And we did not just send our best warrior, but all of them. That day the shrubling who led us was not one we even named a warrior yet, for his limbs were still tender, and he was half the height of a spear. But, he led us nonetheless. Perhaps he was our worst warrior then, though he would not be for long. And that was Vronkal.

Iniri could not stand before the might of us, against the might of Aldryami united, and so she fled back to her dark, ashen place, and for a moment we knew victory.

But, we would bear the scars of that fight forever, for only our green leaves had survived, and never again would we be as close to the gods

Story Seeds

An Awakener Cache

The journey of the Awakeners is often seen as a singular march which carried them from Winterwood to lost Jolar and beyond. However, in truth the great awakening was a journey that took hundreds of years, during which the marching Vronkali often doubled back, scouring old lands for more lost peoples who could be revived. In support of this the Awakeners often left behind caches of goods, including not just supplies but also the magical accessories that they were using to regrow the world.

Now, in the wilds of Fronela, an Awakener cache has been broken open and is being slowly excavated (because it has been buried beneath two thousand years of dirt, mud, and snow). Its ancient magics have become a point of contention. Hired by one of several different groups—which include Aldryami from several forests, local Malkioni, and even primitive shamans—the heroes are asked to make their way to the cache, and to steal away certain of its mysteries for their own patrons.

Fight Against the Ice

Every winter the Vronkali of Winterwood go north to fight against the forces of winter. They beat back the ice, battle against the Hollari ice daimons (see Anaxial's Roster, pp.194-195), and engage in other warfare against the cold.

Sometimes they hire mercenaries to help them, and the heroes are among those approached, giving them an opportunity to see the grandeur of the frozen lands of Valind's Glacier, and perhaps also discover some of the secrets of the ice.

Story Seeds

Seed Mail

The Vronkali of Ballid, Erontree, or Winterwood hire the heroes for a simple task: to transport seeds between the three forests, and at a few select locations to plant them. This will give the heroes a nice opportunity to experience some of the wonders of the Aldryami woods of the north. Although they do not know it, the heroes are taking a small part in the grand plan of Vronkali reforestation. However, there are others who suspect the Vronkali's plans and are trying to head it off. If some enemy mercenaries aren't enough to warn the heroes off, a troop of traveling Uz will be happy to take the seeds off the players' hands-and maybe take their hands off in the process. No matter what, the heroes find themselves right in the middle of an ancient war between Aldryami and Uz-the children of the Grower and the Taker.



as we had been before. And, ever year thereafter Iniri would return once more, to try and carry out her mother's wishes.

And so every year we must stand together again, as we did that one time, before time. For in that way alone can Iniri be banished and summer returned once more to Winterwood.

The Awakeners

A Story of the Brown Age told in Winterwood

The ice lies deep over the Winterwood tonight. It freezes so cold that our limbs grow brittle. Our trees shatter beneath the weight of snow, and we are reminded that every winter is a far against death, against the Taker.

But also let us remember this night that spring draws near, and that every spring is a victory for the Grower.

Let us remember Veratha, for she was the first Awakener. In the darkness, in Trigora beneath the world, she danced the Dance of Spring and so restored the Cycle. Everything was dead before she danced, everything was lost except our most stalwart Vronkali defenders, and she danced through that death to restore life to the world.

But she was not the only Awakener, just the first, and we people of Winterwood became her favored children in the Brown Age, for it was we that decided to follow in her fleeting footsteps. We learned the Dance of Spring, and whereas she had reawakened the world, it was we would reawaken its people.

Let us remember the Pineneedles: Risat who was murdered in Arstola, Rostyl who created the great forest in Umathela, and Rhombur who fell off the end of the world. They did not just reawaken the forests of the world, but they reawakened our own Vronkali people too; they gave our weary, exhausted kin-who had seen too much death and who had dealt too much death-a new life by showing them what they could do for the world.

It was the Pineneedles who formed the mighty gathering of the Awakeners, which swept south across Glorantha like a mighty Aldryami army. It was they who rewoke Ballid, Follola, and all the others, even perfidious Arstola.

Today we might feel abandoned. We have been betrayed by so many Mreli. We fight the ice alone, and the great reforestation stalls and balks. But we must always remember this:

We have done what is right. Veratha reawakened the world. We reawakened the people. And, because we know that the great things always come in triads-as Eron, Gata, and Halamalao did-as Eirrenor, Larayse, and Trileme did-so do we know that there is another reawakening to come.

