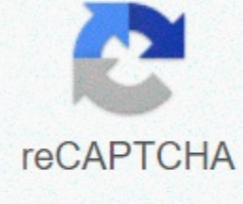




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found by the Ulondarr Clan, Semberholme has always remained a community free of political and social turmoil. The city and its surrounding communities form what has come to be known as the Council of Trees, the closest thing Semberholme has to a ruling body. Though each member of the council is considered equal, many consider the Ulondarr clan to be one of the few to have the true prosperity of Semberholme at heart, gaining them the most respect out of all clans on the council. Vesperr Ulondarr (LG, moon elf, F10M/9), elder of the Ulondarr clan, is the leader of the council. Though conservative and overprotective, Vesperr's decisions prove to be popular among all the clans of Semberholme. He is often considered to be the "high advisor" of the council, and all moon elves (and a large number of gold elves) tend to back Vesperr's decisions. The greens, of all the elves of Semberholme, tend to disagree with Vesperr and his supporters the most. Most of the resolutions the Council of Trees proclaim deal with the expansion of Semberholme, the encroachment of humans, the duties of the Moonshadows, and civil relations (when needed) with other elven communities in Cormanthyr. Outside of Semberholme, individual clans typically are the driving force of the smaller communities. However, many of the moon (and some of the less haughty gold elves) often come to the Ulondarr clan for advice prior to presenting problems to the Council of Trees. Geography Semberholme is surrounded by some of the thickest foliage in Cormanthyr. Not wishing to live in a world of near-darkness, many of the communities have built high into trees to receive more sunlight. To the elves of Cormanthyr, however, this is more of an asset than a liability. The high density of this immediate forest continues for a rough radius of 10 miles north of Semberholme and Lake Sember. In some cases even the most astute elf has to look twice to see tree dwellings through the thick foliage. The trees of Semberholme (as well as many of the surrounding communities) consist mainly of oak trees and enormous maples that rival or often surpass their oaken brethren. Typical tree dwellings are built in one of these two types of trees because of their strength and height from the forest floor. In some of the less dense areas west and south of the city there are groves of spruce and hemlock. The rich soil of the Semberholme woods often leads to patches of extremely dense underbrush, making overland travel difficult. In many places it is easier to travel via the trees, as their dense growth makes walking from one tree to another easy for the dexterous elves. The jungle-like canopy of these dense trees and the lack of sun often produces a thick gray mist across the forest floor for most of the day in Semberholme. Outside the city this is usually accompanied by humid air, lichen, mosses, and a mushy peat covering large patches of the forest floor. The limestone caves beneath the city and much of the forests of Semberholme are used primarily as havens for the elves in case of attack. The caves are kept free of monsters and other dangers by the Moonshadows. The caves more often serve as training facilities for young warriors and educational studies for priests and mages than as a refuge. Still, large stores of food, water, and other necessities are stored there in case of attack. Some of the caves also connect to Lake Sember via underground streams. This is a bonus to the Alu'Tel'Qessir, who use the large pools in said caves as a place to raise their young for the first few months of their lives. Isolated underground pools near Lake Sember are heated by hot springs, and provided an excellent environment for the young aquatic elves. At the request of the Council of Trees, members of the Moonshadows are posted at the surface entrances to any caves containing Alu'Tel'Qessir young. This helps further cement relations between two races of elves. Magic Like the rest of Cormanthyr, magic plays an important part in Semberholme society. Though no mythals were ever laid Semberholme • 89 upon the city of Semberholme (or any of its outlying communities), powerful wards were cast to assist the Moonshadows in their protection of the populace. Such ward spells, known as sigil wards, work to keep nonelves, including violent creatures such as giant owlbears, from wandering into elven communities. For those who knew where to look, these wards are often carved on trees and stone as part of the material component of the spell. When one of these protective wards is encountered the affected creature slowly begins to turn and move away from the city without knowledge of their change in direction. Such effects are automatic in harmful creatures of less than average intelligence and those with fewer than five hit dice. All others are allowed a saving throw versus spells to avoid the effect. An additional effect of the wards is to alert the caster (typically the High Mage of Semberholme, see below) that someone has bypassed their wards. Members of the Moonshadows are then summoned to deal with this rare occurrence. All wizards in Semberholme, be they citizens, visitors, or members of the Moonshadows, report to the High Mage of Semberholme upon their arrival by order of the Coronal. For 1,000 years, the High Mage of Semberholme was the moon elf Entrydal Fflannidan (NG, mn elf, W23). Unlike other high mages of Cormanthyr, Entrydal belongs to no clan and has no ties or commitments to any family. Like Daratine Xantrani of the Moonshadows, his sole purpose is the defense of forests and citizens of Semberholme by order of the Coronal. The High Mage of Semberholme also is in charge of the School of Magic by decree of the Coronal. The duties of the High Mage of Semberholme include maintaining the sigil wards surrounding the city and various communities, assisting the Moonshadows when need be, and dealing with other matters of a magical nature as they arise in the territory. The High Mage also sees to the maintaining of the magical gate linking Semberholme to Myth Drannor and Old Elven Court, located in the temple of Corellon Larethian (see below). Entrydal also maintains a group of three apprentices who help with the administration of magic throughout Semberholme, along with frequent magical journeys to Old Elven Court and Myth Drannor for innumerable reasons known only to the High Mage and select others. Entrydal is already an old elf during his tenure, his true age being known only to him. He is a typical moon elf, though his magical responsibilities often cause him to distance himself from the general populace. Contrary to this, Entrydal is often seen playing with elven children, performing sleight-of-hand tricks for their amusement. His High Magic and his duty consume him. The High Mage Entrydal and the high advisor of the Council of Trees, Vesperr Ulondarr, have an excellent relationship. Rumors abound that Entrydal is actually a member of the Ulondarr family, though he is rumored to be more than four millennia old and few know if this is true. It is also rumored that Entrydal and Vesperr together secretly lure Semberholme from the shadows, despite the decrees of the Council of Trees and the Coronal. Many of these rumors are spread by 90 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves jealous gold elves, and never within the confines of Semberholme itself. Teachings For the families that do not leave Semberholme shortly after the birth of their children, or for those who have chosen to live there permanently, educating the young elves is a concern. While many of the outlying cities have smaller education centers, the major focus of all studies in Semberholme occur within the city itself. Higher levels of education at Semberholme compel parents to send their children there instead of studying at home. From the age of 10 until their 60th year elves are considered to be children. It is during this time they are taught what it is to be an elf in the great nation of Cormanthyr. This includes studies in weapon skills (swordplay and archery), artistic talents, and sociological studies. Over the years teachers begin to encourage the youth to pursue whatever talent they appear most proficient in as a profession. In Semberholme the teaching of youth is handled by a combination of different instructors, depending on the age of the elves. The youngest of elves are often tutored by the elderly of Semberholme, benefiting from their centuries of experience and at the same time making the elder elves feel they're contributing to the community. Much of their teaching consists of the telling of elven history, legends, and knowledge of the current world of Faerûn and how it affects Cormanthyr. Most elven youth learn how to read and write prior to the age of 10. After the age of 20, students learn from members of the elder community, family members present in Semberholme, and a few skilled artisans and instructors from Myth Drannor. The latter are often there at the request of various gold elf clans, ensuring their children receive the best education possible. Since education is by law not exclusive in the city of Semberholme, moon elves (and a smattering of green elves over the years) benefit from that education as well. Until the age of 50 young elves are considered to be impressionable, and great attention is spent for their education at this time. By the time a young elf approaches his fifth decade, his family and teachers have a good idea of how the youth's skills have developed and how best he can best benefit the clan. Occasionally a young elf's "profession" is a dictate of his clan, with elders of the clan instructing teachers to mold the youth in a certain way as to reach a certain plateau later in life. This is done most often by gold elf clans and occasionally by the moon elves, while the few greens present are more concerned with the young elf's wishes. Resources The material needs of Semberholme are met in several ways. What the elves cannot gain from the surrounding woods they import either from Myth Drannor or Old Elven Court. Things such as food (primarily meat, berries, fish, and roots) are easily gathered from the forest in moderate quantities, but other items such as lumber, quarried stone, exotic foods, and miscellaneous goods are brought in from other sources. With the growth in population and the admittance of nonelves to Myth Drannor, several gold elf clans migrating to Semberholme and surrounding communities took it upon themselves to make Semberholme more self-sufficient. This was accomplished by taking a little more from the forest (stone from the caves, foodstuffs and wood from the forest, etc.) than in previous years, supported by the large coffers of the haughty gold elves. In the years following its inception, the security of Semberholme became apparent to the rest of Cormanthyr. Its strategic location and superior handling by the clans eventually led Coronal Eitarrigm to declare the city and surrounding communities to be the refuge of Cormanthyr in case of war. This declaration occurred in the Year of Clouds (-200 DR), primarily due to the onset of violent human and humanoid encroachment at Cormanthyr's borders. This led to the creation of the magical gate at the Temple of Corellon and their eventual devotion to healing magic. Semberholme has been used seldom in this role, and all elves hope that remains a truth forever. Each of the duties above have a temple of some sort in Semberholme or close by. By far the largest patronage belongs to Corellon Larethian, followed by Labelas Enoreth, Hanali Celanil, and Deep Sashesla (by the Alu'Tel'Qessir, but not exclusively). Only the High Priest of the temple of Corellon Larethian has a say in the affairs of Semberholme, having a seat on the Council of Trees. The followers of Solonor Thelendara tend to be members of the Moonshadows, since archery is a large portion of their defense of the forests of Semberholme. Many of the others are present in Semberholme primarily due to the education of elven youths, which over the years add more members to their congregations. Of the non-evil gods listed above, only Erevan Ilesere (The Trickster) and Fenmarel Marstare (The Lone Wolf) do not have active temples in the city of Semberholme. Being the patron of mischief and rogues, Erevan's worshippers have more of a place in Myth Drannor than Semberholme. Though he's not banned, those in Semberholme see no need to venerate him. As for Fenmarel, his worshippers have no reason to partake in what Semberholme has to offer, preferring to follow their own supposed "destinies" than to be tied to the elven community. Followers of the Lone Wolf often find more solace with the budding throes of humanity or the most isolated regions of Faerûn than with their own kind. Temples & Religion Travel Since the avatar of Corellon Larethian himself was said to have blessed this forest and declared it a place of peace for the elves, all those living in Semberholme and its environs hold all elven religion, regardless of individual gods, in the highest regard. Certain clans have devoted themselves to a specific god, while others tend to pay minor tribute to all the elven gods recognized in Semberholme (but not necessarily Cormanthyr on the whole). The following gods are recognized in Semberholme with temples and respectable followings: There are four methods of travel to and from Semberholme: magic, air, the trees, and overland. Of the four, travel by moving from tree to tree is the most popular in the treedwelling community, with the exception of the elderly. Outside the confines of cities and villages, traveling above the forest floor is the best way to avoid harmful creatures as well as to leave few traces of passage. The density of the Semberholme woods make this travel mode easier than in other portions of Cormanthyr. It's thought that an agile elf could move from one end of Semberholme to the other in the trees. Few Refuges • Corellon Larethian (The Protector), patron of Magic, Music, Arts, Crafts, and War. Symbol: crescent moon •Aerdrie Faenya (Winged Mother), patron of Air, Weather, and Avians. Symbol: cloud with the silhouette of a bird • Deep Sashesla (Sailor's Friend), patron of Creation, Knowledge, Beauty, Magic, and Sea Elves. Symbol: dolphin • Hanali Celanil (The Heart of Gold), patron of Love, Romance, and Beauty. Symbol: heart of gold •Labelas Enoreth (The Philosopher), patron of Time and Longevity. Symbol: setting sun •Rillifane Rallathil (The Wild One), patron of the Wilderness and Wild Elves. Symbol: great oak tree • Seahanie Moonboon (Daughter of the Night Skies), patron of Mysticism, Dreams, Death, Journeys, and Transcendence. Symbol: full moon, moonbow •Solonor Thelendara (Keen-Eye), patron of Archery and Hunting. Symbol: silver arrow with green fletching Semberholme • 91 Outside of the Moonshadows have ever accomplished this feat, however. In this age of High Magic and powerful wizards, traveling through the forests of Cormanthyr is often accomplished by using spells. However, travel spells in and out of the city are, for the most part, regulated by the High Mage of Semberholme. Magical travel to and from the city is done via the gate at the temple of Corellon Larethian. Individual mages of respectable skill can come and go as they please, but the courtesy of contacting the High Mage in advance is often observed. Though infrequent in Semberholme, travel via winged mounts is not uncommon. By command of the Coronal, the Moonshadows maintain a corral of four pegasi to be used in cases of emergency. Hence, up to 20 (but not less than a dozen) members of the Moonshadows are trained in aerial riding at any one time. Semberholme also maintains an additional corral for visiting aerialists, be they other pegasi or griffin riders from Myth Drannor. Horses and other land-based mounts are never used in Semberholme due to the thick foliage. Semberholme Sites The following are a few locations of importance found within the city of Semberholme. These locations can be placed anywhere in Semberholme, but smaller dwellings tend to be located near the edge of the settlement. Elderly Ground Dwellings: For those too infirm to live in the trees, or those with no other family in the city, Semberholme has ground dwellings. These structures, some of the only ground buildings in Semberholme, are elegant structures magically crafted from marble or polished granite. Each structure, depending on its size, houses up to five elves unless their clan has paid to have a separate structure built. The linking factor between all ground dwellings is they are never far from entrances to the underground limestone caves. Hall of Trees: This grand arboreal dwelling serves as both a common hall for the residents of Semberholme and as a meeting place for the Council of Trees. Not as far from the ground as other tree structures, the Hall of Trees is the largest of all tree structures in Semberholme. Though not elaborate at first, the Hall of Trees has become the object of creativity for many young artists practicing their trade. Several weather clans with young artisans donated precious metals and jewels to show off the skills of their young. Though not as exalted as some of the structures of Myth Drannor, citizens of Semberholme view it as a crowning achievement to their dedication to the youth of Cormanthyr. High Mage of Semberholme: Though unremarkable when compared to the tree dwellings surrounding it, the home of the Entrydal Fflannidan is far from ordinary. The High Mage's residence is guarded by powerful spells, the passwords to which are known only to him and a few select apprentices. Other portions of the building, those containing secrets and treasures, are warded against all but Entrydal. The interior of the structure is twice as large as the exte- 92 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves rior, resulting from a variation on a distance distortion spell that actually affects physical matter. This also makes the residence large enough for some the High Mage's apprentices, those more advanced in the Art, to room with him. Others (if any) live in a small structure nearby. The Moonshadows: This structure appears as the least elegant of all elven buildings in Semberholme. The primary headquarters of the Moonshadows is a military outpost/barracks than a structure of refinement and cultural beauty. Though of medium size when compared to other structures in Semberholme, the center of operations for the military group is the highest tree dwelling in the city. This building is a central focus for the Moonshadows's military operations rather than a place to eat and sleep during off hours. More often than not the building is nearly deserted, members of the Moonshadows being scattered throughout the forests of the territory. However, there is always a group of at least a dozen Moonshadows found within Semberholme, including the group's administrator Triandal Silveroak (LG, mn elf, F9W/10). In addition to seeing to the day-to-day drudgery of the military, Triandal uses his magic to stay in contact with members of the Moonshadows across Cormanthyr. Outside of the School of Arms, Semberholme's base for the Moonshadows has the largest cache of weapons in the city. Unlike the School of Arms, many of the Moonshadows' weapons (including armor and other items) possessed magical enchantments of up to +5. This made the Moonshadows one of the best-equipped forces in Cormanthyr. School of Arms: Swordplay, archery, unarmed combat, and other forms of warfare are taught diligently in and around this large tree dwelling. Second in size only to the Hall of Trees, the School of Arms is supervised by some of the most prominent warriors in Cormanthyr over the years. These instructors are typically officers in the Cormanthyran military whose families relocated to Semberholme because of births among their children. Instructors serve terms as long as 20 years before returning to their clan. Over the centuries there has never been a shortage of instructors for the School of Arms. Many officers from both Myth Drannor, Old Elven Court, and even Tangled Vale look upon the task as a method of molding the skills of young warriors that may one day serve under their command. Probably the most celebrated instructor of the School of Arms is Captain Fflar of Myth Drannor. Fflar came to Semberholme with his wife to give birth to their first child in the Year of Seven Sons (335 DR), remaining for eight years before returning to the City of Song. Since then, prominent students of the school have be referred to as "Fflarrens," a tribute to the most skilled instructor to walk its halls. Every type of weapon used by the elves of Cormanthyr (and a few exotic weapons from far off lands) can be found in the School of Arms. Few of them are magical, since impetuous students often "borrowed" these items, which more often than not resulted in their loss. There also is the popular argument that weapon skills should be taught without the aid of magic, to sharpen students' expertise at an early age. School of Arts: Elven philosophy, music, song, and assorted artistic skills are a primary part of elven culture in Cormanthyr. While there have been places elsewhere that were more learned, none devotes more time to educating young elves in said skills than Semberholme's School of Arts. Like the School of Arms, this institute has many different instructors, depending on their residency in the city. For many Semberholme's School of Arts has become a place for elderly artisans to pass on their knowledge before departing for Arvandor. The School of Arts has been heavily supported by the gold elf clans of Orbryn and Echor in the years following the Year of Awakening Magic (212 DR). This is primarily due to the presence of humans and humanoids in Myth Drannor. To many gold elves Semberholme became the last place they could bring their children for a purely "elven" education. School of Magic: Given the elf's high aptitude for magic, all youths spend a minimum of one year at the School of Magic whether or not they are destined to become wizards. This is done primarily by moon and gold elves; few green or aquatic elves ever set foot in the school. Here young elves learn the basics of magic and determine if they have any aptitude for the Art. For many years the School of Magic has been presided over by Entrydal Fflannidan and his numerable apprentices. Prior to that minor magics of resident clans would oversee the school, but this became a tool for clan wizards (mostly golds) to uncover potentially powerful high mages at a young age and add them to their clans later via arranged marriages. When the Coronal discovered this, the High Mage became the sole officiate of the school. School of Youth: Not all schools in Semberholme are for education. Like many races (though elves hate the comparison), children need time to have a "childhood." This is where the School of Youth came into play. Here elves can have fun interacting with other elves (racial barriers aside), learn history through the artistic storytelling of the elderly, and at the same time learn beneficial skills such as climbing, swimming, and learning of the animals and plants of the forest. Prior to the age of 20 (or until their parents depart Semberholme), young elves spend considerable time at this school. Beyond that, much of their time is spent at the other institutes, to learn some of the more advanced teachings they need for adulthood. The school is run by parents (usually female) and local elderly who take great joy in the shaping of young elves. There has never been a shortage of tutors for this school. Of the three, the School of Youth is the only one that is not a tree dwelling. Instead it's nestled among the ground dwellings, close to the safety of the limestone caves. Storehouses: All the necessities of Semberholme (fresh water, foodstuffs, etc.) are stored in these structures as winter rations (as well as extra supplies for year-round needs). There are three major storehouses: one ground dwelling, one tree dwelling, and the third found in the limestone caves beneath Semberholme. The duty of maintaining, stocking, and protecting these storehouses falls to the Ulondarr clan. To aid in this the Ulondarr trained cooshee (elven hounds) as guard animals, even for the storehouse far above the forest floor. While friendly to all the elves of Semberholme, the cooshees are fierce if anyone outside the Ulondarr clan tries to access the storehouses. Each structure has from three to ten of the creatures guarding it at any one time. Temple of Corellon: Much like Corellon's marble tower in Arvandor, Semberholme's temple to The Protector is a beautiful spire of alabaster that reaches high into the trees. Located at the center of the city, the temple to Corellon is the largest ground structure in Semberholme. The clergy of Corellon is the largest in Semberholme, its numbers ranging from 20-40 at any given time and consisting of both genders. The prelate of the temple, from The Year of the Gilded Sky (400 DR) until the present day, is the ancient elf Glorandal Agayous (LG, gld elf, P18), who's considered to be the most powerful and influential elven priest in all of Cormanthyr. The parents of elven children in Semberholme often send their young children to the Temple of Corellon, even if they are not devout worshippers of the creator of the elves. Most of these lessons are presented by Glorandal himself for youth from the ages of 15 to 20. Gold, moon, and a few aquatic elven families feel that, because Corellon is the leader of the elven gods and is said to be the father of the elven race, he should be revered by all in Cormanthyr. Aside from its strong spiritual presence, the Temple of Corellon houses the High Magic gate that links Semberholme to both Myth Drannor and Old Elven Court. The gate can be activated only through the combined spells of a priest of Corellon and a High Mage. The temple of Corellon is the foremost healing temple in all of Cormanthyr, and the magical gate is used in cases of medical emergencies. The gate can transport any number of elves from Corellon's temples in Myth Drannor or Old Elven Court as long as those who open the gate maintain their concentration. Temple of Labelas: This temple is set in the lower branches of a great oak tree on the northern edge of Semberholme. Many female elves come to Semberholme to bear children, and they often seek the blessings of Labelas to insure their children not only survive but live a long and prosperous life. Some of the elderly of Semberholme also seek out the temple, but for other reasons. Many arrive there seeking information on the call to Arvandor, confused about whether they should end their existence on this plane and answer the call to the mystical elven realm. The clergy of Labelas in Semberholme has never numbered more than five since its inception in The Year of Old Crowns (-91 DR). The high priestess of this following is Alloralla the Everlasting (CG, gld elf, P12), an ageless elf rumored to be over three millennia old because of her devotion to Labelas. Tree of Knowledge: Near the center of city, not far from the Temple of Corellon, is the largest tree in all of Semberholme—The Tree of Knowledge. This ancient oak has stood tall and proud since the coming of Corellon's avatar thousands of years ago, and is said to be a vessel for the great Semberholme • 93 god's spirit when he wishes to look upon his children in Semberholme. Aside from being an enormous tree (with a 50-foot diameter), there appears to be nothing extraordinary about it at first glance. The tree emanates no detectable magical or spiritual power that anyone has been able to find. Nevertheless, many rumors and