

*Alliance* Southern Minnesota  
Live Action Role Play

**Players Hand Book**

## Introduction

Welcome! You are holding in your hands (or reading digitally) the players guide for the Alliance Southern Minnesota game. Contained within this document is an overview of many of our chapter specific policies, in game locations, and some information on the races in the Sheltered Lands to get you started with writing a background. This guide is likely to be updated yearly in the time during our 'off season' while we generally take a break to let winter roll by. This of course does not include what we expect to be yearly 'hard core' events held in the colder winter months for those hardy enough to attend.

Alliance Southern Minnesota was formed in November of 2008 with the intention of running a game that focused on the actions of our players. While we've worked hard to present a comprehensive and compelling game world for you to play in, our goal is to have most of the events and plots presented to grow from what our players find interesting and engaging. This doesn't mean we don't have pre-established plotline or modules, instead what we have done is create a lively vibrant world with as many options as possible for our players. This means you can as a player pursue any option you find engaging, be it building a merchant empire, to leading people to victory over a great menace, or even a simple warrior or healer just trying to find his way. Be warned however, your actions will have repercussions not just for your character, but for the nations and people of the Sheltered Lands, possibly far beyond what you may have intended.

While we have worked hard to provide a variety or rich information on the races within our world, by no means should this guide be considered exhaustive. If you have a fun idea or back history that you would like to use please feel free to contact our plot staff for assistance, or remember there are always new people of all races arriving through the mists many of who may be looking for a new start. More information on writing a back story can be found towards the end of this guide, in addition we recommend reading the section in the Alliance rule book regarding creating backgrounds. If you feel you could use a little bit of advice, or just extra help fleshing out your back story you can always contact our staff at [info@mnalliance.com](mailto:info@mnalliance.com) and ask for a staff member to work with you.

Ultimately the strength of any chapter relies on its player base, and the Southern Minnesota staff wants you to have the best experience possible at all of our events. To accomplish this we need to hear from our players between events. How we did at the last event, what you would like to see more of, and what your character is doing between events are all things we like to hear about as often as possible. This is by no means a requirement to play, but if we don't hear from you we can't make sure to include things that you enjoy or are interested in at the next game.

While this handbook will be updated year to year, understand it is by no means a complete view of the world. Much of the history of this world has been lost to time; the constant threat of the corrupt has made many ignore the recording of facts and figures, instead turning their attention to the fight at hand. Much more information will be released in game, through our in game forums, and on our website. Beyond that, complete race packets will be available starting in the 2010 season.

We look forward to seeing you at a future event, and welcome any questions you may have that are not covered within this guide. Be sure to check the online forums at [www.alliancelarp.com](http://www.alliancelarp.com) for additional details.

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## **Safety Policies and Rules**

Why are safety policies and rules on the first page of this guide? Because they are by far the most important information we have to share. Alliance Southern Minnesota has many policies in place to ensure that our game is safe and enjoyable to everyone that attends any of our events. Each event will have at least one designated safety Marshall, and these Marshalls are permitted to move during holds if they suspect injury or danger of such to any player. While we maintain a dedicated safety team as well as comprehensive insurance (yes, even those coming out as a trial are covered) we would rather prevent injuries than treat them.

### **The Hold Rule**

While it is stated quite clearly in the rule book, we will restate it here. The most important rule in Alliance is the hold rule. Simply put when you hear the word 'Hold' shouted, you must take a knee if able, and turn your head downwards at look at the ground. Holds are called when someone notices a safety issue. This is not a time to look around for people sneaking up on your, but you may go through your tags to track your abilities remaining etc. Hold will end when the caller of the hold does a 3 count back to 'game on'. If you see an immediate safety concern, please call Hold in a loud voice, it is better to have an extra hold or two than to have an injury, but remember Holds are not designed to ask questions or clarify an effect a monster or player is using.

### **Documentation**

All players within Alliance Southern Minnesota, even those attending for the first time as a trial, must fill out our waiver and medical information forms. We don't do this to be nosy; we do it to be sure our safety team is kept aware of any allergies to food or medicine. Players under the age of 18 must have the waiver and medical information forms signed by their legal guardian. This is an absolute requirement to play, and while we do not wish to turn anyone away, you will not be allowed to participate in our game without filling these out.

### **Safe Play**

Even with our padded weapons it is possible for injuries to occur during combat, to help prevent this certain styles of fighting are not allowed. These include: 'Baseball Batting' or swinging your weapon with excessive force, 'Charging' or fighting too close to another player, and 'machine gunning' or swinging your weapon too fast or in an insufficient arc. Players seen doing any of the above will be given warnings by Marshalls. We understand that mistakes will happen and action taken is generally a warning unless it is habitual or constant issue.

### **Paging**

Paging is a method of play for those who cannot participate in our combat system due to injury, age, or any other reason. All pages wear orange headbands prominently to let players and NPCs know that you may not engage in combat with them. Pages may not participate in combat, nor throw weapons or packets; no other player may engage the page in combat, with melee, thrown weapons, or spell packets. Any page must accept an effect from any player within ten feet that says 'Page <effect>'. Pages are allowed to touch cast spells and perform first aid and other non-combat in game skills (such as teaching, identifying scrolls/potions or ritual casting).

## **The Sheltered Lands, an Overview**

The Sheltered Lands have long been isolated from outside influences by the mists that surround the known world. For nearly two hundred years the civilized nations near the mist wall have been defending against creatures known as the Corrupt. Weak outside their territory, the Corrupt have been held at bay for many years with only minor defeats; however, attacking them in their own territory has proven to be much more difficult. The country of Gaden has made deals and treaties with the countries of Roskaria and Pratorak, gaining a steady stream of supplies from one and an ally in battle with the other. Recent events have cut Pratorak off from Gaden and the relationship with Roskaria is becoming strained as more supplies are needed each year just to maintain the current lines.

With a thick forest to the west, Roskaria to the north and the forces of the Corrupt along the southern and eastern borders, the country of Gaden remains vigilant. Pratorak, lying to the east of Gaden along the great northern mountain ranges, has been lost for twenty four years. The fate of this nation filled with High Orcs and Stone Elves is currently unknown, and many fear it has been lost forever. Sheltered in its valley and protected by Gaden, Roskaria continues to enjoy its prosperity. The people living within spend much of their time creating impressive works of arts while the apprentice craftsmen create the functional weapons and consumables to send to Gaden.

The great untouched wilderness to the west and south of Gaden contains many peoples but no known kingdoms. Indeed many tribes of Elves, Gypsies and other nomadic folk such as High Ogres, Sarr and Wylderkin are known to inhabit this area. The rare Dark Elf that appears always emerge from this area, although whether they live there or simply travel through it is not known, and no member of that race seems to have a desire to explain matters. The great mountain range along Gaden's northern border runs east, indeed as far as to form the northern border of Pratorak as well. The Dwarves that inhabit these mountains rarely come down to Gaden, despite many of their kind living within its borders in peace. Indeed many dwarven folk are known for their great craftsmanship and skills as merchants.

The great mist waterfall that flows into the lands of Roskaria from the mist wall snakes its way through the central portions of not only Roskaria but also Gaden, turning south and forming the western portion of the country's southern border. It is believed that this river is joined by others and flows all the way down to the very end of the world, disappearing once more into the mist wall far to the south. This river not only provides the source of much irrigation and life sustaining water, but it also seems to form a barrier that the Corrupt have not crossed. Although the Corrupt have conquered and traveled past many smaller rivers, they seem unable to cross the great breadth of the river of mists.

The seasons of the sheltered lands often seem subdued to travelers from outside the mists. Winters chill seems to have less bite, and summers are generally warm, but very rarely hot enough to be uncomfortable. Despite the very limited nature of the cold seasons most people and beings living within the sheltered lands still stockpile and maintain food in defense of the occasional severe winter or drought that does occur.

## **Roskaria**

This country is naturally lucky to be located between two major mountain ranges on either side, bordered by Gaden to the south and the curving wall of mists to the north. The high population of Mystic Wood Elves and Humans, with a smattering of Hobblings virtually guarantees a strong production and trading base. While this country deals with its own share of problems with gangs of under-goblins that occasionally come down from the mountains and other local creatures, it has no major problems and is well protected. It trades with Gaden who they supply with supplies and crafted items in return for protection. This deal has been strained over the past few years as Gaden has recently begun demanding more and more supplies as the constant attacks from the Corrupt have strained their resources. With their excellent local supply of resources and a constant stream of fresh water from the waterfall of the mists the people of Roskaria rarely want for anything. The supplies sent to Gaden are generally made by the apprentices and those craftsmen that seem incapable of creating the fine works made by Roskaria's master craftsmen.

