

Rand's Travelogue
Caravans of the Western Heartlands
By Rand Sharpsword

Being a Short Guide to Enemy Caravans in Darkhold Sector, with Emphasis on Merchant Houses and Costers To Be Beaten into Submission so that the Hand of Bane Controls All Trade on the Surface and in the Underdark of Faerûn.

(This report prepared by Rand Sharpsword, caravan leader and anticaravan agent.)

Independents: Most caravans have no colors. They're independents, or working for one city or another, or groups of merchants traveling together. Now, some of the new trading houses and costers fly their own colors as advertising. For us, it's more like target identification. Here's what you need to know to start your missions.

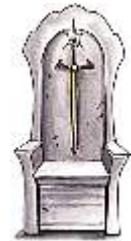
Dragoneye Dealing Coster: Owned by two brothers, Iltravan and Chethar, formerly of the Vilhon Reach, now operating mainly out of Iriaebor and Elturel. Some of their caravan guards are still recruited from antipirate ships, good with scimitars but not much use with missile weapons. They're a well-run outfit, but they relax when they near their headquarters in Iriaebor and in Elturel, trusting to the Hellriders or the merchant houses to guard 'em. Ripe for a Hellrider impersonation trick.



Firehands Group: They travel straight down the Trade Way. Paranoid and well armed because of too many fights with Iron Throne. The bright side is that any attacks against them can be passed off as Iron Throne attacks, and they'll buy it.

Highmoon Trading Coster: The big target out of Waterdeep and Scornubel: a white crescent on a black, star-studded oval. Big because they control so much trade along the Sword Coast. Rich because they carry spices from the south that no one else can get hold of. Dangerous because they nearly always have guards or agents who are at least familiar with magic. Swords alone don't work well against Highmoon.

Iron Throne: Our sometimes allies, but they control too much of the weapons' trade. Best to take their toys away when possible. Instead of fighting them directly, might be best just to spread word of their presence and hope that they will soon be as hated as we are, but not as feared, since that way our enemies will attack them instead of us.



Merchant's League: Formerly a big trading group out of Baldur's Gate, but all the competition from the smaller costers has ruined their pricing. They're ripe for outright attacks or sabotage because they're no longer paying enough for security.

Red Shields: Mercenary company turned trading company, turning both trades to its advantage from Neverwinter to Amn. All things considered, too much trouble to confront directly. If possible, lead them into terrain we've seeded with deepspawn. Their police duty in Scornubel seems lax, but they kill our agents when possible.

Seven Suns: Sad potatoes. Hard to say if the effort it takes to run off their feeble guards is worth the poor take from their caravans. Can't always ignore them because sometimes people cut corners and send rich loads with them -- though not often.

Six Coffers Market Priakos: Not an easy target. Well organized, home bases throughout Faerûn. Approach with caution.

Thousandheads Trading Coster: A hard case named Bharavan Bhaerkantos runs his wagons in groups of one to a dozen on the route from Waterdeep to Hillsfar, through Scornubel, Berdusk, Arabel, and Essembra. The Thousandheads want to fight. Bunch of old adventurers as caravan guards, often as not, some of them working for low rates just for the pleasure of killing bandits. This lot may require heavy magic to take out. They don't take any prisoners, but they don't go in for torture and ritual sacrifice, so they're not quite in our league.

Trail Lords: As near as I can figure, this group fronts for the Red Wizards. Sometimes they're just half-orcs guarding regular caravan goods, other times they're a Thayan concession on the move. Unpredictable. Worth testing out with minor scrapes before committing to a full attack.

Windriders Trading Coster: A pack of wannabe heroes carrying shields blazoned with a white pegasus. More errand boys than traders. Worthwhile targets only because you can assume that the messages they're carrying are messages we would rather

possess than see delivered. Fewer than 70 members, though we've whittled their numbers down some. Probably a front for the Harpers, or at least friendly with them.