legends surround the Tree of Knowledge. The one most widely believed is that the large oak is the father of all treats in the woods of Cormanthyr. Should the Tree of Knowledge ever perish, the treats would not rest until every elf in Faerûn was dead. Another legend says the spirit of all trees in Cormanthyr is held within this one oak. If it were to die, then all the trees in Cormanthyr would perish. The Tree of Knowledge gained its name hundreds of years ago, when it became apparent that elven children paid more attention to their teachers and retained more information when sitting beneath the great oak. Some of the most important lessons taught to the young elves of Semberholme are learned beneath the Tree of Knowledge. Also, elven wizards have often stated that they've reduced the study time for their spells to one-half while sitting in the shadow of the Tree of Knowledge. House Ulondarr: Considered the founders of Semberholme, members of the Ulondarr clan have devoted their lives to maintaining Semberholme, following the appearance of the avatar of Corellon to their ancestors thousands of years ago. While some Ulondarr families can be found in Myth Drannor and Old Elven Court, the majority of them call Semberholme their home. Vesperr Ulondarr, a kind and benevolent elf who loves elven children more than anything else on Faerûn has led the clan for centuries. Most of the Ulondarr clan share Vesperr's affection for the young, but none more than Vesperr himself. His duties to the Council of Trees has often been preempted by his hours of storytelling beneath the Tree of Knowledge. Since the Ulondarrs freely offered their administration of Semberholme, few others stepped forward to share the responsibility. This is partially due to the fact that most families did not stay in Semberholme more than three decades, and few (especially power-hungry golds) saw the need to control a community with no redeeming value in the political scheme of things. The Ulondarrs are doing an excellent job in Semberholme as far as all elves were concerned. Lake Sember The largest body of fresh water in Cormanthyr, Lake Sember became home to several clans of Alu'Tel'Qessir in The Year of Loss (-231 DR). Like Semberholme, this watery refuge became a place where the Alu'Tel'Qessir could come to raise their young away from the harsh environment of the Sea of Fallen Stars. Also like Semberholme, many aquatic elves decided to remain in the peaceful environs of Lake Sember away from the rigors of The Inner Sea. Though from two dif- 94 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves ferent worlds, the elves of Cormanthyr (eventually) welcomed them with open arms despite gold elf protests. Lake Sember is a deep lake, reaching a depth of 400 feet in two distinct places. The remainder of the lake ranges from 25-100 feet from 20 to 10 feet from shore. It's in these depths the Alu'Tel'Qessir make their homes. The secret of Lake Sember has been kept for several millennia by the elves of Cormanthyr. Groups of humanoids and humans know of the River Verire, the Glaemril, and the Pool of Even, but the forests of Semberholme hide Lake Sember, The Semberflow, and Lake Eredruie. The Alu'Tel'Qessir The Alu'Tel'Qessir have never given a reason for their migration to Lake Sember other than they were looking for a place to raise their young. Many gold elf clans believed there was an ulterior motive for their arrival, but the Coronal deemed them true elves despite their differences—and thus they were welcome in Semberholme. Almost at once they proved to be an asset to the community, bringing knowledge, culture, and information regarding their race that was previously unknown. The elves of Cormanthyr had been in contact with the Alu'Tel'Qessir of the Sea of Fallen Stars for thousands of years, though contact (via High Magic) had been sporadic over the centuries. Most contact had to deal with the specific needs of High Mages, trade, and the need for information regarding migrating humanoid races. The Alu'Tel'Qessir discovered Lake Sember by accident. A group of young green elves venturing to the Dragon Reach in The Year of Shattered Walls (-387 DR) came upon a group of aquatic elves exploring the coastal shallows near the River Verire. After breaking language barriers, the two groups quickly became friends. In their conversations the Alu'Tel'Qessir learned where the River eventually led, of Lake Sember, and the serenity that is Semberholme. They took this knowledge back with them to the various Alu'Tel'Qessir leaders, and 150 years later several families ventured up the River Verire and the Semberflow and presented themselves to the Council of Trees. Soon after the Alu'Tel'Qessir began to colonize Lake Sember and became an integral part of the Semberholme community. The Alu'Tel'Qessir who inhabit Lake Sember are devout worshippers of Deep Sashesla, in addition to paying their respects to Corellon Larethian. Through the use of clerical magic they can stay out of the water for extended periods of time, allowing them to bring their children to Semberholme. More and more Alu'Tel'Qessir are realizing that, for their children to survive, they need to be educated in the ways of the surface world. In return, the Alu'Tel'Qessir teach Semberholme's young elves the ways of the sea, something they knew little about in the past. In return for their acceptance in Semberholme, the Alu'Tel'Qessir offered to act as an aquatic branch in the Cormanthyran military. They patrolled the Semberflow and the River Verire for incursions from the south, as well as the eastern edge of the Tangled Vale that rests against the Dragon Reach. Alu'Tel'Qessir, through the use of clerical magic, also began to show up in temples to Deep Sashesla in Myth Drannor and Old Elven Court beginning in The Year of Seven Sons (335 DR) as more aquatic elves began to realize the splendor that was Cormanthyr. Environment Lake Sember contains an abundance of freshwater trout and salmon, the latter of which migrate down the Semberflow and River Verire to the Sea of Fallen Stars. These are the primary source of food for the Alu'Tel'Qessir, along with other various animal and plant life imported by other aquatic elves from the sea. The most dangerous creatures, outside the Alu'Tel'Qessir themselves, that live in Lake Sember are the snapping turtles. These beasts grow quite large and often attack young aquatic elves. Though the Alu'Tel'Qessir have hunted them for centuries, the sheer number of the turtles and the danger in hunting them prevent their extermination from Lake Sember. One of the few intelligent non-elf species in Semberholme lives south and southwest of Lake Sember—a large band of treats. Since the elves of Cormanthyr have great respect for the forest, the treats did little against their encroachment into the woods of Semberholme. They did, however, move most of their population (about 300-400) south of Lake Sember in the years prior to The Year of Chasms (0 DR), as more elves began to inhabit Semberholme. Of all the elves of Semberholme only the Alu'Tel'Qessir have any type of relations with the treats. Vesperr Ulondarr discovered this relationship and used the Alu'Tel'Qessir as a bridge between the races. In the end it was decided that each race live their own lives throughout Cormanthyr, cohabiting peacefully but living in distinct communities. When elven clans wished to establish communities south of Lake Sember, the treats were respectfully sought out for their approval, which was nearly always given. Only the area directly south of Lake Sember has been denied to the elves. Hyaline The only aquatic city in Lake Sember is Hyaline, established with the coming of the Alu'Tel'Qessir. Unlike their sea communities of coral, these aquatic elves built a small city of stone with specially bred freshwater mollusks used to cement the stones together. In the early years the aquatic elves lived in the underground limestone caves beneath Semberholme, which are connected by underwater passages to Hyaline. It's in the pools of these caves the Alu'Tel'Qessir raise their young for the first year of their lives in addition to being a safe haven for most of Semberholme. Architecture Much of the stone used to build Hyaline was mined from the bottom of the lake. This consists primarily of limestone and some granite, cemented together with mollusks. More recently, the Alu'Tel'Qessir traded with Myth Drannor for marble and other comparable building supplies which were used to build additional structures and reinforce older ones. A typical Hyaline building is far from a fancy affair for the Alu'Tel'Qessir. Simple stone structures with one or two rooms are all a family of aquatic elves desires during its stay in Lake Sember. If a Alu'Tel'Qessir family wishes to move to Lake Sember permanently, then a more elaborate structure is crafted that will endure the centuries. Typically when a new family arrives to bear and raise children for a few decades, its members have to repair or remodel an existing structure to meet their individual needs. Magic The majority of magic possessed by the Alu'Tel'Qessir of Lake Sember comes from the priests of Deep Sashesla. To have a priest of the god of the sea elves in your family is a great point of pride for many clans of Alu'Tel'Qessir. Also, as relations grew with the surface elves, magical items were traded for with Myth Drannor—wands, rings, and jewelry that were ultimately used in defense of their homes. However, overall the Alu'Tel'Qessir prefer to use their natural skills rather than magic. Wizards are nearly unheard of among the Alu'Tel'Qessir. Once every two or three generations an aquatic elf shows a talent for the Art. Such wizards are often distinguished by a birthmark or other feature. In years previous to their dealings with Cormanthyr these elves were limited to the teachings of old masters or rare written material. Since their relationship with the surface elves grew, these Alu'Tel'Qessir are now sent to Myth Drannor to learn from best mages in the kingdom. Population The number of Alu'Tel'Qessir elves in Lake Sember has grown from around fifty in -231 DR to nearly 400 in the present day. Most of these elves are temporary residents, coming to the fresh waters to give birth and raise their children in an environment free of human fishermen, sharks, and other dangers of the deep Sea of Fallen Stars. The first and largest group to come to Lake Sember was the Kelpor'ral clan, a close-knit family that boasts strong warriors, devout priests, and even a High Mage in recent years. When it was discovered that Lake Sember was a place the Alu'Tel'Qessir could live in peace, other clans followed suit in the same manner as the elves of Cormanthyr came to Semberholme. Semberholme • 95 Temples The only temple in Hyaline (and Lake Sember) is dedicated to Deep Sashesla. Worship of Corellon by the Alu'Tel'Qessir is done in Semberholme. The elder of this temple is also the leader of the Kelpor'ral clan, one Triktappic Kelpor'ral (NG, aqu elf, P14). This Alu'Tel'Qessir's main focus is the prosperity of his people in Lake Sember. Triktappic is the only elf, aquatic or otherwise, to ever receive a seat on the Council of Trees. Instead he sent his eldest son Bleeth to act as the Alu'Tel'Qessir's liaison with the surface elves, devoting nearly all of his time to young Alu'Tel'Qessir and those wishing to come to Hyaline from the sea. Trade As more Alu'Tel'Qessir come to Hyaline, the elves of Cormanthyr come to Lake Sember to trade with them for exotic items found in the deep sea. Things such as shells, coral, and even small saltwater creatures have become popular among the surface elves. This fad allows the Alu'Tel'Qessir to trade for things they need to transform their city into a place of beauty, things they didn't have before coming to the fresh inland waters. The Alu'Tel'Qessir did not, however, wish to deal with elves outside of Semberholme on their own. They learned early on that to get the best barter from some of the more shrewd elves, the aquatic elves needed to employ a third party to handle their surface dealings. This mantle was taken up by the Miritar clan, a group of gold elf merchants that not only got the best deals for the Alu'Tel'Qessir but made a tidy profit as well. Rivers Lake Sember is not the only home for the Alu'Tel'Qessir of Semberholme. The Semberflow, River Verire, and to some extent the Glaemril are inhabited by aquatic elves. For the most part these rivers are patrolled by Alu'Tel'Qessir warriors due to their pact with the surface elves. Villages As the population of Semberholme proper began to swell in recent years, some of the more wealthy clans founded their own villages north and south of Lake Sember. Each community remained devoted to the philosophy of Semberholme, followed the teachings of Semberholme, and possessed the same defenses (the Moonshadows, limestone caves) as the rest of the region. Each community sends their women to Semberholme to give birth and their children there for schooling. Aluianti: This village is named after the gold elf clan that settled it in The Year of Tomes (-54 DR). Tired of the political strife in Cormanthor and worried over the prosperity of the clan, the heads of the Aluianti families decided to relocate to the peaceful surroundings of Semberholme. 96 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves One of the smaller villages, the elves of Aluianti seldom grow to more than 50 in number. The inhabitants are exclusively gold elves, though all elves are welcome as in all of Semberholme. The Aluianti are primarily artisans, creating beautiful works of pottery, exceptional paintings, and skillful works of jewelry containing precious gems. Ferrengrove: The village of Ferrengrove is the only settlement of green elves in Semberholme. This settlement became home for the families of green elves that filled the ranks of the Moonshadows. Ferrengrove is strictly a tree dwelling community, mirroring some of the communities found in the Tangled Vale to the east. This location was chosen because of its towering oak trees and its proximity to the northern patrols of the Moonshadows. The houses of Ferrengrove are so high in the trees that the settlement cannot be seen from the forest floor, even by other elves. Though not xenophobic, the green elves of Ferrengrove have a history of not being overly sociable. This earned them a reputation among any gold elves they encountered, which worked to drive the two races of elves farther apart in this section of Cormanthyr. There have been at least 100 green elves living in Ferrengrove since The Year of Old Crowns (-91 DR). These green elves are known for the superior bows and arrows they produce, which they market in Myth Drannor and to the Moonshadows. Srsrenshen: This moon elf village was colonized by the Moonrise clan, which was actually a fragmented family from the Ulondarr clan, centuries before. The reason for this separation was unclear, though relations have always been positive regardless of past difference. This village has primarily tree homes with earthen storage cellars hidden under roots of the largest trees. The population of Srsrenshen is one of the largest, with nearly 300 elves of various clans other than the Moonrise. Srsrenshen rests in the shadow of a great knob of rock named Moonrise Crag. In the years prior to the clan's settlement in The Year of Sickles (-172 DR), the crag had been inhabited by wyverns, which were subsequently driven off by archers and powerful magic. However, an occasional group returns to the crag to nest, preying on the local elves until they're once again driven off. Moonrise Crag also contains great caches of rubies, which are mined by the moon elves and used as trade for items of importance. This practice has been used less and less over the years, though the elves still claim the rubies as theirs against all interfering outsiders. The Moonrise elves of Srsrenshen are some of the greatest archers outside of the Tangled Vale. Members of this village often serve as Moonshadows for southern Semberholme, with Srsrenshen being their base of operations in this forest. Tsoyrnyl: This small settlement consists of moon elves of the Tsoyrnyl family, living in a combination of tree and ground dwellings that houses about 70 elves. All members of the Tsoyrnyl clan moved to this remote settlement in The Year of Goodfiddles (-86 DR) to gain insight to their songs by leaving the hectic pace of the rapidly growing Cormanthor. The elves of the Tsoyrnyl clan are poets, musicians, and singers of extraordinary expertise and ability. Many sonnets and harmonies sung throughout Myth Drannor and Old Elven Court were composed by this family. Tsoyrnyl also is the sight of one of the greatest tragedies of Cormanthyr. In The Year of Clinging Death (75 DR) Tsoyrnyl was attacked by the forces of Moander the Darkbringer. The Rotting God had been a plague to the elves of northern Cormanthyr for years, and his attack on this southern community came as a complete surprise. With the direct aid of Moander, the Dread God's forces slipped by members of the Moonshadows and besieged Tsoyrnyl, killing elves or transforming them into dark and twisted creatures (shambling mounds, hangman trees, sundews, etc.). When the forces of Cormanthyr arrived in Tsoyrnyl, much of the surrounding countryside had been twisted and transformed as well, corrupted by the vile power of Moander. While the elven warriors and mages soon vanquished much of the Darkbringer's forces, they were still threatened by the expanding corruption and the former Tsoyrnylans, many of whom were now mindless monsters as well. Despite the dangers, High Mages of Cormanthyr bound and imprisoned Moander's power and many corrupted creatures into a deep rift which was all that remained of Tsoyrnyl; the great working of High Magic within the corrupt area cost two High Mages and 30 elven warriors their lives to complete the binding. Moander's power was lessened, but by then the damage was done. The vile magic remained, and though imprisoned, and the entire Tsoyrnyl clan was wiped out. Veletthuil: This moon elf village was named for the leader of the Brightstar clan, who was tragically slain by a forest buffalo while scouting the city area for settlement. The southernmost settlement of Semberholme, Veletthuil is home to nearly 100 moon elves. Its location was chosen because of the berries that grow in the area, which the Brightstars use to make the potent wine that is their trade. Veletthuil is a tree-dwelling community overlooking the waters of Lake Eredruie, which is more of a large pond than a lake. It is said that newborn elves bathed in the waters of Lake Eredruie live longer, a rumor proven to be true over the centuries. (Such elves add 3d20 years to their lifespan.) Its waters also act as potion of healing for elves and half-elves once per day. Clerics of Labelas insist this is a blessing from their god to elves who are the future of Cormanthyr, and this area is often the focus of birthing rituals for elven parents. Being the elven community farthest from the safety of Semberholme, a larger than normal contingent of Moonshadows is stationed here. elder elves walk into a grove of ancient oaks and disappear from the face of Faerûn forever. Though it is said to be hidden from all except those heeding the call to Arvandor, the general location of Evertrees is warded by sigil-wards cast by the High Mage of Semberholme. Members of the Moonshadows also patrol this area regularly, more to protect elder elves traveling to Evertrees than to ward intrusions from the west. Elves from all across Cormanthyr come to Evertrees to answer the call to Arvandor, even if they don't already live in Semberholme. Evertrees is not restricted to those who live in the area. Forest Gnomes: South and east of the Semberholme, where the Semberflow meets the Glaemril, lies a small community of forest gnomes, just west of the Pool of Even. It is uncertain how long the gnomes have lived in the area or where they came from. The elves of Semberholme discovered the gnomes in The Year of Ebon Husks (-387 DR), found by a patrol scouting out humanoid activities and hunting forest buffalo to the south. Since the community was small and far from Semberholme, the elves gave them little mind. These forest gnomes are difficult to find, blending into the forest even better than many green elf scouts. Much of their community is arboreal, consisting of diminutive structures or carved-out tree interiors. The gnomes gather everything they need from the forest, living on fruits, nuts, roots, and an occasional slain wild boar or forest buffalo. They are an extremely peaceful but xenophobic people who tend to hide when other races encroach on their territory. The forest gnomes of this area, named the Evenen after the nearby pool of water, are likely the most adept wood carvers in Faerûn. Those traveling peacefully through the forest often find delicate carvings of flowers, butterflies, and rare woodland creatures as they leave the area. Such carvings suddenly appear in traveler's packs or pouches, or are discovered on their chests or in their hands upon awakening in the forest. Other Items of Interest Evertrees: The most mystical place in all of Semberholme is Evertrees, though no elf has ever seen it and returned to tell his tale. Elderly elves receiving the call to Arvandor eventually come to Semberholme until the call becomes an irresistible pull to the general vicinity of Evertrees. It is here the Semberholme • 97 THE TANGLED VALE ormanthy's greatest enemy in the years prior to the erecting of the Standing Stone was, without a doubt, the ancient wyrm Venom. It is unknown where the green dragon came from nearly 1,000 years ago, but none could deny the creature's toxic breath, potent spells, and draconic followers. It was because of this dragon the woods south of Elven Court gained their grim name, a result of Venom's innate powers. The dragon's death resulted in the greatest celebration Cormanthyr had ever known. While others reveld at the wyrm's demise, all I could think of was the elves we lost. —Coronal Eitarrigm in the Year of Misty Mountains (20 DR) As Netheril was nearing its zenith, the empire of Cormanthyr was beginning to establish its wooded borders to the south and west. After centuries of peace and prosperity the elves of Cormanthyr became comfortable in their forest domain, thinking nothing could come between them and their home. Many think this was due to the overconfidence of gold elf rulers, while others think the empire was too large for the elves who lived in it. This illusion of peace was shattered with the coming of the green dragon Ven- seemed more intelligent than most dragons the elves had encountered, and initial losses to the Cormanthyran militia were substantial. He seemed to be highly resistant to magic (even High Magic), and held powerful sway over other creatures with draconic blood. Younger green and black dragons and a score of wyverns all called Venom master, helping him hold his territory against even the most stalwart elven forces. The most perplexing thing about the dragon was that he seldom seemed to sleep like others of his age, appearing whenever the elves were mounting any sort of attack against his terrain. This show of power caused the Cormanthyr army to give up the terri-toryinhand to the southern woods of Cormanthyr, known then as the Emerald Vale. Named Venom for short, this ancient green wyrm and its draconic followers settled into the Emerald Vale in -982 DR, taking up residence in the hills of the southern woods. After aggressively assaulting the few Sy'Tel'Qessir settlements in the area, Venom used his innate powers of warp wood and entangle to twist the woods surrounding his lair. This distortion of the forest prevented the elves from mounting an immediate counterattack against the wyrm, giving Venom time to dig in his claws. In the months following his initial attack, Venom continued to use his powers to deform the woods of Cormanthyr until his domain covered several dozen square miles around his lair. In the years to come this area was renamed the "Tangled Vale" due to the green dragon's deforming magic. The elves of Cormanthyr discovered quickly that Venom was no ordinary green dragon. The beast toy claimed by Venom for many years while they planned future assaults. This proved to be their undoing. In the first 500 years of Venom's occupation of the Tangled Vale, the green dragon slowly pushed back the scattered clans of green elves that occupied the area along with remnants of the Cormanthyran army. The Sy'Tel'Qessir continued to petition for assistance against the beast, and their requests were honored several times over the centuries. Unfortunately, each attack on the wyrm ended with the elves retreating, each defeat expanding the dragon's borders. By The Year of the Gilded Sky (400 DR) Venom's influence reached to the River Verire on the south and west banks, and bordered on Old Elven Court to the north and east. The realm of the green wyrm soon became a major threat to the elves of Cormanthyr, as little they did could affect the wyrm's empire. In the next hundred years two things happened:

Venom's ter- History ritory reached its limit and expanded no further, and the elves of Cormanthyr would attempt to expand their army to protect the remainder of their empire. Meanwhile the Sy'Tel'Quessir were becoming more aggravated over the dragon's territorial claim, setting their own plans in motion to slay the beast and his followers. Nearly all green elves in the Cormanthryan army, disgruntled with their lack of effective action in this manner, resigned and joined the forces of General Halfar Audark, who dedicated his life to the destruction of Venom. While they scored minor victories over the years, the turning point in the battle against Venom would not come for decades. In The Year of Setting Suns (-291 DR), Nethesse citizens began filtering across Faerûn fleeing from Survivor State conflicts and the powerful magical battles of the phaerimm and the sharn. This activity caused the Cormanthryan army to concentrate on their northern borders, leaving Venom to General Halfar and less than two score of elven warriors. While Venom's borders did not increase, they did not decrease either. The forces under the general fought and killed dozens of wyverns, and even a dragon or two, over the next 50 years, but an important victory would not come until the Year of Silver Wings (-249 DR). With nearly 300 elves they stormed the creature's lair. While over half their number died, surprise was on their side and the great green wym fell before magical blade, spell, and missile. Scores of wyvern either were killed or fled, and soon the triumphant army began its long trek back to Cormanthor. Not long after they began their journey north and west with the dragon's head leading the procession, a second green dragon appeared from out of nowhere and slew the entire surviving force. All the elves, including General Halfar, died from the wym's breath without so much as uttering a single spell. It then became obvious that Venom was not one, but a mated pair of green dragons. This explained why the dragon did not appear to sleep, and how young green dragons had appeared over the centuries. Their army devastated, the elves of Cormanthyr resigned themselves to keeping the remaining wym contained. Despite their losses, the elves had dealt the surviving green dragon a terrible blow. With the female dragon dead and many wyverns driven off, Venom's territory would be greatly reduced. However, by the same token it would be many years before the elves could attack again. The site of General Halfar and his army's death was hence named the Vale of Lost Voices, and it became a place where slain elven warriors are put to rest. Over the years the territory of Venom the Great Green became smaller. The wym was getting old, and his naps increased from months to years in the next few decades. Then, in The Year of Elfsorrow (-206 DR), a moon elf warrior by the name of Jassin Auglor braved the hazards of the Tangled Vale and confronted Venom while he slept. Armed with one of the legendary moonblades, Jassin and the green wym fought a terrible battle. In the end the dragon's lair caved in beneath tons of rock, and Jassin, Venom, and the moonblade were never seen again. With their master gone, the remaining creatures fled to remote lairs or left Cormanthyr forever. Shortly after the apparent death of Venom, the Dalesmen arrived on the borders of Cormanthyr. A few years later elves and humans met in Cormanthor, the humans wanting to colonize Cormanthyr's southern edges. Since this territory contained the remnants of some of Venom's forces (mostly wyverns but a few dragons as well), the elves gladly gave up this territory to the humans—over the protests from some gold and green elf clans. Relations between the elves and humans continued over the next two centuries, and with the humans' help the elves were able to cut a path through part of the Tangled Vale to make trade with the Dalesmen simpler. With the completion of the road, the Standing Stone was erected north of the Vale of Lost Voices and the Dalereckoning calendar began. Over the next 200 years the Sy'Tel'Quessir slowly returned to The Tangled Vale, setting to undoing the magical violations imposed on the forest by the dragon. Their task was difficult, and in the end the green elves had to settle for using the tangled woods to their advantage. Prosperous villages of Sy'Tel'Quessir once again filled the forest, and the Tangled Vale has become a place where the elves of Cormanthyr can live. The Sy'Tel'Quessir These elves are considered to be the most primitive of all in Cormanthyr, mostly because they prefer the wilds of the forest to the grandeur of Myth Drannor. Long ago the Sy'Tel'Quessir, despite their differences with other elves, made a pact with the Teu'Tel'Quessir (moon) and the Ar'Tel'Quessir (gold) at the founding of Cormanthyr to protect elven interests on Faerûn. Because of this pact the Sy'Tel'Quessir have sworn to help protect Cormanthyr from all invaders in exchange for control of the land originally known as the Emerald Vale. The Sy'Tel'Quessir are the fiercest warriors in all of Cormanthyr, excelling in archery, stealth, and knowledge of the forest. All Sy'Tel'Quessir priests are either druids of Rillifane Lallathil or warrior-priests of Corellon Larethian. Green elves tend to be insular toward gold elves and neutral to moon elves. To be fully accepted into Sy'Tel'Quessir society, other elves must prove themselves in battle—otherwise they're treated with indifference (mostly due to the pact with the golds and moons). The invasion of the great wym Venom in the Emerald Vale was the darkest spot in Sy'Tel'Quessir history. The reduced number of green elves in Cormanthyr can be directly attributed to deaths caused by the dragon and his followers. During his first century in Cormanthyr, many groups of Sy'Tel'Quessir thought they could slay Venom, and the wym(s) feasted on dozens of elven warriors before they realized their error. With the final death of Venom (the second green dragon) in The Year of Elfsorrow, the Sy'Tel'Quessir put down their weapons and rebuilt the now Tangled Vale. Villages and other tree dwellings in the dragon's territory had long since been destroyed, and a large amount of the wildlife had gone to feed the wym's wynn followers. The Tangled Vale • 99 The coming of the Dalesmen also marked another turning point in life of the Sy'Tel'Quessir. The green elves were not happy with Coronat Eltagrim giving the humans a section of Sy'Tel'Quessir land, which made the green elves more protective of the land they possessed. Foresters or other invaders venturing even one step too far into the Tangled Vale were slain mercilessly and instantly. In recent years, the Sy'Tel'Quessir's population has elevated once again. Their skills in war are also again needed with the encroachment of humanoidss across the forests of Cormanthyr. Tangled Vale & Environs The territory of the Tangled Vale extends through the Vale of Lost Voices to the west, the Standing Stone and Elven Court to the north, the Dragon Reach to the east, and the River Verire to the south—though the latter changing with the coming of the Dalesmen. The borders of the Tangled Vale were easily defined by large sections of twisted forest, the result of Venom's magic. Even after the death of the green dragon, his legacy lives on. Wyverns still reside in isolated lairs in the Tangled Vale, though mostly to the south where hills and cliffs are more common. However, being closer to the Dalesmen to the south than the heart of Sy'Tel'Quessir territory, they are often thought of as "human problems." While still retaining a fair amount of rabbits, squirrels, deer, and other common forest wildlife, the forces of Venom for the most part eliminated much of the larger woodland creatures of the Tangle Vale. The most prominent of these were the centaurs, which the green dragons were extremely fond of and nearly hunted to extinction in Cormanthyr. Groups of centaurs had lived peacefully with the Sy'Tel'Quessir before the coming of Venom, and were some of the first to fall victim to the dragon's bloodthirsty appetite. The only surviving group of centaurs left in Cormanthyr eventually congregated in the eastern woods, against the Dragon Reach. There they hid until the elves killed Venom, though afterward they never returned to the Tangled Vale. It was thought that the centaurs could not navigate the twisted features of the Tangled Vale's, but others said they lived in fear of Venom for so long that they did not believe in his demise. Even Clans Nearly all Sy'Tel'Quessir in Cormanthyr can track their heritage back to one of four clans of the Emerald Vale: the Audark, Kevanarial, Moonglamaer, or the Selorn clans. These were the largest of the green elf clans dating back to the Crown Wars and the founding of Cormanthyr. With the coming of Venom and the Tangled Vale, a large number of the Selorn clan were slain in the dragon's initial attack. Survivors of this clan fled to Semberholme and Elven Court, and few returned to the forest of their birth. In later years General Halfar Audark and all but one family of his clan perished in the deception of the great wym when theyy 100 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves killed his mate. Afterward, the surviving Audarks petitioned a group of High Mages to transform them into baelnorn so that they could act as guardians for the Vale of Lost Voices. After some controversy their request was honored, and the Audarks were no more except for a few relatives. The Forest The trees of the Tangled Vale consist of oaks, firs, and elms, most of which are twisted to render ground or above-ground travel—and occasionally both—impossible. It is still unknown how the great green dragons moved around the Tangled Vale, though powerful magic was likely involved. Some of the most twisted areas were broken up with large clearings, though these were often ambush sites and were best avoided. When the threat of Venom was no more, the druids of the Sy'Tel'Quessir tried to use their magic to return the forest to normal. It was quickly realized this was a futile gesture, as the trees had grown along a twisted course considerably in seven centuries and the damage was irreversible. However, the Sy'Tel'Quessir quickly turned this to their advantage. The tangled trees provided obstacles for human and humanoid invaders in later years. The Sy'Tel'Quessir would deal aggressors heavy losses from the thick cover of the contorted foliage, and druids would use even more warp wood spells to create dead ends used for elven ambushes. Large sections of twisted trees actually serve as excellent sites for tree-dwelling villages for the Sy-Tel'Quessir. Though some trees may have had to be further shaped by magic, many of these villages are not visible from the ground or from the air due to the intertwining branches. Even during winter months, when the leaves fell from the trees, such communities are difficult to find. The central and southern portions of the Tangled Vale are the most dense of all the wood in the territory, being affected the most by Venom's magic. The southern and western fringes near the River Verire consist of thinner foliage by comparison but are still heavily wooded though less deformed. Much of the forests given to the Dalesmen were lightly wooded areas. Geography Unlike much of Cormanthyr, the land of the Tangled Vale is far from flat or dull. The portion of the vale south of Elven Court and north of River Duathamber are higher in elevation than the rest of the territory. Beginning with the site of Venom's lair and heading southwest, the foliage becomes lighter due to the hills and valleys that run beyond the River Verire. Once home to wyverns and other green dragons under the command of Venom, some of this land (along with the problems of returning wyverns and dragons) south of River Verire was given over to the humans. The River Duathamber is the main source of fresh water in the Tangled Vale. Small ponds and pools can be found throughout the area, but many are difficult to find and could not support larger communities of Sy'Tel'Quessir. Hence, many green elf villages can be found close to the River Duathamber. Villages deep in the Tangled Vale are often built around natural hot springs or they depend on elven druids for their water. Only in times of crisis do the Sy'Tel'Quessir dig wells. Magic Sy'Tel'Quessir mages are even more rare than those found among the Alu'Tel'Quessir. The wild and impetuous nature of the green elves makes them unlikely to practice wizardry. Even those raised away from the natural environs of the Sy'Tel'Quessir grasp only the most simplest of magical techniques. Instead the Sy'Tel'Quessir rely heavily on priestly magic, specifically druidic magic. Elven druids are rare except among the Sy'Tel'Quessir. While there are always instances of priests of other elven gods, druids of Rillifane Lallathil are by far the most common. Though they never live within the villages themselves, druids are part of every Sy'Tel'Quessir community. In the name of Rillifane the druids adopt Sy'Tel'Quessir villages, watching over and protecting them with their magic. These druids watch over warriors on patrol, officiate over births, escort elderly to Semberholme, and maintain a balance of nature in the Tangled Vale. The Sy'Tel'Quessir learned to use magical weapons and such during their centuries of conflict with Venom. Before that they used magic only when necessary, as the finely crafted bows and swords of the Sy'Tel'Quessir were of nearmagical quality without being enchanted (+1 to hit and damage). In the years following the coming of the Dalesmen it became common for the elves of the Tangled Vale to possess magical potions, scrolls, and other minor magic. If a Sy'Tel'Quessir warrior wanted a magical bow or other weapon he would have to craft it himself then travel to far off Myth Drannor to have it enchanted. Going to a city was often a deterrent for such an act. No High Mage has ever called the Tangled Vale home. Instead, the Coronat often sends mages to Duathamber on a temporary basis. Religion The most commonly worshiped elven deities of the Tangled Vale are Rillifane Lallathil and Corellon Larethian. Rillifane is the more highly venerated of the two, with Corellon being paid homage as he who gave birth to the elves. Rillifane has always been recognized as the patron of the Sy'Tel'Quessir, protector of the woodlands and guardian of the harmony of nature. Shrines to Rillifane cannot compare to the embellished temples of the cities but instead often comprise a single tree in the forest. The druids of Rillifane choose a grand oak tree and carve a small canary in the trunk, two feet from the ground. Such trees are never chosen at random, but usually appear to druids in dreams or other visions. Should a shrine be defiled, the dedicating druid (or the nearest worshiper of Rillifane if the tree is dead or unavailable) instantly knows of the action and does all he can to bring about the defiler's fate. Travel The magic used by Venom to alter the trees of the Tangled Vale caused the Sy'Tel'Quessir to consider using flying mounts. While other communities of Cormanthyr previously used hippogriffs or pegasi as aerial mounts, the Sy'Tel'Quessir refrained from such travel. Then, with the coming of Venom, the Cormanthryan army trained several green elf warriors in the art of aerial combat, mostly to contest wyverns looking to prey on village tree dwellings. After several centuries the Sy'Tel'Quessir became extremely skilled in the art of aerial combat. With the final demise of Venom and the reclaiming of the Tangled Vale, a few clans began to raise griffons as a quicker way to travel through the twisted territory. One clan, the Moonglamaer, attempted to raise young wyverns as mounts. Capturing wyvern young proved to be rather easy, considering the number of them that still occupied the area. However, even with the help of elven druids only in 10 wyverns ever proved trainable. As a result, wyvern riders are very rare in Cormanthyr, but having one as a mount is considered to be a sign of great respect by the Sy'Tel'Quessir community. Rarer still are albino wyverns, which are born every one or two centuries. These uncommon creatures are always trainable but tend to bond with the first being they see upon emerging from their eggs—whether it's the wyvern's mother or an elf. For this reason wyvern eggs on the verge of hatching are always sought by those wanting them as mounts. Many potential riders stalk the nests of Wyvern's Rift, looking for eggs about to hatch. This usually happens during the hottest of summer months. Villages With the threat of Venom gone, the Sy'Tel'Quessir set to rebuilding the villages of the now Tangled Vale. Many of those from the time before the dragon were rotted and for the most part uninhabitable. Those villages at the northern edge of the wym's territory were more military posts than elven communities. Women, elderly, and children who had fled to Old Elven Court and Semberholme eventually returned to build new communities and restore old ones. The villages below are the largest communities in the Tangled Vale and do not reflect the true number of Sy'Tel'Quessir found there. Many families, and even entire clans, live in remote sections of the forest, far from larger groups of elves. Duathamber: This Sy'Tel'Quessir village was the largest in the Emerald Vale prior to the coming of Venom, and was always occupied during the wym's reign despite multiple attacks. During those fearful years Duathamber was a military outpost for the Sy'Tel'Quessir, a place where they could coordinate their attacks against the green dragon's forces. Many Sy'Tel'Quessir failures in early years were due to repeated The Tangled Vale • 101 strikes against this village by both dragons and wyverns. In -605 DR, with the aid of Cormanthor mages, the military station was moved underground, beyond the reach of airborne foes. Tunnels from as far as a mile away were magically created to allow the elves access to the military safehouse. In addition, large caches of weapons and other supplies were stored here to assist the elves during their centuries of conflict. When Venom was finally defeated in The Year of Elfsorrow, Duathamber again became the largest Sy'Tel'Quessir community in the now Tangled Vale. Of all the Sy'Tel'Quessir communities in the vale, Duathamber contains the largest contingent of moon (and some gold) elves. Most are Cormanthryan soldiers stationed here during the reign of Venom, or their descendants who decided to stay following the dragon's death. Green elves from the Tangled Vale and beyond come to Duathamber for celebrations, as do young warriors for the Test of Survival. These young elves have to travel to the other side of the River Duathamber and must survive in the wilderness without the aid of weapons for a time of three full moons. Those who return are considered warriors of the Sy'Tel'Quessir; those that fail are seldom seen again. While some Sy'Tel'Quessir communities live independently from the rest of Cormanthyr, Duathamber trades heavily with Myth Drannor and Elven Court. Bass, trout, and catfish— sometimes the size of small ponies—are harvested for feasts throughout Cormanthyr and are considered a delicacy in certain circles. While not as materialistic as gold and moon elves, the Sy'Tel'Quessir have their needs as well and such fish do not come cheap. Dysrisa: This small tree dwelling village consists of small families that are not part of larger, more prominent Sy'Tel'Quessir clans. This village never fell under the influence of Venom's tyranny and was a regular stop for army troops moving south to confront the dragon's forces. Hence, Dysrisa became a trading village that continued to be so after the wym's demise. The Sy'Tel'Quessir families living in Dysrisa have become prosperous using their animal husbandry skills; cooshees bred and raised here are highly valued throughout the realm. Dysrisa is known not only for its animal husbandry but as a place where rare roots, berries, and other items of the forest can be found. Elven herbalists, alchemists, and wizards in search of spell components come to this village to find items not available elsewhere. Eerienne: Located deep within the heart of the Tangled Vale, Eerienne was founded in the years since the reign of Venominhandar. This village has become a haven for Sy'Tel'Quessir who, still disillusioned with the leaders of Cormanthyr, want nothing to do with the other elves of the land. Many Sy'Tel'Quessir think that if Venom had attacked Cormanthor or Elven Court and not their homeland, all of Cormanthyr would have come to fight the dragon. They believe that because it was in Sy'Tel'Quessir land, the haughty gold and moon elves didn't care. Once the threat of the dragon was gone, those green elves still disconcerted with 102 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves this became isolationists in the village of Eerienne. Only Sy'Tel'Quessir are welcome in this remote village. Members of other elf races are stopped at the village borders and asked their business. Members of other races are attacked if they seem hostile or are watched closely by the green elves, who do not reveal themselves (and their home) to such beings. Eerienne is a well-hidden tree dwelling village, secreted among the twisted treetops of the vale. Experienced elven scouts find it difficult to locate Eerienne even during the winter months, and during the summer solstice it is nigh impossible. The village is surrounded by snares, pitfalls, and other dangerous traps to ensure privacy. The Sy'Tel'Quessir of Eerienne are hunters and gatherers, living exclusively off the land without the drappings of high elven society. They wear animal skins and fight with hand-crafted bows and quarterstaves. Forged metal swords and arrowheads, usually crafted in Myth Drannor, are rare here. Druids of Rillifane are common in this community, and all are revered as great wise men. As many of the Sy'Tel'Quessir living here do not wish to leave the Tangled Vale, the druids are often asked to escort the elderly to Evertees (near Semberholme) or carry honored dead to the Vale of Lost Voices. Faelorin: This ground village is another Sy'Tel'Quessir community that was transformed to a military outpost during the time of Venom. Faelorin was moved from the upper branches of the trees to the forest floor due to the danger of airborne draconic attack. Doing so effectively protected them from dragon and wyvern aerial attacks and allowed the village to survive the centuries of conflict with the wym's forces. General Audark's assault on Venom's lair was organized from Faelorin. Just before the moon elf Jassin Auglor challenged the green dragon in its lair, the vengeful wym—still aggravated over the death of his mate—savagely attacked Faelorin. Using his magic to further tangle the trees surrounding the village, Venom destroyed Faelorin and nearly all its occupants. A few women and children escaped, their husbands and sons buying them time to escape with their lives. Some Sy'Tel'Quessir have returned to Faelorin over the years. The village has become a haven for young green elves inspired by their ancestors' sacrifices for their families, and is now a community of Sy'Tel'Quessir warriors which is locally known as Tangled Trees. Sar-Andath: Another military outpost during the time of Venom, Sar-Andathl also has become a village of Sy'Tel'Quessir warriors in later years. Sar-Andathi is administered by a Sy'Tel'Quessir warrior named Tenyajn Haell (N grn elf F17), an elf who is thought to be the finest archer who ever lived. In The Year of the Whispering (277 DR) Tenyajn was made a general in the Cormanthryan army, personally training most of its ranks for over four centuries. Vale of Lost Voices This valley is named for the elves of General Audark's army who lost their lives to the green dragon Venom. Thinking they had killed the wym in his lair, the elves were not prepared for the attack of the second dragon. The Vale of Lost Voices gets its name because not one elf in that army was able to utter so much as a whisper before the poison breath of the dragon swept over them all. Since that day the Vale of Lost Voices has been a place where all fallen elven warriors of Cormanthyr can be buried with valor and glory. The leader of that doomed army was General Halfar Audark, leader of the powerful Audark clan and one of the most skilled Sy'Tel'Quessir warriors of his time. Nearly every member of the Audark clan followed Halfar to the dragon's lair, and those who did not die there perished in the surprise attack later on. Only a dozen members of the Audark clan remained after that day, four females and eight males—including the wife of General Halfar, Mistale Audark. With the final demise of Venom in The Year of Elfsorrow (-206 DR), Mistale journeyed to Cormanthor to request that she and the remainder of the Audark clan be transformed into baelnorn. As powerful undead creatures the grietstricken Audarks could gain solace in becoming the eternal guardians of the vale. Since no Sy'Tel'Quessir had ever been changed into a baelnorn, there was much controversy over this request. As most baelnorn were wizards of one sort or another, the high mages of Cormanthor were unsure of the results of the transformation on green elves. In the end the request was granted, and the guardians of the Vale of Lost Voices were born. Sy'Tel'Quessir Baelnorn It quickly became apparent that Sy'Tel'Quessir baelnorn are unlike their wizardly counterparts. The flesh of the green elf baelnorn is dark green and brown, and is the equivalent of petrified wood (AC -2). Their hair has the appearance of moss, and their eyes glow a light amber. The only clothing the Sy'Tel'Quessir baelnorn wear support the items they carry, which are usually weapons of +3 to +4 enchantment. Such baelnorn are unable to speak, having their actions speak for them in all matters. Creatures of the forest seem to know the thoughts of the baelnorn, which heed their call. While regular baelnorn are able to use spells, the Sy'Tel'Quessir baelnorn are unsurpassed warriors. Each of these baelnorn has the skills of a 20th-level warrior and can remain nearly unseen (treat as cloak of elvenkind) while within the Vale. Each of these baelnorn is warned when anyone is moving through their vale via telepathic communication with the creatures of the forest, and can use dimension door (unlimited use) to travel there as swiftly as possible. These powers are in addition to the other abilities of a basic baelnorn (except for the above-mentioned wizard spells that these baelnorn do not possess). Sy'Tel'Quessir baelnorn cannot leave the Vale of Lost Voices. Entering the Vale The baelnorn deal with intruders into the Vale of Lost Voice in several different ways, depending on their identity and in-tentions. Funeral processions are watched over by at least one baelnorn, who may choose to lead the promenade through the vale if the deceased was a valiant warrior. It is considered a great tribute by the elves of Cormanthyr to have a Sy'Tel'Quessir baelnorn lead a death march through the forest. The baelnorn always take note of honored dead buried with items of wealth or magic. Such tombs are become targets for grave robbers who sometimes use magic to teleport in and out of the vale quickly before attracting the unwanted attention of the baelnorn guardians. Elves entering the Vale of Lost Voices who are not there to bury dead are closely watched. If their actions prove suspicious the baelnorn send their ghostly apparition projections to the intruder as a warning. If the elf does not immediately explain himself or retreat, the baelnorn attacks. Sometimes elves enter the vale in order to pay tribute to honored dead. After entering the forest such elves traditionally proclaim in a loud voice their reason for entering the sacred forest in hope that the baelnorn approve. If they are not warned with an apparition, they may proceed. Typically, any nonelves entering the Vale of Lost Voices attract the immediate attention of at least one baelnorn. If there are more than three intruders, up to five baelnorn may appear to deal with them. If the meddlers do not proclaim themselves in a manner similar to that of an elf paying respects, then such trespassers are instantly attacked. Even if they do declare their reason for entering the Vale of Lost Voices, the reason has to be a very good one for the baelnorn to allow them passage through the sacred forest. The Sy'Tel'Quessir baelnorn of the Vale of Lost Voices are the only green elf baelnorn ever created. Following the sacrifice of the Audark clan, no other Sy'Tel'Quessir have stepped forward to make such a request from the High Mages of Myth Drannor. For nearly a thousand years the baelnorn of the Vale of Lost Voices have protected the sacred forest, and they do not remain idle. In the years following the coming of the Dalesmen, human and humanoid intruders entered the Vale of Lost Voices on a regular basis. Many of them wandered down from Rauthnavuyr's Road but quickly retreated at the sight of the baelnorn's projected apparitions. After Myth Drannor was opened to all races by the Coronat, nonelves learned of the riches that were buried in the Vale of Lost Voices, and countless fools entered the forest in search of elven riches. Though few ever returned, one or two grave robbers were fortunate enough get in and out of the vale with stolen booty. These thieves then spread word of their good fortune, and others came looking for riches. By The Year of the Blessed Sheep (321 DR) the warnings given by the baelnorn to trespassers became fewer, and intruders were more commonly killed on sight. The Honored Dead Warrior elves of Cormanthyr who die in battle are typically laid to rest in the Vale of Lost Voices. The ceremony for each warrior varies. Usually the warrior's deeds are recited during the journey through the forest, concluding as the procession The Tangled Vale • 103 reaches the appointed burial place. Depending on the influence of the family, special areas are reserved for members of each clan. The burial rites for each type of elf—gold, moon, or green—during the time of Cormanthyr are different. Gold: Members of the Ar'Tel'Quessir are commonly entombed in mausoleums crafted of marble or some other stone. In the years following the opening of Myth Drannor, some gold elves moved their mausoleums underground to hide them from grave robbers. If a member of the warrior's clan was a powerful wizard or High Mage, the tomb is warded with spells. The honored Ar'Tel'Quessir dead are entombed in their full warrior regalia, though powerful weapons are usually passed down to other members of the clan. Each member of the late warrior's clan places something into the tomb with the slain elf. This is done so that a piece of each family member accompanies the deceased in his afterlife travels. Moon: Fallen Teu'Tel'Quessir warriors taken to the Vale of the Lost Voices are always buried in clearings or glens, allowing them to gaze upon the night sky. Entire families occupy one glen, with the most prominent clans being reserved for rare hilltops plon in the vale. These elves are buried in fine silken robes adorned with elegant jewelry and precious gems. Their graves are deep, and evidence of the burial is covered with spells that quickly regrow the grass and plants that were uprooted. Only members of the family present know exactly where a fallen warrior is buried. Green: There are two types of graves for Sy'Tel'Quessir warriors, depending on the elf's deeds. Warriors of great renown are buried deep in the forest, with magical accens (enchanted by a druid of Rillifane) placed on their chests. Within one year such an acorn grows into a small sapling, marking the grave of the warrior and at the same time masking it from defilers. Less notable warriors—but warriors nonetheless—are placed inside trees by druids of Rillifane. Using a long forgotten version of the spell tree, the druids merge the remains of the warrior with a non-oak tree. Only druids of Rillifane are merged with oak trees. All Sy'Tel'Quessir elves put to rest in the vale are naked, leaving the world in the same way they were born. No Sy'Tel'Quessir grave has ever been found by thieves. Other Locations Briarbosk: This village was home to the Briarbosk Sy'Tel'Quessir clan prior to the coming of Venominhandar in -982 DR, and it was also the first elven community attacked by the green dragon's forces. Though the clan was not destroyed in the attack, the survivors perished years later trying to exact revenge upon Venom in a foolish attack on his lair. No Briarbosk has walked Faerûn since. All that remains of Briarbosk are a few rotted tree dwellings. It is thought that the baelnorn of the Vale of Lost Voices can be found in the ruins of Briarbosk, perhaps coming here to remember the days when they too were alive. 