### **Government and Society**

Roskaria functions very similar to a small community on a massive scale. Leaders are selected every five years, with the king being decided by a general vote of all craftsmen, nobles, and soldiers. The king then appoints (or keeps) his advisors and generals. Sheriffs and magistrates can also be replaced during this period of time. The king's men maintain the road ways and protect the populace from the occasional incursion and internal threat.

Most nobles in Roskaria come from a long line usually being traced back to an honored craftsman, a former king, and in a few rare cases an honored defender, such as a sheriff or magistrate. While it is uncommon, any noble could lose his classification should he dishonor his position. In these cases the crimes are more often against the people than against the king, few nobles would dare to act against the king, especially when they can run their own candidate against him. However, the occasional noble will traffic in illegal goods, from memory altering potions to necromantic and otherwise tainted items.

### **Notable People**

Palon – Current leader of Roskaria, he was elected by a general vote, nearly thirty years ago and has not had an opponent in the last 25 years. Taking over during the early years of Roskaria's alliance with Gaden, Palon has seen the steady stream of supplies heading south into Gaden increase greatly. Currently the supplies Gaden requests are not a great strain on the country, but the King has been becoming increasingly concerned that at the current pace the requests will outstrip what the country can easily produce.

Kalthor – Head of the Roskarian guard, Kalthor is known as being a determined but principled man. Charged with the security of domestic matters, he is rarely seen in the same place twice, but will almost always be seen at any significant disturbance within his country's borders.

Gillan – Head of the trading guild, a stern faced Hobbling known as Gillan is well known as the man to go to if you need supplies or have something to contribute to the shipments to Gaden. Many new craftsmen have gotten their start up money and supplies after helping out the Traders Guild.

## **Gaden**

This country borders Roskaria to the south and blocks the only known way into or out of that country. Its high population of professional warriors has served it well as Gaden sits on the frontlines of the current Corrupt territory. Facing fairly easy to repel but constant attacks, Gaden has strained its supplies, and the country is beginning to become more aggressive in how it deals with Roskaria and the occasional foreign diplomat, though few have been seen in recent decades since the Corrupt lines have expanded to nearly surround the country.

Gaden is noticeably more militant than Roskaria as it is, in fact, a nation at war, fighting daily at a variety of locations along the front line. Production tends to have a war time focus and most events/celebration involve the war in some way or another, such as warriors heading off to battle, or a load of supplies completed. Unlike Roskaria, Gaden has a far more traditional power structure with hereditary leadership passed down to the eldest son for most positions of authority.

### **Notable People**

Nerak – The elder king of Gaden, he has been leading the country for nearly thirty years after his father, who was far more of a hands-on/front line leader, fell for his eighth and final time to the Corrupt. Forced into a more traditional role by his lack of an heir, he lives vicariously through his only son, Talon, who is a strong templar and skilled in strategy. Many believe that were his son to die before him, he would sink into a great depression.

Talon – The only son of the current king, Talon has proved himself a skilled and brave warrior and takes an active hand in the constant fighting with the Corrupt. As an Earth Templar, he tends to serve as the anchor to any group he fights alongside. He is known for making the hard choices when necessary, but always strives to limit the deaths of those who serve him. He has even been known to reassign some spirit weakened warriors to safer duties such as protecting the capital or serving as messengers.

Kirna – A well known merchant with a knack for having the right goods available at the right time, many nobles and military leaders owe this man a great number of favors. There are rumors that Kirna is not always entirely honest, and questions have been raised as to just how this man has such a well stocked inventory, even at times when a specific need is difficult to find.

### **Holidays and Special Events**

The Festival of Remembrance – Held near the end of October this festival marks the end of the Respite season (see below). During this more somber festival those who have fallen in the previous year are remembered and honored with good acts, ranging from simple good works and donations to larger, more organized efforts against longstanding bastions of Undead and other creatures.

The Respite (Res-pit)- Starting in late summer, this is a jovial time as each year the Corrupt stop their ceaseless attacks for sixty days. Many games and tourneys are held during this time, unions and rites of passage ceremonies are typically scheduled during this time as well to give the participants a 'good start' in their new lives/duties. Action against the Corrupt during this time is forbidden as to avoid provoking them into attacking.

## **Pratorak**

The county of Pratorak lays to the east of Gaden, sharing the same mountain range as its northern border. Ruled for centuries by various High Orc chieftains, who ruled over much of the stone elf population at least in name, this all changed with the arrival of the Corrupt on their borders so many years ago. Instrumental in holding the line against the Corrupt even as many other defenses fell, a group of Stone Elves calling themselves the Stone Council reinforced the buckling lines of the High Orcs. Their eldritch magic blasted large holes in the Corrupt waves, allowing the High Orc lines to reform. After the battle ended, the enraged leader of the High Orc troops came to slay the leader of the Stone Council, who forced a duel for dominance. Overcoming the High Orc's rage and strength with a practiced skill, the leader of the Stone Council took over the local area. Shortly thereafter the council members challenged other High Orc leaders, each council member challenging a different leader of a different area. In a short time the council had authority over the majority of the High Orc clans and proclaimed the territory to be Pratorak. After a short war in which the Stone Council conquered those remaining tribes who could not be challenged or provoked into an honor duel, its name was changed to the Monolithic Council, and it began reorganizing the defenses of Pratorak to better battle the Corrupt.

### **Government and Society**

Pratorak is ruled by the Monolithic Council, which is almost always comprised entirely of Stone Elves. The eleven members of the council have absolute authority, which is quickly carried out by the military commanders, who are all High Orcs with impressive records in battle. All civilian leaders are selected by appointments; starting from the council down, all leaders are appointed by the next higher authority above them. In contrast, military leaders are not selected; instead, any member of the military may challenge a superior officer to an honor duel for that position. While this can seem brutal, it has left the military of Pratorak filled with strong leaders. While the lack of testing for strategy may seem to be a great setback, each major military group has a civilian 'advisor' whose word is nearly absolute, although phrased as suggestions.

With the Monolithic Council's talent for logistics and planning, and the High Orcs that comprise the great majority of their fighting force, Pratorak had been able to maintain not only their own lines but also a stretch of territory between their own country and Gaden until recent decades. Even after losing contact with Gaden, it is well believed that Pratorak still stands strong within its own borders.

### **Kalmoke's Anvil**

Kalmoke's Anvil, named for a fearsome High Orc chieftain, this fort was overrun by the Corrupt just over twenty years ago. The natural structure of the area allowed this fort to protect the Valley of Solace, which rests between the nations of Gaden and Pratorak. With the fall of the Anvil, the Corrupt have pushed into the Valley of Solace; although the steep ridges that flank it on each side serve as strong defensive positions to keep them from spilling out of the valley and into the neighboring countries. Many a tactician has suggested that reclaiming the Anvil would be the first step in reestablishing contact between Gaden and Pratorak, but more practical men point out that doing so would further stretch already thin lines and put an even greater strain on the King's army.

## **A Recent History**

1447, December – Alliance between Pratorak and Gaden solidified by the signing of the Grand Accords. The Society of Truth is formed to create an immutable transcript of historical events.

1449, November – Quelic Elf high magician backlashes ritual and is destroyed, causing the Earth circles in Pratorak to lose resurrection ability.

1450, April – A Gypsy caravan is run out of Gaden for telling lies about the Wounding of the Earth.

1454, November – The Earth circles of Pratorak regain the ability to resurrect people.

1457, March – The first Dryad is seen in Gaden.

1460, June – The Order of the Flame is disbanded after the final death of its leader Krieghammer.

1461, August – Dwarven participants in the annual Respite tournament are disqualified for use of Metheran enhanced weaponry.

1463, November – The squire of Sir Thalamous indicted on charges of thievery and obliterated.

1467, March – Gaden crops are wiped out from a great flood; this causes famine and deaths.

1472, May – Gaden establishes a trade agreement with Ruskaria for a large amount of food yearly. This brings prosperity back to the starving country.

