

The Best of Greyhawk Presents

**Best of Greyhawk #5**

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# The City of Hardby I

by Aria13

## Status of Hardby

Hardby, pre-FtA, was a gynarchy, ruled by a Despotrix. However, little more was known. In FtA, Carl Sargent saw fit to remove the ONLY arguable bastion of female rule in the Flanaess. To much time with the Scarlet Brotherhood I guess. At any rate, if Hardby is to be a gynarchy in your campaign, such a campaign must be pre-FtA or you have to ignore Sargent. :) I choose to ignore him.

## History of Hardby

Hardby was founded by a Suel society of female mages and their female retainers. Known as the Kliktak, they were never more than a minor sect within the Suel Empire that espoused the natural superiority of women over men. They are named after a minor figure in Suel history, the Empress Kliklshe, who was deposed for attempting to institute a strict matrilineal pattern of imperial succession.

Fleeing the devastation of the Suel/Baklunish Wars, the Kliktak settled on the site of present day Hardby. Taking their radical beliefs to an extreme, the Despotrix, as the leader of the Kliktak was known, decreed that women alone would possess civil rights in Hardby and that all men would be held as chattel. Slaving contracts were issued to prominent members of the Kerrone warrior society, who were charged with procuring male slaves for Hardby.

This slaving activity quickly made Hardby an outlaw state and led to a series of wars with Greyhawk. Greyhawk's superior economic climate and Hardby's understandable isolation made the outcome inevitable. The wars ended with Greyhawk's occupation of Hardby. The Despotrix was allowed to remain in power but men were accorded equal rights. The hope was to prevent the Kliktak from merely going underground and becoming an endemic problem. To a degree, the plan worked.

The Despotrix needed the Kerrone to maintain civil authority in the face of a newly freed and restive male population. However, as the chief focus of this resentment was the Chellak order of, formerly, noble mages, that with the Kerrone formed the Kliktak, they were forced underground.

As the Greyhawk occupation dragged on, the Kerrone and Chellak grew apart. Forced to treat men with a measure respect, the Kerrone discovered that they were worthy of it. While still maintaining their martial traditions, the Kerrone married and developed a working relationship with the freed men of Hardby. The Chellak, isolated from positions of power and resentful, grew bitter, practicing male slavery in secret.

When Hardby regained its independence, it was no longer a segregated society. Men retained their rights. The Kerrone continued to provide the bulk of the city's standing militia and the Despotrix remained in power. Men, however, formed the bulk of Hardby's small navy and larger merchant marine, as the Kerrone were strictly an infantry force. Most mages in Hardby are also male because the Chellak were the Kliktak order of mages.

## Hardby Today

The Despotrix is the hereditary, matriarchal ruler of Hardby and by tradition always a mage. She is advised by a Regency Council made up of the High Mistress of the Kerrone, the Admiral of the Ocean-Sea and various ministerial advisors. Only the Admiral is male and is regarded as the spokesman for Hardby's male citizenry.

Despite a more liberal attitude toward men, the gynarchy is still predominantly of Suel demeanor. The Despotrix's laws are fair but harsh and she spares no quarter to Hardby's enemies, chiefly Greyhawk. Among the Wild Coast states, Hardby and Greyhawk are engaged in a war for the hearts and minds of the city states. Hardby's nearness and willingness to use its navy, and newly constituted force of naval infantry, to defend against the pirates of Highport and the humanoids of the Pomarj, give it a slight advantage.

On land, the Kerrone maintain a high state of readiness in case of any hostile move by Greyhawk. The Despotrix has also begun to establish colonies in the Abor-Alz, chiefly to mine mineral resources but also as a redoubt in case of invasion. The patriarchal hillmen have resisted all attempts at diplomacy and are a constant threat to the colonies. Punitive expeditions by the Kerrone routinely lay waste to large areas of the Abor-Alz but the hillmen retreat only to return at a later date. Greyhawk is suspected of supplying advisors to the hillmen but no proof has yet been found.

Relations between Hardby and Greyhawk are tense. Each imposes tariffs on the others vessels using the Selitan River. This has had the effect of almost completely halting traffic between Wooly Bay and the Nyr Dyv. Only the Rhenee are exempt and make a handsome profit as middlemen. Hardby counts on the Rhenee to form an early warning system and first line of defense should the burgers of Greyhawk decide to \*remove\* the trade barriers.

## **Chellak & Sunnat**

The Chellak are the chief threat to the Despotrix. With agents in Greyhawk, Highport and the Abor-Alz, in addition to Hardby, they continually strive to depose the Despotix and assume power. While they routinely ally with Hardby's enemies, they will not betray the city to a conqueror for they wish to rule. The Despotrix counts on this fact and views the Chellak as more of a nuisance than a real threat. She is mistaken.

Several of the advisors on the Regency Council are members of the Chellak. They gather information that they hope will embarrass the Despotrix or the Admiral or lead to their successful assassination. The Chellak have also turned to treating with creatures from the lower planes for aid.

It is worth noting that the Kliktac were not religious. They worshipped no single Power. Instead, they revered a female creative principle believed to embody all creation. In this respect, their clerics were much like druids but were never numerous. When the Chellak broke with the Kerrone, the Sunnat, as the clerics were known, chose sides based on personal belief and association. Those that went with the Chellak were eventually absorbed, losing their identity as clerics for the most part. Those that stayed with the Kerrone became the chief clerics of Hardby.

Religious freedom is one of the legal principles established during the Greyhawk occupation that has remained strong. However, female Powers are more numerous and popular, even among Hardby's male population. There is a belief that all female deities look out for Hardby's well being and should be respected. The Sunnat merely see such Powers as manifestations of the female creative principle.

## **Suel Nationalism**

Hardby very much sees itself as an inheritor state of the old Suel Empire. Generally, this is a harmless civil fiction that serves to unite the citizenry around a shared heritage. After all, few of Hardby's citizens can claim pure Suel blood after all these years.

Unfortunately, there is a dark side to this civic pride. Agents of the Scarlet Brotherhood have begun to make inroads among the male population preaching male supremacy and advocating the overthrow of the Despotrix in favor of the Admiral. To date, the general prominence of women in Hardby has made this a pipe dream of irredentist elements, but the future is always uncertain.

More disturbing is the Cult of Vecna that actually operates openly under the guise of Suel pride. The Despotrix would love to stamp out the Cult but its membership includes prominent male and female members of Hardby society and the Despotrix must move cautiously to avoid creating opposition to her rule. The Cult itself seeks to convert the Despotrix or failing that her heir. It does not strive for a violent overthrow of the government.

## **The Jasmine Lance**

The Jasmine Lance is the Despotrix' secret police force. Trained assassins and spies, they generally operate outside of Hardby, posing as courtesans. In this guise, the Despotix has the most extensive intelligence network second only to the Scarlet Brotherhood.

Operating throughout the Flanaess, most Lance operatives will be found in Greyhawk and Dyvers. Their presence in Greyhawk is of obvious import. In Dyvers, they ostensibly have their headquarters and serve the Mayor of Dyvers. In this way, the Despotrix maintains plausible deniability, while aiding Greyhawk's nearest and oldest rival.

P.S. The head of the Jasmine Lance is known only as the Diamond Lilly. She is named after what NightScreed once called LillianM1, who gave me the idea to create the Jasmine Lance.

## **The Ladies Art**

The operatives of the Jasmine Lance often are involved in situations where openly carrying a weapon would be inappropriate. Similarly, their dress may on occasion be such as to prevent the easy concealment of a weapon. Nonetheless, an operative may find herself in need of a defense. To this end, the Jasmine Lance trains each of its agents in the Ladies Art, so called because it was developed by the ladies of the Overking's court in Rauxes, who often had to deal with unwanted attentions. The maneuvers taught as part of the Ladies Art are selected to work in combination and to be effective while the practitioner is wearing a dress.

The Ladies Art is an unarmed martial art that can function with a special set of weapons if desired. Four special maneuvers are taught and they are always acquired in exact order. A PC can learn a single maneuver at a cost of one proficiency slot.

The first maneuver taught is Stunning Slap. The Stunning Slap is an open handed slap delivered with a cupped hand to an opponents head. To be effective, the opponent must be surprised by the attack or otherwise stunned

and unable to defend. As the Stunning Slap is a called shot with the benefit of surprise, only a -2 penalty to hit is applied.

The Stunning Slap does no damage but a successful hit stuns the opponent for 1d4 rounds. This stun effect is only in part due to the force of the blow. The blow is generally aimed so as to disrupt the opponents equilibrium by disrupting inner ear pressure. The element of surprise also accounts for part of the effect.