104 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves The Dark Road: In the early years of the Vale of Lost Voices this trail was nothing more than a path that the elves of Cormanthor and the Tangled Vale would use to reach the heart of the sacred forest. In the years following the opening of Myth Drannor, the Dark Road slowly widened due to continued use. The road gained its name because of the dark canopy of trees that cover the path for nearly its entire length. It was also named such because those who were not elves often met a dark fate when they trespassed in the vale. As the trail has widened, at least one baelnorn guards either end of the Dark Road, discouraging all but funeral processions from entering. Other Items of Interest Centaurs: Several dozen tribes of centaurs occupied the southern woods of the Emerald Vale in the years prior to the coming of Venom. These tribes lived in the hills, peacefully coexisting with the elves of Cormanthyr since anyone could remember. That all changed with the coming of the green dragon. Venom, his secretive mate, and the wyverns and dragons under his control were all especially fond of centaur flesh, and they hunted them feverishly. Skilled fighters, the centaurs resisted as best they could, and much like the elves won small battles here and there, but they eventually lost the war. The sheer number of wyverns, coupled with the innate magic of the dragons, proved to be their undoing. With their numbers dropping below 50, the centaurs fled the renamed Tangled Vale and moved east toward the Dragon Reach. Once beyond the influence of Venom, the centaur population slowly grew back to nearly where it once was. Eventually the threat of Venom was eliminated, but that made room for another menace: humans. As the Dalesmen began to settle the southern reaches of Cormanthyr, they immediately began to encroach on the centaurs' territory. With the erecting of the Standing Stone, many families of centaurs decided that enough was enough and fled Cormanthyr all together, traveling to an unknown destination. Those that remained moved slowly north along the Dragon Reach, just ahead of the human expansion. Eventually the centaurs that remained fell into obscurity, scattered throughout the eastern woods. Dragons: Venom and his mate were not the only dragons in Cormanthyr over the centuries, and many were their children. In the seven centuries they inhabited the Tangled Vale, it's thought that Venom and his mate (whose name remains unknown) had at least four offspring survive to maturity, though there could have been more who did not remain in Cormanthyr. Of the four, there have been two confirmed kills of youngto-adult-age dragons (in addition to Venom and his mate) by the sages as of 0 DR. As for any other offspring of the two ancient greens, only one has surfaced in the years following Venom's death: a crafty female green the elves named Sy'quideh, which means "green magic" in the ancient tongue of the Sy'Tel'Quessir. This name was earned when it was dis- covered the wym was well-versed in wizardry, preferring the use of spells and innate abilities over its breath weapon and physical attacks. Sy'quideh was thought to lair in the hills south of her sire's lair, but her true location was never discovered. Records at Elven Court mark the last recorded sighting of the dragon two years after Venom's death, when a group of green elves outside of Duathamber spotted a green dragon bathing in the river. By the time they returned with a group of warriors, the dragon was gone. Glaun Bog: Another wym that called Venominhandar master was a black dragon named Zarlандris. Only of juvenile age when it came to Cormanthyr in The Year of Smoke (-390 DR), Zarlандris settled in the Glaun Bog with the permission of the ancient green. Until Venom was slain in -206 DR, the black dragon paid homage to the green dragon, and refrained from attacking his master's wyvern followers. After the old wym Venom's death, Zarlандris was free to do as he pleased, though he did stay out of the way of Cormanthryan elves. Zarlандris occupies Glaun Bog to this day, though he has not been seen in almost two centuries. Venom's Lair: Located at what would one day be known as Haptooth Hill, the lair of the ancient green dragon was a maze of caverns filled with traps and steep vertical drops. When the forces of General Audark attacked the lair in The Year of Silver Wings the elves had the help of several of Cormanthor's powerful wizards, and these obstacles were negated by the creation of a second underground tunnel. With this tunnel the elves surprised Venom's mate and slew her, losing less than half their force—an acceptable loss for the elves at that time, considering the victory they seemed to have won. When Venom himself was confronted in his lair in The Year of Elfsorrow by Jassin Auglor, the exact nature of the battle that took place is unknown. The only accounts are from Jassin's squire who, injured by a wyvern the day before, did not accompany his master into the lair. He only reported that the lair collapsed upon itself and neither Venom nor his mentor ever emerged. Lost as well was Jassin's moonblade, which was a great blow to his clan. Several Auglor members tried to discover the lair using magic over the next few centuries, but they never found Jassin or his blade. It is said that Venom's lair contained more riches than Myth Drannor at its height, but that legend is highly discounted unless the green dragon brought a fortune with him to Cormanthyr. No elven community, even the Sy'Tel'Quessir villages he sacked early on, ever contained that amount of wealth. Wyvern's Rift: Where Venominhandar acquired so many wyverns, in addition to learning how to control them so completely, is unknown. After arriving in Cormanthyr the green wym used his magic to riddle the rift to the southeast with nests for his followers. Over seven centuries, their numbers reached as many as 100 at one point but began to drop off after the dragon's demise, as many of them wandered off to different territories. Still, a fair number of wyverns terrorize Cormanthyr today. Many young green elves become blooded warriors and hunters stalking the dangerous, winged beasts. The Tangled Vale • 105 MYSTERIES OF ELVEN COURT It is a constant source of amusement to the elves that the humans in Myth Drannor assume that Elven Court is a physical place, while it has been such in the past and may yet be again in the future, it is of no matter. Elven Court today is a state of mind and a situation far more than a place or thing. The ruins of Old Elven Court bear too many sorrows for the Tel'Quessir to visit and too many mysteries for the N'Tel'Quess to avoid, despite repeated warnings of lurking dangers. —Nuala Irin, lorekeeper in the Year of Smiling Nyth (279 DR) History Nearly twelve millennia ago, the Descent of the Drow brought a truce to the Crown Wars. Clan elders, High Mages, and holy elves in all the elven settlements across Faerûn received a summons from Corellon Larethian the Creator while in states of reverie; they were to prepare for Court to decide the fate of the Crown Wars and the future of the elves. Almost instantly (i.e., two days after the first reverie-message), these elves began disappearing at dawn when they first greeted the sun. Their disappearances were consistent with legends of Corellon summoning an elf to his side, so few elves worried about the abductions. In all, 500 elves (125 of each surface elf race and 125 aquatic elves) magically arrived in a deep, untouched wood far to the east of any elven realms yet established. "Here," Corellon's voice proclaimed, "is the Place and Time of Elven Court. Now you all must decide your future, for the path on which you all walk leads to destruction." Elven Court as the Place of Judgement For the next nine centuries, the founders of Elven Court built homes and temples amid the trees and around the deep wells, pools, and underground rivers of the aquatic elves. As this site was divinely chosen and visited, many temples rose up around the central clearings that became Elven Court. Even with all this work to establish a colony here, the elves knew this was a judgment place and that they must come to an accord over how to resolve the conflicts of the Crown Wars. Even though the summoned elves were a mix of clan elders and High Mages and common elves (even some fair-haired youths of only 150 winters), Elven Court was always perceived and operated as a settlement of peers. Their old hierarchies were set aside to allow for freedom of expression and discussion among the Court members. There also was little need for law or government therein, as their duty (and the diligence of the Seldarine) kept the peace; these 500 elves knew hey had to determine their race's future, and any other troubles seemed petty in contrast. All elves were equals here, for they were called to judge themselves, not measure themselves by social status or magical prowess. The elves of Elven Court looked long and hard at themselves and their brethren to find where the Peoples' path had strayed. By the Time of Judgment, the original 500 elves placed amid a virgin wood had grown to a small city of temples, halls, tree dwellings, and a population of 673. The First Proclamation was to oust the corrupt and power-mad ruling clan Vyshaan from Aryvandaar, and the Fifth Crown War erupted as the Vyshaan resisted the Court's ruling. Within 200 years, it was over, and the elves moved to colonize more of Faerûn to both avoid the connotations of remaining in the old lands of Aryvandaar and to settle virgin woods untouched by the violence and disarray of the Crown Wars. Many of the elves born and raised at Elven Court returned to the eastern forest and established the first settlements of Arcorar: Semberholme, Uvaeren, Rystall Wood, and Jhyrennarst. Elven Court as a City & Realm After the settlement of Arcorar (the forest around the Elven Court), Elven Court became almost exclusively a place of religious pilgrimages, given its number of grand temples to the Seldarine. As a place of hidden power due to Corellon's manifestation here, it was chosen as one of the sites for the creation of the moonblades, and the priests and High Mages created 25 of the mystical blades here (though legends speak of the moonblades numbering near 100 in all). It also became the unofficial "center" of the Arcorar Forest, as the leaders of the four individual realms all deferred to the even-handed judgments of the elders at Elven Court. While no empire would pull these domains together until Cormanthyr, Elven Court was considered the seat of leadership for all those dwelling in the forest. Elven Court was neutral ground for all the forest's clans and races, a place where all elves were peers and peace presided over all assemblies. This sense of equanimity and equality came from the fact that no weapons were allowed to be drawn at the heart of Elven Court (though the few defenders of the realm patrolled the perimeters doubly well for that security). The Gods' Walk and all temple grounds around it were considered holy ground until the fall of this Old Elven Court. In celebration of a two-millennia-long peace between the dwarves of Sarphil and the elves of Arcorar, a feast was held at the Hall of Ages in Elven Court on Midwinter Night -4400 DR. The Dark Court Slaughter began on that longest of nights, as drow and duergar flooded up from below, establishing various warzones about the city but concentrating on the Hall of Ages. The fight saw the deaths of both the Coronals of Rystall Wood and Jhyrennarst and 23 clan leaders from among all the clans of Arcorar. During the Slaughter, Elven Court heard the clash of weapons for the first time in its history. Unfortunately, the overwhelming drow conjured magics that kept the city cloaked in inky blackness during the day, allowing the skirmishes to stretch for days. Summned monsters destroyed much of the city, while their drow mistresses took to corrupting the many temples. While most of the Seldarine temples were collapsed by disintegration spells on the support columns, the Creator's House received special treatment: The inside of the temple was reshaped by drow wizards and priests into a massive stone web. The center of the web acted as a gate which brought droves of spiders large and small. This unending crawl of spiders and the desecration of the holiest place in Elven Court made the elves despair and abandon the city. While the drow remained in Elven Court slightly longer, they too abandoned the site and returned to the Underdark. In the five millennia since its fall, Old Elven Court has lain forsaken by the elves who built it. Arcorar's many realms became the single empire of Cormanthyr under the Coronat Kahvoerm Irithyl, and the Elven Court (as a decision-making body) simply became a part of the gleaming capital city of Cormanthor. The ruined city is a place of nightmares and walking fears for most elves, though the Sy'Tel'Quessir brave the edges of the ruins to hunt and kill many monsters before they wander into other settled areas. While most elves still refer to the ter- ritory as Old Elven Court, the green elves and many soldiers in Cormanthyr's armies refer to the area as the Darkwoods. Their primary concerns are keeping the monsters out of their hunting and burial grounds to the southwest of this area. All the elves of Cormanthor mourn the loss of this oncegreat city, but they cannot restore it to greatness for three reasons: The entire army would be needed to clear the Darkwoods of monsters, and this would still take years; the army is needed on far more fronts, with the constant threat of the Lands under Shadow, the encroachments from the north and south, and elsewhere; and Myth Drannor fulfills the Old Court's purpose as a place of unification, peace, and the center of the empire. Until such time that Myth Drannor cannot perform these duties or the army can free the templecity from evil, Old Elven Court and the Darkwoods remain nearly empty of elves or any other of the good sylvan races. Old Elven Court & Environs Geography The Darkwoods and Old Elven Court lie in the eastern sector of Cormanthor, and this territory covers a roughly 20-mile area of forest centered on the old city. The Darkwoods live up to their name, as the trees and foliage here are noticeably darker in hue, no matter what type of plant. Carnivorous plants have taken hold of some areas, so beware of strangleeved and hangmans' trees along the eastern edges of this area. Due to a drow curse set during the Dark Court Slaughter, all the waters (fountains, streams, and deep pools) within the Court and the Darkwoods are a deep, near-black purple color. Still translucent and odorless, the water is still perfectly fresh water for the plants and animals and N'Tel'Quess; to nondrow elves, however, the water is mildly poisonous when ingested and it causes fever and illness (-1 Str & Con for a day per drink of water; save vs. poison or instant death to an aquatic elf breathing the waters). If the purplish water is bottled and removed from the Darkwoods (i.e., more than 10 miles away from Old Elven Court), the color fades after 24 hours and the water is normal in all respects. Of course, this curse affects water (but not ale or wine) brought into the Darkwoods, infesting it with the purple coloration after 24 hours within the area. Population The predominant lifefoms within the areas of Old Elven Court are spiders (of all types and sizes), gargoyles, fomorian giants, mites and other gremlins, and massive nocturnal packs of gibberlings. Nonliving creatures that inhabit the Darkwoods include banshees, spectres, and ghosts, all of which are the tortured spirits of dead elves and dwarves who fell 5,000 years ago. There are many more creatures found all about the Darkwoods, from hags to zombies, but the above Mysteries of Elven Court • 107 are the most likely candidates aside from birds, squirrels, and the small game that permeates Cormanthor. Of the sylvan races, only centaurs and various green elf clans dare approach the Darkwoods. Soldiers all (but not exclusively warriors), they patrol the borders and near-interior, keeping the evil creatures contained. They will intercept any who attempt to enter the Darkwoods for their own safety and to protect the Old Elven Court from more looters. If adventurers convince them they mean no ill of the elven dead therein, they are saluted for bravery (or chided for foolhardiness, if deemed too inexperienced) and given some warnings about traveling through Darkwoods (e.g., about the water and locations of some monster lairs). Magic There is an unknown but assumed vast amount of lurking magic among the ruins of Elven Court's temples. In its heyday, the Court's temples and buildings (including the living tree buildings that have grown wild in the interim) were riddled with minor and major magics, similar to Myth Drannor today. The drow curses and magics which corrupted many other aspects of the once-proud city have infected these as well, though some magics are maintained as they were but are used in more malevolent ways than their designers ever intended. • The magics embedded in now-shattered concert shells once allowed all within an amphitheater to hear the beauty of an elven bard's song but now magnify the terrifying howls of leucrotta and banshees therein. • The Plaza of Dance once sponsored grand galas where elves danced lightly on air; its magic long twisted by the nearby destruction and dissolution of the temple to Hanali, any who enter the plaza suffer the effects of a reverse gravity field, as the magic roughly grabs entrants and flings them skyward, where they either land outside the courtyard or fall back into the field, only to be tossed ever higher. . . . (Contact with the field tosses a being 20 feet into the air in a slight arc; there is a 30% chance of contacting the field again, and then the being is flung 30 feet up and out of the courtyard, suffering appropriate falling damage in either case). • Any arrows or missiles fired or thrown within the boundaries of Old Elven Court (marked by cobblestone trails and stone markers) will veer away from a target after flying 20 feet and sail outside of the nearest city boundaries; targets inside that distance can be hit by the missiles with a THACO penalty of -4. Missiles always veer straight up and then out toward the nearest edge of the city, where the missile falls directly to the ground. This magic ignores all distance limits, magical or ability bonuses, or types of missiles (such as arrows of slaying), so a stone could fly up to 500 yards to ployp harmlessly in the grass, no matter who or what flung it. This explains the random piles of good arrows, sling bullets, and even magical missiles from a necklace of missiles people find outside the city limits. • The great Feast Hall in the Hall of Ages lies exposed to 108 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves the sky, its ceiling destroyed during the Dark Court Slaughter by errant lightning bolts and other forceful magic. However, the magical fields on the still-whole but scarred table that dominates the room yet hold, and food placed on the table maintains its temperature and doesn't spoil. Many of the carnivorous monsters, but most especially the gargoyles, drop their kills upon the table, where they will stay fresh (and warm, in their just-killed state) until consumed. Architecture This city in its prime was a beautiful place of High-Magicborn stone temples and grand living tree homes. The Decision Place was entirely elven and often magically created, so very few buildings were made with brick and mortar. Now, in its ruin, only the landmarks below are more than rubble overgrown with ivy and strangleeved, and the beauty of the remaining buildings has been marred by their partial ruination and continued abuse by monsters that lair within the woods. Landmarks While the landmarks were few and far between even when Elven Court was a thriving community, those few that existed were ruined by the drow & duergar attacks during the Dark Court Slaughter. Since the abandonment of Old

Elven Court, the forest reclaimed much of the area. Crawling ivies, flowers, lichens, mosses, and bushes now cover much of the rubblestrewn courtyards, streets, and fallen buildings. Fountains still lie within the city limits, though only one still pumps a slow trickle of purplish water into an ivy-cked basin. Now, at the height of Myth Drannor’s power, there are only a few major sites here that retain any hints of their former use, while all others are restored to nature or too thoroughly destroyed to identify. The Creator’s House Ruined Ground Dwelling—Grand; 3-Story Temple From the outside, the southern facade of this once-grand oval temple was shod in gold and its five graceful spires towered over the surrounding trees. Now, two of the towers are broken open at their tops while a third is fully destroyed, its outer wall rendered by massive claws along its entire length. The high arched roof of the temple has massive holes in it, but it is largely intact and can provide some shelter. Its twostory high stone double doors are broken, one door broken lengthwise (its jagged remnants still swinging on the left hinges) while the other is shattered entirely, the rubble littering the stairs leading up to the doors. Once inside the greatest temple of Elven Court, its desecration is fully realized. All the floor mosaics have been marred or destroyed by clawed creatures far greater than man-size. The twelve massive support pillars that line the central aisle leading to the altar have been altered by magic, and a stoneshaped web links the pillars together, its branches and orientation leaving it 14 feet above and parallel to the floor. The center of the web is 15 feet in diameter and it glows with a purplish light. Every nook and cranny within the temple’s structure is thick with webs, though these are more standard spiders’ silk webs (with only a few being the webs of giant spiders). A number of marble statues of Corellon lie pushed off their pedestals and shattered amid dust and webs. The most dangerous site in nearly the entire forest of Cormanthor, the fallen temple to Corellon is the source of much of Elven Court’s corruption. Thanks to draw magic, the temple and surrounding grounds are infested with spiders of all shapes and sizes. The Spiders’ Gate at the center of the stone web (100 feet from the doors and 40 feet down from the ceiling) summons a random number of spiders from some unknown source. However, it is a reactive magic, and the presence of certain beings or types of beings activates the gate’s magic. • Any elf inside the temple walls activates the gate, dropping 2d20 standard, poisonous, or hairy spiders into the temple 1d4 rounds after the entrance of the elf. This gate activates itself, repeating the above effect, for each individual elf in a party (i.e., four elves cause 8d20 spiders to be summoned here). • The presence of magical items (any type) activates the gate, summoning 1d12 large or huge spiders for every magical item carried into the temple. If the items are rings, scrolls, or potions, add 2 to the resulting roll. • Finally, the Spiders’ Gate is also sensitive to spells and latent memorized magic. Should any spells, spell effects, or spellcasters come within 50 feet of any part of the stone web, the gate erupts into purple flames which spread along the web, licking and cracking. Each spell or caster (priest and wizard classes and any spellcasting rangers or paladins) of 6th level or less causes the gate to produce 1d4 giant spiders (50% standard, 30% flying spiders, 20% driders). Spellcasters or effects greater than those levels each see 1d6 phase spiders emerge from the gate. The presence of a High Mage in this temple causes the gate to emit 1d4 gargantuan spiders as well as the maximum amount of each of the other types of spiders (rather than rolling randomly). The above effects are cumulative, so an elf thief under the influence of a potion of invisibility wearing a ring of jumping causes the gate to emit 2-40 (2d20) smaller spiders and 3-14 (1d12+2) large/huge spiders. Once his elven High Mage friend joins him (wielding a staff of the magi and wearing a ring of protection), though, the gate erupts with 40 more lesser spiders, 14 more large/huge spiders, and 1-4 gargantuan spiders. In general, two adventurers against 60-112 spiders of all sizes had best run for their lives, as many elves before them have! The Hall of Ages Ruined Ground Dwelling—Grand; 3-Story Hall and Temple This building is among the grander remains in Old Elven Court. The first floor contains a temple to Labelas (long ruined by summoned fire lizards and like creatures, the golden statues all partially slagged and lying in resolidified pools of gold), while the floors above were the kitchens and pantries and guest rooms that all supported the top floor, the greatest feast-hall in all of Arcorar. This was the focus of the drow and duergar attack, and yet it is one of the few surviving buildings. As stated above, the roof of this massive marble building is shattered and gone, the whole upper floor exposed to the elements. Various holes appear throughout the 35-foot-high walls due to spells or other attacks during the Slaughter. Lower parts of this building are covered in climbing ivy with bright yellow flowers (yellow musk creepers), though they grow to the roof where holes in the walls allow them new purchase to continue climbing. The northwestern corner of the building is collapsed in a heap of rubble, the tunneling underneath it the cause of the destruction. Creatures careful in climbing up the pile of rubble can reach the top of the breach and enter the building’s second floor through its old pantries. Garrison of Fletching Green Ruined Fortified Ground Dwelling—Major; 3-Story Garrison This wide, round stone tower lies on the far northern outskirts of the Old Elven Court (100 yards north of the city limits). It it once acted as the primary garrison for the armed protectors of the Elven Court and was constantly staffed by archers and rangers. Set in the center of a wide, green clearing, the tower itself seems whole and untouched by time or by the chaos that permeates the Dark Woods. The only extraneous feature on the tower beyond its roof crenelations are three gargoyles set in the walls; they act as downspouts for draining water off the flat roof, sending it down through stone drains beneath them to cellar cisterns. Any who approach from above can find a secret trap door leading down into the tower, but it is sealed with a wizard lock cast by a 19th-level wizard and has remained unbreached for centuries. Those who try to enter the tower through its apparently open door at ground level gain a rude surprise. Green slime vomits out of the gargoyle over the door, which strikes the character with a THAC0 12; affected creatures easily flow down the drains in liquid form, leaving no clues as to the danger. This effect is triggered by proximity; anything solid approaching within eight feet of the door (walking, flying, or otherwise) causes the green slime to continue to flow until such objects are moved. The doorway is also trapped with an invisible wall of force over the opening; contact with this field has a 70% chance of knocking a character into the slime. Elven Court Today Though the Elven Court lies in rubble and ruin, folk of Myth Drannor still hear talk of Elven Court as a present-day assembly. No longer an actual, physical site (much to the surprise of many N’Tel’Queess), Elven Court is a congregation of Mysteries of Elven Court • 109 the Coronel, elf nobles, High Mages, druids, and what appear to be treats and dryads in quiet groves surrounding any of the settlements. When an elf refers to a ruling made by Elven Court, he abstractly refers to these assemblies. Elven Court is now a ritualized communion of present-day elven leaders. Gatherings last anywhere from four to 24 hours and cannot be convened without the presence of at least one tree-spirit: A number of elves who chose to be buried in special ceremonies under the roots of Cormanthyr’s trees have become part of Cormanthor physically and psychically, and are henceforth tree-spirits. Rather than communing with the Call of Arvandor, they commune with the trees and the lifeweb of all plantlife on Toril. A special ritual known to High Mages, ranking druids, and the Coronel calls to the tree-spirits and 2d4+1 of them answer a Call to Court. When called, a tree-spirit inhabits any type of tree within 50 yards of the summoning person(s). A face similar to the spirit’s former self forms within the bark, and once complete, the tree-spirit can speak and participate in Elven Court. Physically, summoned tree-spirits are identical to treats, and they have all the attendant abilities of the same. In addition, a tree-spirit can look into the mind of an elf in reverie who leans against its trunk, and this is often the quickest way to provide information to the tree-spirits. Obviously, tree-spirits can manifest in the forms of dryads, hamadryads, nymphs. 