1478, September – Roskaria agrees to become a protectorate of Gaden in exchange for providing it with supplies.

1480, January – Royal family of Gaden assassinated; the king and queen do not resurrect. Nerak takes the throne at the age of 12.

1486, June – Klamoke's Anvil is overrun, cutting off the trade routes between Pratorak and Gaden. The Corrupt begin to take over the Valley of Solace.

1487, February – Talon is born and crowned prince of Gaden.

1487, May – Due to heavy losses Gaden pulls occupational forces from the Valley of Solace, and lets last communication lines with Pratorak fall. Gaden creates a new defensive perimeter at Bastion Ridge.

1489, August – Last known messenger from Pratorak arrives in Gaden.

1491, August – Sureshot Cimorine Lightfoot is the first Hobbling to win the annual Respite tournament.

1497, April – The Scepter of Ages is lost.

1509, March – "Great Beast of the Mist" slain, strangers begin to arrive in the shelter lands.

## **Barbarians**

The Barbarians in and around Gaden have long felt disconnected with the elements of the Sheltered Lands, and by extension Celestial magic. Legends tell that the Barbarians were once a single people when they first came through the mists to settle and explore their current home. Those original men came from the mists, and their ultimate home has long since been forgotten. The Barbarians were led by a council of four shamans. Each shaman had strong ties to the earth but also focused on the various elements. It was their belief that elemental spirits were responsible for the distaste they felt of Celestial magic. These four disappeared hundreds of years ago while attempting a ritual to seal them away. Unlike many races, the different tribes of Barbarians have intermarried and live together in multiple groups throughout Gaden.

Aside from Gaden the Barbarian tribes have small settlements in many areas, with Roskaria being an exception. While there are indeed barbarians living within Roskaria they have no settlements to call their own, instead staying individually or in small groups within other towns and settlements. A few Barbarian settlements can be found in the grasslands west of Gaden, mostly populated by the Lambentous and Levarin. There are known settlements of Petara and Irrigu Barbarians in the lands of Pratorak, although like all the people in that country, they have not been heard of for some time.

### **The Lambentous**

These Barbarians are well known for their aggressive nature. They have many rituals concerning the weather: a light rain is seen as good luck, and a heavier rain is seen as a bad omen; similarly, a breeze might be considered unlucky, and a gust of wind might be an omen of wealth to come. Few who travel with Barbarians from this clan are ever able to predict if a bit of weather will be seen as good or bad.

### **The Petara**

The Petara Barbarians are known for being stubborn to the point of aggression. Barbarians from this tribe will almost never turn from a course of action once embarked on, regardless of the changing situation. Only a trusted friend will be able to make these Barbarians listen to reason. Many of the superstitions held by this tribe appear to be produced by near random combinations; such as if a farmer walks by with a sickle and a hoe or if a squirrel chooses to climb a tree instead of running into a hole. These combinations could have any number of different meanings- anything from signs of winter coming early to enemy armies on the march.

### **The Irrigu**

Barbarians of this tribe tend to ignore obstacles to their goals, side stepping anything that does not stand directly in their path. Generally once someone gets out of the way, these Barbarians will forgive and forget and continue on with their path. Barbarians of this tribe tend to see signs in what people say, and many an ally has been confused when talking to a Barbarian friend as a simple turn of phrase is seen as a harbinger of things to come.

### **The Levarin**

Barbarians of this tribe tend to pay a lot of attention to magical effects and items and are by far the likeliest to be scholars, templars or adepts. Strangely attracted and repulsed at the same time by Celestial magic, the extremely rare Celestial casters that emerge from the Barbarian tribes are nearly always a Levarin. Oddly, this particular group of Barbarians does not have a specific common source for their superstitions and may believe in any of the above theories, or have their own unique view.

## **Biata**

A race with incredibly strong emotions, the Biata are a rare sight within the lands of Gaden. Biata visually appear very similar to Humans, except with feathers growing within their hair, and in place of eyebrows the Biata often have one hand develop into a griffon-like claw. Although this claw often looks fierce, it is not strong enough to be used in combat and functions like a hand for those who grow them. It is unknown where the Biata come from, or where they retire to, as those Biata seen within the lands of Gaden and her neighbors are generally younger and still developing. Once a Biata develops to a certain point, they seem to be drawn towards the mountains and most never return. Those few who do refuse to talk about their journey, even with those close to them.

Like Stone Elves, Biata develop mental powers as they age and become more experienced. These powers are often used to heal or help those with traumatic events remember (or forget). Such powers can be misused and the vast majority of Biata will go far out of their way to investigate the misuse of such abilities. Unlike Stone Elves, the Biata are far from reserved, often wearing their emotions on their sleeve and utilizing their heightened emotional state to help them achieve their goals.

## **Crimson Biata**

These Biata often have red, orange, and yellow feather patterns and are known for being quick to anger and slow to calm down. A high number of these Biata choose the path of a warrior, as their anger and highly intense emotional state fuels their abilities in battle. Friends of this type of Biata are often a calming influence, able to help the Biata maintain their balance and rein them in when their emotions get the better of them. Should one of these friends fall in battle, the Biata will likely fly into a rage to save their fallen friend, or at least avenge their death.

## **Violet Biata**

Wearing predominately darker colored feathers, generally blue, purple, or black in color, these are the most serious and reserved of the Biata seen within Gaden. While they often seem to be rational beings, these Biata have a tendency to be very compassionate about the trials of others. Generally fairly passive, these Biata are often found working within groups, serving as guide, healer, or just good company. This is not to say that this group of Biata do not hold strong beliefs or goals, simply that their general nature tends to be less aggressive than others.

## **Wild Biata**

Loners and mercenaries, these white, grey, and tan feathered Biata are by far the least common to be seen working with others. In general, members of this group prefer to keep to themselves or within their small groups where they are comfortable. Despite this outward shyness those they see as friends often quickly get to know them as pranksters and mischief makers. Usually chaotic in nature this group of Biata tends to change their current favored friend at random, showering one with affection or gifts and assistance then suddenly shifting their attention to another member of their group. While their friendship can be a bit chaotic, they by no means forget who their friends are and will almost always come through in a pinch.

## **Dark Elves**

The Dark Elves of the Sheltered Lands are an enigmatic group; few people in Gaden know much about them beyond rumor and conjecture. Dark skinned with white hair, this race is one of the easiest to recognize, if you can see them in the first place. Although they are not considered a rarity, Dark Elves are also not a common race within Gaden, what little is known about them points to their home being far to the southwest of Gaden, over large tracts of open plains. This, coupled with their sensitivity to light, ensures the journey is not undertaken lightly, and few Dark Elves return to their homeland frequently. Known to keep their word of honor to the exact wording of their oath, some nobles and trades prefer to hire Dark Elves above any other, although finding one willing to swear on his honor can be difficult.

Dark Elves are ruled by houses, each member of this race is aware of his or her house and position in it. When multiple members of different houses interact, it is accepted that the greatest, oldest, or most powerful house has the position of authority. Thus the matron of a small house will give way to even a minor notable member of a great house. Such authority carries risks, however. For example, if a request or demand from a member of a great house is dishonorable or brings dishonor to the house, then the rulers of the great house are expected to extract fair punishment from the offending member.

### **House Roiyaru**

One of the most ancient and powerful houses, even non-Dark Elves may recognize this name. Currently in power in the home lands of the Dark Elves, this house came to power so long ago that only consulting the most ancient of tomes could hope to pinpoint a date. One of the prime beliefs of this house is that Dark Elves are descended from an ancient line of Black Dragons, and as such are far superior to other races. While most houses will be practical in their belief in their superiority, members of this house tend to be blunt and brutally honest in the way they perceive the 'lesser' races.

### **House Kariudo**

A lesser known house, members from Kariudo are one of the most common groups within the lands of Gaden as this house seeks to gain greater stature and power within Dark Elf society. This makes members of this house some of the most willing to work with other races to accomplish their goals, which can range anywhere from gathering information to accumulating powerful trinkets or scrolls.

### **House Soruja**

An old and respected house, Soruja contains a high number of extremely capable warriors. Despite their fierce nature, this house rarely deems to offer its assistance to others without the promise of great rewards. House Soruja is generally content to watch history unfold, unless they are directly threatened.