The second maneuver learned is the Backhand Chop. Backhanded with the edge of an open hand, fingers extended and joined, the Backhand Chop is delivered to an opponents neck, shoulders or lower face. Because this is a called shot but one able to be delivered to more than a specific area, a -2 penalty to hit is applied. Damage is 1d4.

The third maneuver learned is the Knee Strike. This maneuver involves raising a knee sharply into an opponents abdomen or groin. This is a soft maneuver but an effective one because of the target area. To be effective, an opponent must be surprised by the attack or otherwise stunned and unable to defend. Because this is a called shot but one able to be delivered to more than a specific area and one for which surprise is called for, only a -1 penalty to hit is applied. Damage from a Knee Strike is 1d6 and a successful hit requires the opponent to save versus paralyzation or be stunned for 1d4 rounds.

The final maneuver learned is the Sudden Push. This maneuver involves a sudden, sharp push delivered two handed from the chest to an opponents chest. To be effective, the opponent must be surprised or otherwise stunned and unable to defend. A successful Sudden Push propels an opponent backwards a number of feet equal to the attacker's level. While the Push is not powerful enough to cause an opponent to fall, any objects in the opponents path will cause him or her to trip and fall. The Push itself does no damage. However, if the opponent falls he takes standard falling damage. Similarly, if the opponent collides with an object, he takes damage as if he has fallen a distance equivalent to the distance Pushed.

Finally, if an operative is anticipating trouble, she may equip herself with a set of razor sharp, artificial fingernails, known as Razor Claws. The Ladies Art teaches the operative to be able to make two attacks per round with Razor Claws but one proficiency slot per attack must be spent. Damage per Razor Claw attack is 1d4, if slashing, and 1d6, if raking. The DM must determine when conditions will allow a rake. Use of Razor Claws is only taught after the four maneuvers of the Ladies Art have been mastered.

Arial3

## **Caveat**

Necessarily, this is but a sketch of Hardby and as the only female dominated society in WoG cannot begin to explore or incorporate all aspects of a setting designed for women. It was never my intention that it do so. In fact, it is much more a gender neutral setting that has evolved from radical, dominatrix beginnings. I hold this out as no model of design of any variety but I do think that it is one example of a more feminine setting than you will find in ANY published world by TSR. Except those evil spider babes, who don't count. I also point out that this is at best a DESIGN. It says nothing about styles of play, merely a possible setting for play.

P.S. - I hate having to make this post but I fear having people get the wrong, and simplistic, idea that this is what I was calling for. It is not. This is a graft that reflects the wonderful World of Greyhawk. Nothing more. You work with what you've got, which is a sexist setting. That determines what type of female dominated settings can reasonably be supposed to exist.

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## **The City of Hardby II**

by Iquander

Well, since I have been called an unabashed canonist (a moniker I do not fully object to, by the way), I guess I feel like I have to accept what Sargent did to Hardby. It is not only is FtA that we find Hardby closely allied with the Free City of Greyhawk and I think it's annexation during the tumult of the Greyhawk Wars is logical. Besides, it was published officially, and I have no choice but to accept it as law (see above).

On page 33 of the Gem of the Flanaess book, we get a description of Hardby that contains not a mention of women in any way, shape or form. It is, of course, referred to as a "despotrix", but no other mention is made of Hardby's "previous" history. This isn't entirely surprising, as the City of Greyhawk Boxed Set was published in an era

not particularly interested in continuity. As has been mentioned several times before, the layout of the City of Greyhawk in the boxed set is much different than the layout and "feel" of the free city in the first two Gord the Rogue novels. There is a reason for this. The design team had never read the novels.

It seems pretty obvious. Sargent's later work frequently runs roughshod over continuity as established in the official TSR novels. The novels published after Gygax left TSR are obviously not canon (as it would be something akin to copyright infringement to copy them over to post-Gygax TSR products) and the five novels by Rose Estes take place primarily in the far past and are written at a totally different market, namely, little tiny kids.

But, up until Iuz the Evil and not even after it, the events of the novels are ignored. I also think that it's quite relevant to point out that the Gem of the Flanaess book, surely the origin of Hardby's desexualization, was written by Douglas Niles. Not Carl Sargent.

Yup, someone was responsible for this, but it wasn't our favorite target and, I'd be willing to bet, it was completely unintentional. Sargent obviously worked off the Gem of the Flanaess book for his From the Ashes Campaign Book so, by the time he inherited it, the deed had been done. There is a way to reconcile all of this, however. . .

## **Fixing Hardby**

It is known to many, of course, that Zagig Yragerne (the so-called Mad Archmage) was a product of the union of the Landgraf of Selintan and the Gynarch of Hardby. In those days, the Despotrix held much of the surrounding land and rivaled the towns of the Wild Coast as the de facto military power of the Wolly Bay. Its rise had paralleled the town of Greyhawk to the north and some claimed it would one day equal the splendor of Dyvers or Chendl. The Gynarch (Despotrix) was a kind and resourceful ruler, and her marriage to Ganz of Greyhawk cemented relations between the two burgeoning towns. Theirs was a friendly rivalry, built upon cooperation and fair trade. The disorganized bandits to the south, along the Wild Coast and Pomarj region, envied the wealth of the Despotrix. Their raids were frequent and unsuccessful, managing only to encourage a stronger naval defense. Why, they argued to their retainers, should a woman be allowed to stand in the place of a man?

And, to a certain extent, their question was well founded. In all of history, never before had a woman been placed in a position of power and responsibility such as delegated to the Despotrix of Hardby. With that ruler's marriage, Ganz showed open support for her social role and status, seldom attempting to persuade her decisions. To the powerful men of the south, this new state of Selintan represented an empire of insanity.

Some years later in CY 375, the Gynarch gave birth to a child, Zagig Yragerne. In the following years, both towns grew and began to take on larger populations. Dyvers, long held as the cultural capitol of the central Falnaess, saw an entire community of artists relocate in a single week. The Towns of the Selintan, as they were called at that time, seemed headed for fantastic wealth and success.

Then, within a single decade, both the Landgraf and Despotrix passed away. Zagig, their adventurous son, was called back to Greyhawk to see to his new responsibilities as Landgraf. At first, the mage seems to delight in his duties. He brings magic to the Greyhawk, the town of his birth. He constructs new walls of stone in a fraction of the time it took to build the gates. He had a plan, he announced, to make Greyhawk the "Gem of the Flanaess".

The citizenry of Hardby were not amused. Left without a female heir to take command of the city, they are effectively left leaderless. In his effort to improve Greyhawk, Zagig all but ignores the town of his mother. The Knights of True Womanhood, a devout sect of warrior-women places one of their number upon the Throne of Wood. The southern lands sense the chaos in Hardby and strike out in force. Within a week, fully half of Hardby ships lie sunken in the depths of the Wolly Bay. Their defense, however, holds. The town of Hardby was safe, and fully unprepared for their next assault. The attention of Zagig Yragerne.

Citing their "failure" in the harbor as a sign of their weakness, Zagig, still the nominal ruler of the Selintan territory, deposes the false leader of Hardby and establishes a ruling council of male merchants to see to the affairs of the city. The Knights are furious, but Zagig sends several squads of Greyhawk cavalry to the outskirts of the town to "discourage" his southern neighbors. After much protest and a strict trading ban, Zagig relents and withdraws his troops, officially dismantling the Selintan Territory so he can focus attention on Greyhawk. He does this, however, based upon a number of conditions.

He concedes the women of Hardby the right to appoint a Gynarch, though he stresses the importance of the fact that this leader cannot come from within the ranks of the Knights of True Womanhood.

## **Fixing Hardby II**

Secondly, he states that the transference of power in the event of the death of a Gynarch must not be hereditary, but must be agreed upon by the sitting chair of the Knighthood of True Womanhood, the Matriarch of the temple to Osprem, the Patriarch of the temple to Xerbo and the male-dominated Council of Merchants.

Thirdly, Zagig ensured the everlasting peace between the two towns only as long as the Merchant Council existed and thrived. In addition, he expanded the powers of the council to the point at which the Gynarch became little more than a figurehead.

The sitting Swordmistress of True Womanhood, one Elendel Aledain, agreed to the mage's terms, much to the chagrin of her peers. Indeed, Aledain's vision extended far beyond her own life to the point at which Zagig would be little but a memory. At that point, she confided in her assistants, Hardby would arise once again to her previous glory. This was not understood by many, and Aledain was impeached from her position and exiled to the Cairn Hills. The Knighthood did not forgive easily.

Years later, when Zagig withdrew from society, the Knighthood made its move. In a bold political statement, the sitting Swordmistress, in alliance with a puppet Gynarch, declared the dissolution of the Merchant Council. The men, however, would not stand for such a betrayal of Zagig's wishes. In the years following Hardby's independence, they had tasted status, and they were not about to give it up on account of a woman. With status had come chauvinism and bigotry.