Perhaps it is we who shall be awakened this time, to find a new place in a new world, or perhaps it is the other peoples of the land who shall be awakened, to remember what we have done. But have no doubt, there is a third awakening coming.

For Winterwood is the forest of the Awakeners.

The Maidstone Mountains

The Maidstone Mountains include a strange enclave of Aldryami, somewhat a part of Winterwood, but at the same time largely separated from that society. This is at least partially because of their relationship with the strange Grotaron peoples.

History of the Maidstone Mountains

The Maidstone Mountains appeared in the Red Age, as Valind's Glacier pushed down into Fronela. Aldryami had previously lived in those lands, but at the time Vronkal High Elf was growing much of Winterwood into the first band of Marching Aldryami, and he saw little need to resettle the newly raised lands.

In the Black Age, Vronkal's power continued to increase as the wars of the world spread. Some elves of Winterwood became concerned with giving so much power to a leader who ultimately did the will of the Taker-even with the best of the intentions. Thus they left Vronkal's army, and left Winterwood itself, settling in the Maidstone Mountains. Here they found and befriended the curious race known as Grotarons.

Without the aid of Vronkal, many of the Maidstone elves died during the Black Age. They would later be raised as Mreli, the only to be found in these far northern lands. But many more Vronkali survived, as did the strange Grotarons. The Vronkali of the Maidstone reawakened their own Mreli, and then welcomed in the New Dawn.

Since the White Age began, the Maidstone elves have largely stayed apart from the world, pursuing their own goals. The sole exception was when they supported the Greenleaf Rebellion, where local hsunchen turned against Loskalm in 1614 S.T. This was a grave embarrassment to the rest of Winterwood, whose High King Elf, Fodrola Vronkal, was forced to sign the Axe Treaty with Loskalm as a result.

The Frozen Forests

The Maidstone Mountains have long been a forest that lies both within and without of Winterwood. It lies within Winterwood because the forest is continuous, and thus the Aldryami of Maidstone can hear the song of Winterwood's Great Tree. Likewise the events of the Greenleaf Rebellion have shown that the Aldryami of Winterwood are ultimately responsible for the action of their Maidstone kin. It lies without Winterwood because the Aldryami of the mountains are isolationists, intent on their own concerns, and willing to do things without respect for how it might affect the rest of the forest.

The Aldryami of the Maidstone Mountains live primarily in the foothills and along the southern mountains. They include not just Vronkali, but also the only Mreli in Winterwood. There are 15,000 or so Aldryami in the mountains, a third of them brown. The rest of the mountains are the domain of the Grotarons. Relations between the peoples are friendly, even cordial, although they have become more strained in recent years as the Grotarons population has begun to exceed its living space.

The Aldryami of Maidstone are very interested in the spiritual saber-toothed mammoth which the Grotarons hunt. They believe that bringing it back into the Inner World could help reestablish the Green Age, and so they have been working for over a thousand years toward this goal. In recent years this has also brought them into contact with the hsunchen of Fronela; the Aldryami's part in the Greenleaf Rebellion was merely an attempt to win the trust of the hsunchen people.

Notable Places

Stalking Ground: A clearing which lies on the periphery of Grotaron and Aldryami territory. It is an ancient place of sacrifice, and the Aldryami believe its magic may hold the key to regrowing the Grotaron's totem spirit.

Notable People

VARONI SHARPTETH: A Vronkali woodlord of Aldrya, and the unofficial leader of the Maidstone elves (who have no Council of their own). He is a strong proponent of the mammoth regrowth, and is currently pushing to bring hsunchens up into the mountains (whether they want to come or not). He has filed his wooden teeth to sharp points to show his dedication.

Stats for the Grotarons may be found in Anaxial Roster, pp.152-153.

THE MAIDSTONE MOUNTAINS

NAMES: The Maidstone Mountains.
LOOK AND FEEL: Mixed coniferous and deciduous trees, covering the foothills of a steep mountain range.

REACTION TO FOREIGNERS: Generally suspicious, though the Maidstone Aldryami will not turn violent unless provoked.

PURPOSE: To regrow the saber-toothed mountain mammoth.

SIGNIFICANT ABILITIES: Know Ancient Myths 5W, Know Grotarons 10W.

GREAT TREE "THE GREAT PINE"
 I Awareness-Sense Enroaching Ice 10W4*
 ; Blessing-Be Ready for Tomorrow's Battle 4W4*
 D Defense- Stay Warm 18W3*

**Use of these functions is limited to a hero's ElfSense score.*

Maidstone Mountains Forest Keyword

PROMINENT SPECIES: Birch (brown), Black Oak (brown), Pine (green).