### **House Chiryoku**

Rarely seen, this house earns mentioning only because it handles the vast majority of writing and historical documentation for the history of Dark Elf society. Because of this they are often called upon as mediators or judges in disputes between clans. While officially a minor house, they are treated with great respect because of this work.

## **Dryads**

The Dryads of the Sheltered Lands, or the “children of Autumn” as they are commonly called, have only recently begun to stir. The cause of this awakening is unknown, and the Dryads, while friendly and more than willing to talk about their history and background with anyone interested, are still a mystery even to themselves. Appearing sometime about fifty years ago, the Dryads have always been part of the Sheltered Lands and are not new comers. Instead, they have simply recently reawakened from a centuries, or possibly millennial slumber. Ever since their reawakening, Dryads have slowly become more common in and around the nations of the Sheltered Lands.

Appearing to be at least part plant, all of the beings have shown an immense skill in avoiding being bound in any way, as well as an aversion to heavy, thick, or metal armor. When asked about their desires, most claim they are searching to return home to the First Forest, but few Dryads seem to undertake this task with any feeling of urgency; most simply living their lives seeming believing that a way home to the First Forest will present itself in due time.

## **Bark Skins**

By far the most common of the Dryads, these beings have emerged mostly from forested areas. Sporting tree bark like skin and other tree bits, from leaves to the occasional blossom, the Dryads of this type are extremely patient and interpret most things that happen in a philosophical manner. Despite their ability to see the long view, many of these Dryads are often quick to lend their aid to prevent the despoliation of natural areas, especially those that include forest, as they are well aware that such damage can take an incredibly long to return.

## **Reedlyn**

Reedlyn, not to be confused as scavengers, come primarily from shallow bodies of water and the vast grassy plains of the Sheltered Lands. Generally one of the most flowery in appearance many Reedlyn are known for their compassion and ability to love without discrimination, the only exception being those being not of a natural nature such as the undead, or the Corrupt. Many of the Dryads of this type devote themselves to Earth magic, although most avoid using binding spells whenever possible. Perhaps due to their flowering nature, the Reedlyn Dryads also seem to have an affinity for alchemy and potion making, with many skilled craftsmen of that nature within their ranks.

## **Fungrens**

Fungrens are a often not what one would expect from their name; although they are fungal or spore like in nature, many of these creatures are quite attractive in their patterns. Often their facial features will be quite colorful and in dynamic patterns, the vine-like fungi on their limbs also adds to this look. It is unknown exactly where this particular group of Dryads comes from, as they seem to appear from mountains, swamps, forests and anywhere else plants can grow. As a group these Dryads are adventurous and often have a great amount of energy to expend, regardless of what they find interesting, be it crafting, exploring or simply talking with others. Despite all this, Fungrens often have trouble finding a group that will take them on long term, as many people in the Sheltered Lands are unnerved by their strange growths and their fungal like appearance.

## **Dwarves**

As far as most citizens of the Sheltered Lands are concerned, there is little difference from the average Dwarf and the Hobblings and Humans they are often seen with. While this isn't entirely true, the races do share many similarities and the conflict with the Corrupt has helped to ease away the differences that might have otherwise proved troublesome. The average Dwarf is a skilled craftsman and even Dwarven warriors are usually skilled enough to repair their armor at the very least.

The Dwarves of the Sheltered Lands have been scattered for many years. What caused them to scatter has been lost to history, but it is known that the Corrupt were not the prime issue. Many Dwarf clans are still locked in battle with various foes to maintain the land they still hold. Other clans have integrated themselves within existing countries, usually offering their services as warriors or crafters to earn their keep. The few remaining Dwarven settlements lay within the mountains in Northeast Gaden. The settlements extend both down the slope of the mountain and within the mountains themselves, with a complex system of tunnels that gives the inhabitants within a sense of security they do not have elsewhere. Rumors abound of great chambers deep within these tunnel systems that hold ancient forges and tools made of incredibly rare materials. However, such rumors are easily dismissed as no living soul in over five hundred years has admitted to seeing them.

### **The Kutorian**

Making their home in the northeastern mountains of Gaden, the Kutorian are one of the least seen of all the Dwarven clans, yet one of the best known. Their weapons are widely known as nearly indestructible, a side effect of an extended conflict with an underground race with caustic skin. As popular as these weapons are, they are also rare to see in the hands of any but the most skilled warriors. A few nobles and wealthy merchants have managed to get their hands on such a prized weapon, but almost invariably they were acquired from a fallen, or desperate, warrior. A Kutorian Dwarf will generally value bravery in battle and loyalty to allies over almost any other concern. However, many Kutorian Dwarves are considered unsociable even by their supposedly close allies as they do not warm up to other races quickly.

### **The Regarion**

The Dwarves of this clan are found throughout the lands and make their homes in a number of small camps in central Gaden. Far closer to merchants than their brethren, these Dwarves are often found trading finished goods for raw materials and will go far out of their way to gain access to the rare minerals such as true silver or metheran (a dark, heavy metal with uniquely absorbent properties). While they are considered far too sociable by most other Dwarven clans, many other races have been surprised at how sociable and friendly Dwarves from this clan can be.

### **The Mirunican**

This clan of Dwarves does not have any true home, but are instead found in family groups that offer their services, as crafters or warriors, to those with enough funds. Few groups of this clan have been seen of late as many of them have been lost in wars with the Corrupt, and a great number of them had been hired by the Monolithic Council (a leadership group of Pratorak). While they are naturally skilled at blacksmithing like any other Dwarves, many warriors of this clan focus instead on their natural resilience and forgo training in blacksmithing beyond the bare basics.

## **Elves**

Once one of the strongest races, legends speak of the old Elven empires as places of great learning and peace. Little is known about their downfall, save that it came as the result of internal strife or conflict. While there are small groups and singular Elves within Gaden, the majority of Elves inhabit the vast open grasslands that lie to the southwest of Gaden. As a group there are very few Elves in Gaden and the few that do come into the country are generally younger and not privy to much of the historical information of their people.

Little is currently known about the old Elven empires, not even where they once existed. Those elders that might remember such time are private with such matters, even with the younger members of their own people. What is known is that they cannot return to their previous lands, and most Elves do not even know in fact where that may be.

### **The Quelie**

A traveling group of Elves that move every eight to ten years and have been doing for centuries, any area they settle in sees its ground drained in some unknown fashion. This drain prevents the circles in the area from being used for ritual magic for many years after this group moves on. This means that they must move every eight to ten years and find a new location to live in while the earth recovers. Although this drain will not cause an Earth circle to lose its power of resurrection or a Celestial circle to lose its power of identification, it does prevent them from defending themselves with their magics. Possessing many extremely old and arcane ritual magics, this group has many powerful warriors protected by multiple enchantments. Not surprisingly, most Elven adventurers of this group have a strong focus on magic, either Earth or Celestial.

### **The Kam-Alua**

Known for their extremely complicated yet dependable machinery, this group of Elves has been attempting to rediscover their past for centuries. While they are currently known for being able to make siege engines of incredible effectiveness, such engines are cost prohibitive to make. These newer recreated siege engines also pale in comparison to the machines once built in their lands. As such, the technology of the past has been elevated to an almost mythical standard, being held as somewhat of a fable of this particular tribe. Most Elves from this group are studious, and some of them may be able to handle themselves in a fight. However, they are generally far more interested in learning how to build new and better things.

### **The Sagitari**

A comparatively young group, the Sagitari came into existence a few years after the great exodus from the old Elven lands. Fed up with the mistakes of the past, this group came together and swore to do as much good as they could for the land in penance for the damage their people have caused. While they encompass all classes and professions, a high number choose to take a martial approach, with a high portion of archers among them. Their natural aptitude for the bow makes them quite feared by those who have faced them before. Outside of their own people many of these Elves hire themselves out as mercenaries, choosing their employers, or adventure group, carefully to ensure that their efforts help to repair the land in at least some manner.

## **Gypsies**

Gypsy tribes can be found throughout the Sheltered Lands in many places with many different cultural practices. The Gypsies of the Sheltered Lands do have many things in common. They are considered overall to be a jolly people by many of the other races, throwing grand parties with much raucous celebrating. It is well known that they are a wandering people, traveling in bands from place to place. In this manner they have become the orators of many a historical telling of the Sheltered Lands. Their tales will often weave colorful tapestries of times past and myths lost. Many caravans of the Gypsy will stage productions or theatrics of the events recorded by their tribes. Some even say that the tales of the Gypsy contain a grain of truth, others disagree sighting the Gypsy as wandering bands of hooligans and mischief makers.