The wishes of the council, however, were largely irrelevant. After several hours of closed door sessions, the rulers of the Knighthood and their allies announced that the Merchant's Council would not, in fact be abolished. Instead, they would continue to oversee affairs and everything would go on as normal. The Directing Oligarchs of Greyhawk were relieved. They had dealt extensively with the Council and trusted it implicitly.

It is for this reason that the council was never dissolved. In closed sessions of the merchant men, however, confessions were made. One man admitted to his peers that he had been involved in a smuggling operation that seemed too lucrative to pass up. Another spoke of a thief in the night who he had killed and hidden. Three more spoke of embezzling city funds. All, it seemed, had received unsigned letters, written in feminine script, detailing their new, covert, arrangement.

### **Fixing Hardby III**

It went unnoticed, then, when the Council slowly began to see things from a decidedly female perspective. Money reserved for the development of an armed cavalry instead was diverted into an ambitious project to lure a church of Pelor to a location within the wooden palisades of Hardby. These new priests and priestesses brought health to the infirm and promoted tolerance between the heated relations of men and women in the town. In the following years, the population doubled (more than half of the newcomers female refugees from the Pomarj and Wild Coast slaves). The Throne of Wood was given, free of charge, a new resting place in a beautiful building donated by the council to the Order of True Womanhood. Finally, the Council reinstated the controversial legal code of the Order. In the following weeks, 57 men accused of forcing intimacy with their wives were buried to the necks on a beach at low tide. The cynics of the Order, finally understanding the foresight of Elendel Aledain, erected a statue to the woman in the city square. For a time, all went well.

Around 580, however, the Directing Oligarchs of the Free city of Greyhawk panicked. Already fearing an attack from the north as the Horned Society moved against the Bandit Kingdoms and the Shield Lands, the rulers of Greyhawk began to evaluate their strategic position. In doing so, they found Hardby wanting. Though the smaller city had payer tribute to Greyhawk for protection, the Oligarchs sent its Mountaineer Militia to guard the northern coast of the Woolly Bay. This was harshly opposed by both the Merchant's Council and the Order of True Womanhood.

In the end, however, there was little the small city could do. The warriors of Greyhawk, though poorly trained, outnumbered the women of Hardby, and the city was annexed, in action in not in fact by name. The council was dismantled, the Militia eventually replaced by the "Hardby Marines", a flotilla of men flying the colors of Greyhawk. Hardby was effectively ruled by a council of Greyhawk military men who, on a good day, remembered to invite the Gynarch to important political events. She was chided, teased and pinched. In the years prior to the occupation of Hardby, such actions would have been fatal.

### **Fixing Hardby IV**

In the days following it, they may yet prove to be as well. Almost immediately upon their arrival in Hardby, the Marines began to run into streaks of incredibly good luck. Many of the sailors received incredible bargains on golden statues from Hepmonaland. Others met with beautiful women and went on from there. Individually, in the days following the Greyhawk Wars, these Marines have been notified by unnamed agents of the Order of True Womanhood that their statues are in fact religious relics to eldritch Olman powers of revenge and law, their mistresses wives of

important local officials. Like the Merchant Council before them, the Hardby Marines have been caught in a nightmarish trap. All of their weaknesses have been exploited to the brink of scandal. One man among them, however, Captain Wilbram Carister, has proven exceptionally difficult to crack. In short, the man is scrupulous to a fault and possesses few secrets. He is, however, often at sea, and it is at this time that the Order gets much of its work accomplished.

Of note, too, is the construction of a large cathedral to Mayaheine within the city proper. The demipower's matriarchs have made it clear that they wish to locate their base of operations in the City of Hardby, which they have termed "the Bastion of Enlightenment". This has met with a mixed response from the hierarchy of the Order, many of whom swear allegiance to other deities. The majority, however, revere Pelor and, given that god's relationship with Mayaheine, look forward to the completion of this project.

In the meantime, however, the Sitting Swordmistress covets the Throne of Wood for herself. When this latest Gynarch passes, she intends to sit in that seat, which she swears to her confidants will rise to a height of power never before seen in connection with a woman. The time will come, she says, when my throne will need polish.

PS: The name, "The Order of True Womanhood" is not mine. We have Gygax to thank for that one. For every "Mordenkainen" there is a "Yrag". . . .

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## Joramy

by QSamantha

Joramy is the goddess of fire, volcanoes, anger and quarrels. Of uncertain origin, the goddess is commonly worshipped throughout the Flanaess. More than an elemental deity, Joramy represents not only the destructive power of fire but the ability of fire to cleanse and phoenix-like creativity, born out of certain destruction. Though anger and quarrels are commonly attributed to Joramy, this reflects her "fiery" disposition more than any true spheres of interest.

### Joramy's Avatar (Priest 16, Wizard 12)

Joramy's avatar takes the form of a woman dressed in flowing purple robes with gold trim that completely conceal the feet, giving the appearance of floating more than moving. The avatar's head, neck and hands are entirely composed of living flame. About her head, a greater nimbus of blue flame is visible. Joramy's avatar has access to all schools and spheres of spells except those involving cold or water. Fire based spells are cast at double effectiveness.

Joramy will only manifest her avatar if one of her Sanctums is desecrated or if called upon by a priestess of 10th or greater level. Whenever she appears, Joramy is in no mood to brook insult or delay. She will immediately perceive why she was summoned and judge whether or not to intervene. After resolving any difficulties, Joramy will commonly test the priestess who summoned with a Trial by Fire.

The subject of a Trial will be engulfed by flame and must save versus death magic or die. If Joramy was summoned when there was no need, the save is at a -6 penalty and a successful save indicates that the priestess loses a level that only Joramy can choose to restore. If there was cause, the save is without penalty or bonus. Should the DM determine that the priestess has been role-played well, she may award a bonus of between +1 to +4 to the save.

Str 17 Dex 18 Con 16 Int 20 Wis 18 Cha 20 (awe not appearance)

MV 12 SZ 6' MR 35% AC 0 HD 13 HP 102 #AT 1

THACO 10 Dmg 1d10+6

Special Att/Def: Joramy's avatar is immune to all fire spells. Any such attacks heal her instead of doing damage. She can animate and absolutely control any fires or sources of flame within a one mile radius. By her command a single spark may become a firestorm or raging inferno may be snuffed out in a second.

Statistics: AL n(g); WAL any; AoC Fire, Purity, Creativity; SY Jacinth shaped like a flame.

### Duties of the Priesthood

Joramy's priesthood is not large. Clerics must be female, though worshippers may be of either gender. Up to 12th level, each priestess is expected to lead a wandering existence gathering about her companions in service to

Joramy. These companions may be men or women and need not worship Joramy exclusively. They must, however, tythe 5% of all treasure to the priestess with whom they travel, who will hold these moneys in trust.

Upon reaching 13th level, a priestess of Joramy must establish a Temple in a urban environment, using the funds collected to this point. If this is not possible, the priestess may establish a Temple in a wilderness area but must found a town as well. In such event, the cleric is allowed to continue to wander until she reaches 16th level, when a Temple and town must be founded.

Once a priestess has founded a Temple, she is expected to remain in the area to see to its development, though she may adventure within these bounds. Once the Temple is fully staffed to include a priestess of at least 13th level, the founding cleric may resume a wandering existence.

Before a priestess may attain 21st level, she must found a Sanctum in a remote wilderness area. Volcanoes, geysers and hot springs are preferred sites. These are Joramy's pilgrimage sites and holy of holiest. Having founded a Sanctum, the priestess must staff it as she would a Temple but may only resume wandering when there are at least three clerics of Joramy of at least 13th level in residence. Taking up residence in a sanctum is an alternative to founding a Temple for clerics at 13th level. If this alternative is chosen, the cleric must remain in the area of the Sanctum until she reaches 16th level at which time she may resume wandering only if there is a priestess of at least 13th level to take her place.

## Devotions of the Priesthood

Priestesses are expected to conduct themselves in a neutral manner but their promotion of urban environments for their Temples gives them something of a good tendency. Similarly, a priestess of Joramy is sworn to protect all who follow or tythe to the goddess, regardless of alignment. Priestesses are forbidden from using any cold spells and must only bathe in heated water.

Joramy's rites always involve an open flame, usually contained in as an elaborate a vessel as can be obtained. Before beginning any rite, each priestess must pass her hands through the flames, saving versus spell or taking 1d4 points of damage. Musical accompaniment is customary and consists of pipes and bells.