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Rand's Travelogue

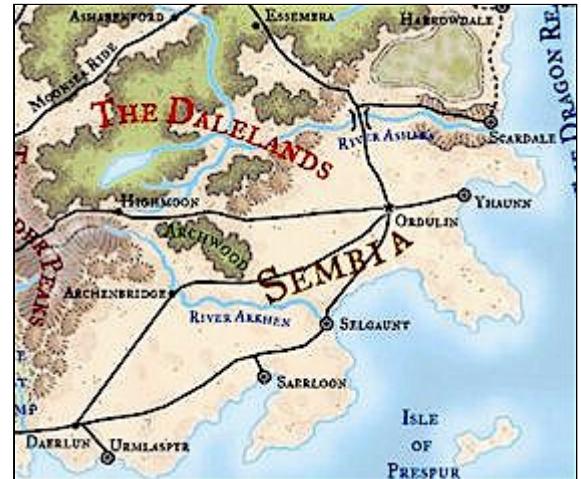
Caravans and Trading Companies in Sembia

By Rand Sharpword

Most overland trade in Faerûn is organized into caravans. A few of the larger nations, notably Amn and the Zhents, run their own caravans, marked with national colors and guarded by professional soldiers. Many other caravans are private outfits or ad-hoc consortiums of temporarily associated merchants. Overland travel companies seeking to make a name for themselves as reliable movers of goods run still other caravans.

Sembia does not maintain national caravan outfits, though certain Sembian cities have been known to sponsor their own caravans. Around half of the caravans moving between Sembia's ports, Ordulin, and the roads into Cormyr are organized by the aforementioned overland travel companies. A list of a few of the major companies with interests in moving Sembian goods follows. There are many other trading companies elsewhere in Faerûn, most notably along the routes between Waterdeep and the Moonsea, but only Sembians follow caravan movements, caravan schedules, and individual caravan masters with a passion and intensity that other peoples reserve for gladiatorial combats or chariot racing.

Firehands Group: The Firehands Group is a medium-sized company based in Daerlun. It has been in business for twelve years and concentrates exclusively on routes to Waterdeep from Sembia. They are an above-board group, with competitive rates, but frequently fall victim of the machinations of the Iron Throne.



Iron Throne: The Iron Throne is a mysterious organization that has rapidly taken over much of the arms traffic between Sembia, Thay, and other nations of the East. The Iron Throne merchants claim to be interested in the cause of free trade, speaking for smaller merchants who lack a voice. In truth, the master of the Iron Throne is a half-fiend, "fallen" from the inferno, who seeks to carve a place of power for herself by economic domination of Faerûn through weapons that wreak havoc upon the guilty and innocent alike. No one knows the truth, thanks to the efficient operations of the Iron Thrones' three wings: The Arms, who handle high level negotiations and business deals; the Feet, who see to caravan security and the destruction or sabotage of rival merchants; and the Eye, wizards and sorcerers devoted to maintaining communications between the organization's far-flung agents.

The Iron Throne's initial period of expansion has slowed, largely due to a mounting conflict with newly established franchises of the Red Wizards of Thay.

Six Coffers Market Priakos: Originally formed by six prosperous merchants in widespread cities as a means of ensuring the proper flow of their goods, Six Coffers Market still controls a sizeable percentage of trade throughout Faerûn. The headquarters is in Berdusk. Regional centers of operation are Selgaunt, Iriaebor, Waterdeep, Marsembur, Priapurl, and Silverymoon. Mirabeta Selkirk has acquired a sizeable interest in the Six Coffers Market Priakos. Mirabeta is evil-smart rather than evil-stupid, and she has directed her part of the operation efficiently.

Seven Suns Trading Coster: The poor merchants' alternative to the Six Coffers outfit, Seven Suns offers slow wagons, barely competent guards, and extremely low rates. How low are their rates? Low enough that people who should know better still hire them to transport their cargo.

Adventure Seeds

You can integrate the trading companies in your campaign in many ways, but here are a few adventure seeds to get you started!

⌚ **Watchful One:** The heroes hire onto a Six Coffers Market Priakos caravan as guards only to discover that a couple of the guards are acting strangely. Why does one of the guards constantly watch another guard? Is the other guard who she says she is? Dungeon Masters can set up the watched one as a debtor in hiding or as a former kidnap victim who worked her way free. The watcher can be someone who suspects the woman of some crime or an agent of the kidnappers seeking to find a way to recapture his victim.

⌚ **Smelly Cargo:** As the heroes travel, they come across a caravan that has stopped and is in disarray. If the heroes investigate, they discover that half of the caravan's guards walked off the job. The caravan leader is reluctant to discuss why. Heroes can also discover quite easily that the cargo in the wagons is trash! The smell is really hard to miss. What is going on here? Is the cargo really trash, or is it disguised? And why did the guards leave?