## **Fratier**

The members of this family value the fraternity of their own kind just as any other Gypsy, but they will often take this bond to an extreme level. This bond is not that of the connection that all Gypsies share but a binding union with another until the end of time. This bond is rarely given more than once by any Gypsy in this tribe. It is important to note that while these bonds are often found between spouses they are not the same as the bonds of marriage and many married men and women will have a union bond with another. There is always a ceremony to accompany the recognition of these bonds, always symbolic and involving a great test of trust. An example of this ritual would be the two potential “brothers” wander into the desert, each with the other’s only canteen of water. They each have one goal: to make it through the desert alive, trusting each other to ration the water. If one were to drink of the others canteen neither would make it to the other side. Only through willpower and trust do they know that they will overcome the desert. It is often said that after this ritual if you were to cut one brother the other would bleed for him.

## **Valde Venator**

When the first great tribe disbanded, one of the subsequent tribes rose to become great hunters. It would seem that the struggle against the Corrupt is felt particularly strong by this tribe. They are always seeking a great prey to hunt, usually among the Corrupt. To find honor and pride from a great hunt is the drive of most of the people from this particular tribe. This tribe is sometimes said to be more serious than typical Gypsies. That is because most people don’t understand the strict nature of the rules of this tribe, and the fact that they are easily offended if the rules aren’t followed. For example declining an invitation to a party or gathering is seen as a great insult. Often fine or valuable gifts are offered to those a Gypsy finds worthy, generally this is offered to those the Gypsy does not know well. Such offers are not for the recipients benefit, but instead a method of gain prestige for the Gypsy, and by extension the family. Declining such a gift will almost surely earn a Gypsy’s ire, unfortunately many unfamiliar with this family discover this too late.

## **Afaji**

Often described as ‘the type of person that would sell you a cart while their brother stole your horse’, the Afaji family has a well deserved reputation as being extremely shrewd traders and occasionally thieves. Despite their reputation the Afaji have a strong sense of honor. While they may indeed steal and swindle at every opportunity, they will also be true to any friend they may have. Of all the Gypsy groups, these are the most likely to make lasting friendships with those outside of the family, although such friendships take time and are often strained by the various ‘pranks’ an Afaji will play. Oddly enough many Afaji will become very possessive of small items they’ve liberated from those whose company they enjoy.

## **High Ogres**

High Ogres are a nomadic people who live in tune with the land. They travel throughout the grasslands in small tribes. Each tribe is led by a high chief and a high shaman, the most powerful of the High Ogres of that tribe. The High Ogre culture is steeped in tradition, usually of a shamanistic type. One of the rituals that the High Ogres complete on a yearly basis is the Spirit Awakening. This is a ritual where all the tribes' high shamans convene to discuss the land and their peoples. It is also during this time that any new high chiefs will be named. The population of the High Ogres has dimmed over the years and no one knows the exact reason for this. So when the tribes unite for the Spirit Awakening, it is also a time of festivity and celebration for another year of life for the race. After the event the tribes will all separate to avoid being wiped out and each go their separate way for another year. All High Ogres of the Sheltered Lands are taught to never approach the intersection of the three great rivers. The reason why has been lost to time, but all the members of the tribes know that such a caution has powerful roots and trust in it.

High Ogres are also a very strong and combative people. Most disagreements among their ranks are settled by trial at arms. Using magic or spells during a duel is seen as a sign of weakness and avoided by all but the most significant shaman, whose rank in the tribe is assured regardless of their performance in duels. Despite their heritage High Ogres are generally able to restrain themselves in the lands of other races, respecting their 'silly' laws and manage to stay out of trouble.

## **The Aerie**

The Aerie are one of the two known major tribes of High Ogres, although stories tell of other tribes not yet known to those living within Gaden. These High Ogres are fierce fighters, known for their strength and quickness. Often carrying two weapons at a time, or two-handed weapons, these High Ogres are often seen as a blur during combat, quickly striking an opponent multiple times with deadly attacks. The few shamans, or spell casters, from this tribe tend to specialize in Celestial spells, wielding bolts of eldritch fire and lightning when needed to accomplish their goals, although even the most devoted shaman will wield some type of weapon. When not fighting, these High Ogres can be quiet and seemingly contemplative at times. Occasionally one will find an Aerie High Ogre simply resting in a field, or an outlook listening to the wind. Like all High Ogres, the Aerie have an affinity for nature, in this case many claim that the wind brings to them the changes of the world.

## **The Erudan**

The other well known tribe of High Ogres is known as the Erudan. Unlike the Aerie, they do not have a well-defined singular fighting style, instead using a variety of weapons and tactics in battle. Like other tribes of High Ogres, the Erudan feel close to nature and water holds a special meaning to them. Occasionally even the busiest of Erudan High Ogres will stop by a lake, river, or other body of water to observe the ripples, often finding meaning in them. The spell casters from this tribe are commonly known to use Earth magic, although they rarely choose to employ curses for a reason that is not fully clear to anyone, not even the Erudan. However, there is no ill will towards those few Erudan shamans that overcome this innate characteristic and learn to fully deploy curses as part of their overall spell casting practice.

## **High Orcs**

The High Orcs of the Sheltered Lands have long been centered within the country of Pratorak, although plenty of this race travel outside of their borders to find new challenges, fame, and interesting things to eat. While they are technically the ruling class of Pratorak, most High Orcs have little love for administrative duties or details that such a position entails and they leave most of the day to day operations to others. Known for their strength High Orcs are both famed and feared for their skill in battle. While High Orcs are attracted to battle, indeed it often forms the core of their lives, they are no less intelligent than the other races. With shorter than average life spans, few living much past their fortieth year, many races see the High Orcs as impatient and quick to act with force to accomplish their goals. When two High Orcs disagree or come to odds with each other, there will often be a battle for dominance, a ritualized duel to see which of the two is stronger, with the loser accepting the dominance of the winner. These duels are usually restricted to High Orcs, however sometimes challenges from other races will be accepted in the case of a trusted, or long term, friend. Despite their fierce nature two High Orcs meeting for the first time will generally become fast friends unless there is some significant disagreement between them.

Most High Orcs seen in Gaden migrated over during the years when the alliance between Gaden and Pratorak was at its peak, and travel between the two lands was far easier than it is today. Occasionally a High Orc will appear on the borders of Gaden, but such High Orcs are almost always young and not well-informed as to the current state of Pratorak.

### **The Green Hammer Tribe**

Historically the strongest of the High Orc tribes, this tribe has the closest relationship with the Stone Elves of Pratorak. As can be expected of any High Orc tribe, the members of this tribe are well-known for their ferocity and strength in battle. Beyond this, however, the Green Hammer tribe is well-known for their self-sufficiency and their ability to accomplish goals with little help. High Orcs coming from this tribe treat orders from those they deem their superiors as goals to be accomplished regardless of the cost or method required. Although most members of this tribe have a strong sense of honor, which helps keep them from employing tactics they deem dishonorable or evil, there are those that fully believe that the end justifies the means and won't hesitate to remove any obstacles to their goals in a very direct manner. This has caused a few potential diplomatic close calls in the recent history between Pratorak and Gaden.

### **The Stone Arm Tribe**

Populating much of the standing forces of Pratorak, the Stone Arm tribe is known for their fierce determination. While their skill in battle should not be discounted, this tribe is known for never backing down from a battle, regardless of the cost. Known to hold the line to their very last, it was a group of Stone Arms who were the final holding force during the siege of Kalmoke's Anvil, which is named after one of their greatest heroes. The group defending the Anvil held it for nearly an entire day, paying an enormous cost in life. Of the three dozen High Orcs in the final holding force, all but two died permanently that day. The remaining two became honored chieftains within the tribe. Of the two, one died a few years later from unknown causes and it is assumed the other continued to lead his tribe. However, since the lines of communication were cut off twenty years ago, if this High Orc chieftain is still alive then he is surely in the twilight of his life.