The Rite of Passage is the means by which one becomes a lay adherent of Joramy. All of the companions of a priestess of Joramy must undergo this rite before two levels have been gained in the company of the priestess. The priestess ignites a large bonfire through which each would be adherent must jump after being blessed by the priestess. Save versus spell must be made or the Leapers, as they are known in this Rite, suffer 1d10 points of damage. Any damage suffered must be allowed to heal naturally. Attempts at magical healing of any sort are an affront to Joramy and until atoned for will cause the apostate to suffer double damage from all fire attacks with no possibility of any save.

The Rite of the Dancing Flame is the chief Rite of Joramy's worship and always performed at night. All who worship or tythe to Joramy may participate. A fire is kindled and an elaborate dance takes place around the fire at the edge of the fire's circle of illumination. Within the circle of dancers, the high priestess prepares a special beverage that is only drunk while heated. The dancers continue to dance until exhaustion sets in. The high priestess will then gradually take each dancer out of the circle and pour them the prepared libation. This drink has remarkable restorative powers and will revive all but the dead and infuse them with a marvelous, intoxicating vitality. As the dance concludes, the revived dancers join hands around the fire and a prayer is said to Joramy, after which must revelry and feasting is common.

The Rite of the Dying Light is the cremation ceremony when a priestess of Joramy or one of her companions dies. A burial platform is built upon which the body is placed. A pyre is then built beneath the platform and set ablaze. If it is Joramy's will, a save may be made by the fallen adherent against spell at a -3 penalty, success indicating resurrection. If the fallen is a priestess of Joramy of 13th or greater level, the penalty is -2, and if the priestess of Joramy of is of 21st or greater level, the penalty is a -1.

Any save may be adjusted by a sacrifice of one level for every +1 to the save. This is considered the highest sign of devotion and for every level sacrificed, the character making the sacrifice gains a cumulative +10% to experience until all levels sacrificed are regained. The character making the sacrifice will also gain a cumulative +2% magic resistance until the lost levels are regained.

## Requirements

**AB** - standard; **AL** - Neutral; **WP** - Flail, Short sword (poniard) **AR** - Chain; **TU** - Standard

**RA** - Priestesses of Joramy traditionally wear orange robes trimmed with gold, cinched at the waist with voluminous sleeves and a flowing skirt. Purple robes of the above description are reserved for the heads of a Temple or Sanctum.

**SP** - All; Chaos; Charm; Divination; Elemental Fire; Guardian; Healing; War; Wards; Combat: Prayer, Flame Strike, Spiritual Wrath, Holy/Unholy Word

PW -2nd - Burning Hands 4th - Pyrotechnics 6th - Hypnotic Pattern 8th - Fireflow 10th - Fireball 12th - Mirage Arcana 14th - Incendiary Cloud

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## The City of Dyvers

by QSamantha

### City & People

Dyvers, situated at the mouth of the Volverdyva River, commands the western approach to the Nyr Dyv. Long a possession of Furondy, Dyvers won her independence from Furondy without incident and remains on deliberately good terms with her former liege. Above all, this is a city of tradesmen and women. Good relations with trading partners is essential.

Dyvers, nicknamed the Western Gate, is just that. Goods traveling to or from Veluna and points west must pass through Dyvers. Even Furondy, which controls the great naval base at Willip, sends its goods to market through Dyvers down the Att River, which joins the Volverdyva north of Verbobonc. Through the Viscounty of Verbobonc, goods from the gnomes of the Kron Hills, the dwarves of the Lortmil Mountains and even the elves of Celene, make their way to Dyvers.

Though Greyhawk is a near rival, it is further away, beyond the Midbay and leagues down the Selintan, than might be supposed. As Dyvers is the Western Gate, Greyhawk is the Eastern Gate, and Hardby the Southern Gate. But Hardby is too far away to raise many concerns in Dyvers. It is Greyhawk alone that draws the ire of the good folk of Dyvers for Greyhawk's expansionist trade policies are eternally at odds with Dyvers own plans for hegemony of east/west trade. Each city would usurp the other's position and their trade wars know no peace nor even truce.

The Dyverse are a unique people. The city was originally a Flan trading post and fishing village, taking advantage of both the Nyr Dyv and the Volverdyva. With the Oeridian migrations, the village was conquered and a town begun. A later migration of Baklunish people also brought settlers to Dyvers, first as little more than cheap labor but eventually offering their own unique contribution to the growing metropolis.

The citizenry is a mixture of these peoples. In physical appearance, the Dyverse closely resemble the Flan. They, tend to be somewhat stocky, with a rugged hardiness and a fatalistic bent. However, there are few more energetic people than the Dyverse. The Oeridian wanderlust is transformed in Dyvers into an almost manic preoccupation with hard work and civic pride. The stone walls of Dyvers, its cobbled streets and immense central Keep were not raised by magic but by the sweat of the brow of countless citizens determined to provide for themselves and their city. Much of the labor was freely given. With such a willingness to see a job through to the end, it is not surprising that the Dyverse take pride in their city and enjoy their time off. For all their sturdy determination, the citizenry is exotically flamboyant in a stolid sort of way. Civic display is everywhere, as the people of Dyvers enjoy decorating their city with sculpture, friezes and murals. This impulse is most evident during Dyvers numerous civic holidays when great pageants and fairs are held. Even celebrating life in their city, a good Dyverse will not pass up the opportunity to turn a profit.

### Dyvers Government

Dyvers is governed by an elected Mayor. In point of fact, the twelve founding families of Oeridian extraction form an oligarchy that truly governs the city through control of the Dyverse and Sundry Senate. The Senate proposes and passes legislation, while the Mayor governs. Every ward of the city elects a Senator, as does every guild. However, the so called Sundries, villages outside the city proper, are also allowed to elect at large, or Sundry, Senators, as if they were city wards.

The Court system of Dyvers is unique. The Guild Courts have jurisdiction over all matters mercantile, no matter how trivial or attenuated. Non-mercantile matters are governed by dwarven law. The Dyverse, not wishing to worry about the niceties of civil justice, and finding in dwarven temperament something akin to their own, have turned over their civil justice system to dwarven judges specially hired to provide this service. The dwarven judges are known collectively as the Anvil of Justice.

The Constabulary of Dyvers is similarly run on a contract basis by dwarves. Three hundred dwarven constables make up the city's police force, known as the Tricentury. Along with the dwarven judges, the Tricentury and all of their families reside in the central Keep, which also houses all city offices, the city armory, the city's emergency storehouses and granary and the barracks of the Wall Guard. Beneath the Keep, the dwarves have dug

numerous tunnels and are allowed a monopoly on trade with the Underdark as part of their contract. This trade, however, is the only variety a dwarven merchant may legally engage in. Nonetheless, the prominent role dwarves play in Dyvers has endeared the city to dwarves across the Flanaess and much dwarven trade flows through the city.

The Tricentury is only responsible for providing police protection within the city walls. It is the responsibility of the Wall Guard to secure the gates and man the city's battlements. This job has also been contracted out to a force of Perranland mercenaries. These Perranlanders, 1000 strong, reside in the barracks in the Keep or may secure private lodgings if they wish. Many have done so, married locals and are considered citizens rather than mere mercenaries.

Augmenting the Perranlanders and the Constabulary is the Civic Legion. Dyver's militia, the Civic Legion drills regularly with the usual single mindedness of the Dyverse and should be considered a veteran unit. The Legion can field as many as 5,000 fighters if necessary, most armed with pikes or halberds. The Legions are commanded by a mix of local, Dwarven and Perranland commanders. To say that their tactics are unusual but extremely effective is an understatement.

The most recent addition to Dyver's standing forces have been the 1000 strong Naval Marine. Dyver's largest single industry is ship building. Ships are built for export but also for Dyver's own extensive merchant marine fleet. It is the dangers faced by Dyvers captains upon the Nyr Dyv that prompted the city fathers to organize the Naval Marine. Pirates operating out of the Bandit Kingdoms have always been a problem but the increased tensions to the north instigated by Iuz have spilled over into the Nyr Dyv, forcing the Dyverse to respond. While no where near as large as Furondy's Willip Fleet, the Dyverse Naval Marines are winning something of a reputation for their ferocity in defense of Dyverse shipping. The Naval Marines, in conjunction with hired adventurers acting as advance scouts, have even conducted punitive raids on pirate bases in the bandit kingdoms.

## **Dyvers Foreign Relations**

The Burghers of Greyhawk have nothing against stopping piracy, or starting it so long as their ships go unmolested, but they look upon the Dyverse Naval Marine with nothing less than horror. The Greyhawkers see the Naval Marine as a potential first strike weapon that could pose severe strategic problems in any war with Dyvers. As trade rivals, relations between the two cities have never been good, even in the best of times, however, the specter of an arms race now looms.