110 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves and even satyrs or shambling mounds, should they choose to do so for more mobility; their powers are identical to the forms they adopt, though they can shed their form and place their consciousness within a tree or disperse it into the lifeweb in a second. When in session, the eldest tree-spirit presides over that Elven Court, though the Coronel is the active agent of that spirit, directing the questioning and discussion for the benefit of the elder spirit. Issues that do not concern the trees and the overall health of Cormanthyr seem frivolous to the spirits, and they abstain from these “lesser” discussions. Their value comes in their inherent ability to see the wider forest and the broad spectrum, rather than the distractions of mortal life. These Courts are called only to debate and come to a conclusive decision on a major change that either is not covered in or changes elven laws and society, such as the creation of moonblades, the alliance of the races at Cormanthyr, and the opening of Myth Drannor to all good peoples. Elven Court can convene anywhere in Cormanthor, though the summoning of the prerequisite three tree-spirits takes 1d12 hours longer if done more than 40 miles away from the burial sites in the eastern woods near Old Elven Court. While possible, long-standing traditions prevent an Elven Court from being summoned within 10 miles of the Vale of Lost Voices; the dead here are not to be disturbed. CITIZENRY he inhabitants of Cormanthyr (or a general Cormanthryan campaign), are many and varied. While the majority are elves, the Opening of Myth Drannor’s fabled gates and the whole of Cormanthyr’s domain provide many more hundreds of faces, stories, and legends than can be accounted for herein. Below are the great names and celebrities among Cormanthyr’s boundaries. Rulers of Cormanthyr While only one voice truly rules in Cormanthyr, the upper echelons of power are shared among the many officials of Myth Drannor and Cormanthyr and the Houses of elven nobility. No matter how much bearing these people might have on a DM’s campaign, it is understood that every one of them is known and identifiable by any native of Myth Drannor. DMs are encouraged to create a large staff of go-betweens and servants or lesser members of the families through which the PCs can learn of the goings-on in the upper echelons (and perhaps eventually meet some of them later in the campaign, as they endeavor themselves to noble families or rise in the ranks of the martial or magical militaries). Coronel Eltargrim Irithyl Game Information: LG gold em F25/W/19; High Mage (by virtue of the elfblade, Ar’Cor’Keyrm) Life/Death: -612 DR - Present The kindly golden-eyed ruler of Cormanthyr is among the oldest living elves on Faerûn, though he retains some aspects of his youth. White hair tumbling down his shoulders, Eltargrim maintains his powerful build from his warrior days, though he most often wears robes of state rather than armor now. His face is ever a sea of calm, and not since the hectic troubles of the Opening (and the open rebellion of the gold Starryms) has the Coronel raised his voice in anger. His only signs of ire now are a chilling silence rather than a kindly smile and words in a strong, clear voice. Eltargrim Irithyl is first and foremost a warrior in his heart, for he spent 300 years in the Akh’Velahr and still retains his tattoos from his military days: The sword tattoo on his left hand is black with green highlights, and his palm bears two black and two silver rings, a pennaal’s ranking with Akh’Aegis and Crossed Swords medal tattoos on his left outer forearm. When he became the Coronel, he resigned his commission and his studies reverted to High Magic (which he assumed with the elfblade’s drawing), though he lost none of his battle skills. While none ever discussed this, the Coronel’s early years were spent much in seclusion as he learned wizards’ magic in order to better control the High Magic that became his by right. These studies made Eltargrim more contemplative and methodical than he once was, for his military command style seemed brash and as full of recklessness as intuitive strategy. Since the Opening which he shepherded upon Cormanthyr, the Coronel has spent much of his time assuaging his people’s concerns about the Alliance and its changing effects upon the “pure elven culture” of Cormanthyr. His experiences both as warrior and as wizard taught him greater respect and regard for all the races and their individual accomplishments, and he strives still to teach the elves to learn from them. For nearly 200 years, he has calmly led by example, and the peace and prosperity that Cormanthyr gained with Myth Drannor’s rise is his crowning achievement. Aravae Irithyl, the Coronel’s Heir Game Information: LG gold elf W7/C6 of Labelas; grandniece of the Coronel Eltargrim Life/Death: 146 DR - Present Once called “the loveliest rose abloom in the Great King’s Forest” and often known by her translated name of “Felicity,” Aravae Irithyl is an elfmaid of rare beauty, even among the comeliest of the People. Little and small, the 49”-tall elf has a cascading mane of russet-red curls and small cinnamon-toned eyes that are quite rare for one of her goldentoned kin. She is the very picture of propriety and diplomacy, much like her great-uncle the Coronel, and many attribute this to her primary tutor and friend, the Srinshsee. This is much changed from a few short centuries ago, just after the Opening, when the young Aravae rebelled against her station and her elders’ wishes to join in some small adventuring about Cormanthyr and the Dalelands surrounding it. Confiding in the Srinshsee of her plans, Aravae asked her to create a simulacrum of her to cover her short absence of only two decades. While Aravae and her young friends (including the dashing young bladesinger Josidiah Starym and a number of humans) wandered the realm, the Srinshsee made it seem as she had sequestered the girl away for intensive magical study; while few wondered about this, none involved ever knew if the Coronel discovered their ruse. Still, the experiences served Aravae well and she gained an understanding of the outer lands and other races (which was the Srinshsee’s and Coronel’s intent from the start). This young elfmaid is the assumed heir of the Coronel Eltargrim, since she is the final surviving member (other than himself) of House Irithyl, the second oldest great clan of the realm. Her mother died in childbirth and her father, an akh’faer arfaem and sole surviving male relative and nephew of Eltargrim, died during the siege on Moander’s temple in the Year of Unkind Weapons (171 DR). In defiance of the normal protocols which would have long since married Aravae off to ensure the continuance of House Irithyl, the Coronel has allowed her leave to wait for the return of her love, Josidiah Starym, from his quest for the Ary’Velahr’Keyrm. While she is faithful and spends her time honing her skills of intrigue and discretion, her vows do not stop the multitudes of hopeful young bravos and elves of the elder (and not-so-aged) Houses from attempting to charm her (and gain an easy in-road to the power of the Coronel. . .). Noble Families of Cormanthyr The noble Houses of Myth Drannor have varied greatly across the millennia since the first priest arrived at Elven Court during the Crown Wars. By Myth Drannor’s time, 48 Houses had risen and fallen since the time of Arcorar, and the oldest Houses that remained were the clans of Durothil, Irithyl, 111 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves Nimesin, Echorn, Starym, Dahast, Ongluth, and Mistwinter (in order of seniority). These, along with the younger Clans Ealoeth and Ulondarr, are the 12 First Houses of Cormanthyr. The influence of these clans can span millennia, given their long lifespans, though the might of various families waxes and wanes across that time. Only a few families below have power that spans the whole of Cormanthyr, up to the present Year of the Falling Tower (650 DR). Note that falls in social prestige mean that the clan is either caught up in scandals, poor trade and loss of money and ties, or the family line could possibly be extinct. For some, a drop in status below nobility is worse than death, and they would rather leave Cormanthyr entirely before accepting the lesser status of landed merchants or craftsmen. DMs are encouraged to choose ten to twelve clans or Houses that will become prominent in their campaigns, and keep an eye on events in the campaign that might affect their influence. For example, the popularity of House Ammath rises in the Year of the Turning Leaf (590 DR) with the surprising rise to prominence of Kelvhan Olortynnal, a cousin of the main family; while their prestige rises, so does the number of personal enemies due to the objections of the other military officers (and their Houses). While the PCs may never become directly associated with a House (by choice or by exclusion), there are very few activities within the city that do not have some ties to the Houses. The choice of which rooming house to stay at is determined by its owners and whom they allow to live there, while certain taverns cater to those of certain Houses or House-affiliations; few, if any, places within the keyed Myth Drannor buildings are noted as to which races or Houses are not welcome, for this layer of intrigue and political pull is best left to each DM. Even the decision of going for a walk in the forest is affected by the Houses, since many of them claim areas as “their” hunting lands or estates and will use a trespassing offense as an excuse to “chastise” any wandering N’Tel’Queess. Of course, not all reactions are this negative or dangerous, but the predominantly gold elf population and the pervasive sense of status makes this far more common than for nonelves to be welcomed among noble House society (unless they are looking for entertainment or personal guards for parties at others villas where their nonelven presence will be a veiled affront to the host). Below are the major Houses of the city along with a number of minor Houses, though not all clans or nobles are noted, leaving room for the DM to create some families and up-and-coming clans of his own. Each Clan or House is defined by its predominant racial type; this is not exclusive, though any elves not of this racial subtype are lesser nobles of the House, rather than of the ruling line. Then, at least the four highest members of the House are listed: the leader and Speaker, the heir of the House’s leadership, the most powerful archmage, and the elder of the house (through some elves encompass more than one of these roles). Finally, the family’s seal or coat of arms and the House colors are noted; bear in mind that the House colors may not always be strictly represented in the seal. Alastrarra Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Matriarch/Lady Speaker: Namryitha Alastrarra (LE gold elf W24; eldest lawful child of previous Speaker) Clan Heir: Ornthalas Alastrarra (LN gold em bladesinger F13/W12; 3rd son of Namryitha) Clan Elder & Archmage: Naeryndam Alastrarra (LG gold em W29; half-brother and elder sibling of Namryiitha, recognized as part of the clan on the deathbed of his father, the last Speaker) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A falcon vault; sky blue and ivory Ammath Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Prominent Members: Matriarch/Lady Speaker: Puorlaas Ammath (LN moon elf W22; 3rd child but elder survivor of previous Speaker) Clan Heir: Luthais Ammath (LG moon elf male F21; eldest child of Puorlaas, Arshaal of Akh’Velahr moonhorse cavalry) Clan Elder & Archmage: Khysoun Ammath (NG moon em W23/HW; High Court Mage, first cousin of Puorlaas) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Four alternating crescent moons of black and white over a silver chevron; black and silver This clan of honorable moon elves has been dominated by wizards for the past three millennia. However, change is in the air for the clan as the eldest of Puorlaas’ five children is a warrior with little interest in arts arcane. Still, the “thoughtful giant” Luthais, whose musculature and strength compare more to brawny humankind than the elfdom, respects magic and its traditions greatly. Audark Clan Type: Sy’Tel’Queessir (Green) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Tehlmar Audark (N green em R19; nephew of Speaker Arkhun, proclaimed to succession rather than inherited by birth) Clan Heir: Phraan Audark (NG green em F8/T9; Shaalth of Akh’Velahr scouts, eldest son of Tehlmar) Clan Elder: Alabyran Audark (NE green em F12; 2nd brother of the dead Speaker Arkhun, who secretly dislikes the current situation as he believes he should be the LordSpeaker, not his nephew) Clan Archmage: Unae Audark (LG moon elf W(D)12—Encikkar; mother of Tehlmar and widowed wife of Cohnal) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A stag saltire; olive green and black Auglamyr Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Hastos Auglamyr (N gold em F14; Pennaal of the Akh’Velahr infantry) Clan Heir & Archmage: Symrustar Auglamyr (see “Notables of Ar’) Clan Elder: Raerauntha Fynasla (NE gold elf R12; greataunt of Hastos/elder sister of Syvias, Hastos’ grandmother) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A displayed &lt;h>headed gold dragon on a blood-red field; gold and crimson, (the crimson is replaced with shades of blues and purples among the lessers of the House) Angulor Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Ajaar Angulor XII (NE moon em R11 Clan Heir: Ajaar XIII (CN moon em F0; eldest child of Ajaar XII) Clan Elder: Iscira Tohrthaal “the Shadancer” (LE moon elf W8/T9; maternal aunt of Ajaar XII) Clan Archmage: Ecaeris Auglor (NG moon elf W22; SpellCaptain, apprentice of Alea Dahast, younger sister of Ajaar XII) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A proper griffin armd and salient on a green field; chestnut-brown, charcoal, and kellygreen Dahast Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Purtham Dahast (LG gold em bladesinger F6/W6; grandson of Alea) Clan Heir: Lohis Dahast (CE gold em F7; fourth son of Purtham who secretly slew his elder brothers by leading them to ambush) Clan Elder & Archmage: Alea Dahast (LN gold elf W29; the “High Lady of Art,” Spell-Major, and High Mage since 490 DR) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A lap harp and a dagger respectful atop a chevron-parted shield of white and midnight blue; eggshell white, midnight blue, and (sparingly) canary yellow Durothil Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Laosx Durothil (N gold em R7) Clan Heir: Vhoorin Durothil (CG gold em W1/F1; child nephew of Laosx by his 3rd brother Vaernas) Clan Elder: Ushymcha Durothil (LG moon elf W22; High Mage, mother of Ahskahala, great-aunt of Luothil); Were baelnon counted among clan ranks, the Lady Synnorha Durothil (LG gold elf baelnon W20) would be clan elder, though long-standing tradition bars undead from claiming official title among the living (and she is content that at least her great-granddaughter Ushymcha secretly relies on her advice) Clan Archmage: “The Starsee” aka Kuornos Durothil (LN gold em W21; nephew of Ahskahala, 2nd cousin of Vhoorin) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A gold dragon’s head sinister on a white field; gold, yellow, and snow-white This most ancient of the gold elf clans of Faerûn has been among the higher families of every major elven civilization on Faerûn for over 15 millennia. However, their presence in Arcorar and Cormanthyr was always fleeting, since many of them fled Aryvandaur during the Crown Wars and headed west to Evermeet. The few that remained in Cormanthyr as House Durothil were among the pacifists from Yrtancel and Myth Ondath or the few survivors of Uvaeren. Now, after centuries among the more martial elves of Cormanthyr, even this clan has entered the ranks of the military, most notably the lesser cousin Ahskahala Durothil (CG gold elf F16), the akh’velahr commander of the Wing & Horn cavalry. Citizenry • 113 Ealoeth Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Iefyr Ealoeth (NE gold em F9) Clan Heir & Archmage: Yrthraetha Ealoeth (CE gold elf W12; daughter of Iefyr) Clan Elder: Omvyr Ealoeth (CE gold em F13; grand-uncle of Iefyr) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Two addressed pegasi vault on a field of sky blue; sky blue, violet, and rose Among the richer of the clans of Cormanthor, the Ealoeths across the years have become skillful manipulators of the People and Not-People alike. No true and incontrovertible evidence ever connected the Ealoeths with any wrongdoings, and they were socially powerful enough to demand respect from all but the most senior Houses of the City of Song. Still, whispers and gossip abounded that the last three Lords of House Ealoeth sponsored certain mercantile interests in the colonies south of the forests, and these interests linked them with known assassins and other, much darker deeds. . . . Echorn Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Delmuth Echorn the Elder (CN gold em F9) Clan Heir: Itylra Echorn (NE gold elf W6/T7) Clan Elder: Neldor Echorn (NG em W14; great-granduncle of Delmuth) Clan Archmage: Ahrendraia Echorn (LG elf W22/HM; 3rd daughter of Neldor) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A proper hawk with wings close on a blue field; orange, amber, and duskwood-brown Faerondarl Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Prominent Members: Clan Heir: Taanya Faerondarl (NG moon elf F2/W2) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A proper unicorn salient amid a circle of nine winking stars all set against a field of midnight blue; midnight blue, black, and purple This once-prod, dying House suffered greatly due to the schemes of its former Lord Speaker Fhocin, whose inept plots brought vengeful assassinations down upon his family and clumsy spellcasting resulted in the partial destruction of the family villa and the deaths of over 24 people during a revel. Now, his daughter remains the sole beneficiary of all Faerondarl lands and monies, and she readies to marry her lover’s choice of a man to whom she has agreed to live her life as a charade (and plans to use her influence as Lady of the House to keep Jonik safe while Lord Chaalmyth plays with his wife’s family properties. Goadulphyn Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Galan Goadulphyn (CN gold em T12) Clan Heir: Thallan Goadulphyn (N hem infant) 114 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves Seal/Arms & House Colors: Two pairs of eagle silhouettes respectful; no distinctive house colors due to laxness of last 4 generations. This near-dead House, while among the older Houses, nearly died out before the mythal rose as its last denizen, the roguish Galan Goadulphyn, kept disappearing for months on end without explanation. Now, surprisingly settled with a young human wife and half-elven child, Lord Galan sets himself to the tasks of restoring his House. Haevault Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Braern Haevault (LG gold em W13—Dualist (Encikkar)) Clan Heir: Armyrn Haevault (LG gold em F15; eldest son of Braern stepson of Talanashta) Clan Elder: Khyrmn Haevault (NG gold em R9; former pennaal among Akh’Velahr scouts, granduncle of Braern) Clan Archmage: Talanashta Haevault (LG gold elf W21—Dualist (Djakkar); wife of Braern) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Two crossed spears against a split shield of white and gold; white, ochre, and gray Haladalar Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Wylm Haladalar (NE gold em F11) Clan Heir: Jonas Haladalar (CN gold em F6; third son of Wylm) Clan Elder: Yrilssa Haladalar (NG gold elf F9 of Sahanine) Clan Archmage: Paeiris Haladar (N gold em W16; greatnephew of Wylm) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A golden stag regardant on a black shield; moss green, parchment yellow, and white The Haladar clan’s fall from grace, due to the temper and impetuosity of Paeiris Haladar at his loss of position as the SpellMajor, was temporary, thanks to the lore and wisdom of its elder and its two baelnon who guard the crypts within Burial Glen (and a secret library therein). While details are scarce, gossip talked of cryptic rituals and long-hidden rites directly to the goddesses Sahanine and Mystra both; regardless of the steps involved, Paeiris Haladar was among the few who survived being deemed unworthy by an elfblade (forever wrapps in dead magic and left unable to wield any magic). His magical abilities (as well as humility and duty) were restored within 30 years of losing them. As he proved his loyalty and ability incessantly among the Akh’Faer, he and Josidiah Starym healed the rifts between them and Paeiris rose to his side as Spell-Captain, where he remains today. Hawksong Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Elidyrr Hawksong (CN moon em C9—Corellon Larethian) Clan Heir: Otaerhyn Hawksong (CG green em R15; illegitimate but sole son of Elidyrr by green elf mistress Axilya Laeny (N elf F7), Arms-Captain) Clan Elder: Jaonos Hawksong I (N moon em W12—Dualist (Alurakkar), uncle of Elidyrr) Clan Archmage: Rathian Hawksong (LN moon elf W21; High Mage, third wife of Jaonos) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A white hawk vault on a field of brown; brown and white Ildacer Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Myrill Ildacer VI (LE moon em F11) Clan Heir: Myrill Ildacer VII (LN moon em bladesinger F3/W3; fourth son of Myrill VI, student of Thilithan, Akh’Velahr recruit) Clan Elder: Thilithan Ildacer (LN moon em bladesinger F10/W9; great-granduncle of Myrill the elder) Clan Archmage: Shyaal Ildacer (see “The Coronel’s Defenders” below) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Six glowing-green wands set around a yellow blazing sun on a green field; olive-dragbron, emerald green, and lime green Iliathor Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Prominent Members: Matriarch/Lady Speaker: Eallyrr Iliathor (NG moon elf P12—Hanali) Clan Heir: Welychyr Iliathor (CG moon em R9; sole child of Eallyrr) Clan Elder & Archmage: Urmicca Iliathor (LG moon elf W19; grandmother of Eallyrr) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Four white doves displayed around a black circle with a gold edge; lions’-mane-yellow, dragon’s-hoard-gold, and forge-fire-red (Their House colors all deeper, richer tones than standard, this nontraditional clan also favors their clan colors in a stripe or tartan pattern, much to the horror of stodgy gold elves) Lundlar Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold); Predominately half-elven by this year) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker & Clan Elder: Shyrrik Lundlar (N gold em F13) Clan Heir: Keyrm Lundlar (LG gold hem R11; sole survivor but sixth son of Shyrrik by his human wife Scolnia, a priestess of Mystra (LG hf P14—Mystra) Clan Archmage: Glynni Lundlar (LG gold elf W24; High Mage, sister of Shyrrik) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Two “dove-verbs” addorsed and with wings close (doves with long, thin wyvern-like snaky tails set back to back with wings kept at their sides), their tails linked in a helix; umber, tan, and dusked This House has always backed the Coronel’s rule in all things, and most of all the Houses embraced Eltargrim’s dream of union among the races. This gave them many political enemies in the tense decades around the Opening, and this led to the deaths of the five armator-sons of Shyrrik and a number of family casualties, including lady-wife of the House, the peaceful priestess Cathra. Despite these hardships, Lord Shyrrik’s faith and loyalty never wavered. In fact, he welcomed the other races to the City of Spells most enthusiastically. In love almost immediately with a human priestess (and many whispered, in efforts to swiftly restore his House ranks), he married her immediately upon the end of his five years of mourning for his previous wife; by this time, many of his younger nephews and nieces and cousins of the clans had done the same at his insistence. In effect, the major and minor branches of this clan within Cormanthyr has married many humans since the Opening and as a result, they are one of the more populous Houses, with many of their marriages resulting in multiple children. While the House is mostly half-elven, they are all raised as full elves and even the humans among them are treated as elves. Only outsiders and political enemies mock their House as a weak one, and never to the faces of the many pious warriors and priests of House Lundlar. Maerdrym Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Ardryll Maerdrym (N moon em F13) Clan Heir: Conall Maerdrym (NE moon em W7—Dualist (Nelluonkcar); second son of Ardryll) Clan Elder: Nyvorlas Maerdrym (LG moon em F16; grandfather of Arun, granduncle of Ardryll) Clan Archmage: Maaleshiira Maerdrym (CN elf W19; niece of Ardryll by his third brother), a youngling elf whose abilities in magic far outstrip her patience and sense Seal/Arms & House Colors: Four gray roses entwined and growing up around three black wizards’ staves on a white field; black, charcoal gray, white, olive green Miritar Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker & Archmage: Pyrdter Miritar (LG gold em W20) Clan Heir: Pwyaln Miritar (LG gold em W11—Dualist (Alurakkar); fourth son of Pyrdter) Clan Elder: Tathlan Miritar (LG gold em F19; uncle of Pyrdter) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Four daggers, points down, on a chevron of white over a red field; black, cherry red, and slate gray Mistviryn Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Chaalmyth Mistviryn (LE gold em F11) Clan Heir: None officially; within the clan, many consider Chaalmyth’s second cousin Jonik the Younger (LG gold em R4) the heir apparent despite the convolutions of the succession lines Clan Elder & Archmage: Jonik Mistviryn (LG gold em W15; father of Jonik the Younger, the clan heir) Seal/Arms & House Colors: An elven arm, chain-armored and elbowed sinister holding a whip that coils against a green field; chocolate brown, mahogany, wheat, and parchment yellow Mistwinter Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A silver harp between the horns of a crescent moon encircled by stars on a black field, no House colors The sole surviving member of this once-vast clan of rangers and druids and wizards is the “Lady Steel” Dathlue Mistwinter (CG moon elf R22). While still among the many secrets of Cormanthyr, Lady Steel is the leader and founder of the Harpers at Twilight, a secret organization banded together to promote the Citizenry • 115 Coronel’s peace, protect the many who are unable to protect themselves, and prevent the abuses of power so often found among the other noble Houses. In fact, the group’s emblem is the House seal of the Mistwinthers. Moonglamæar Clan Type: Sy’Tel’Queessir (Green) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Sadalymn Moonglamæar (CG green em R21) Clan Heir: Amkissra Moonglamæar (NG green elf P9—Rillifane; first child of Sadalymn) Clan Elder: Dasyra Moonglamæar (LG green elf bladesinger F15/W15; grandaunt of Sadalymn) Clan Archmage: Raibry Moonglamæar (CG moon em W19; great-grandson of Dasyra with a moon elf mother) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A proper moonhorse rampant on a blue field; ash gray, silver, moon-white, steel-blue Narlbeth Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Larm Narlbeth (NG moon em R13) Clan Heir: Ruvyn Narlbeth (LN moon em F4; eldest son of Larm) Clan Elder: Tannyll Narlbeth (CG moon em C13—Sahanine; great-granduncle of Larm) Clan Archmage: Mothrys Narlbeth (LE moon em W18; second cousin of Larm) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A proper griffin passant on a red field; cranberry red, burgundy, duskwood brown Neirdre Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Rhyngyl Neirdre (LE gold em F12) Clan Heir: Mihangyl Neirdre (LN gold em C3—Labelas; eldest son of Rhyngyl) Clan Elder: Aneirin Neirdre (N gold elf B16; greataunt of Rhyngyl) Clan Archmage: Gylledha Neirdre (NG gold elf W22; sister of Rhyngyl (though a bitter, secret enemy of her corrupt brother) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Black dragon couchant on a red field; black and ember red Nightstar Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Taredd Nightstar (CG moon em R11) Clan Heir: Sandew Nightstar (CG moon em R2; eldest son of Taredd) Clan Elder: Seith Nightstar (NG moon em R16; grandfather of Taredd who stepped down from the lordship in favor of fresh minds and viewpoints upon the Opening; advisor to the Harpers) Clan Archmage: Gweyr Nightstar (CG moon em W16; aunt of Taredd and daughter-in-law to Seith) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Eight-pointed silver star on a blue field; navy blue, violet, and silver Nimesin Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Dyffros Nimesin (LE gold em F11) 116 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves Clan Heir: Rychell Nimesin (LN gold em F3; adopted son, (and fifth child) of Dyffros; eldest child of Llamryl, 2nd wife of the House) Clan Elder: Goronyrn Nimesin (LN gold em F16; uncle of Dyffros) Clan Archmage: Eyrnyrnyn Nimesin (LN gold em W23; brother of Goronyrn and uncle of Dyffros) Seal/Arms & House Colors: An armored elven hand surrounded by golden flames crushing and breaking a proper long sword in its grasp against a black field; despite the age and prosperity of this House, it stands among the few that have never restricted their servants or family members to particular colors for recognition Ni’Tessine Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Cystynn Ni’Tessine (AL gold em W17) Clan Heir: Dannyd Ni’Tessine (AL gold em bladesinger F10/W10; eldest son of Cystynn) Clan Elder: Rhys Ni’Tessine (AL gold em W20; second cousin of Cystynn, former aronor of the Honor Spellgourd) Clan Archmage: Myrdryn Ni’Tessine (LG gold em W24; prodigy and fourth son of Cystynn, High Mage in training) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A proper Pegasus and griffon salient and respectful over a blue field; either powder white and sky blue (and other Pegasus-related colors) or dun brown and gold (and other griffon-styled colors), depending on the particular branch of the family (ruling line vs. lesser lines) Nlossae Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Haryk Nlossae (LG gold em P11—Corellon; senior priest of the Parentree (SS)) Clan Heir: Kuskmyn Nlossae (LG gold em P3—Corellon; nephew of Haryk) Clan Elder: Cheyrth Nlossae (N gold em P12—Corellon; granduncle of Haryk, high priest of Corellon at Scholars’ Hope (S7) Clan Archmage: Nlossae (AL gold em W9/C9—Corellon; younger brother of Haryk, father of Kuskmyn) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Five golden butterflies set against a quartered field (colors: black, white, green, blue) with one on each quarter and one at the intersection of the four quarters; gold or yellow with one other color (black, white, green, blue) Oakstaff Clan Settlement: the Tangletrees Type: Sy’Tel’Queessir (Green) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Jharym “The Oakstaff” NG green em R18) Clan Heir: Aatar Oakstaff (N green em P4—Rillifane; sole son of Jharym and second child) Clan Elder: Cluyrn Oakstaff (NG green em R21; granduncle of Jharym) Clan Archmage: Nuala Oakstaff (N green em W17; niece of Jharym, faernaa of the Akh’Faer) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Seven arons and much ivy growing up and around a thick oaken staff set against a green field; browns and greens of no particular specificity Though among the eldest of the green elf Houses, Clan Oakstaff had little to do with the day-to-day life of the city. In fact, few of House Oakstaff lived within Myth Drannor, but they occupied numerous hunting lodges and small estates throughout Cormanthyr. Their ties with allies and friends in the forests once called Keltormir are strong, and they are often using gates to travel to and from those southwestern forests. Of all the noble Houses outside of Mistwinter, House Oakstaff has the most involvement with the fledgling Harpers at Twilight. Omberdawn Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Corym Omberdawn (LG moon em F12) Clan Heir: Shalantha Omberdawn (LG moon elf W16; daughter and sole child of Corym, faernal of the Akh’Faer, former student of Windsong Tower, brief lover of Ecamane Truesilver) Clan Elder: Rhyalyf Omberdawn (LG moon em P13—Aerdrine Faeny; grandfather of Chsarynn) Clan Archmage: Chsarynn Omberdawn (LG moon elf W21; aunt of Corym, an Elder of Windsong Tower) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A red firebird sinister vaulted formed from fires outlining the yellow rising sun at the base of the field; amber, ember-red/orange, blood-red, and sunshine yellow Ongluth Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker & Clan Elder: Garynnon Ongluth (N moon em F23) Clan Heir: Garynnon Ongluth II (LG moon em bladesinger F5/W5; seventh grandson of Garynnon the elder, temporary student of Josidiah Starym, nikym of Akh’Velahr) Clan Archmage: Edymn Ongluth (N moon em W24; brother of Garynnon the elder, High Mage) Seal/Arms & House Colors: A black stag attired with silver antlers courtant against a full moon set on a black field; black, midnight blue, silver, and white Starym Clan Type: Teu’Tel’Queessir (Moon)/Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Iliitrán Starym (LE moon elf F19) Clan Heir: Venail Starym (NE moon elf F13); properly, this post should be held by Josidiah Starym (NG gold elf F9/W10; Bladesinger), the missing gold elf heir Clan Elder: Taleisin Starym (CG moon elf F11/W12; Bladesinger; Lord Protector of the Clan Starym, former arkeyrm of the Akh’Velahr cavalry) Clan Archmage: Ysmyrlyda Starym (CG moon elf W19; mother of Josidiah, niece by marriage to Taleisin) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Two falling silver dragons respectful; silver and maroon This ancient, ultraconservative, old guard family of Cormanthyr is among the most vociferous opponents of the Myh Drannan Alliances. While their line was long and honored, their strict adherence to the Old Ways put them at odds with the Coronel. Their Lord-Speaker’s attack on the Coronel’s Court in 261 DR ended their period as a trusted, influential House, and most of the gold elves of the clan left Cormanthor entirely after the fiasco. While they were major powers in the city of Cormanthor, the rise of the mythal coincided with their rise in teachery and death, as Starym after Starym died trying to stop the Coronel’s plan. The former Matriarch Ildilynra Starym died fighting the Coronel as a blood dragon when he refused to renege on his decision to open Cormanthyr to the N’Tel’Queess. Despite this treasonous attack against him, the Coronel had the lady’s ruined body buried with full honors as befitted a House noble and returned her family’s relics with no word of reproach. Orbryn Clan Type: Ar’Tel’Queessir (Gold) Prominent Members: Patriarch/Lord Speaker: Edwyrd Orbryn (LG gold em F4; son of Aulathar) Clan Heir: Leojyn (NG gold em F2/W2; brother of Eschallus) Clan Elder: Meira Orbryn (N gold elf P10—Labelas; grandmother of Edwyrd) Clan Archmage: Nelaeryn Orbryn (LG gold em W16; uncle of Eschallus, Court Mage and commander of the Honor Spellgourd) Seal/Arms & House Colors: Six gold coins in a circle around a six-pointed star set on a white field; purple, magenta, and pink Ever since the raising of the mythal and the death of then-patriarch and archmage Aulathar Orbryn, House Orbryn and House Starym have been bitter, mortal enemies, even with the absence of the gold Starryms who caused much of the turmoil. Despite their goodness and the obvious honor of Josidiah Starym and his family line, Edwyrd Orbryn and all of his nine brothers and four uncles refused to acknowledge or even remain in the presence of any Starym. Citizenry • 117 Others of this House, from its Lord Speaker Llombærth to its Archmage Uldeiryin Starym, also broke faith with the Coronel and attempted to slay him and others before the mythal could be raised. Thus, after the Opening, nearly the entire clan abandoned Myth Drannor entirely, though one family fourth in line to the House remained with its gold and moon elf brood to try and repair the House’s honor. Within a few short decades, the unrepurchable honor of Taleisin and Josidiah Starym gave the house greater respectability among the Coronel’s Court than it had in centuries. In the Year of Trials Arcane (523 DR), another younger offshoot branch of the Starym clan, moon elves all though with a lineage back to the Fourth Rysar, entered the City of Spells to claim the Starym lordship. While their arrival restores House Starym’s position as a social power (due to their numbers and name) in the city, the new arrivals usurp the House lordship despite the protests of Lord-Protector Taleisin and the House Archmage; its heir Josidiah Starym is absent on a quest and the lord died of late, leaving the succession in question. Due to Iliitrán Starym’s successful drawing of the long-held family moonblade, he proved “his and his family’s loyalty to Myth Drannor,” though this test was one the Coronel did not believe would profit in their favor. His hands tied, Eltargrim upheld the new dynasty for the lordship of the Starym until such time that Josidiah might return to press his claim anew. Thus, while the few Starym who remained after the Opening are predominantly gold elves, the new “upper” House is moon elven in nature. The Coronel’s Defenders While the Coronel and the nobles are the true rulers, those who help defend the Coronel’s Court, the city of Myth Drannor, and the realm entire are all accorded higher social status and influence, whether their birth is noble and of the People or of some “lesser” source. In all, treat NPC officers and Court officials as if they were nobles of some level, while enlisted personnel among the armator corps or other military are accorded at least basic respects above common courtesy. The Court Magi & the Armators As stated before, the Coronel’s primary court defenders and assistants within this power structure are the two High Court Mages, their six Court Mages and two Court Sages, and the corps of armators who protect the Coronel’s Court, Castle Cormanthor, and the city at large. Despite the titles of Court Mage or above, these ten folk still see themselves as armators (if they rose through those ranks). An unwritten social rule among the noble houses of Old Cormanthor strongly urged every House heir to be an armator for at least one century in youth; if they took to that life, they could remain and hope to achieve Court Mage status, and these duties would allow the House greater access to Court and the inner workings of power.





leaves. General Construction and Theory When Cormanthor decided to open its gates to other races, the elves wanted a way to defend and protect their already long-established ways of life. Akin to a personal mantle spell that protected its mage at all times, the elves wanted a similar effect to blanket Cormanthor, to protect them and their ways of life. The creation, indeed even the idea, of the mythals was long-lost to the elves of the city of Cormanthor; of them all, only three beings truly understood and knew of the secret mythals of old: the Srinshsee, High Court Mage Lord Earynspieir, and the ancient wizards (and secret High Mage) Lady Ahrendue Echorn. An aged elf mage called Mythanthar had spent the previous centuries researching that type of protective spell and sought to link wizardly magic with High Magic; his carefully researched "city-wide mantle" was the first wizards' mythal after a High Magic working of old. Aside from the High Mages, none in Cormanthor are certain about the true nature of mythals, no matter how well versed they are in ancient elven lore of old or current debates on magical theory. Many agree that a mythal is alive, and is a huge web of magical forces woven together by magic and the lifeforces of the casters. The mythal is believed to be sustained by the natural mechanisms within and around it, from the wind to the current of a brook or a temperature shift from the energy of sunlight. Given the lies to life and Faerûn, mythals can hardly be common wizardry, no matter what may have been said in the past. The mythals and their magic are tied directly to the Weave, the source of all Torilian magic. This view of mythal nature is supported by the words of the goddess Mystra and her altoon-human worshippers. However, her zealous agents attempt (as all humanity does with elvinkind) to claim that Mystra's second, the demigod Azuth, was a principal in the creation of the very first mythal. The elves find this either a laughable attempt to rewrite magical history or an insult against the primacy of elven High Magic. Still, even though two humans were present the raising of Myth Drannor's mythal, many among the City of Song today claim to know much of its nature and powers. The elves allow these claims and comments to stand without question, for the mythal's mysteries become far better cloaked under the easy-to-find falsehoods rather than any official. High Magic Mythals The Old Ways are, of course, the best and most proper way to create mythals. Kept secret for so long, mythals themselves have become legends even among the elves of Cormanthor, though there are at least seven secretive High Mages among all the spellcasters of the Coronar's realm who know the secrets of how to construct a High Magic mythal. Only three of them live and serve within the capital. A Ritual of Myriad slowly links the casters of the ritual (a central quartet and a circle of nine assistants). The eldest High Mage acts as the focus of the ritual (known as the Grand Caster); he is surrounded by a circle of three Major Casters. While the Grand Caster builds the central energy sphere from which the mythal grows, the three Major Casters help shape the mythal in height, breadth, and depth. The Grand Caster sets one grand power of the mythal, which often matches the purpose for the mythal's formation; he also sets one major and one minor power. The three Major Casters each grant a major and minor power to the mythal as well. Surrounding this foursome is a concentric circle of nine spellcasters; since at least three more High Mages are required for the working, this third ring of nine people often consists of those three High Mages with six high-level wizards or High Mage initiates (if not full High Mages). Only the central four High Mages are actually casting the mythal; the outer nine are secondary casters adding powers to the mythal and energy to the link between all casters. Each of the secondary casters can add up to two minor powers each to the mythal. If a mythal is expected to cloak a very large area, the needs for energy with which to expand the mythal are great: in these cases, additional folks are drawn into the link and ritual for that very purpose. Encircling the third ring might be a fourth ring of 27 elves, followed (as needed) by a fifth ring of 81 elves. Elves of the fourth and fifth rings need not be spellcasters, for they are simply providing energy for the spellcasters to weave into the mythal. They cannot add any powers to the mythal, though any beings involved in this ritual feel a blissful rapture while in the communal link. While many elves deny this fact, nonevels can be part of this ritual too. They can occupy a position in any ring outside of the primary casters, and N'Tel'Quess mages could even contribute secondary powers to a mythal. This is one of very few ways a N'Tel'Quess can experience what it means to be an elf. In all, a fully developed High Magic mythal contains a maximum of 27 powers: one grand power, four major powers, and up to 22 minor powers. In all, no matter how many are involved in the ritual, this ritual drains a collective 300 hit points from participants; thus, the ritual confers less damage upon its principals with additional support, as the damage is distributed evenly among all linked members. Wizardly Mythals While the lore and legends exist about Myth Drannor's mythal and its formation, the exact spell and full research notes of Mythanthor have been stolen and otherwise suppressed by agents who want such information to remain secret. Still, enough spellcasters throughout the city either directly witnessed the creation of the mythal or passively participated in its creation to leave some basic information which could be refuted or corroborated with the discovery of the spell or its notes. Due to multiple witnesses (both outside and inside the mythal's casting), the following can be determined about the 10th-level spell create mythal. • It is three separate spells cast by one central caster, a group of at least four casters weaving the second spell, and another group of at least four casters forming the 140 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves third magic. The central caster weaves his spell together with the other two into one lengthy casting and single effect: a mythal. • The minimum intelligence of all central and secondary casters must be a score of 19, while tertiary spellcasters need a score of 17 to participate in this overlapping series of spells. The central caster must be an elf wizard of at least 21st level and the four secondaries must be at least 20th level, though the tertiary casters can be any level of spellcaster. • The central casting allows one mage to summon a binding field in the form of an expanding pillar of fiery magic around her form. This fire arcs out, enveloping the secondary and tertiary casters in harmless cold flames; they begin casting once aflame. The central caster's fiery pillar pulls in all the other surrounding spellcasting effects and slowly weaves them together into a mythal. The primary caster is the mage who establishes the core of power to which all the other mages tie their component spells, and she also is the one who determines the ultimate size and extent of the mythal's boundaries. Finally, the central caster can place a major and a minor power in the mythal. • At least four casters must always be in the second rank. The secondary casting allows multiple casters to cause the energy of the mythal to expand and grow like an ephemeral balloon over, around, and under an area. While these casters push and inflate the mythal around them, they each may add one major power to the mythal, though the central caster could cancel any of these effects before finishing the spell and cementing the powers in place. • At least four casters must be in the third rank as well, and there can never be more casters in the second rank than in the third. Tertiary casters are the casters who help the other mages anchor the mythal to the borders envisioned by the central caster. They complete the work begun by the primary five (or more) casters. The tertiary casters each may place three minor powers into the weave of the mythal, though these effects can be negated or adjusted by casters of higher rank. • With the minimums described above, at least five major and thirteen minor powers are always in a wizardly mythal using Mythanthor's create mythal spell. This can increase with the addition of more casters, though a limit may exist to the number of powers that can be placed within a mythal before it sunders explosively. (Popular theory is that the maximum number of casters equals the central caster's intelligence score.) • Beyond the exact site of the casting, the surrounding areas react to the growing energy and mythal. Certain aware elven individuals can go into reverie and share in the mindmeld and union of thought and emotion that is part of creating a massive spell working such as this. They provide additional energy to protect the lives of all the casters and help bring the mythal itself to life. These supporters cannot add additional powers to the mythal, though they are the first beyond those actively casting the spell who are aware of some of the mythal's powers and potentials. • The most immediate effect of the spell occurs to the central caster: When he summons the fiery pillar from which the mythal grows, the component to trigger this effect is his own life. The caster explodes, his physical form instantly transformed into arcane fire. The caster's mind is still controlling the casting, though this gets more distant throughout the casting, since the caster's mind and physical life energy have expanded to become the mythal itself. • The spell also requires, as physical components to power the spell, the presence and lifeforces of at least nine living beings, all casting its three-part spell; this includes the mandatory death of the central caster. The energy drain is enormous, and a greater number of people involved allow the energy drain to be spread across as many casters and supporters as are involved, possibly sparing the lives of all the casters save the central caster. This spell drains 400 to 800 hit points from its casters, depending on the size of the mythal. • While this spell is considered a ninth-level spell in its intricacies, its communal nature and tri-level working makes it a 10th-level magic in scope. Suffice it to say that Elminster, the Srinshsee, and a number of other notable mages concede that this spell most likely would have failed utterly, destroying them all without the mitigating influence of Mystra and the High Mages among the casters. Thus, even with all the requisite knowledge and casters, the create mythal spell is an unworkable magic without the express attention of the goddess of magic Mystra. The Powers of Mythals Whether mythals are created by High Magic or the work of wizardry, their classifications of powers remain steady, though within those power grades remain great room for variance. Grand powers, of which there can be only one per High Magic mythal, are permanent and constant within the mythal. Never subject to anyone's control but the Grand Caster of the mythal during its creation, the grand power tends to have major effects on the physical and magical natures of the area and the people it envelops. Possibilities include making a city and all its inhabitants within the mythal fly (the fallen city of Myth liscar on the isle of Lantan); a mythal-supportive atmosphere that allows a city of air-breathers on the ocean floor (Myth Nantar under the Sea of Fallen Stars); placing an entire city and all its inhabitants in stasis and removing the city from Faerûn until certain conditions are met to restore it and its people to the Realms (the lost city of Myth Adhoافر, the last mythal city of Siluvanede in the High Forest). Like the grand power, major powers also are permanent and constant effects within the mythal's area of effect. Most major powers permeate their mythals as either amplifiers or prohibitors of certain effects, but their primary purpose is defense of the mythal-cloaked area. Major powers could be fields that don't allow the city to be seen or entered by specific creatures (Myth Dyrails in the Forest of Mir), powers Mythals 4.1 that prevent scrying or teleportation into and out of the mythal (Myth Drannor), or other such defensive effects. These are not controlled by anyone, but they (with hidden safeguards implanted during the mythal's creation) can be bypassed from within the mythal, temporarily cancelling a major defense. The minor powers of a mythal are considered minor only due to their need for activating conditions, ranging from a command word to the presence of particular creatures