## **Humans**

Humans are by far the most common of all races within Fortanis, and as such are seen as a baseline against which all other races are measured against. Being so populous it is hard to pin down this race or any real racial traits. Lacking any particular advantage, and a shorter life-span than many other races, Humans compensate for this with an adventurous spirit. Known for breeding quickly, and pushing the limits of their boundaries, both for good and ill, many races regard Humans with a weary eye, convinced that so much energy focused in so many directions is bound to cause serious and unforeseen problems. Others point out that Humans, in general, can be noble, hardworking, and gracious.

Regardless of the nature of Humans, it cannot be denied that they have a tendency to sway events and history, by their sheer numbers alone if nothing else. Within the countries of both Roskaria and Gaden, humans hold many high offices, leading not only themselves but many people of other races against the siege by the Corrupt. Ultimately, any Human must be judged on a case by case basis, as it is almost impossible to predict how this race will react in any given situation, although history has shown that self-preservation has risen to the top more often than other actions. Humans have also shown a great ability to adapt to their situations and surroundings. Those in peaceful lands will be traders, artists, and philosophers, while those in more warlike areas will in general be warriors, blacksmiths, and strategists. By no means is this a hard and fast rule, for even in the most peaceful of lands there will be warriors, and even in the most hard pressed battle there will be traders or philosophers among them.

### **The Humans of Roskaria**

Wealthy, pampered and generally content, the Humans of Roskaria are the most able of all Humans to follow their desires. There are many Humans employed as soldiers or scouts, and these warriors comprise a well-practiced army within their valley. However, they are usually less experienced in combat than the warriors in Gaden or the outlying wilderness. Many Humans born in Roskaria become very wealthy as traders or engineers, building great estates for the nobility. In fact, many of the Human nobles in Roskaria gained their rank from their fame in building homes for other nobles. There is some minor resentment among this group as a Human has never been elected King of Roskaria.

### **The Humans of Gaden**

After centuries of holding the Corrupt at bay, the Humans of Gaden have become some of the Sheltered Land's finest warriors and generals. Most Humans born in the land of Gaden are strongly encouraged to take up weapons or any other job that supports the war effort in some way. This includes the Humans within Gaden that have taken a more studious role, as they have proven invaluable many times to the war efforts. Even the traders in Gaden are, in general, rough and rugged Humans both able and willing to fight any bandits or the occasional beast or monster that block their path.

### **Wilderness Humans**

A blanket term for any Human that was not born within Roskaria or Gaden, these Humans run the full gamut from warriors to scholars and traders to thieves for they are as varied as the locations they come from. Most Humans of this nature are either from nomadic groups or small outlying towns that have survived for decades by the skin of their teeth and the sweat of their backs.

## **Hoblings**

The Hobblings of the Sheltered Lands are by far one of the most recognizable races. Known for their love of trading, dealing, collecting, selling, and more trading, it should come as no surprise that a great many Hobblings make their way in the world through economic means, and even the most fierce Hobbling warrior will be seen making deals and trading from time to time. Quick on their feet, Hobblings can make extremely capable scholars. However, their weapon options are a bit limited, so there are few Hobblings that take the warrior road.

As one of the most prosperous races within Gaden, many Hobblings are accustomed to a certain status of living that tends to be hard to maintain as an adventurer. This is by no means to say there are not a good number of Hobbling adventurers, but those who do adventure can often be seen spending their wealth on fine drinks and warm beds. Despite their quirks many adventuring groups find Hobblings to be valuable additions to their teams. Their bargaining skills and often vast knowledge of the value of many items found adventuring can ensure their group stays well-equipped and funded.

While they do not rule over the country of Roskaria, there are many notable, and noble, Hobbling families within the country and their influence on the laws, especially involving trade, is clearly visible. Many of the current noble houses came up as traders or skilled transporters of goods, as their vast wealth eventually translated into noble titles when the time was right and their wealth was needed.

## **The Lightfoots**

An adventuresome bunch, the Lightfoots are a fairly young noble family, coming to power from the fame of Cimorine Lightfoot, who was the first Hobbling ever to win a significant event during the annual tournament of Respite. Since their recognition as a noble house, members of the Lightfoot clan have been seen adventuring throughout the known world, either in small groups or as part of other adventuring groups.

## **The Sortiens**

Known to be extremely sharp hagglers and traders, the Sortiens are almost a dynasty of traders within the lands of Roskaria. This family rose to power decades ago by being in the right place at the right time and agreeing to handle the deliveries from Roskaria to Gaden. Since that time the shipments between the two countries have grown at a record pace, and the Sortien power has grown along with them. Most members of this family seem to have a very strong focus on gathering additional wealth regardless of their chosen profession. Their vast family network can at times yield necessary information or assistance, sometimes at a steep price if it is desperately needed.

## **The Durans**

This family is notable for being one of the few ever to refuse recognition as nobility. Beyond that, this family seems to have an aversion to liquid assets, converting them as quickly as possible into permanent structures. Despite not being noble, this family owns a large number of mines, outposts, training camps, and craft centers. Over time this has led the family to become extremely influential and able to supply almost any supply at a moments notice.

## **Mystic Wood Elves**

Most of the Mystic Wood Elves of the Sheltered Lands enjoy a life met with little strife. Roskaria, which is considered to be the most prosperous of all the countries of the Sheltered Lands is home to, and currently ruled by, Mystic Wood Elves. Because of the nature of their race, they are excellent craftsmen and farmers. This has driven Roskaria to be a prosperous, wealthy country. They have virtually no cultural taboos, save that of the crafting, casting, or administering of the command effect group. They have a natural distain to controlling free will from the moment of birth. So great is their loathing of commands it is illegal for anyone to possess any products of this group in the lands of Roskaria. This being said, there is one exception to the rule: Most Mystic Wood Elves will recognize the usefulness of the command Awaken, and as such, it is generally accepted. Similarly, some scholars will prepare Dominate in order to command victims of command effects to return to normal.

Inevitably, the wanderlust overcomes all Mystic Wood Elves and they have an insatiable urge to travel the world. No one knows what compels them to travel in the way that they do. It is accepted and thought of as a normal part of life, just as it is commonly known that Mystic Wood Elves travel under a pseudonym, often called a road name. Mystic Wood Elves believe that the true name has a special property, almost a power over them. As such, they only reveal their true name to a trusted individual. Anyone knows that if they are given a true name, then they have a friend for the ages, or to the end.

## **Natural Craftsmen**

All Mystic Wood Elves have a knack for picking up new craftsmen skills more easily than most races. This is coupled with, or perhaps a result of, a strong interest in learning new things and new trades to try. While this often results in large amounts of supplies, this race has very little interest in coins and trade, often freely giving away the results of their craftsmanship or in exchange for future offered favors. This does not mean they do not value their creations; they simply do not worry about extracting the most of such item and are happy to share. Despite this, most Mystic Wood Elves eventually end up with large piles of coin as a result of their crafting ventures. This coin is almost always spent or invested quickly, as it is not in their nature to horde.

## **Free Will**

Another aspect of this race is their fierce belief in free will. Indeed, there are few crimes worse in a Mystic Wood Elf's eyes than forcing someone to do something against one's will. This includes most spells or elixirs of the command variety, such as Shun, but does not include Awaken as it is seen as restoring free will, not taking it away. While there is a small grey area, such as the use of Dominate to command people to return to normal, no Mystic Wood Elf would ever employ a greater command, such as an Amnesia, or Love 9 potion. To do so would go against the very fiber of their being, causing great nightmares and negative feelings. These feelings will often cause the Mystic Wood Elf to fail to produce as much as normal when plying his trades, as they are distracted until such feelings are resolved.

Generally, most Mystic Wood Elves will burn or destroy any command effects they come into contact with, often paying money out of their own pocket to acquire them simply to destroy them. Rumors of more powerful command effects are always of interest, and there has been more than one quest lead by a Mystic Wood Elf that resulted in the destruction of the item quested for because it was seen as taking away the free will of others.

## **Sarr**

The Sarr of the Sheltered Lands are seen as a fairly feral race, far more likely to act aggressively than in a civilized manner. While there is some truth to this, as the Sarr are closely related to predatory felines, it is not an entirely fair perception. Like all races, the Sarr have a full range within their population, from aggressive mercenaries to the rare diplomat. Appearing to be a humanoid version of a predatory cat, many Sarr have difficulty when first meeting people, who are often willing to believe the worst of them. All Sarr share a fondness for edged weaponry, to the point of refusing to use blunt weapons. To them the idea of a weapon that cannot cut seems alien. As well as being resistant to poison, many Sarr share a natural affinity for assassination, being able to find a victim's vital organs from behind with a natural ease. All these things, coupled with a far higher than average number of Chaos-casting scholars within their ranks help to seclude the Sarr from more formal arraignments or membership within a kingdom, although few Sarr seemed to mind or even disagree with such treatment.