Beyond Greyhawk, Dyvers is on good terms with most states. Dyvers maintains trade missions in both of the Urnst states and Hardby, promoting trade and anti-Greyhawk sentiment. Full embassies exist in Furondy, Veluna and Verbobonc.

Dyvers only real foreign relations problem is with the elves of the Gnarley Forest. Dyvers builds ships and needs wood to do so. The Gnarley is close at hand and has excellent timber. Indiscriminate logging by the Dyverse, however, has angered the elves of the Gnarley as well as the Gnarly Men, who would have this trade for themselves. Though open conflict has yet to break out, skirmishes are common and tensions continue to mount.

## **Dyvers Merchants**

A city built on trade, Dyvers enjoys an enviable position. Via the Volverdyva, goods from Highfolk, Veluna and Verbobonc reach the city's markets. Via the Att, goods from Littleberg and Furondy find their way to Dyvers. Thanks to the gnomes of the Kron Hills, the dwarves of the Lortmils and the elves of Celene, Dyvers can boast the largest market in demi-human goods in the Flanaess.

However, none of this can compare to Dyvers trade through the Thornward Pass. As the Fals river cuts through the northern extent of the Lorridges, it opens the way into Ket and the rich Baklunish lands to the west. Dyverse caravans regularly make this trek, usually twice a year. These caravans bring back goods impossible to find anywhere else in the Flanaess. If there is a single secret to Dyvers success in keeping pace with the larger, wealthier and more cosmopolitan Greyhawk, this is it.

Dyverse merchants band together to organize these caravans and spare no expense in hiring the best guards money can buy. Adventurers familiar with the terrain or of formidable reputation are all but certain to be approached by merchants from Dyvers seeking caravan escorts or scouts. Many a semiretired adventurer makes a handsome living in this way, providing escort and maybe even doing a little trading of his own.

Of course, the caravans are tempting targets for bandits and marauding humanoids. Worse are the agents Greyhawk sends to raid the caravans, infiltrate them so as to ruin trade relations with the Ketish or Baklunish, or merely cause devastating rock slides in the Thornward Pass.

Like most cities Dyvers has a central market but this market is reserved for itinerant peddlers, caravan merchants and non-domestic merchants. All domestic merchants must establish a shop in Dyvers if they wish to conduct business. By law, all businesses of a kind are located on certain streets and nowhere else, with the exception of

inns and taverns. These so called Market Streets have the effect of turning almost all of Dyvers into a single huge market.

Because each street only has a single type of business, the guildhall of the guild for that type of business will always be close by. The Grand Guildhall is located on the central square that surrounds the Keep. This concentration also makes street traffic horrendous because if you need something you do not make, you will not find it on your street. If you are lucky, it will be only one or two streets away but there is no guarantee. That means Dyvers' streets are crowded with merchants, shoppers and business people of all stripe attempting to get needed items.

To accommodate this traffic, Dyvers streets come in three sizes. Trunks are the largest streets, some 40 feet wide. There is really only one trunk that circumnavigates the city. It is called the Grand Trunk, though each of the four sides of the city name their extent of the trunk as well. Highstreets are 30 feet wide and generally run north to south, east to west. Ways are 20 feet wide and run at odd angles, while everything else is named an Alley and usually no more than 5, at most 10, feet wide. The overall effect is one of organization, the Grand Trunk and the Highstreets, and unfathomable chaos, the Ways and Alleys. Luckily, the Carters and Cabbies Guild specializes in getting people and things where they need to go.

### **Dyvers Guild Strife**

Every occupation in Dyvers has an associated guild. Belonging to a guild is a fact of everyday life in Dyvers. It is also the law, no business, including adventuring and thievery, can be legally conducted without a guild license. The first person to start a business new to Dyvers must file guild incorporation papers and automatically becomes the guildmaster. Each guild, it should be remembered elects a Senator.

Guild Wars are common, usually between guilds that have something in common, say the Gravediggers Guild and the Morticians Guild. However, these wars are not fought to absorb the other guild but to control it. Thus, if the Gravediggers win, they control the Morticians. This way, the Gravediggers now control two votes in the Dyverse and Sundry Senate. Guild Wars are usually wars of conquest but are occasionally wars of independence. Say, should the League of Assassins resent taking orders from the Thieves Guild.

Guild Wars can also be competitive. One of the longest standing wars is that between the Thieves Guild and the Society of Courtesans for control of the Fences Guild. To protect their own independence, the Fences Guild attempts to play off the Courtesans against the Thieves. Aware of this, the Thieves, have more than once attempted to take over the Courtesans directly. It was in the middle of this fight that the League of Assassins made their successful bid for independence. They have now joined the fray, seeking to annex all of the other three guilds.

### **Religion in Dyvers**

In Dyvers, money talks. Religion is seen as good business. The city taxes every faith but promotes itself as the best place to establish a temple because of all of the visitors trade brings through the city. Most faiths reluctantly agree. Dyvers is unique in that all faiths are free to establish temples so long as they do not otherwise violate the civil or mercantile law.

The city fathers also see the profit in making Dyvers a pilgrimage site. To this end, they have hired adventurers to recover holy relics for the various faiths. These relics are then freely donated to the appropriate faith with the proviso that the relic cannot leave the city. This is yet another reason some faiths choose to locate here.

All temples are confined to the religious ward. Businesses that cater to pilgrims or the needs of the temples locate here as a matter of course. Thus, it is possible to enter a tavern in this ward and find priests of Pholtus and St. Cuthbert sharing a table and arguing philosophy, or a follower of Nerull working out an agreement with a priest of Herionous to sell some unused supplies. The Tricentury maintains heightened patrols just in case.

The people of Dyvers are themselves joyously polytheistic. Patronizing more than one temple is common. As a consequence the temples put on festival after festival hoping to secure sole possession of their parishioners devotion.

The Dyverse also worship a number of minor nature gods, saints and local hero gods. These are generally lumped together as the Civic Gods. There is a Civic Temple but many of the prominent Civic Gods also have individual temples.

The Civic Temple is the only temple not located in the religious quarter. Instead, it is located on the central square surrounding the Keep, along with the Grand Guildhall. It is a jumble of small shrines and altars, choked in the smoke of countless votive candles left by the faithful. This confusion makes it a common site for clandestine rendezvous.

## **Sculptors & Mechanics Guild**

Dyvers for all its industriousness is a very beautiful city. Part of that beauty is a result of the patronage of the arts by wealthy citizens. Sculpture of all kinds is extremely common. Elaborate fountains, waterclocks and aqueducts also grace the city. All of these works are the products of the Ancient and Honorable Order of Sculptors and Mechanics.

The Sculptors and Mechanics Guild is perhaps the most prominent in Dyvers. Its sculptors produce not just sculpture but numerous golems designed to serve many functions. Similarly, the mechanics produce complicated clockwork mechanisms that rival in function and surpass in flexibility, the sculptors' magic. It is not uncommon to meet with these marvels throughout the city. Greyhawk is justifiably proud of its notable wizards. Dyvers feels much the same about the Ancient and Honorable Order of Sculptors and Mechanics.

Little Guardians are one of the most frequently encountered types of golems. These sculptures of miniature animals and figures spring to life at an owner's command. Because of their small size their victim is at a -4 penalty to hit and they generally have an armor class between 4 and 0. Though the worst of them only do 1d6 points of damage a turn, they will not cease their attack until ordered to do so by their owner or destroyed. The most effective way to combat a Little Guardian is to remove any clothing or armor it has burrowed under and have a companion remove it. Of course, this is often all that is needed to allow the owner of the golem to get away.

Capture Spheres are golems whose possession is illegal for any but the Constabulary. About the size of a large orange, a capture sphere is thrown at a target and deploys automatically, expanding into a shape like that of a Lurker Above and encasing or binding the target. If desired, the Capture Sphere may be ordered to constrict with predictable results.

Many wealthy merchants and adventurers sport a unique mechanical weapon known as the adaptus. Shaped like a grapefruit sized sphere with a hollowed out grip, the adaptus has a series of small levers within the hollow. By merely pushing a desired lever, the Adaptus, much like a Swiss Army Knife, transforms into a particular type of weapon. The type of weapon an adaptus can transform into is determined at the time of construction. Generally, most adaptus have but two functions. More functions increase the cost. Rumors exist of Adaptus that can become hand held crossbows, weapons that can be thrown, only to return, and terrible slicing weapons that fight on their own. Generally, the damage from an Adaptus weapon is 2 points less than a standard weapon of a similar type.