TYPICAL SKILLS: Communicate with Other Species, Ski.

TYPICAL PERSONALITY TRAITS: Nostalgic.

Story Seeds

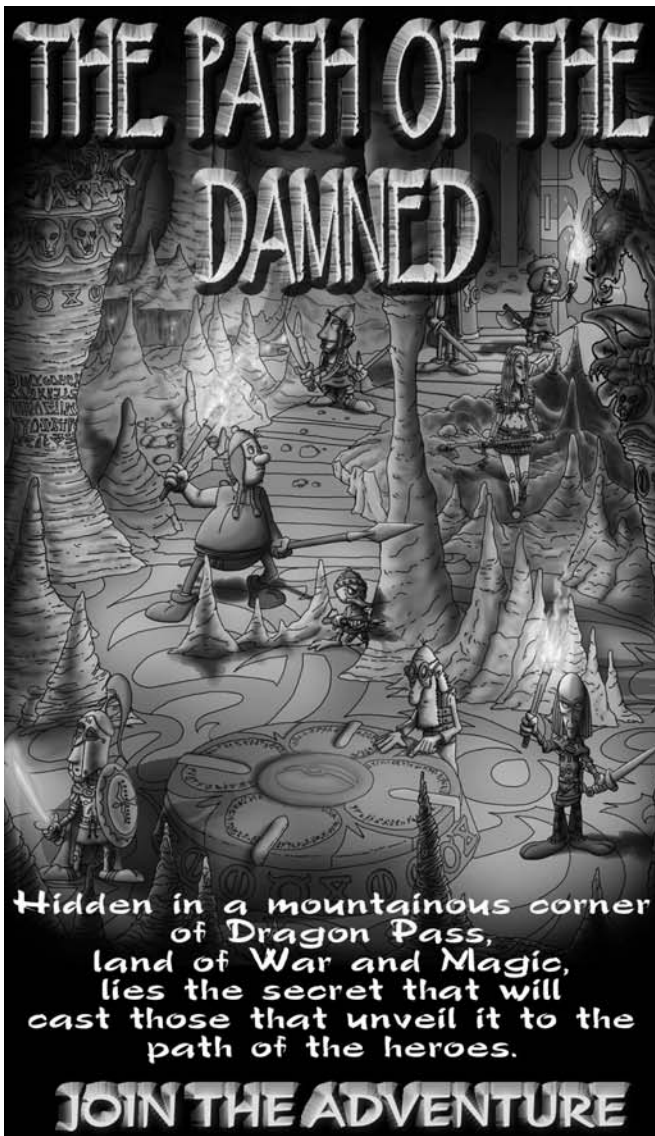
Missing!

When an entire tribe of hsunchen peoples go missing, the other locals become concerned. If they decide to aid these people, the heroes will soon learn that the hsunchen have been kidnapped by a band of Vronkali who are using them for strange mythic rituals. What can the heroes do against an entire society of elves?

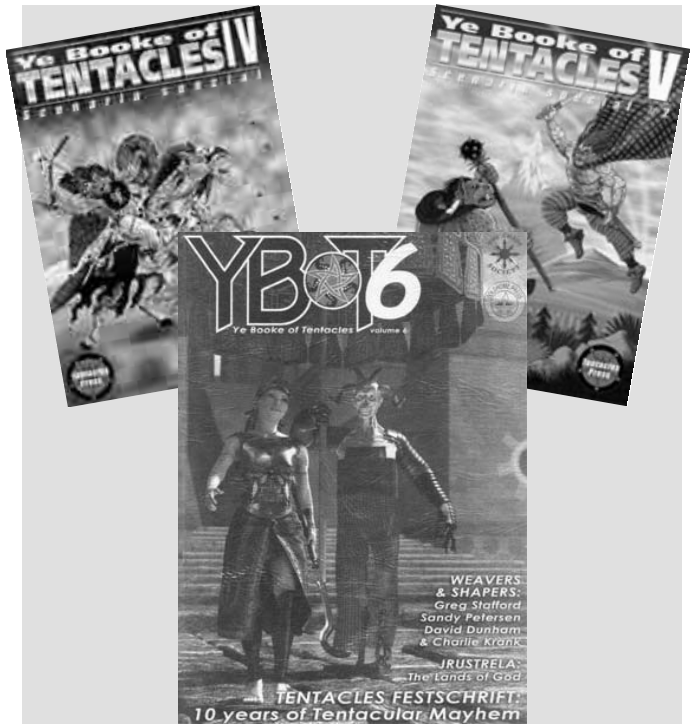


Chaos Society

P R O D U C T S



The Path of the Damned has been awarded the First Prize in the Digital Comic category in the First Iberoamerican Comic Contest. The Path of the Damned has been nominated for Best of Glorantha 2002 award in three categories.