● **The Rumors Thicken:** News comes to light that implicates one of the Firehands Group's senior caravan leaders in a scandal: He is in cahoots with the Iron Throne and has been for years, according to the news. However, the leader insists that he is innocent of such a scandal. The next day, he is found dead. Was he innocent, or did his guilt bring about his death? What other people will be drawn into this scandal by the time the heroes finish investigating?

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Rand's Travelogue

More Moonsea!

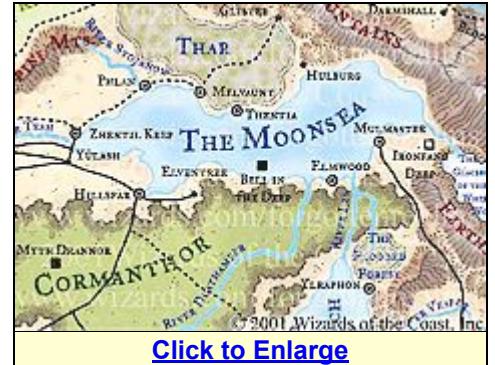
By Rand Sharpword

Rand Sharpword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Moonsea. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*.

Major Geographical Features

River Duathamper: The River Duathamper is a minor tributary of the Moonsea that flows through the forest of Cormanthor from the south. A few woodcutters cut timber from its banks and float the logs downriver to the Moonsea, but the elves of the forest quickly run the interlopers out.

River Stojanow: The swift, cold River Stojanow flows to the Moonsea from the foothills of the Dragonspine Mountains. Ships and barges carry ore from Dragonspine mines to Phlan and Melvaunt.



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Important Sites

Elmwood (Village, 500): Elmwood is a small farming community on the southern shores of the Moonsea. The locals supplement their incomes with fishing and woodcarving, and they sell their goods to passing ships and adventurers at fair prices. Few places in the Moonsea can be called peaceful and serene, but Elmwood is one of them. Constable Thoyana Jorgadaul (NG female shield dwarf Ftr8), an adventurer who retired here years ago, oversees the community. Elmwood owes its security both to its isolation and the simple fact that no one in the town owns anything worth stealing.

The Temple in the Sky: Little known outside the Moonsea region, the Temple in the Sky has always had an eerie reputation. Literally a huge rock floating in the sky, legend states that spells dating back to long-fallen Netheril lifted it aloft. It has drifted around the skies of Faerûn ever since. Eventually the Zhentarim tethered the rock with huge chains to the Flaming Tower, which is a simple, square stone keep north of Shadowdale inhabited by hell hounds and fire giants.

The Temple is a huge, horizontal-egg-shaped hollow rock with landing stages at one end linked by a series of passages, grand temple chambers, living areas, prison cells, and storage caverns to a large innermost cavern.

When Zhentil Keep was ruined and strife shook the Zhentarim, many awed Zhents took to worshiping the beholder Xulqorth, a gigantic eye tyrant. It brought treasure into the Temple that included servitor gargoyles and dragons (controlled by magic items), undead servitor beholders it created and controlled by spells, and even "ghost" beholders that served it due to its possession of certain remains and relics.

A cult (largely of former Zhent troops and mercenaries -- half-orcs in particular) made offerings to Xulqorth the Great Eye (the "All-Seeing and Unsleeping"). In return they received rewards of magic (including touches of the Hand of Healing, an enchanted gauntlet it could operate from afar) and its direction of Cult members in careful raids on, and skirmishes with, fleeing Keep refugees and Moonsea caravans and prospectors.

When these successes aroused the Knights of Myth Drannor to attack the Temple, the Great Eye severed the tethering chains and the rock took flight across the skies. The Temple later returned to the Moonsea, and Xulqorth mastered some means of steering and controlling the untethered Temple's flight and location. The remains of several adventuring bands who have tried to raid the Temple have been found beneath its current location.

Plots and Rumors

Dwarves Delving: Dwarves have been seen in the Tesh valley. Lots of dwarves. Most of these dwarves are well armed and armored, and all are traveling upriver toward the mountains where the old dwarven kingdom of Tethyamar once lay. Will that realm rise again? If not, where are the dwarves bound, and why?

Terrible with Customers: In years past, Hillsfar was one of the few places in Faerûn that had a legitimate magic shop. The proprietor, Laris, grudgingly sold off a few minor items he didn't find useful. He was unfailingly rude to his customers and relied on a pair of stone golems to enforce his high prices. Several days after the Red Wizard

envoy arrived in the city, Laris made a brief and fatal appearance in the arena (a behir swallowed him). No one knows what became of Laris's golems, but it is assumed they were destroyed or that Maalthiir has somehow appropriated them.