The height of the Mechanics art is the Dyvers Homunculus. These are clockwork men and women that can perform programmed tasks that are determined upon manufacture. The more complicated or numerous the tasks, the more expensive the Homunculus. Generally, susceptible to immediate identification, there are rumors of Homunculi so cunningly constructed as to be able to pass as human. Still, more fantastic are the stories of such creatures that can perform any task or exertion a human being can, more skillfully and with greater strength. Of course, the stories of such creatures that have even begun to think for themselves is utter nonsense.

## **Note on Dyvers**

This view of Dyvers is somewhat at odds with the description given in the published materials. I find it hard to believe that Dyvers as written can be a serious rival to Greyhawk. Thus, I have made the city much more prosperous and formidable. The playing field is now more level, no more easy victories for team Greyhawk. I think this improves the possibilities for play.

P.S. No offense taken Psychlops:) I may be awhile answering your questions as I'm folder hopping right now but anyone else who wants to take a shot is more than welcome.

As a general comment on MB's posts, I think they and some of the other recent posts to which Psychlops refers are wonderful in that they explore WoG's possibilities. Frankly, what keeps me interested in WoG are its possibilities. The setting is not closed, even after FtA. To many other settings seem scripted for novels. Maybe, that is the age in which we game but I like the wide open spaces, filled with possibility. I like a designer who gives me details in profusion but leaves enough little things undone to allow me to go crazy. No setting does that better than WoG, though I continue the Birthright watch.

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# Oerth's Dwarves

By MB Drapier

Since the dwarves of Oerth have been in the air, so to speak, I thought I would contribute a series of posts on dwarf society, taking the dwarves of the Jotens and Crystalmists as a model. Once more, I repeat the caveats of other contributors in saying that these are suggestions only, meant to help DMs in developing quick dwarf holds, especially when they come up as random encounters in play. Take what is useful and ignore the rest. Nonetheless, I would appreciate any changes, emendations, or elaborations. :)

## Dwarf History and Legend

The greatest of all dwarves, according to dwarf lore, was and is Moradin or Motsognir, the dwarven tongue. This is loosely translated as "Soul-Forger," although "Soul-Singer" would be more accurate. Nevertheless, the folk of Moradin are so charmed by the music of the forge that their language makes no distinction between singing and forging/hammering. Moradin or Motsognir first made Durin, the first dwarven king, and all of Durin's host and ancestors, including the legendary King Dvalin, the first to wield the Axe of the Dwarvish Lords. As all dwarves are supposed to have originated on the same forge of Durin, they are all supposed to be potentially noble; still, the blood of Durin runs stronger in some than others, and these are the dwarf-kings, recognized by the priests of the Forge and accepted by the people. Durin's folk spread out in many directions, but Durin himself carved out the great holds of the Crystalmists.

The dwarves of the Crystalmists once ruled a great empire which fell during the Baklunish-Suloise wars, when the last Overking was killed and the Axe of the Dwarvish Lords was lost (DMG 1st ed. 156). After the Invoked Devastation, the clans were sundered and driven from their mountain holds by hordes of giants and humanoids, as well as internal strife. The clans wandered in many directions, some employed in the mercenary armies of struggling human warchiefs and others traveling far and wide to establish new holds in the Flanaess, encountering others of Durin's folk in their way. But many remained in the foothills of the Crystalmists, a convenient spot from which to mount raids into the mountains to regain the holds, or even established new holds in the mountains themselves, battling giants and humanoids by the thousands.

These battle-hardened veterans are sustained by a messianic vision that one day Durin will come again to lead his people to victory their enemies. This is more staunchly held by the superstitious mountain holders than the more practical hill holders, although even the hill holders occasionally support ventures into the mountains, relying on the messianic vision to inspire recruits

## Social and Economic Structure

The following notes are generalizations about hill holders, and variation between the holds may still be considerable.

Power among the dwarves is largely connected to the control of the valuable ore and mineral wealth of the mines. Rights to ore tend to be concentrated in the hands of the nobility, who lease it to the independent miners in return for a fee and military service. This is not as static a social structure as first appears, however, since any dwarf who discovers a new vein of ore is entitled to all the mining privileges of that discovery, and may lease it to others. Moreover, even though the distinction between dwarves of noble and non-noble blood keeps even the richest miners from buying nobility, there is considerable intermarriage between noble and non-noble dwarves (remembering that \*all\* dwarves are potentially noble), and so the class structure has a dynamic quality to it.

Many dwarves are called as artisans, although even the artisans do some work in the mines. The artisan is held in high esteem in the dwarf hold, particularly the smith and the stoneworker. Other tasks, such as weaving and stitching, are done at home. Dwarves of peculiar talent are placed in charge of the brewery, producing fine ale for the hold feasts.

Priests and professional warriors form two separate groups. The priests are dual-classed fighter/clerics, and the professional warriors in charge primarily of defense of the hold. Such a warrior eschews forever the joys of family or any other career, giving life and limb to the defense of Clan and the Earl-King. A warrior may rise in the ranks as a result of personal skill, and the captains are even allowed a voice in the Grand Council (q.v.). Likewise among the priests; the chief clerics speak in Council, and remain forever devoted to Clan and god.

Finally, there is the class of merchants. Each hold sponsors a market, open only to other dwarves. The great freeholders generally employ their own team of merchants to travel to nearby gnomish enclaves, or further afield to the lucrative human markets of Cryllor and Flen. But most independent miners and lesser freeholders find it more convenient to sell to professional merchants. The dwarves pay a fee for the use of the market, and the market funds are

then pooled to finance deeper delving, food and clothing for the hold, expeditions to found new holds, etc., all subject to the approval of the Grand Council and the Earl-King.

It should be noted that, noble or non-noble, dwarves hold many things in common. Take food, for example. Dwarves are fond of large, elaborate banquets, with spice cakes and honey mead and mushrooms and beans of all varieties and golden wheat cakes topped with creamy butter and sweet nectar wine and ale and, on occasion, fresh viands. Such feasts are held every day in the grand feast halls, and no dwarf ever goes hungry. These feasts are also times for the dwarves to discuss casual business matters, perform on their beautiful harps, drums, and flutes, or tell tales of prowess in arms. The life of the hold is a good life.

## **Dwarven Politics and Law**

As mentioned, dwarf society is governed by an Earl-King, who is advised by a Grand Council comprised of other freeholders, independent miners, artisans, the ranking priest, and the captains of the warrior class. All have one voice, even the greatest freeholders, but status in the hold often carries weight in Council. In a technical sense, the Council exists to advise the Earl-King, but traditionally the Earl-King acts on the Council's advice. Dwarf Councils can be loud, heady, even passionate affairs, though few humans have seen one in action.

All decisions, military or domestic, must be debated by the Council and approved by the Earl-King. Many times, the Council is the forum for mining disputes, which run the gamut from intricate to arcane. Since dwarves control entire veins of ore rather than mine avenues, complex feats of mathematics, engineering, and divination must be employed to determine where each vein starts and stops. Truthfully, the law itself is simple—it is the process of arriving at the truth which is complex. Occasionally, the Council hears a case involving fraud, in which a dwarf knowingly and willingly mines into an ore belonging to another. In these rare cases, punishment is always most severe, banishment from the hold usually being the rule.

Cases involving murder or injury are so rare as to be almost nonexistent, and in those cases the decision is in the hands of the Earl-King, who has some broad discretionary power. Conflicts between nobles arise mostly during periods of succession, and are solved sometimes by the founding of a new hold.

The class structure of the dwarves does not afford any dwarf any more status in matters of law and policy than another. The lowliest miner, if he or she is able to convince others on the Council, can carry the day. This is not to say that noble status is not on occasion coveted, especially by dwarven merchants. As in human societies, the merchants are extremely rich and ever mindful of increasing their status. The money they earn is often used to finance new delves, in a search for more ore, or even to found new holds. In both cases, the venture must be discussed in the Grand Council and approved by the Earl-King, and so thoughtless mining or indiscriminate colonial moves are not serious problems. Nonetheless, the richer a hold becomes, the more voice its merchants have, and the more careless mining and expansion goes on. Not a few of these holds have fallen as a result of their inhabitants delving too deep.

One final note on founding new holds: there have, at times, been holds founded independently, without the consent of any Council or the blessing of any hold in existence. This is perfectly permissible, but those independent holders do not enjoy the protection and support of a mother hold, and can either fall prey to humanoids or be absorbed into a more powerful hold nearby.

## **Dwarf Coalitions**

The various dwarf holds in the Stark Mounds, Good Hills, and Little Hills are knit together by a common treaty of interest called the Imperial Dwarf League, technically established to reclaim the lost holds of the mountains, but also acting to ensure the freedom of the holds from powerful humans to the east, and especially the kingdom of Keoland.

