

# You All Meet in a Dungeon

The Western Lands

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# Morgansfort: The Western Lands Campaign

2nd Edition, Release 43

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Contributors: Nicholas Plant, Chuck Schoonover, Mark Goss, Greg Schabert, and Craig Schwarze

Cover Art: Nathan Nada

Artwork: Erik Wilson, Dan Dalton, Steve "carjack" Zieser, Cory "Shonuff" Gelnett, Nathan Nada, Brian DeClercq, Michael "Sudsy" Sutherland, Kevin Morton, Bruce Ripple, Sean Stone, Mike Hill, Brian "Glad" Thomas, Jason Hall, Gabe Fua, Borgar Olsen, Martin Serena, John Fredericks, Tony Grant Gittoes, Hadrien Riel-Salvatore, Joseph Vallejo Jr., Andy "Atom" Taylor, Jody Claunch, Piotr Klimkowicz, Jonas Campe, Luigi "artikid" Castellani, and Benedikt Noir

Proofing: AlfTheRed, Chris Hall, Ken Hovey, Ben Hannigan, Chris Hearn, Sidney Parham, Jeffrey May, James Lemon, Al Vetter, Gavin Rourke, Hadrien Riel-Salvatore, Matt Sluis, Peter Schäfer, and Chris Clary

Playtesters: Mike Brantner, Alan Jett, Kevin Dobbs, Taylor Gonnerman, Jaclyn Scott, Justin Scott, Chris Wolfmeyer, Cody Drebenstedt, Emily Drebenstedt, and Jeanne Mayer Mitchell