Most Sarr found today speak of vast grasslands to the west of the natural forest that borders Gaden's western edge. Tales tell of a great many hidden settlements within this area that serve as the staging point for many travelling groups. Those Sarr that do travel and live within the borders of Gaden often find employment as mercenaries or with adventuring groups, often distaining the idea of a 'settled' life. As with any race, there are exceptions to this rule and Sarr can be found throughout Gaden in a variety of jobs, anything from a humble messenger to a captain within the Kings army. The Sarr are well known throughout Gaden, despite their population being few and far between.

## **The Crimson Fang**

Despite the name, the members of this tribe share no common color; what they do share is an aptitude for stealth and eliminating troublesome people of all races. Rumor has it that the only way to be sure that a member of this tribe was involved in an assassination is to look for telltale bite or claw marks on the sides, or back of their necks. An honored kill will often be bitten while the victim is bleeding out, the act symbolizing the Sarr taking their strength as its own. Those deemed less worthy will instead be slashed in a similar fashion, but this is only to be done to approved targets by the clan elders, never to random or personal victims. It is unknown how many Sarr within the civilized kingdoms of Gaden and Roskaria are members of the Crimson Fang, as they will not announce themselves for obvious reasons, and many an assassin have blended in well posing as a member of a more gentile tribe.

## **The Kasarrass**

This tribe of Sarr is made up of a fair mix of different Sarr and range from warriors to those that practice the scholarly arts. Known most for their protective nature, many of the free ranging patrols and those that protect the Sarr settlements of the grasslands are from this tribe. Most Kasarrass will seek to defend their chosen people, be they Sarr or otherwise. For this group, the best defense is a good offense. When a threat is perceived, a Kasarrain Sarr will act quickly, usually with maximum force, to remove the threat. Even Earth scholars of the Kasarrass will be quick to join battle with anything that may, or will, threaten those they hold dear. Most of the Sarr in Gaden are from this group. Their dedication to defending their adopted groups have won them at least some begrudging respect from the general populous and it is rare for open disrespect to be shown without cause.

## **Stone Elves**

The Stone Elves of the Sheltered Lands are a mystery to most of its inhabitants. Stoic and apparently without strong emotions, their history has become interwoven with a race that is dramatically different than themselves. The origins of this race have long been lost to history, but what little is known is that they appeared in the nation of Pratorak, migrating in from the mountain range to the north. At first the High Orcs of the area viewed these new comers as a threat and prepared for war. The leaders of those first Stone Elves quickly realized that the High Orc race cared little for many of the finer points of society or leadership and quickly offered surrender, taking an outwardly subservient role. As they had expected, the High Orcs quickly tired of keeping track of their new servants and soon left them to their own devices, with only the occasional incident causing any discomfort. As time went on, this union proved to be beneficial to both races. While the High Orcs took defense of their territory seriously, the Stone Elves were left to control the infrastructure. Indeed, most orders from the High Orc leaders boiled down to 'grow more things to eat' and 'build more weapons'. As time went on the Stone Elves learned to manipulate the High Orcs into helping with most projects that needed muscle, often by claiming that such a large amount of rocks could not possibly be moved two miles to a stream bed and piled high to block the stream of water. Such announcements have historically been taken up quickly by any High Orcs in the region to prove their strength. Ultimately, many of the Stone Elves believe that the High Orcs know exactly what is going on, and simply don't care as they benefit from the fruits of such labor are held in a high societal standing and they are honored for their strength.

## **The Monolithic Council**

Recent events have changed the long-standing historical relationship between the Stone Elves and High Orcs. After careful deliberation the Stone Council, a group of eleven Stone Elf leaders, decided that they must be in a position to make changes at a greater pace due to the pressures of the Corrupt. After turning the tide of battle at a key engagement, using their powers of Celestial magic to decimate the Corrupt lines after they had broken through the High Orc lines, the Stone Council then challenged the local leader of the military unit to a duel for dominance. Their long relationship with the High Orcs gave them enough of a basis to make the challenge. After a long battle, the leader of the Council won the duel and took command of the local unit. The other members of the Council soon followed suit with other major groups of High Orcs, and the new Monolithic Council soon had a commanding force. Since that time the Stone Elves have taken more of a leadership role in the logistics of the war, leaving the battle specifics of any given military option to the High Orc commanders.

## **A Race of One Tribe**

Unlike many other races, the Stone Elves of the Sheltered Lands have not split into various groups. Indeed, even Stone Elves within the borders of other kingdoms such as Gaden are still seen to be part of the whole of the race. Logical to the extreme and with a very firm grip on their emotions, these beings have little trouble understanding the emotions of other races. Stone Elves have emotions; they simply do not allow their feelings to guide their actions.

Stone Elves also have a variety of mental abilities, although not all members of this race choose to practice them. These abilities allow for many impressive feats of healing, mental recall and other effects that make them excellent administrators and leaders when given the chance. Like any other race, the Stone Elves have their outlier members: those who have chosen to travel the world and integrate into other countries, and many of them are valued greatly as advisors and administrators.

## **Wylderkin**

Wylderkin, more commonly known as Scavengers, are an oddity to the other races of the Sheltered Lands. Nobody knows the origins of this loosely-defined race. Indeed, the great variety of beings that can be classified as Wylderkin is staggering. As a rule most Scavengers are called by their closest relation to other animals, such as Wolfkin, Squirrelkin or Possumkin. While all Wylderkin have their own aspects that are often very different depending on the type of Wylderkin, all Scavengers have a few common aspects that are consistent among all Wylderkin. There are no known large groups of any group of Wylderkin within the Sheltered Lands. Indeed, most of these beings come from small, out-of-the-way villages or tribes and rarely travel in groups of more than a half dozen or so. The majority of tribes are scattered about in the great forested area west of Gaden and the vast plains land that lay beyond that. Despite their scattered nature, Scavengers are not uncommon in the lands of Gaden. There are often travelers from yet another unknown tribe appearing in the borders. Many of these folk settle into careers, becoming everything from military scouts to inn keepers. Not all Wylderkin have been upstanding citizens of the nations of the Sheltered Lands, but on the whole, members of this race are given a fair chance before being judged.

### **A Race Without Limits**

Unlike other races, each and every Wylderkin will have different racial abilities. Usually such abilities can be anticipated based on the race that most closely resembles the scavenger in question. But even amongst scavengers that come from the same tribe, their abilities may vary greatly. For example, two Wolfkin brothers may each be great fighters, but one may have a strong resistance to fear and be exceptionally quick, able to dodge nearly any attack, at least occasionally. His brother may instead be exceptionally skilled with weapons and have an innate ability to wiggle out of the most complex binding spell. This diversity means that attacking a village or tribe of Wylderkin must be planned very carefully, for an invader will never know what they will face.

### **A Different Outlook on the World**

Unlike most other races, Wylderkin by their very nature tend not to have a long list of traditions to draw upon. Indeed, the commonly used term of Scavenger often seems to be the most accurate description of these beings. Wylderkin will very rarely have much interest in politics or accumulating wealth, instead worrying about day-to-day issues as they come up. While a Scavenger might accept prepared foodstuffs, they will generally not think to seek out additional food or supplies until they are hungry, or in need of the item in question. Similarly, the concept of personal property that is prevalent in most communities seems alien to most of these beings. While this can be of great benefit to his friends, this can also cause conflict as Scavengers may often take things they need, such as food or a replacement weapon, without offering payment or even telling the owner of said property. That being said, a Wylderkin that finds something he or she doesn't need is quick to discard it or give it away without a thought as to repayment or personal gain.

While each Scavenger is different, most will have a pattern of behavior they find comforting: Turtlekin might have a tendency to fight defensively; and Weaselkin are likely to dart about quickly in, or out, of combat situations. While they are generally self-sufficient, many Scavengers are happy and content to make themselves part of a small group or team. This is especially true of traditional 'pack' animals such as wolf- or horse-types.