The Dwarf League, in consort with the Independent League of Dwarven Merchants, nevertheless sponsors raids on the lost mountain holds, awarding a standing bounty for humanoid ears. Keoland encourages this, and even sometimes finances expeditions designed to retake entire holds, however fated to failure. Here, the Keoish are crafty, for they will provide enough sponsorship to keep the effort alive, but not enough to mount a serious effort. The Keoish are quite happy to have the Dwarf League as a buffer against various marauding humanoids and giants from the mountains, but they don't want another powerful demi-human kingdom like the Ulek states hemming them in.

The Independent League of Dwarven Merchants allows dwarves to establish trade agreements with human market towns in Keoland, Sterich, the Yeomanry, and Geoff. Only licensed members of the League may be allowed to trade in the dwarf holds. These are the dwarves most frequently encountered in the human cities.

## **Adventurers/Holdless Dwarves**

Dwarves who become adventurers out of choice are not typical, being self-created outcasts of dwarven society. More common are the holdless dwarves who survive a massacre--these poor folk, embittered and cynical, generally wander as mercenaries or loners, ever seeking death in battle, bent on a revenge that can never be complete.

Most terrible is the dwarf warrior who loses his or her hold. These dwarves will join one of the groups of berserking dwarves who enter the mountain holds alone or in small groups, craving death. These folk may sometimes be encountered, but only singly or in groups of 2-5. They shun armor and act as berserks in all respects. If they see any creature with obvious humanoid blood (or even an ogrish-looking human), they will attack immediately and without warning.

This means that players may encounter the following types of dwarves: 1) merchants; 2) adventurers; 3) a group of colonists on their way to found a new hold; 4) dwarf mercenaries; 5) dwarf berserks; 6) dwarf hold army, on their way to raid a humanoid enclave. I hope that this might help facilitate encounters, and give more options for encounters with Oerth dwarves of the hills.

## **Mountain Holders**

Finally, mountain hold society is similar to society among the hill holders, with these exceptions.

First, mountain holders have a far more rigid class system--there is little if any intermarriage between independent miner and noble, the general rule being marriage between nobles of different holds.

Second, mountain holds tend to be discrete enclaves, with little sense of connection to other holds. More often than not a frontier mentality predominates at the mountain holds, and those few humans who have encountered the mountain dwarves of the western Flanaess insist that these dwarves tend toward the insane (a human reading of dwarven commitment). The mountain holds tend to be even more xenophobic than the hill holds.

Third, the mountain holders are radical Imperialists, believing fervently in the Coming of Durin and the retaking of the kingdom. They are altogether more passionate (for dwarves) than their hill cousins, given to bouts of moodiness, extravagant anger, deep love and devotion, and grandiose feelings of delight and agony.

Many is the dwarven merchant who has complained bitterly about the character of the mountain holders. They are impossible to do business with unless one has struck up a fast friendship, and friendships are only struck up from shared moments of extreme and life-threatening danger. Once the merchant has been accepted by the mountain holders, of course, he or she is on easy street--for mountain hold artisans, as mountain hold warriors, are superior in skill to their hill hold cousins, though fewer in number.

It need not be added that it would be suicidal to try to cheat a mountain holder....

Mountain hold scouts and armies might be added to the list of dwarf encounters in the previous post.

## **Ulek, Duergar and Derro, etc.**

This will be a short post, since I am spending a lot of time online and shouldn't be. :0

Indeed, the Principality of Ulek is more cosmopolitan (by human standards) than the western dwarf holds. In my campaign, the western dwarves consider their kin in Ulek to be "Mannish." Rich dwarves from Ulek and the Lortmils will often support thrusts into the Crystalmists because of the great magic and wealth that can be recovered. I have also changed the style of dwarf hold in Ulek--the cliff city rather than the mountain hold being the dominant building. The cliff cities are far more open than the mountain and hill holds of the west, with halflings, dwarves, humans, and even elves visiting. I don't have the time now to post all my stuff on Ulek, as I'm working on stuff on gnomes and halflings of the hills. Perhaps someone else will oblige.... :)

As far as duergar and derro, I haven't yet worked up an elaborate history. Duergar in my own campaign were implicated in the fall of the Empire and the sundering of the clans. Their origin is in dwarven prehistory, and probably has to do with both dynastic strife and the inclination of the dwarves to head ever deeper into the earth. They are a wandering folk, and fierce opponents, although not organized on a grand scale like the drow.

The derro I have associated with the Suloise Empire; they are dwarves who were basically sold on evil magic, and who are now mainly encountered among the ruins of the ancient Suel cities. They have been wholly changed and corrupted by evil, especially that of the artifact of Tharizdun.

It would be very nice to see someone else pick up the threads and weave them into a coherent pattern, or heck, even get some new yarn and take Ulek, duergar, and derro in a different direction. :D

## **Final Explanations**

These ideas on dwarf society come from a number of sources. In my account of the legends and history of the dwarves, I drew freely from Old Icelandic saga (which was also one of Tolkien's sources), and in my account of their

culture and laws recreated a kind of utopian Norse/Anglo-Saxon/free market/communist society. Only the best of contradictory worlds.

Some of what I have done has also been adapted from Warhammer--the GW people seem, like myself, fond of dwarves, and I have used some of their ideas about dwarven empires, nobility, and berserk warriors. I hope that you find some of this useful.

## Instant Greyhawk Campaigns

By Aria13

### Instant Greyhawk Campaigns/Part 1

With mention of the Temple of Elemental Evil, and lurkers, I thought it might be nice to present to those unfamiliar with WoG or otherwise lurking an easy way to get started. Going through my collection of stuff and cross checking with local hobby stores, one mail order house (Wargames West) and TSR's online catalog, I've come up with a list of WoG products that are still available and which I feel I can recommend. I've organized these products into three groups. Each group can be run as a campaign, complete in itself from 1st level to about 12th to 15th level. You can also cut and paste all three groups for The Instant Ultimate Greyhawk Campaign. Before talking about these campaigns, I should stress that these represent only WoG materials that are currently available. There is a lot of older stuff that is not included because it is not generally available and will be harder to find. This is the easy stuff.

**Runabout Campaign:** This is the easiest and cheapest way to get into WoG. You only need to buy two products. First, you will need the World of Greyhawk boxed set. THIS IS NOT FROM THE ASHES! Do not confuse the two. If the product says From The Ashes, it is not what you are looking for. Second, you will need a module called the Fate of Istus.

The World of Greyhawk boxed set will give you all the details about the World of Greyhawk. You will need them because the Fate of Istus takes PCs all around Greyhawk visiting different cities and countries. In each city, there is an adventure. If you play through FoI, characters will start at 1st level and progress to around 12th level. The neat thing about this campaign is that it is cheap but also that it gets the PCs moving around the setting. By the time you are done, PCs will know a good deal about WoG. Fate of Istus is very good in this respect because it gives you very atmospheric descriptions and information on each city before beginning the adventure. As a historical note, FoI was the module that brought 1st Edition WoG into 2d Edition.

**Classics Campaign:** Only a little more expensive than the Runabout Campaign, the Classics Campaign requires you to buy only three products, though the World of Greyhawk boxed set, mentioned above, is highly recommended. First, you will want the Temple of Elemental Evil module. Second, you will want the Scourge of the Slave Lords module. Third, you will want the Queen of Spiders module.

This is the classic WoG campaign, bringing together some of the first AD&D modules ever released but nicely updated. This is a grand campaign of epic proportion. It begins with Temple of Elemental Evil, a dungeon adventure, that rivals FR's Undermountain, but which also has town and wilderness areas attached. TEE takes place west of the City of Greyhawk by several hundred miles. From there, Scourge of the Slave Lords picks up as the PCs fight slavers along the Wild Coast and into the Pomarj, south of Greyhawk by several hundred miles. Finally, Queen of the Spiders brings the PCs up against giants, drow and Lolth on her home plane. It doesn't get much more epic.

This campaign is the classic AD&D campaign. TSR has never published a more grand scale campaign than this one. It takes characters from 1st through 15th+ level and encompasses a huge dungeon, wilderness adventures, one of the best town adventures ever published and a planar adventure in Lolth's Web Pits in the Abyss.

Historically, this was the first appearance of Lolth ANYWHERE. It was the first appearance of the Drow ANYWHERE. And it was the first planar adventure ANYWHERE. Historic and epic. What more do you want?

### Instant Greyhawk Campaigns/Part 2

**City of Greyhawk Campaign:** The City of Greyhawk is located in the center of the setting and is the home of many NPCs important to the World of Greyhawk. The City, however, was only developed in game products fairly recently. You will need five products to run this campaign, through again the World of Greyhawk boxed set is recommended.

First, you will need the City of Greyhawk boxed set. This is an in-depth look at the city and the surrounding area. Included in the box are several adventures of various levels that are easy to run.