The sixth YE BOOKE OF TENTACLES brings us an with "The Lands of God" an insight to Jrustela in the 2nd Age - 719 S.T. - including the HeroQuest Homeland Keyword

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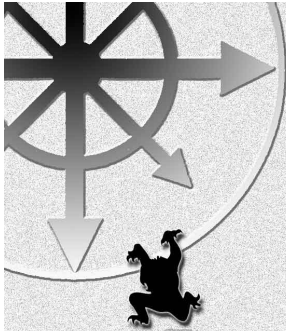
Extensive information on Spirits, Essences and Daimones of the oceans go deep into the mysteries of the aquatic

...

Other informations include Gloranthan Fiction by Greg Stafford and John Hughes, a Lunar heroband, Erekoze and a short story for Stormbringer, The Fungi From Yuggoth and a scenario for Call of Cthulhu, and the Tentacles Festschrift - Ten years of Tentacles Convention - plus Interviews with the weavers & shapers of your worlds

...


Previous YBOTS # 4 and 5 focused on scenarios. Go right onto adventures and explore Glorantha, the Young Kingdoms and the 1920s through gaming



RuneQuest Gesellschaft e.V.

- *The Chaos Society* -

Gaming society & fan publisher for
Glorantha · Cthulhu · Elric etc.



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The *RuneQuest Gesellschaft e.V.* was founded in Germany in May 1991 as a gaming club for the purpose of uniting German fans of the RuneQuest game system and the world of Glorantha.

The *RuneQuest Gesellschaft e.V.* (which operates in English as *The Chaos Society*) is a gaming society and fan publisher for:

- The world of Glorantha, regardless of its game system (HeroQuest RPG, RuneQuest RPG, Dragon Pass boardgame, etc.)
- The D100/Basic Roleplaying System, regardless of its background (Glorantha, Call of Cthulhu, Elric of Melnibonè, Hawkmoon, etc.)

The game that combines the world of Glorantha and the D100 game system is, and has been since 1978, RuneQuest, hence the name of our organisation.

Every year since 1990, we have organised a convention held at Pentecost/Whitsun to celebrate “our” game systems and gaming worlds. Since 1996, this convention has been called *Tentacles*.

From 1992 to 1999, we published a German language fanzine, *FreeINT/Schattenklinge*. Twenty issues were published. It was followed by five club newsletters, which also included articles and adventures.

In 1996, we decided to “go international”, and started the fanzine/magazine *Tradetalk*. Most Tradetalk articles and adventures are set in Glorantha, and support the D100 system. Call of Cthulhu, Elric!, Pendragon, or Nephilim articles are occasionally included. Sixteen issues of this magazine have now been published.

In 1998, the German RuneQuest Con became international. It was renamed the *Tentacles Convention* (which was in fact the 9th RQ Convention). *Ye Booke of Tentacles* was started to support it, containing Glorantha, Call of Cthulhu, Hawkmoon, Elric!, Pendragon, and Nephilim articles and adventures. Six volumes have now been published.

In 2001, the *Pavis & Big Rubble Companion* series was started as another convention fundraiser book series. Six volumes and one booklet have been published.

In 2002, we started to publish *The Path of the Damned*, a Gloranthan comic book series in full colour. Three issues are now available.

In 2003, we published *The Widow's Tale*, a Gloranthan novel. This was followed in 2007 by *Eurhol's Vale & Other Tales*, a follow-up anthology which included both a prequel and a sequel to the first book, as well as two other short stories.

We have also published background information booklets for three freeforms in both German and English, the Glorantha Con 2003 (Toronto) convention fundraiser book *MoonRites*, and various other booklets.

Today, we still publish *Tradetalk* magazine and organize conventions. We hope to publish *The Path of the Damned, Vol. 4* in the near future, and possibly another *Ye Booke of Tentacles* sometime later. Other projects will probably be taken on whenever we feel that they are too interesting to let pass by.

For more information on our products (plus those of other fan publishers), have a look at our website:

www.tradetalk.de