## **Writing a Background**

While backgrounds are by no means a requirement to play Alliance LARP, they help to give both the player and the plot staff some information on the character's history, desires, and goals. We also encourage players to write backgrounds for their characters because we find it helps to provide a clear, consistent character portrayal. Personal plot often comes from this background, as well as in-game events. Personal plot is generally one or more plotlines developed based on the details or specific events in the history of a particular character or group (as opposed to more generalized plot.) A good example of this might be a module that is planned for your character or group to go visit a personal friend out in the wilderness area, which then leads to the set-up for an entire plot line.

### **Keep it Simple**

A common mistake many players make when writing their first background is to try to be too specific with their history. Remember that backgrounds should give some history on your character and some information on their goals. Ask yourself: What is my character trying to achieve? Why? How? There are many reasons people might start adventuring: hope for a better life, to earn money, or power to accomplish a goal. Some might adventure for fame or fortune, others because they simply don't want to settle into a 'boring' lifestyle. Whatever the reason is we encourage you to avoid histories that read 'My father was slain by black Jim, and ancient and powerful lich and I am sworn to avenge him.' Try to leave room for plot to fit it into existing plotlines. A better version would be 'My father was in the army and despite having never resurrected in the past, he failed to come home from a campaign deep into the wilderness.' Keep in mind that orphaned adventurers are extremely rare, as in this world a death is not always permanent, so to see both parents permanently die (or 'perm') is a rare occurrence.

### **Setting Goals**

Remember, a character's history is the first information our plot team gets about your character. This is your chance to let us know what you find interesting, what you would like to see in game. Try to keep such information to generalities: 'My character wants to one day own a fortress to protect the innocent people of Gaden' works far better than 'My character wants to build his fortress on the northern-most ridge watching over the Valley of Solace.' Because plotlines can change over time, having a fortress in such a location may not make sense by the time your character is ready to build it. Also remember that some goals might never be achieved, such as becoming a dragon mage. Your character might work towards this goal for his or her entire career, but in the end, any PC that obtains such power would immediately become an NPC under the control of plot. This effectively 'retires' that character, which may happen in rare instances, but will never happen without the PC's consent.

### **Transfers**

Similar to local players, we want to hear from those bringing characters into our chapter for any length of time. In this case, you may provide as much or as little information as you would like about the incoming character. One thing we always like to know is why such a character has left his home to travel through the mists to a new land. Any special interests your character has can also be great information to supply: Is he or she determined to be a great alchemist, mage, or warrior; or perhaps work on a trade agreement or treaty with one of the nations of the Sheltered Lands? While we cannot provide each character a personal plot line at every event, we do our best to make sure every character has the opportunity to do something related to the character's basic goals at any event he or she attends.

## **Your First Event**

Many players are anxious before attending their first event, not knowing what to expect or how to prepare. Remember, if you ever have any questions, you can email questions to [info@mnalliance.com](mailto:info@mnalliance.com). If you would like, you can also request a 'Newbie Marshal' to be assigned to you to help you with all the questions you might have on backgrounds, character construction, and the rules of the game. These folks are volunteers and are happy to help with any questions. However, they are generally not able to provide equipment or costuming, but are likely to be able to help you assemble a basic costume within your budget. You can also email any questions that come up after your first or any event.

## **Preparing a Character**

To prepare for your first event, you'll need to prepare a character. If you do not have a rule book, you can get in contact with a Newbie Marshal or any member of our staff who can assist you in creating your character by spending your build points according to what kind of character you'd like to play. Remember to make a character that you will enjoy playing. If you enjoy the combat aspects, then make a character with weapon skills you find interesting. If you want to be a caster, either aiding your friends from behind the lines or tossing powerful evocation spells, then build your character with the appropriate scholarly skills. Don't worry about making a mistake the first time around. After your first game you are allowed to 're-forge,' or remake, your character making any changes you would like.

## **Character Costuming and 'Phys Reps'**

While we don't expect you to come to your first game in a full costume with beautifully built weapons, there are some things you can do to make sure you are not out of place. First, be sure not to wear jeans, tennis shoes, or branded clothing. This is by far the easiest way to appear out of place at any of our events. If you need help coming up with a quick, cheap, or easy costuming or phys reps, there are lots of people happy to help and share what they've done on our online message boards. If you are playing a spell caster or an archer, it is a good idea to make some packets before the game. You may also want to make your PVC weaponry (see Rule Book for instructions and specifications). Generally, we'll have some on hand to lend, but having your own style of packet or weapon is a great way to customize your character and also makes sure the packets you throw get back into your hands.

## **Fight Practices**

Despite the name, fight practices are not all about combat. Indeed, fight practices are a great place to come to get information and hints on just about any facet of our game. You do not need to come to a fight practice 'in character' or costumed. During fight practices, there will often be 'mini mods' run to help people get used to working together, practice their spell incants, or even simply to have some fun. If you are unsure of what kind of character you'd like to play, attending fight practices is a great way to decide, or you can NPC for an event or two. Attending a fight practice grants you 5 Goblin Stamps or more if you bring a friend!

## **A Story Told Together**

Remember above all that our game is a role-playing game, and in general you'll get out of it what you put into it. If you are in doubt or confused as to what to do next, that best thing to do is to talk to someone in-game. Whether it's another player or a NPC that's wandered into town, you may be surprised where the discussion leads you.

## **Alliance Southern MN Transfer, Level Cap, and other Policies**

### **Overview**

As a new chapter with a majority of new players, it is the policy of the Alliance Southern MN to limit the levels and effects allowed to be transferred into its games until such a time that it is deemed reasonable to game play to relax the restrictions. At the same time, it is also the desire of Alliance Southern MN to encourage out-of-chapter players to come play in our chapter, and the below policies are designed to balance these aims.

### **Level Cap**

The initial level cap will be 155 build. Character transfers may not be 'cut down' as per Alliance Policy and characters above the cap will not be allowed to transfer in, even if used previously in the Chapter. One reason for this policy is to help Plot and Logistics create a consistent world that grows naturally over time. We suggest that any character transferred in be reasonably below the cap so they do not reach it too quickly. Over time, the cap will increase to be equal to the highest build non-transferred local character that is active.

The chapter will also maintain a 'dummy' character card in the database that will receive blankets for every offered event, and this will be used as a minimum guaranteed cap increase. However, in the event a local character receives 'excessive' blankets, then the next highest character will be used for the purposes of the build cap. 'Excessive' blanketing is loosely defined as a character that receives more blankets than an active blanketing player that takes no more than four road trips per year and this determination will be decided by the Southern MN Plot Team. The cap will be removed once either a local player and/or the 'dummy' passes 255 build.

### **Magic Item Policy**

In order to provide a fair, consistent, and balanced game, Southern MN limits magic item transfers. For the first game, no transferred character may use any magic item, restricted or otherwise, as the unique mists surrounding the Sheltered Lands suppress their magic. This includes any Fae Marks, rituals on the spirit, and any non-standard effects. The reason for this policy is ensure that the feel of the campaign world remains consistent, while allowing transferring players to bring in their favorite items over time, each player may attempt to attune one item or effect on their spirit for each game day or logistics period.

The item tag and its phys rep must be on-hand and in-game to attune. Players may also work together to attune more powerful items, but all participants in such efforts may not attune another item that day, nor participate in any other attunement attempt. The difficulty in attuning an item is based on its effects, number of effect categories, and remaining duration. LCO effects (FOIG) are in place to ensure that non-attuned items cannot be permanently stolen or destroyed. Once an item has been successfully attuned, it may pass through the mists without further restrictions. Southern MN maintains an 'attunement database' of items that have been attuned in-game. It is the intent of Alliance Southern MN to have LCO agreements with other chapters, but items covered by such agreements will still need to be attuned.

## **Retirement Policy**

As per national Alliance policy, any character being retired must be housed in the Southern MN database and all items must be turned in for goblin stamp value. A new character may then be forged having half the deaths of the retired character, rounded up, and half of the retired characters build points, also rounded up. In the event that the goblin stamp value of the retired production items is above 300, goblin stamp purchases available from these stamps may be restricted to Event/Monthly blankets and production purchases on the sole discretion of the Southern MN staff. This means such goblin points could not be used to buy phys reps or membership extensions. However, goblin points earned in other ways would still be useable for such purchases.