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Rand's Travelogue

More Dalelands!

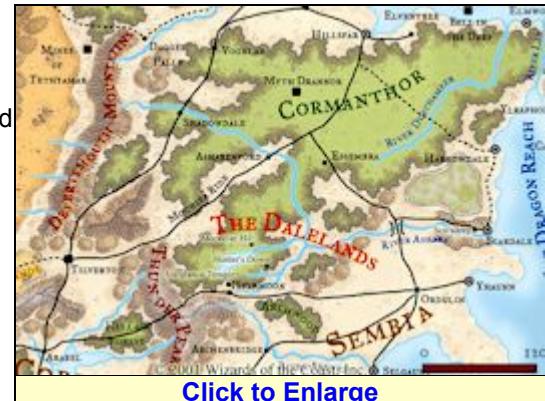
By Rand Sharpword

Rand Sharpword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Dalelands. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*.

Deepingdale Locations

Moonrise Hill (Hamlet, 350): The elves call this village, which lies just a few miles northeast of Lake Eredruie, Ssrenshen. Tree homes camouflaged behind artfully shaped foliage can be hard to miss, but few who make it to the village miss the Bonepile -- burnt ground containing the skeletons of a hobgoblin raiding party, owlbears, and other nuisances.

Like the folk of Bristar, the elves here serve in the Swords of Deepingdale, the Dale's unofficial and seldom-gathered militia. The Moonrise Hill elves are more standoffish than the elves of Bristar, partly because they have to defend their territory against treasure seekers seeking driftgems blown off the mountain above the village, Moonrise Crag. The mountain's rock is weak and porous, and small, precious rubies trapped in the rock break free when the ferocious west winds slam the mountain's crumbling east face. Adventurers and others seeking the gems are not welcome visitors to Moonrise Hill and should practice their arrow-dodging skills.



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Starglance Temple: Named for the venerable elf who tended the temple while the other elves retreated to Evermeet, the Starglance Temple to Corellon Larethian has become a rallying point for elves who wish to retake Cormanthor. The temple blends into the forest near Highmoon, but few who do not worship Corellon can sense its presence as they pass.

Hunter's Down: This long, tree-studded hill, north of Highmoon and east of Moonrise Hill, is named for an ancient battle, the last stand of human hunters against a bugbear army. In truth, the hill's history goes back before humans arrived in the Dales, to the first horrible battles between elven armies -- a conflict between the elves of Hlaarr and those of Yhendor. Hunter's Down is no simple hill -- it is a grave barrow containing the massed dead of both sides of that ancient war.

The elven dead do not trouble the outside world much. They are still guarded by twelve great elven liches, known as baelnorns. The baelnorns spend most of their time debating the mistakes made by the elves who lie buried beside them. Brave souls who enter the tombs by diving through a magic pool hidden in a thicket atop the hill can sometimes trade information on events in the outside world for minor magic items or healing. Others who strike the baelnorns as determined tomb robbers find only death.

Harrowdale Locations

Fall of Stars: One of the few establishments in Faerûn founded as a club exclusively for adventurers, this Harrowdale town establishment offers everything from dragon's blood whiskey to information to a safe place to sleep.

Scardale Locations

Scarsdeep (Small Town, 1,400): Like Chandlerscross, Scarsdeep has soared while Scardale Town has fallen. Scarsdeep's contribution to the partnership is to mount constant patrols along both the borders of the Dale and in the vicinity of Scardale Town. At some point, Scarsdeep and the other Scardalefolk might want to take back Scardale Town, but for the moment they've decided that the city is more trouble than it's worth and aim to keep its problems contained within its walls. The most difficult part of their task is to ensure that boats seeking passage past Scardale can do so safely.

Luckily for the citizens of Scarsdeep, and for Scardalefolk in general, the military council that rules the town has a "benevolent protector." The town's new temple to the full Triad -- Torm, Tyr, and Ilmater, worshiped under the same set of three connected roofs -- proclaims Scarsdeep's intention to take the high road.