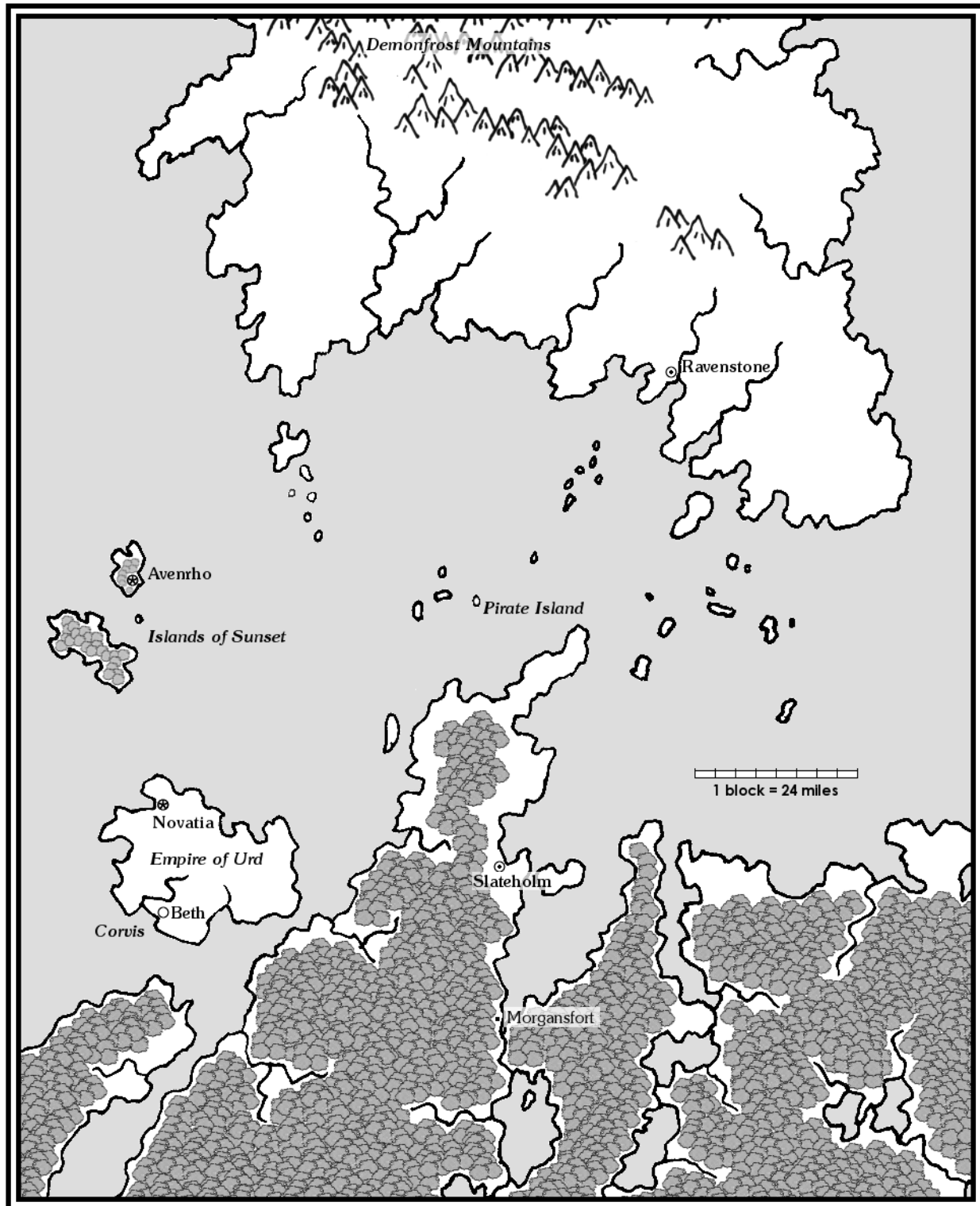
## **Introduction**

Note that this is not a copy of **Morgansfort: The Western Lands Campaign**.

It is a cut-down player handout consisting solely of the background material on The Western Lands. In compliance with the licence, all artwork has been removed. The map of the Western Lands has been retained, as the maps are under the CC BY-SA 4.0 licence.

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## The Western Lands



## **Kingdoms, Regions, and Free Cities**

### **Avenrho, City of**

Avenrho is the capitol city of the Elvish kingdom of the west, also called Avenrho. The kingdom is officially allied with the Empire of Urd, but the alliance is a matter of treaty only; the Elves are not likely to come to the aid of the Emperor.

### **Beth, City of**

Beth is the "capitol" of the Church of Tah (see next section).

### **Corvis, Island of**

Corvis is the site of what remains of the Empire of Urd (see below). When the first Urdish colonists arrived on Corvis, they encountered the natives, who called themselves Covari.

The Covari worked in bronze, and worshiped the gods of nature; they were strongly distrustful of magic-users, to the point of burning or drowning anyone convicted of working arcane magic. At one time they had been a proper kingdom, but the last Overking of the Covari died without heir more than a decade before the first Urdish colonists arrived.

The Urds, for their part, worked in iron and steel, and accepted magic-users at least as willingly as they did lawyers (which is to say, they did not consider performing arcane magic any sort of offense on its own). The Urds were, at least initially, outnumbered by the Covari, and so they entered into treaties with them and attempted to live peacefully among the natives.

This did not last, and in the inevitable fighting the better organized and more advanced Urds easily subjugated the Covari. Now, in modern times, most Urdish citizens on Corvis are, at least in part, descended from the Covari; very few are pure blood natives. However, some still remember the old ways and the old gods, and dream of rising up and overthrowing the Empire.

### **Demonfrost Mountains**

This steep mountain range is always snowcapped, and numerous glaciers wend their way down the rocky slopes. No one lives here save for wild men and cold-resistant monsters.

### **Ravenstone, Free City of**

This city is a former Urdish colony, which became a "free city" when the Empire fell. Unlike Slateholm (below), Ravenstone continues to be influenced by Urd, and is the largest provider of slaves to the new Empire. The city is dark, dirty and corrupt.

Ravenstone is ruled by Countess Olga, daughter of Count Olaf, whom she is said to have done away with in his old age.

### **Slateholm, Free City of**

Slateholm was founded as an Urdish colony on the site of an ancient, possibly nonhuman settlement. The city is set on a group of islands in a coastal swamp, with a single causeway extending from the city inland. Slateholm has an excellent seaport, however, and the vast majority of visitors to the city arrive by sea.

When the Empire of Urd fell, Slateholm's governor, Saman Valdis, declared his city to be autonomous and began to call himself Duke. His descendants have continued a relatively stable and prosperous rule in the city since then. The current ruler is Duke Helsung II.

Slateholm is the site of the largest cathedral of the Church of Tah, Reformed, a large construction completely built from the fire-resistant wood found in the surrounding fens.

Ownership of slaves is strictly forbidden in the city, making Slateholm a popular destination for recently-escaped slaves. Slateholm is also a popular city with those whose businesses are less than legal elsewhere, excepting slavers of course. The city is said to have the only organized Thieves Guild in existence, but this is merely a rumor.

### **Sunset, Islands of**

The Islands of Sunset are the ancestral lands of the Elves of the west. The Elf Queen rules the kingdom from her castle in Avenrho. Few non-Elves are ever allowed within the capitol, as the Elves are somewhat xenophobic.

### **Novatia, City of**

Novatia is the capitol of the Empire of Urd (see below). It is the largest city in the Western Lands. The city has an outer wall as well as an inner walled section where only the Emperor, other nobility and their servants live. The city has grown beyond the outer wall, with squatters erecting the rudest of buildings and engaging in all manner of unlicensed (if not outright illegal) businesses.