or objects within the mythal. The powers have limited duration, and many are accessible only to those who know their activators. Minor powers are often the offensive or sundry powers; some are quite powerful, despite their label as "minor." During the weaving of a mythal, any of these powers can be erased by the primary caster before the mythal is set, to prevent any perversion of the mythal's intent. Minor powers include the ability to reduce the aging processes of any living creature within a mythal, recharge magical items, or lessen the harsh effects of anything from poisons to harsh weather to spells of all kinds, and so on. The Dangers of Mythals While these are among the greatest of magics for either wizards or High Mages, there is an inherent danger in establishing a mythal. They are great feats of magic, and they focus the Weave well in their particular locations, but they also have a tendency, as does all power, to become corrupt. Wizard-constructed mythals degrade over time, simply because they are not maintained naturally, but only by the initial power generated during the create mythal spellcasting; the mythal's powers are partially supported by natural forces, but not the mythal itself. The spell's duration is usually 900 years with the minimum number of casters; in general, the mythal remains whole and healthy for a number of years equal to the hit points consumed during the casting. Every 100 years after that, wizardly mythals lose 1d4 minor powers; one major power is lost every 300 years. A chance also exists each century that individual powers of a mythal will become corrupt; minor powers are 25% likely while major powers are 30% likely each century beyond a mythal's "healthy age." DMs should decide the effects of corrupt powers, though they should retain some form or function similar to the original powers (e.g., corruption instead of healing, an automatic feather fall effect becoming an automatic levitation, problematic if a character cannot fly or move aerially, etc.). High Magic mythals are more stable than wizardly mythals, though these too suffer from possible degradations. Since their power is derived both from the ritual and later by the natural forces of life around and within, these mythals suffer only when nature and the land around the mythal become corrupt. If the status quo of the natural setting is not maintained at a level equal to what it was when the mythal was created, its powers begin losing either their strength or in- 142 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves tegrity (i.e., loss of power or corrupt power). For every mile of trees, streams, or other life befouled or other effects like the death of a treat, there is a 20% chance of corrupting 1d4 minor powers, a 6% chance of corrupting a major power, and a 2% chance of corrupting the grand power. Powers are lost only if the mythal's environs are totally stripped bare of all major lifefoms, inhabitants, trees, game animals, etc. Whether created by High Magic or wizard magic, a mythal reacts negatively to the presence of lower planar creatures within it. The proximity of such creatures on the Prime Material also serves to corrupt the land and the magic supported by it. For every 100 Hit Dice of lower planar creatures (bateazu, tanar'i, yugoloths, slaadi, etc.) within a mythal's boundaries at one time, there is a 1% chance (a 4% chance for 400 Hit Dice, and so on) of corrupting 1d4 minor powers and 1d2 major powers. Their presence also can disrupt the stability of the mythal, creating pockets of wild magic or dead magic, and forcing the mythal's magic to fluctuate within it. These checks are made at the instant the creatures contact the mythal and may be cumulative with other effects (e.g., a forest fire set by tanar'i could corrupt mythal powers). Myth Drannor's Mythal One of the few wizardly mythals in existence, Myth Drannor's mystical field had a number of unique properties, not the least of which were two humans involved in the casting. Below are some of the secrets of the mythal, many of which are lost even to the current Realms (650 DR), let alone the Realms of the 14th-Century Dale reckoning. Origins and Creators After the treacherous Starym attacks upon the Coronar's person brought the Court into open rebellion, the time for discussion ended. Both the Srinshsee and the Coronar decided to finally implement their plan even before the dust settled from the battle, and accordance was brought to bear. The Call went out to the surviving (and successive) heads of all the families of the city and all mages of power and influence, and came they all did (whether by design, desire, or the Srinshsee's magical summoning) to the shattered Court of the Coronar. In all, more than 100 personages stood amid the ruined Court and the fallen Starym and their allies that day; of these, 14 stepped forward, and Mythanthor and the Srinshsee determined each person's status within the casting by mentally granting them knowledge of their part of the spell. They willingly cast their segments of the create mythal spell and all were soon engulfed in the arcane fires that brought Myth Drannor's pride to life. The primary and central caster was Mythanthor, and the spell of his own creation exploded his mortal form. He, as the central caster, gave his own life to form the foundations of the mythal, to weave together the work of the others, and to put the first major and minor powers of the mythal in place. The secondary casters were four in number; by the secret design of the Coronar, the Srinshsee, and Mythanthor, all were confidentially High Mages (to control the mythal and its power with their greater knowledge of magic, should this wizardly method prove unstable). • The Coronar Etlargrim Irlithy • The Srinshsee, Lady Oluevaera Estelda • Lady Ahrendue Echorn • Lord Earynspieir Ongluth Of those assembled in the Court of the Coronar and within the fiery ring, these were the tertiary casters, who established the many minor powers of the mythal: • the ioun stone studded half-elf Arguth of Ambral Isle • Lady Herald Aubaudameira "Alais" Dree • the human armathor Elminster Aumar • Lady Alea Dahast • Lord Ondabrar Maendellyn • "Lady Steel" Dathlue Mistwincer • Nacacia, half-elf paramour of Elminster • Lord Aulauthar Orbryn • Mentor Wintercloak, the long-hidden human wizard ally of Lady Herald "Alais" Dree Known lesser supporters of the mythal's casting (though not necessarily attendants at the Court of the Coronar) who contributed energy (but no powers) to the mythal were: • Harblest Stormmaster, the self-styled "Mage of Words" • Beldroth Lundlar • Lord Nelaeryn Mormmist • Lady Alaglossa Torglara • and at least a score of additional elves (noble and commoner wizards alike) across the city Secrets Surrounding the Mythal During the construction of Myth Drannor's mythal, unknown thieves entered Mythanthor's ruined tower and stole his bound notes on mythal construction and his rudimentary notes on the create mythal spell. As the Srinshsee was among his collaborators on this project, she has a copy of Mythanthor's notes and the sole complete copy of the spell, and these are well hidden in the Vault of Ages. Still, after nearly 400 years of searching, neither the identities of the thieves nor the location of the missing Mythanthor's Folio have been found. The true and secret tragedy of the mythal's creation around the Towers of Song involves the sacrifice of Mythanthor. Among the casters of Mythanthor's create mythal spell were three secret High Mages, whose manipulations and directions within the aborning mythal helped keep it stable despite the corruptions of Uldeyrn Starym and other distractions. None of them interfered with Mythanthor's research or his casting, as he had been one of their number. Due to a High Magic backlash centuries before, Mythanthor was stripped of some power and reduced to wizardly magic forevermore. Since that time, he sought to duplicate some of his former High Magics by wizardly means, including this greatest of feats. His former fellows allowed his studies to continue, for their trust in him was without question, and with this work he needed to prove to himself that he was no less an elf for his injuries and troubles. They rejoiced in his success when he announced the create mythal spell was perfected. Had they fully known that this would cost the life of their dear friend, the High Mages would have stopped the casting in favor of secretly performing the High Magic Ritual of Myriad that would summon the mythal to life. While they are proud of their comrade's accomplishment, the High Mages of Cormanthyr mourn their own reticence and ensure that Mythanthor's dream remains alive and healthy. In fact, some High Mages in reverie even seem to talk with Mythanthor, whose consciousness is buried deep among the weave of the mythal, and they arise sadly, their eyes moist with tears. During the casting of the mythal, all 14 casters were mentally linked to Mythanthor. With his dying essence, he extracted a solemn vow from all involved: "Speak not of the mythal's full powers and glory, but leave it for those with the will to discover it on their own. Teach those who would learn of the mythal, but never solve all of its puzzles, lest a student have no cause or drive to learn further. Enlighten others that they might feel the mythal, rather than draw a map to show them where it truly lies—the mythal lies in the hearts and minds of those it encompasses, and such knowledge and insight must be learned by each one who touches its weave." Thus, the 14 would tell the younglings of all races only the rudiments of the mythal and its lore, leaving its mysteries for each to unfold as they will. Only eight of the 14 mythalcasters live still on Faerûn in this Year of the Falling Tower (650 DR), but four of them reside within Cormanthor's boughs, so true lore on the mythal is scarce (while rumors abound in every tavern). Powers and Properties The mythal spans a far wider range than the actual city of Myth Drannor. Based on both the vows of the Srinshsee at the casting and the reports of the akh'velahrn scouts, it roughly stretches north to the Northpost, west to Sysshaamll's Grove, east to the Five Speaker Trees, and south to the former site of Slammoth's Pool (which dried up over a century ago). Castle Cormanthor marks the center of the mythal (the exact centerpoint of the mythal lies 3,000-4,000 feet beneath the forest floor), and its radii span an uneven one to two miles in each direction. The mythal rises to a height of 1,000 feet above the grounds of the old city (Cormanthor, Shredyrinnam, and Kerradunath), allowing elven flight over much of Cormanthor's treetops; even at its farthest boundaries, the mythal always rises at least 30 feet in the air among the trees, allowing quick escapes by many an elf. Its depth has never accurately been measured, though many assume the mythal's one- to two-mile radii to be constants; should this theory be true, the mythal's lowest boundary underground is over three miles beneath Myth Drannor! (While the dwarves and gnomes of Myth Drannor have offered to test for the true Mythals + 143 subterranean dimensions of the mythal, the elves prefer to minimize the amount of tunneling and excavation beneath the city, in fear that the drow may find ways to circumvent even the great magics of the mythal.) Below are the arrayed powers of the City of Love's mythal. Note that many powers deter the use of various effects either inside the mythal or as a means of entry, such as teleportation; the deterrents operate as stated below, though any powers granted by the mythal are exempt from the normal deterrents, and also function as described. High Magic operates normally within the mythal. (In fact, the existence of the mythal makes Myth Drannor a place of power and negates any High Magic backlashes in rituals performed within its envelope.) In general, mythal-granted powers provide magic under strict controls and prevent the abuse of certain similar magics for the protection of the city and its people. Major Mythal Powers Given the five central casters (one primary, four secondaries), five major powers are imbued within the mythal that operate at all times. The details of these powers follow, with the parameters of each set of abilities. The Defense of the People The primary goal of the mythal was to protect the elves and their way of life while also allowing the N'Tel'Quess among them. This major mythal power, crafted by Mythanthor, places an invisible overmantle upon every elf who walks within the mythal, regardless of additional protections or magical deterrents. Unlike the usual clashing of magics when two mantles come into contact, this nonintrusive magical defense always takes precedence over other magical protections; only if its defenses are breached or bypassed are an elf's other defenses brought to bear against an attack. The powers of the overmantle are as follows: • Flight: Speed 15, Maneuverability Class C (any additional flight-related magics such as the fly spell operate at normal speed +6 or one higher maneuverability class). • Shield and protection from normal missiles: The shield spell persists even after the elf leaves the area of the mythal, lasting one hour per day the elf lived under the mythal; • Immunity to contact, gaseous, or ingested poisons (though, curiously, not to injected poisons such as snakebites or poisons delivered into a wound with an venomed weapon). • Any invocation/evocation, alteration, or necromancy spells dealt by a N'Tel'Quess caster (including half-elves) against an elf are reduced to their minimum effect or damage, though range and other factors are unaffected. In addition, the overmantle grants a +1 bonus to the elves' saving throws against such spells; this saving throw bonus lingers on an elf outside the mythal's area for one hour per day lived under the mythal (as described for the shield, above). • The only nonconstant power of the overmantle utterly negates the first 3rd- to 5th-level spell cast specifically 144 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves against a target elf (or within 20 feet of the elf, allowing defenses against fireballs and the like) each day, regardless of its caster or intent. The mythal instantly absorbs the magic in a flash of purple sparks at the target of the effect. After this defense is used, the overmantle cannot manifest this power for another 24 hours; still, the flash of sparks often serves to warn an elf of an attack and bring other defenses to bear. While few natives ever fully learn the extent of this overmantle's powers, all elves can easily access its power of flight with a mere thought, and can use it at will while inside the mythal. This is the only ability of this major power within the control of its wielders; all other powers are automatic and operate as stated above. Racial Interdicts Myth Drannor's mythal prevents the entrance of certain races into the fair city. Chromatic dragons (in draconic or shapechanged forms), drow, duergar, illithids, doppelgangers, orcs, ogres, hobgoblins, and goblins cannot enter the mythal from above, below, or at ground level. The mythal acts as an effective magical barrier as solid as a mountain of stone against their entry; should any manage to enter Myth Drannor by unknown means, an intruder of any of the above races suffers an automatic 1d8 hit points of damage as the mythal crackles around it and then randomly teleports each intruder more than 500 miles from Cormanthor. Keep in mind that this only deters the physical passage of these creatures into the mythal; their powers (or missiles, breath weapons, certain psionics, etc.) can still influence the world within the mythal unless countered by other defensive powers. Scrying Interdicts Within its confines and at its boundaries, the mythal absorbs and negates all scrying, detection, location, divination, and mind-reading or influencing magics, from simple locate object and wizard eye spells to the more powerful hold monster and mass charm dweomers. None of these can be cast to cross the boundary of (into or out from) the mythal. In other words, no wizard spells wholly or partly of the enchantment/charm or greater divination schools, and no priest spells of the charm or divination spheres, or any magical item discharges that emulate such spells, work in Myth Drannor. The mythal also nullifies all psionic powers (clairsentient, et al) that achieve the same effects as the above prohibited spells. Teleportation Interdicts No teleportation or similar translocation magics (such as dimension door) work properly within Myth Drannor, or into or out of its confines. A wizard (or any creature using a magical item) trying to teleport into Myth Drannor uses and exhausts the magic in the usual manner, but the destination is warped by the mythal and the impatient wizard or item-user arrives at a random destination somewhere on Faerûn more than 100 miles from Cormanthor. Any attempt to use such magic while within Myth Drannor, even powerful spells or items such as a priest's word of recall or transport via plants, results in a trip to a random location elsewhere within the mythal. Such trips are not governed by the usual limitations (a dimension door, for example, could send its caster on a much longer journey than the spell normally permits), but are never fatal or harmful due to teleportation "errors;" possible contact with solid objects or unsafe landings simply caroms the traveler to a safe destination. The mythal nullifies all psionic powers (psychoptortive, et al) that achieve the same effects as the above prohibited spells. Planar Magic and Psionic Augmentations This major power, indeed this grouping of similar minor effects over planar boundaries and power transfers, was created by the Coronar Etlargrim as a way of allowing more open access between the City of Brotherhood and the outside Realms. This single major power has multiple effects noted below, but generally speaking, all magic (spells, items, and so on), monster abilities (only those connected to other planes such as undead life draining), and psionics that deal with astral or etheral states and planar connections are augmented by the mythal. • Astral spells require only one turn to cast, and the caster can reach down to the first, second, or third levels of the desired outer plane, at will. • Banishment spells require no material components, though this allows a +2 bonus toward the target's saving throw vs. the spell (using the components eliminates this bonus). The caster does not need to know or utter the name, title, or type of creature to be banished if the creature is clearly visible to the caster at the commencement of spellcasting. • Ensnarement spells always bring the desired creature (no saving throw allowed) instantly to the caster, and the creature is always successfully trapped by the warding circle. Furthermore, ensnared creatures incur a -2 penalty against their intelligence scores to resisting the summoner's requests. • Gate spells do not age the caster, and always reach the exact intended creature. • Plane shift spells require no material component for casting, and unwilling creatures (who still must be touched to be affected) are allowed no saving throw against the spell. The caster can send two unwilling creatures to another plane (not just one), but both entities are taken to the same destination. The destination is always the precise plane and/or location that the caster intends to reach, never resulting in a wrong or diverted journey. • Drawmij's instant summons, Leomund's secret chest, and other magics that provide links across distances or planes work after a fashion inside the mythal. They always produce something, but the object is a random item of the DM's choice—anything from a faded flower to a stool or a rock, never the intended item! Magical items and spells linked to their own extradimensional spaces, such as bags of holding and portable holes, are not affected. • Creatures who cause damage either by the discharge of energies drawn from or the drawing of energies to the Positive or Negative Material Plane (such as devas, or undead such as liches and vampires) find these energy-transfer powers nullified inside the mythal. Command words exist that open access to the Material Planes (one each for Positive and Negative) to restore these powers per individual, but these are shared only among the Coronar and his loyal baehnon. • Initial and maintenance PSP costs for psychoptortive psionic powers involving otherplanar contact and summonings are cut in half (fractions round up). However, despite these augmentations, psychoptortive psionics involving movement within the Prime Material Plane of Toril (such as teleport) are warped by the mythal as previously noted. Minor Mythal Powers While the major powers were those for the city's defense and welfare, the lesser powers of the mythal were intended to make the lives of city inhabitants easier. With nine tertiary casters, as many as 27 powers could be woven into the mythal; however, with the death of Lord Aulauthar Orbryn by the magics of Uldeyrn Starym and Elminster's (and others') distractions in fighting that same corrupt effort during the laying of the mythal, the casters may not have added their complete contingent of spells. Therefore, each DM may add his own secrets about the mythal and determine exactly how many powers the mythal contains. At the absolute minimum, 18 minor powers should exist within this mythal, even though only a dozen are specifically detailed here; the remaining six (or more) minor powers should be developed by DMs. Hints for other minor mythal powers are found in the "Magic of Myth Drannor" section of Book One. These also could be works of wizardly magic instead. Blueglow Magics Before the laying of the mythal, only one temple garden in Cormanthor contained the rare elven blueglow moss, a lush moss that glowed at night with a vivid blue faerie fire - like radiance (and heavy patches of it generated enough light to read by). Thanks to a minor glamour within the mythal, the blueglow moss flourishes in many gardens in Myth Drannor and even grows wild out beyond the city itself. Under normal circumstances (or if harvested and taken outside of the mythal), blueglow moss is merely an herb useful for safely packing wounds and acting as a minor antidote for low-grade contact poisons. If steeped in hot water for tea, it can fully neutralize poison of the ingested variety or those poisons injected by most spiders' and snakes' bites. When powered by the mythal, however, blueglow moss confers many more benefits upon creatures who undergo prolonged exposure to it. For this reason, the bulk of the mosses are found in carefully tended beds in arbors and gardens within temple courtyards of Myth Drannor. It is a Mythals + 145 heinous crime to damage living blueglow found anywhere in Cormanthyr. An injured being who sleeps on a bed of blueglow moss heals 1d4 points of damage per uninterrupted hour of exposure. Continued sleep and exposure to blueglow for six hours or more adds the following benefits and effects: • Regeneration of lost limbs, damaged organs, and tissues is begun, but this is a slow process. It starts by banishing disease and parasitic infestations and the like (cure disease after 12 hours of exposure). Extended and repeated blueglow moss exposures can result in the complete restoration of an elf or living being to a whole, healthy state. In general, 18 continuous hours of blueglow exposure are needed to regenerate a digit (finger, toe); 36 continuous hours will restore organs such as eyes, ears, and other nonvital organs (which are restored by the normal healing process); 120 hours restore whole hands and feet; longer exposure restores whole limbs. • The exposed person augments his alertness of his own body. Attacks, diseases, infections, and poisons are instantly noticed—even attacks normally hidden by anaesthetic, such as rot grub burrowings. Magical attacks that affect the victim's senses, however, cannot be detected without other magical aid. This awareness lasts for one day (24 hours) per six-hour exposure. The person gains no extra benefits against the dangers, only the ability to detect the problems. • An exposed creature gains increased resistance to petrification (+1 bonus to all saving throws) and polymorph (+2 bonus to saving throws) attacks. Once the person leaves the mythal, these benefits are instantly lost. • The exposed creature must successfully save vs. spell at a -6 penalty or he will acquire 70-foot-range invaision (10foot-range per six-hour period of exposure). Creatures possessing natural invaision gain only 10 feet of additional range regardless of the length of exposure. Beyond the stated limits, neither benefit is permanent or cumulative, and vision range cannot be extended any farther by repeated exposure. When the creature leaves the mythal, the power is instantly lost. • Blueglow-exposed creatures feel light and nimble, as if their weight is lessened by the moss' power. After more than six hours, a creature acquires the power to levitate if he succeeds a save vs. spell at a -4 penalty. If successful, the person can rise or descend in the air at a rate of 10 feet per round. After the first six-hour exposure, creatures can lift only themselves (naked). They can slow their descent (e.g., when falling) to this rate even when fully encumbered. An additional 25 pounds of weight can be levitated per six-hour period of exposure, until affected beings can levitate themselves in full plate armor along with a horse, a fallen comrade, and assorted baggage (about 1,000 pounds in all—the maximum weight movable by these magics). Whenever the affected being leaves the mythal, this power is instantly lost. 146 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves Everlights The mythal extends and augments light magic and the psionic devotion control link, making the cost always 1 PSP/round, and making mistakes impossible. Magics that illuminate but do not cause damage, such as dancing lights, faerie fire, light, and other magical light effects about the city, are increased greatly in duration; when cast, they last until dispelled by dispel magic or by the will of the caster. These extensions are not permanent, though; an undisturbed light will continue its effects for as many years as the caster's age. Feather Fall All creatures, elves and N'Tel'Quess alike, descending faster than one foot per second are subject to a feather fall spell unless they are under the influence of an elven overmantle or other light-related magic which compensates for and controls flying descents into and around the mythal. This power is to protect those less than sure-of-foot on the skyways and in the higher tree-domiciles of Myth Drannor. Magical Item Charges At will, a creature who knows the procedure can direct the mythal to recharge a magical item. This process cannot be blocked or reversed by anyone, although it can be stopped by slaying or rendering unconscious the being causing it. The item must be one that uses charges and is rechargeable, such as wands, rods, bellhuts, and staves. The process requires one round of "startup," when the user wrestles to channel mythal energies. This round does not benefit the item, but does drain the guiding being. The mythal gives the item (which must be within the mythal and not more than 90 feet from the guiding being) one charge per round thereafter, but at the same time drains two hit points per round from the creature directing it. Hit points lost in this way can be regained by normal rest or by magical healing. Guiding the mythal requires total concentration; spellcasting, reading, combat, and even standing watch are impossible. If the guide's concentration is broken by an attack or