Plots and Rumors

Deeper than Honor: The PCs are asked to referee a mortal duel between a member of the Sun Soul monastery and a monk of the Broken Ones who has traveled north to Tasseldale from Sembia. Fighting the duel breaks the laws of both the monasteries, but the combatants cannot settle their dispute in any other fashion. Hence, the PCs are asked to arrange a hidden location for the duel -- something that will escape the monastery's notice until it is too late. If religious obligations are not enough, the monks promise the magic items of the losing fighter to the PCs for their aid. If the consequences do not seem confused enough, yet, throw in the post-duel wrinkle that the survivor converts allegiances and assumes the responsibilities of the monk she killed, unavoidably turning the PCs' part in the affair into semipublic news. Were the PCs motivated by simple greed? One of the monasteries might want to examine that question in punishing detail.

Serious Games: An otherwise level-headed ranger, who has previously shown no interest in the Woodsman's War, wants to hire the PCs to break into an Archenbridge tavern to retrieve colors taken from Tassadrans in the last few tendays. Has the ranger developed new civic pride, or is another factor prompting his interest? Did the Archenfolk find something better than mere colors when they looted a defeated Tassadran woodsman?

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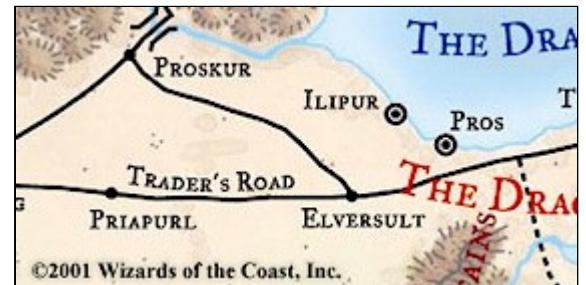
More Lake of Steam and Dragon Coast!

By Rand Sharpsword

Rand Sharpsword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Lake of Steam and Dragon Coast. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*.

Dragon Coast Locations

Priapurl (Small Town, 2,000): Priapurl is a sleepy town along the Trader's Road. It is notable for three things: its tavernkeeper, its absentee ruler, and its local mercenary company. The barkeep is a former priest of Bane known as Zo who runs a tavern named Lord Cyric's Bane. He always claimed to have tired of Zhent politics, felt the call to change his ways, and reformed into an honest citizen. Now that Bane has returned and Zo still runs his bar, most folks in Priapurl fully believe in Zo's reformation, though none are eager to cross him or try stealing from his establishment.



The absentee ruler, Tar Hurara (LN female human Ftr1/Nbl4), is descended from bandits but aspires to true nobility. She spends all her time at the court of Cormyr.

The Mindgulph Mercenary Company commanded by Lady Gayrlana Bloodsword (LN female human Ftr13/Rog1) occupies a large keep to the south of the town. The Mindgulphs are a unique company of monstrous humanoids, aberrations, and magical beasts including wemics, centaurs, dragonkin, treants and even a beholder.

Lake of Steam Locations

Ankhwood: Once part of the Winterwood, this forest suffers from a strange magical effect. For many years a wild magic zone and a dead magic zone orbited each other within the wood, but this effect has faded. Unfortunately, this only increased the other odd effect of the area that mutates animals, insects, and plants. The resident elves are trying to discover the cause. Outsiders speculate about a failed *mythal*.



The Neth Stand: People from nearby towns dislike this light forest both for the sulphurous mists that arise from underground volcanic vents and for the dangerous creatures, primarily a tribe of semiaquatic trolls and a rival group of canny and aggressive weresharks. Its high-quality wood (valuable even though it requires treatment to get rid of the smell) draws local loggers who arm themselves or hire guards to ward off monster attacks.

Yeshpek (Large City, 23,000): This fortified city exports chains of various sizes and strength. Many people from here become mercenaries, although they have a reputation for recklessness and defying authority. The locals consider flamboyant spending and ostentatious display of wealth to be wasteful. The people are critical of others but proud of their crafted goods.

Tulmon (Metropolis, 25,000): This city is built almost entirely out of stone and has little to fear from fire. Its leader is Arkanuirr Tchalleem (LN male human Sor11) who has used magic to prolong his life to over 300 years. The nearby Crypt City, part of the older original Tulmon, is haunted by undead and used as a neutral ground for criminals and the black market. The city is intolerant of visiting wizards and sorcerers, especially reckless ones.

Plots and Rumors

Sorcerers Beware: Sorcerers are especially scarce around Tulmon recently. Rumors have it that someone in the town is trying an experiment of sorts that involves the blood of a sorcerer. There is even a bounty for every vial of sorcerer blood, regardless of race, that a person brings to a couple of storekeepers in Tulmon.