### **Urd, Empire of**

The Empire of Urd, far across the Eastern Ocean, established a substantial colony on the island of Corvis as well as several smaller

colonies nearby shortly before the Empire itself fell. The governor of the primary colony on Corvis, Thalus Dane, promptly declared himself the new Urdish Emperor. Thalus Dane's descendants still rule an empire of one island, where the people live as they always have... under the strict domination of the Emperor.

The prosperity of Urd is due to their superior farming techniques, in combination with their rich emerald mines. Emeralds are sold for high profit, as the mine-owners create a false shortage by hoarding most of the production of their mines. It is said that the "emerald barons" are even richer than the Emperor himself... though such is not said in the Emperor's hearing.

Urd is the primary consumer of slaves in the Western Lands, as well as all sorts of luxury goods. Some pirates are recognized as "traders" by the Urdish port authorities (in return for substantial bribes).

## **Religion in the Western Lands**

### **Druids**

In the Western Lands there are many who worship the spirits of Nature. Each spirit can grant only a limited number of spells or effects (usually only one or two), and a Druid will be able to call upon many such spirits. This religion is followed mostly by "savage" or "tribal" cultures. A few barbarian clans may have Druids among their numbers.

### **The Hundred Gods**

Before the arrival of the Urdish colonists, most of the more civilized people in the Western Lands worshiped one or another of several pantheons of gods. Faced with discrimination (and worse) from the colonists, these various religions joined together, and the combination of all those pantheons became the Hundred Gods.

Because of this, the various gods' domains overlap more than a little bit. Whatever anyone's personal convictions are, there is probably a god that fits them perfectly. Priests

of the Hundred are treated as normal Clerics. Such a priest will generally have a silver disc engraved around the edge with at least twelve runes or symbols of gods to whom they are devoted.

### **The Church of Tah (aka The Bethite Church)**

The Church of Tah is a monotheistic church, which came to the Western Lands along with the Urdish colonists. When the Empire of Urd fell and Thalus Dane declared himself Emperor, High Priest Zamos in the city of Beth declared himself the new Patriarch. After a period of unrest and chaos, Zamos was able to solidify his control.

The so-called Bethite Church claims to follow a set of orderly and generally virtuous beliefs... but it is obvious to any outside observer that this is just not so. Many Bethite Priests take bribes in return for granting special blessings and dispensations, and despite vows of celibacy are well known for their orgies and other, darker pursuits. These priests are also

well known for the large quantities of gold, silver, and precious stones they adorn themselves and their temples with. Of course, not all Bethite priests are bad; possibly less than one in ten are so corrupted. But those who are tend to be among the hierarchy.

Every Bethite priest must have his holy symbol, or a blessed object bearing the symbol as a mark, in order to call on the power of his god Tah. Such items are virtually always made of gold, or at least plated with it. The Bethite holy symbol is a circle, bisected by a vertical bar that extends below the circle to form a stem or handle.

The Bethite church never accepts women as priests.

### **The Church of Tah, Reformed**

The Reformed Church of Tah arose in the other former Urdish colonies in response to the increasing corruption within the Bethite sect. Each former colony, as well as other centers of civilization where the Reformers have established missions, has its own hierarchy of priests. All are sworn to celibacy and poverty, and their oaths are carefully monitored in almost all cases by the local Hierarchs.

Because of their missionary zeal, it is common to see a Reformer priest at large, wearing his plain robes, simple rope belt, sandals, and wooden holy symbol. The Reformer holy symbol is identical to the Bethite symbol, but is always carved in wood. Like the Bethites, a Reformer must have a proper holy symbol in

hand to call upon Tah.

Unlike the Bethites, the Reformers do accept women as well as men as priests, though very few women attain the position of Hierarch.

### **Evil Clerics**

Some Clerics worship evil powers. Among the Druids and the Priests of the Hundred, evil Clerics are uncommon but not unheard of, and such Clerics follow the same rules and restrictions as described above. They may perform human sacrifice, employ undead monsters, and perform other atrocities, but always within the rituals of their faith; they believe causing suffering or death for any personal reason (such as sadistic pleasure) is disrespectful to the evil gods or spirits.

The believers in Tah (aka Tahists) believe that only Tah is truly a god. Their beliefs include a being, usually called Shaitah or Mephistus, who was once a servant of Tah but turned to evil. Shaitah's goal is to tempt mortals away from belief in Tah; thus, Tahists believe that Druids and followers of the Hundred Gods have been deceived by Shaitah, and they try particularly hard to convert them.

But there are those heretical Clerics, sometimes former followers of Tah, who have turned to the worship of Shaitah. They claim (heretically, according to the Churches of Tah) that Shaitah is a god, coequal with Tah, and they wish to help Shaitah win the eternal battle.

Player characters cannot play an evil cleric.