Second, third and fourth, you will need the Falcon Series of modules. Falcon's Revenge, Falcon Master and Flames of the Falcon are the three modules in the series and were designed to be run with the City of Greyhawk boxed set. They form a complete city campaign set in the City of Greyhawk.

Fifth, Ruins of Greyhawk is another useful product that describes the ruins of old Castle Greyhawk, just outside the City walls. This is a major dungeon and ruined castle complex that can take characters from 1st to 12th level.

Combined, these three products provide an in depth campaign centered in the City of Greyhawk. Many of the adventures in the boxed set are wilderness adventures. The Falcon series takes place in the city and the Ruins of Greyhawk is a dungeon adventure.

Taking all of the above products together, you can run a WoG campaign that will last for years. Despite the fact that WoG is no longer in print, the above named products are still commonly available in hobby stores or through mail order. You do not need to pay scalper prices for any of them.

Two other available products that can be used to expand any or all of the above campaigns are the Treasures of Greyhawk anthology of adventures and the Greyhawk Adventures hardback that provides information on unique spells, NPCs, mysterious sites etc.

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## Starting in Saltmarsh

By Iquander

Know then that it is the month of Reaping in the 576th reckoning of the Common Year. Three weeks ago, the town of Seaton, some distance to the north, was sacked by three ships of seagoing brigands. These men arrived in the night without warning and set the town ablaze, abducting those they could not kill. The fear of the residents of Seaton was great, for the marauder's ships bore sails of yellow, the mark of a ring of slavers that has, of late, terrorized the coasts of the Sea of Gearnat, many leagues to the north.

Hundreds of citizens managed to survive the onslaught, though no organized defense had been put into play. The slavers simply arrived in the darkness, took their prizes, and left, the wooden buildings of the waterfront smoldering in their path.

Many of the survivors fled south and west to the small fishing village of Saltmarsh. There, they sold what possessions they had been able to carry and bought horses or passage to Burle, a large town to the north, near the immense Dreadwood Forest. Some of these refugees, however, chose to remain in the village, hoping that the pirates had gotten their fill with unlucky relatives and neighbors.

Saltmarsh, however, was scarcely prepared to deal with hundreds of refugees. The price of horseflesh nearly doubled in the days following the raid and the village ran short of many necessary products. Local free farmers have been forced to send much of their surplus to the village by writ of the mayor and Erolin Timertikos, Lord of Saltmarsh. As this decree cut down on the amount of food and goods the farmers would ordinarily trade with the elves of the Dreadwood or the populace of Burle, tensions flared.

Response to the raid on behalf of the government of Keoland has been mixed. Though no military aid has been sent (due to a humanoid uproar near the capital), a small group of priests of Pelor have been dispatched from Burle to assist with the refugees. It is said that King Skotti has heard of the sack of Seaton, but few report any official reaction on behalf of the monarch. Most expect a small detachment of fighting men, but as of yet, no one has arrived. For the time being, it seems, the slavers remain strictly a local problem.

In light of this fact, the five-member town council, the mayor and Timertikos have conducted several closed-session meetings on the matter. Though no one knows what exactly has been discussed, a few questions have surely arisen.

First, the yellow sails of the slavers ships immediately suggest the organized slavery ring currently operating to the north. If this raid were indeed their doing, it would be the southernmost raid yet and the first against the people of Keoland. Though surprising, this is not entirely unlikely. The Hold of the Sea Princes, some hundred miles to the south of Saltmarsh, remains one of the few civilized nations of the Flanaess to retain the abominable practice of slavery, and it is likely that it's nobles are among the yellow-sailed slavers' primary customers. Though no connection between Keoland's southern neighbors and the criminal organization has ever been proven, many see it as likely.

But the Sea Princes have been docile ever since the events following the Siege of Westkeep over one hundred years ago and direct aggression against a vastly more powerful neighbor seems foolish at best. If, then, the recent

marauding is not the fault of Sea Princes-funded slavers, who is to blame? In the days following the nefarious deed, many have asked that question, for blame seems to soothe the soul.

## Starting in Saltmarsh II

The Council of Saltmarsh is hardly in a position to send espionage teams across the Hool Marsh in order to discover if the fault lies there. Such a journey, given the harsh conditions of the swamps, would surely spell the doom for all involved. Furthermore, many, if not all, of the seafaring vessels of Seaton were set aflame during the conflict and the captains of the few deep seaworthy ships in the village's small harbor refuse to set sail, in fear of losing their craft to the better equipped slavers. Indeed, there seems little the government and people of Saltmarsh can do save wait, and hope that the yellow-sailed ships do not return.

Well, that's the set up for my current campaign, and so far I'd say it's worked marvelously. I've developed several dozen NPCs, including the entire Town Council, the Lord of Saltmarsh and several other folks who now make the village their home.

The players each have chosen a different past. One is unrelated to the area, one was a foppish member of the upper-middle class of Seaton, now without wealth or family, and the third a fledgling bard who has called Saltmarsh his home since birth. Together, they have chosen to investigate the ruins of Seaton. A request on behalf of the ranking priest of Pelor, now stationed in Saltmarsh, set them on a search for a reliquary that had been in the small temple to Pelor in Burle. He explains that this "artifact" is in fact a portion of a finger from the long dead prophet Al'ib Kahlm, said to be the man gifted with the *Cup* and *Talisman of Al' Akbar*.

They also get assistance from a cloth merchant in town named Dircroft Cronan, who seems to have a great deal of interest in bringing these slavers to justice. He offers them a 500 gp reward if they can find out important information regarding the brigands.

So, they set off to Seaton, but not before the lord's son (a twelve year old named Talin), bugs them about accompanying him to investigate the mysterious "haunted house" a few miles out of town. The blow him off, of course, and set off for Seaton. There, they get into a whole lot of trouble with a half-orc and his band of humanoids who have taken up residence in the home of the former lord after being driven by a group of adventurers from their cave-home in the Dreadwood Forest. The leader of these creatures has the relic, and he's willing to bargain for it.

So, off goes the party to the cavern, where they meet a more or less generic party of adventurers who seem to think the best orc is the kind dangling from the end of a spear. They brag to the party about how they killed the women and little baby orcs and are generally not very nice at all. Eventually, an agreement is struck (to go into the entire story would take several posts) and the party gets the cavern free. Once they turn it over to the half-orc, they get the relic and go back to Saltmarsh.

There they meet with Cronan, hand over the goods to the priests and get bugged by young Talin yet again. They later set off to Burle to deliver a sealed message for Cronan to a friend living there. And, more or less, that's where the campaign is currently. Perhaps you see where this is going.

The module mentioned a merchant who had been paying a smuggler, one Sanbalet, to bring in stolen goods through a deception in which they would throw a bunch of illusions on an old bluff-top house. This suited Sanbalet just fine, but his colleague and captain of the Sea Ghost, one Sigurd "SnakeEyes" found a way to get more money for his difficulties. So, along with two other ships, Sigurd hoisted the yellow sail and set off for Seaton.

## Starting in Saltmarsh III

What makes this interesting is the fact that Cronan, though evil, never wanted any of this to happen. The destruction of Seaton destroyed one of his major markets and has put an extraordinary strain on his entire operation. Sigurd, pretending to be afraid of the slavers that might still be lurking at the horizon, has demanded more gold in compensation. Cronan is a desperate man. Hence, the reward.

When the party returns from Burle, all of Saltmarsh will be abuzz regarding the fact that Talin Timertikos has gone missing. None of the residents of the village seem to know where he could have gone. Perhaps the PCs have some idea? If played correctly, this could give the PCs an enormous amount of guilt. Of course, they will discover the ruse at the haunted house and Sanbalet and his operation. Imagine Cronan's surprise when he learns that he is in part responsible for the destruction of Seaton. . .

This done, and Talin still not found, the Lord of Saltmarsh will demand (well, he may just ask firmly) that the PCs do whatever they can to find his son. Sanbalet will mention the Sea Ghost. They will venture there, almost exactly in the manner described in the module, and do battle with the captain. When investigating the hold, they are sure to discover the nicely folded sails of yellow and nautical charts leading to the city of Highport, far to the north....

And it goes on from there. Are the Slavers responsible for the attacks? They'll just have to go to the Pomarj and find out themselves. One thing's for sure, though. When they do, I certainly won't just let them "appear" at the open temple to Groomsh....

Iquander

PS: The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh is not as readily available nowadays as perhaps the Temple of Elemental Evil, but you should be able to find it for under five bucks in a used bin (curses upon any game store that doesn't have one of these). As is pretty obvious, it needs some work, but that's just the fun of it.

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End of Best of Greyhawk #1  
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