other means, the process ceases, and at least one round must pass before another "startup" can be attempted. The charge that the item would have gained during the broken round is lost, but charges gained earlier are retained and cannot be removed by dispel magic or other known means. Mental and Physical Cures The mythal was designed to sustain and aid those who live within it. Extended contact with it confers a 20% chance per day of curing any diseases, insanity, or feeblemindedness. This 20% chance is not cumulative but is checked at the end of each continuous 24-hour period spent within the mythal. The Mythal Ghosts A creature who dwells within the mythal for more than nine days develops a "mythal ghost." This is a shadowy, tenuous likeness of the creature that is released to serve him only when he is at or near death (fewer than 10% of hit points re-maining) or is rendered immobile (tied up, pinned under fallen rubble, or buried). A mythal ghost has the same abilities and statistics as the creature it mirrors and can move and wield items but cannot speak or cast spells. It is not affected by fire, cold, or undead attacks and has hit points equal to its owner's full hit point total. If, and only if, the injured or trapped creature remains motionless, the ghost can be freed. The owner of a mythal ghost feels a floating, moving sensation when the conditions for freeing the ghost are met. Once released, ghosts can fly upward or downward 20 feet per round and can walk on air. If struck or borne downward, they are always affected as if by a feather fall. If desired, they can move with utter silence. A mythal ghost can attempt to free its owner from restraints, can fight against foes of its owner, can warn or direct others through silent gestures, can retrieve items its owner cannot reach, can transfer items held by its owner to another, and so on. Mythal ghosts can fight other mythal ghosts. A mythal ghost is affected by magic normally but cannot be contacted or affected psionically. It is destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or when its owner dies. A mythal ghost needs no air or sustenance and cannot drown. It can carry food to its owner but cannot eat to nourish its owner. It cannot remain vigilant while its owner sleeps, though an owner slipping into unconsciousness can will her alert self to pass entirely into her ghost. In this case, the owner cannot awaken until the ghost returns to merge with her; normally, an owner can remain alert from both her own body and the ghost at the same time, and can move or speak with her body at will (instantly destroying the ghost). The ability to generate a mythal ghost lasts for one year for every 24 hours spent in the mythal beyond the nine-day minimum needed to spin a ghost. A visitor who spends 12 days in Myth Drannor could generate a mythal ghost up to three years later, when imprisoned in a dungeon cell somewhere in Calimshan, or laid low with a broken leg in the wilds north of Silveryloom. There are no limitations on the distance between a mythal ghost and its owner (though a ghost cannot pass outside of the Prime Material Plane). DM's Note: This power of Elminster's making is one of the more carefully hidden abilities granted by the mythal. It is never revealed to folk of Myth Drannor until they are panicked by capture or approaching death and the magic activates involuntarily. Of those who have used their mythal ghosts and survived (or seen them in action), none ever mention the power for fear that speaking of their mystical doubles may negate their use again later in life. This superstition is shared among all races and is yet another of those "open secrets" never spoken out loud but understood by all. Mythal Movement At will, a creature who knows the secret can have the mythal teleport it and any beings or items it touches (up to 14 times its own body volume) to another specific location within the mythal. No spell is required, and there is no possibility of teleport error. This power is rarely used by natives of the city, since the user temporarily loses one hit point, which is ab-sorbed by the mythal during the trip. As a result of this damage, the activator gains a small permanent scar somewhere on his body. This is the sole method of teleportation allowed by the mythal that does not randomly eject the traveler across the Realms. Mythal longevity Creatures who dwell within the mythal continuously for more than five years are sustained and kept at a constant age by the mythal (physical appearance and statistics are "frozen" when the five-year minimum is reached). This benefit is cancelled if the creature exits the mythal; if the individual returns, time accumulation starts anew. Once the effect takes hold, an individual does not age; death might come only from violence or an accident rather than natural aging or bodily failure. Thus, even halflings and humans can survive for centuries by living within the mythal! Most folk see this as a tremendous blessing, especially those shorter-lived races who gain a chance to fulfill all their dreams. However, this power has its drawbacks: As long as folk dwell in this "stasis," no gains in mental statistics due to age are made, in trade for eliminating physical losses due to the magical maintenance of the body. Elf (and other races') children are all born outside of the mythal's influence, and only after they learn to walk are they brought into the City of Song. Still, the magical longevity benefits each child's learning, as they grow for five years and then halt; even the N'Tel'Quess understand that children learn more easily than adults, and thus extend their children's lives in study longer than normal. All students and children of Cormanthyr (if desired) gain their primary educations in Myth Drannor over a ten-year period. Once beyond primary education and upon entry into the advanced study of a trade or magic, many children leave the mythal for a time, allowing their physical bodies to grow stronger and taller so they might exercise their knowledge and become adults. In addition, mental acuity (and mental statistics) also grow in accordance with the character's physical age (not actual age). After reaching late adolescence or early adulthood, persons of all races are allowed to permanently settle in Myth Drannor (or within the mythal's boundaries). Reverie Protection While in reverie, an elf who knows how to activate this power can establish a 10-foot-radius ward that acts as a wall of force against contact by N'Tel'Quess. Other activation words (known to even fewer elves, mostly senior archmages) can make this ward effective even against elves. During the single round required to set these wards, individuals can be named in order to allow them to penetrate the field despite its normal protections. The temporary ward collapses upon the awakening of the casting elf, though any attacks against such wards always shake elves from reverie to allow them to defend themselves. Mythals + 147 Spell Absorption and Reflection By force of will, a creature who knows the secret can direct the mythal to absorb one spell per round targeted within 20 feet of himself. The mythal easily can absorb any wizard spell of up to third level and any priest spell of up to second level; the spell disappears into the mythal with a twinkling of purple sparks. This spell absorption is considered to have a casting time of 2. Using a slightly different method but still manipulating the mythal, a knowledgeable creature can reflect first-level priest spells and first- and second-level wizard spells (or identical magical-item effects) back upon their casters. As above, this can affect one spell or item effect per round, and the magic must be targeted within 20 feet of the spell-reflecting creature. Reflected magics automatically hit their casters, though they can be negated by the casters' other defenses. Spell reflection is treated as a casting time of 3. Spell Charges By will, a knowledgeable creature can direct the mythal to expand all nonprohibited wizard spells of less than third level and all nonprohibited first-level priest spells to their maximum possible duration, damage, number of targets, or effects (automatic hits are scored, if applicable). Magic normally augmented by the mythal causes up to double its normal maximum effects (the DM must decide how much a spell can transcend its normal limitations). Weather and Nature Meditation Extremes of heat and cold are moderated by the mythal—the intense heat of summer and the severe cold of winter blizzards are mitigated. While this would appear to be a major effect, it is among the lesser powers, as the mythal naturally performs this function to maintain its powers; this ability merely augments that absorption, moderating the extremities of all types of weather and aiding the lush forest growth in this area of Cormanthor. Death by exposure is all but impos-sible for all creatures within this power, even in the worst weather. Natural lightning strikes (as opposed to magically caused ones) are also known in Myth Drannor; the mythal absorbs such discharges to power itself. This effect also aids all plant growth within the mythal's confines. Other Mythals The mythal over Myth Drannor is one of only four known wizardly mythals across the Realms, all of which were developed by independent spells mimicking the High Magic mythals they could study. One is newly wrapped around Myth Glaurach in Eaerlann, while another slightly older than Myth Drannor's rests upon the Imperial Mount of the fallen city of Shoanach in Tethyr. The final wizard's mythal of Faerûn is left open for the DM's development and placement; bear in mind that without direct and proper maintenance and care for the mythal, it will fall to corruption more swiftly. No one knows the total number of mythal-cloaked cities, towns, strongholds, or tombs throughout the Realms, though sources that talk of mythals refer to "Faerûn's twelve cities of Myth" and elves themselves will admit to at least a dozen or more additional sites and strongholds that lie under the protection of the magical fields. Whether these mythals were raised by Mythanthor's researched spell or elven High Magic, they share the characteristics of mythals as discussed above. • At least 18 inherent powers are within any mythal's weave, whether laid by wizardly or High Magic. • It is sustained by the natural and magical processes within the land it surrounds and envelops, and • It cannot be fully or permanently destroyed by conventional magics or mundane means. A number of old magical fields act as mythals but are not called such; humans of old with access to ancient Rauriness or Netherese magics may have secretly established nearbythals. Unlike the elves, most humans saw no reason to advertise their presence there (allowing them a trump card in spell battles). The Modern Fate of Myth Drannor's Mythal By the modern-day Realms of 1370 DR, at least one of the major powers and six to twelve of the minor powers have disappeared entirely. Others have been corrupted and warped due to the presence of lower planar invaders within the mythal's environs before, during, and after the fall of the city. (For a definitive check on the corruption or survival of mythal powers, refer to The Ruins of Myth Drannor campaign supplement.) The mythal also becomes permeated with areas of wild and dead magic, and many of the powers create temporary wild-magic surges. During the ARCANÉ AGE campaign of Myth Drannor, no powers go awry or corrupt, and it operates thusly until the early days of the Year of the Lost Lance (712 DR). 148 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves MAGICAL ITEMS The magical items of Myth Drannor and Cormanthyr, from the lowest trinket to the greatest artifacts and relics of power, are partially explored below. Given the massive amounts of magic woven during the height of the realm and the city, there is no way to do more than scratch the surface of the magics that were tamed under Cormanthor's boughs. Here are some of the magical items, artifacts, and relics of the Coronar's domain. Miscellaneous Magical Items Alliance Items While not specifically a type of item created among the elves, objects that have become known as "alliance items" are products of both elven and N'Tel'Quess make. These are wide and varied, and could be anything from adaptations of older items (elven or otherwise) to new magic. Many common magical items of the modern Realms may not have been created without the synthesis of all the races' magic, from bracers of defense to staves of power. Many wondrous things have grown from the combined efforts of elves, humans, dwarves, and others, including: • Heavy chain mail shirts, open over the heart of the wearer, which magically close when a weapon approaches; dwarven bracers that magically generate a suit of armor when clashed against each other; and light-weight plate armor that





understandings of magic as they did under Myrjala's gaze. The Quess'Ar'Teranthvar Though the name has lengthened and the form severely altered, the lost magical relics of Netheril reside here: the Quess'Ar'Teranthvar, the "Golden Grove of Hidden Knowledge," are the mutated remnants of the long-ago stolen Nether Scrolls! The Nether scrolls were secreted away from their keepers in Netheril in the 326th Year of that realm, and brought to the High Mages of Cormanthyr for safe-keeping. For centuries, the humans' fabulous leaps in magic had far outstripped the advancement of any elf in Faerûn's history. The theft of these Nether scrolls, as the humans called them, would teach the elves how the humans cast (and survived) such abuse of the Art, and it also would minimize the further spreading of such knowledge among the humans. While the knowledge within could easily be read in their scroll forms, the elves found that the information had to be learned in sequence (i.e., the first set must be read at least once and understood partially before moving on to the second set). They also learned that each race that looked upon the scrolls found out new and different information; in fact, one of the chief thieves of the scrolls was Rilmothx Sha'Quessir, the gnome elf-friend who learned incredible secrets of illusions from only the briefest of readings of the scrolls. In addition, within a year of studying the scrolls, an early elven scholar found that re-examination of the scrolls revealed even more information than previously found within them. Over time, the elves found that experience and more knowledge (i.e., an increase in Intelligence or Wisdom) allowed more awareness of what the Nether Scrolls contained. The elves also saw hidden learning among those writings that could be revealed only by altering the scrolls into something more inherently and deeply elven in nature. This planned transformation also would serve to keep other races from understanding or gleaning further information from them, thus minimizing the potential damage to the Weave. A High Mage named Tyvollus Aluviirsaan transformed the metal scrolls into the form they now wear: A slim, golden beech tree with golden metal leaves, its roots spreading out across the surface it rests upon, and its trunk bark forming a face of a treant. Within the tree's branches are a small silver bird with an electrum beak and a snake with alternating gold, silver, and electrum scales. (Some elves describe these two creatures as the voices of Corellon and Mystra, the two gods responsible for elven magic.) This grove has five communication modes with which to teach elves the secrets of the Nether Scrolls; despite the changes in forms, the information is much the same as that imparted by the Nether Scrolls, though there are some perks and differences for the elves.
• The Arcaenus Fundare scrolls told the basics of magical knowledge, how to both learn magic and teach it to others, the schools of magical thought and study, and how magic of ninth level and below interacted with the Weave. In short, the bulk of all current magical knowledge comes from this one source. This information comes through in the shape of the root pattern and the bark pattern of the tree, which spell out words in the ancient moon and gold elven script languages.
• The Magicus Creare scrolls involved items, the care needed to purify materials for item-empowering, the mechanics of item enchantment, and the creation of magical items of all types and purposes, including advanced items that became one with their wielders. This knowledge comes from the shapes of the leaves and patterns along individual branches, both of which form letters, words, and sentences at times in an ancient green elf script.
• The Major Creare scrolls involved the existence and understanding of living, semi-animate fields of self-sustaining or self-restorative magic. The most basic level of this knowledge led to augmentative items that enhanced the bearer and his store of personal magics (items from eyes of minute seeing to girdles of giant strength and ioun stones and tel'kiira), while the first major step beyond that involved the creation of golems. The Major Creare also had a well-hidden treatise on anti-magic and dead magic, which was essential to comprehend to grasp the deeper wisdom beyond the disruption or interruption of the Weave, and that was its focus and magnification. Ad-vanced scholars of this knowledge eventually learned of the living magics and magical fields called wards, wardmists, and mythals; little more than the crudest of these true magics were ever uncovered. These magics are learned from the animal forms within the tree's branches, which speak in oracular (and thus, rarely direct) terms about the knowledge the elf wishes to gain.
• Planus Mechanicus was the treatise contained in the fourth set of Nether Scrolls, and it detailed the secret structure and mechanics behind the planes of existence, their creation and interactions, and the workings of magic and the Weave in each plane. The best scholars of this area of knowledge understood the nature of underplanes and pocket planes, creating many of the dimensional pockets within the Ethereal and other planes. The rustling and tinkling chimes of the metallic leaves plays out ancient elven metaphoric ballads which impart the knowledge in the most abstract ways; this stage of learning is the most time-consuming, given the length of most elven ballads and the cryptic nature of how information is imparted and what the metaphors mean when strung together.
• The Ars Factum scrolls represent the final stage of knowledge for mortal magical-item creation, as the data imparted taught wizards how to create artifacts ranging from items of massive power to items with their own sentience and access to the Weave (in essence, a new magical lifeform). This rarest knowledge is revealed by the entire grove contorting its bark and branches into major symbols explained in concert by the chiming leaves' melodies and the accompanying songs sung by one or both of the animals.
• While there were only five sets of 10 Nether Scrolls organized as noted above by their Netherese names, the combination of the 50 metallic sheets into this grove form allowed some elves to glean a sixth, hidden wellspring of magical knowledge: When studied by a High Mage or an elven wizard of at least 20th level, the greater magics nearly lost to the ages are revealed; to the High Mages, new rituals and variations on already-known rituals are found, while wizards learn tenth-level magics. They once learned more (eleventh-level spells), but the Fall of Netheril even caused the Quess'Ar'Teranthvar to lose all of its leaves for a decade, and thereafter, only tenth-level magic and High Magic could be gleaned from the grove. This information is learned by the bird and the snake fusing into the form of a small golden dragon entwined about the trunk of the grove; this creature tells only wizards' magic to wizards and High Magic to those versed in it, never revealing one's secrets to the other. Tyvollus remains with his creation today, his body in the stasis of aduessuur. His mind, locked in reverie, maintains the form of the Quess'Ar'Teranthvar and is actually the medium through which the grove changes itself to communicate with an acolyte. Should anything disturb him or disrupt his reverie even for a moment, the tree will collapse within 1d10 turns into a mound of semimolten metals. After 1d20 years without the attentions of Tyvollus, the metals will separate into the Nether Scrolls once again. The grove would be useless for no less than a tenday, even if Tyvollus immediately returns to aduessuur. Unless Tyvollus is killed and the area surrounding the grove becomes a deadmagic zone, this object is invulnerable to all mortal magics, including limited wish and disintegrate; even wishes only affect the grove for one hour. The grove lies within the Solarium, an upper chamber of Appendix • 159 Windsong Tower, though it is neither pointed out nor easily found. The room exists in a pocket dimension between the top level of the central tower and its roof; in effect, only those the grove or Tyvollus wishes to teach ever learn of the room's existence (by the sight of glowing stairs leading into the ceiling of the Abjurers' Librarium, and only they can gain access to it when invited by either powerful magical presence). Only one student at a time is allowed into the Solarium, an apparent glass-walled room with a stone floor always under a sunny sky. Invited students and acolytes often disappear into the chamber for a tenday, their needs magically suspended or tended to by the grove; the longest any being has ever studied the grove was a year, and the Srinshée gleaned much knowledge from her studies in that time. During this, the student gleans all she can from one of the grove's five modes of communication; only elves and gnomes and half-elves can even begin to understand the grove, and only those with Intelligence and Wisdom scores of 17 or greater can comprehend the least of it. The Tablets of Pharyssolnyth These tablets came to Cormanthor long ago with the survivors of Srinshinnar, though they remained hidden for centuries. The Pharyssolnyth Tablets came into Windsong Tower's keeping when the Srinshée chose to accept an invitation and join the ranks of the Tower Elders. These 37 large obsidian-black slates seem odd both to the eye and to the touch, their sides polished on one and raw on the opposite. Centuries of investigation revealed that the slabs are permanently enlarged black dragon scales. Years more of analysis and a delicate touch proved that their surfaces were minutely carved with nigh-invisible scrawlings and etchings, tactile writing unknown to any races of Myth Drannor. While they are incredibly hard to read, the Srinshée and others spent the better part of four centuries studying and recording their theories and translations upon the raw sides of the black tablets in ancient moon elvish. The Tablets, recorded by the silver wymr Pharyssolnyth of Yrlaphon in the first century of that city's history, were a treatise on how dragons learn, understand, and cast magic, as spells or in items. DM's Note: Any dracononic individual who reads all of these scrolls gains an understanding of dragons' powers and attitudes about spellcasting and magic and they receive a +2 saving throw bonus against any spells or magical-item effects cast by dragons. Towerkin Rings As noted before, every member of the faculty and the student body of Windsong Tower bears a Towerkin ring. The only way to determine if a wizard learned Art at Windsong Tower (other than imprudent and rude questioning) is to slay him and remove his rings, checking for telltale carvings: Along the inside of the band, minute carvings mimic the designs of the Tower Fence. Students and apprentices wore silver bands and the faculty and Elders wore gold rings; if a former student returned to Windsong to teach, the silver band would be transmuted to gold. The Towerkin rings allow the free and immediate use of any gates within five miles of the center of Myth Drannor, to automatically teleport without error to the central and largest building of the Windsong Tower complex when they entered an active gate. This access, approved by the Coronal, allows the many hidden students and tutors of the Tower to enter the 160 • Cormanthyr: Empire of Elves school without being traced, tracked, or even followed, since all others using the gate went to its proper destination, not the Tower. Some initiates or tutors provide the Tower Elders with a ring of their own in which to set the Towerkin magics, a practice which increased over the years. The enchantments and carvings done by the Windsong Elders and their aides, while specific and potent in their own ways, never interfered with any other innate magics or properties of an item. Thus, by the time of this product, it was almost as likely that an initiate would be wearing a plain Towerkin ring as an heirloom or stylized ring or a ring of warmth (or other magical rings) altered and enchanted as a Towerkin ring as well. In all, over 600 elves and humans and half-elves learned magic within the walls of Windsong Tower over the past five centuries, and many magical rings or family treasures might unknowingly be Towerkin rings willed to kin after the death of the previous wearer. DM's Note: A Towerkin ring does not count as a magical ring for the two ring rules maximum; its only magic is its permanent bonding with the hand, as it merely catalyzes the other effects embedded in other more active magics. Secret Agendas What was the true agenda and purpose of the Windsong Tower and its Elders? None have ever found out, as their closemouthed natures prevented any outsiders from learning their secrets. Some proposed this was an attempt by High Mages to teach High Magic to wizards and create wizardly simulacrum of their holy communal rituals for wider use: most reject this idea, for most High Mages find this practice disdainful of the Weave and the rituals that respect it and its mistress. Others suggest that it was a storehouse of artifacts, not unlike the Vault of Ages, and the elves simply took to teaching both magic and the lore of the elven artifacts. Still more believed the Windsong Tower complex was the Coronal's first attempt (occurring before the Opening) at integrating elves and nonelves in harmony; this is utterly unprovable, but many gold elves and other nobles find the mere suggestion horrifying. No matter what its true purpose, Windsong Tower holds far more mysteries and adventure opportunities for any who are associated with members (or are apprentice or student members themselves). The only fact known about their teachings are their graduation requirements: Each student must create a unique spell of first or second level in order to graduate and become a full mage or wizard; folk attempting to enter as senior students or faculty must provide a third- or fourth-level spell. With this known to be true, many have sought to join the Tower, believing they could gain access to a great library of spells and magic; this assumption is false, as the Elders guard all access to the full library of spells accumulated over 500 years. With graduation or a rise to faculty level, Towerkin receive a book of spells, three of each level they are capable of casting (or a starting spellbook of seven first-level spells), all drawn from the unique spells of the Windsong Initiates. The knowledge contained among the Windsong Scrolls (or the Codex Quevarr, as sometimes called among the elves) would dwarf any five elven wizards' collective spell libraries, and their hiding places (for the Scrolls are divided among the Elders) are all known only to one Elder, the Coronal, and the Keeper of the Vault of Ages.

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