Oaken Trials: The one, young stand of oaks in the Neth Stand has acquired a dryad, but she ails from the mists that have inundated the wood. Loggers fear to bring down her trees for she is very protective of them, but she seems to be suffering. No druids know of the situation as of yet, and the loggers don't particularly want to deal with the druids anyway.

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Rand's Travelogue
**More High Forest, Savage Frontier,
and Silver Marches!**

By Rand Sharpword

Rand Sharpword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the High Forest, Silver Marches, and Savage Coast areas. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the ***Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting***.

Savage Frontier Locations

Lurkwood: As the most convenient route from the orc-ridden Spine of the World to both the Evermoors and the High Forest, Lurkwood is a dangerous place to tarry. Humans log the fringes of the wood, but only when well armed.

Longsaddle (Small Town, 950): Lurkwood is a small village that is notable as the rallying point for a widespread community of boisterous cattle ranchers who are held in check by a family of magicians with deep roots in the local community, the Harpells. The Harpells are members of the Lord's Alliance. Longsaddle may be a small community, but it's anything but sleepy, because magicians, outsiders, aberrants, and adventurers who side with or against the Harpells constantly trickle through town, looking for information or to settle a grudge.

Silver Marches Locations

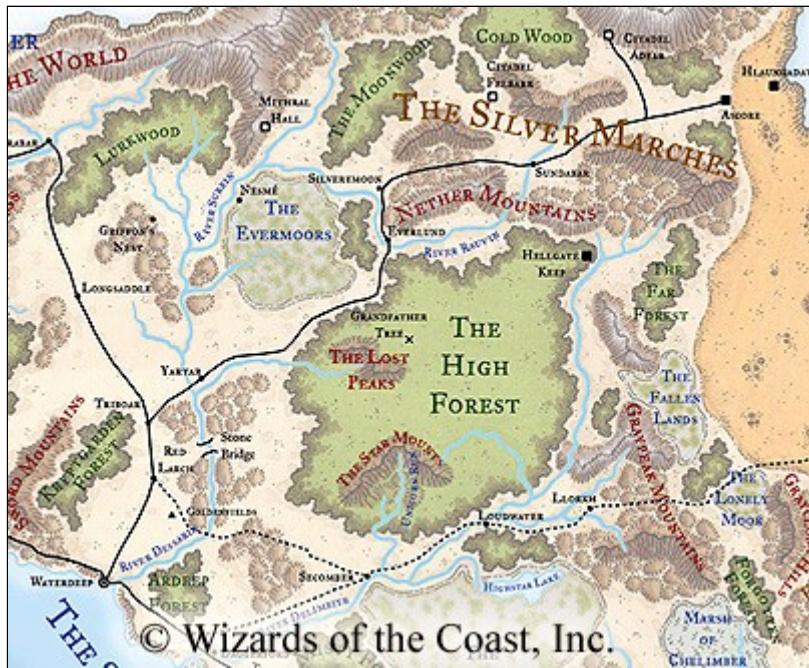
Deadsnows (Village, 530): Among the crags of mountain country, near the trails left by dire bears and hunting dragons, sits an outpost of 500 dwarves and 30 humans. The dwarves worship Marthammor Finder of Trails, an adventurers' god. The humans worship Lathander. Together the two races maintain a watchtower, an Underdark cavern, and an abbey that provides shelter for travelers. In the new order of the Silver March, Deadsnows serves as an early warning post for the communities to the south.

Plots and Rumors

"Tell Us Who to Hate": The centaurs of the High Forest have received multiple divinations telling them that they must win a war in the next month or lose their tribe's luck. The divinations specified that the centaurs cannot declare the war themselves -- they have to be told who to war against by a noncentaur who happens to be a member of a PC race. After the PC obliges, the centaurs reveal the second part of the prophecy: The noncentaur who names their enemy must lead them into battle. If the PCs avoid doing their prophetic duty, make sure that the noncentaur NPC who names an enemy picks a group the PCs are friendly with.

The Latest from Silverymoon: Alustriel of the Seven Sisters, the ruler of Silverymoon for 134 years until she stepped down to oversee all the Silver March, encourages stronger bonds between the diverse races of Silverymoon. Marriage and children between the races are still relatively rare, but childrearing, education, and professional training are often so intermingled that outsiders think of Silverymoon as the place where elves think they're dwarves, dwarves think they're elves, and humans think they're everything.

Tag in the Woods: Giants from the Evermoors chase a small army of orcs out of the moors into the Moonwood. While the orcs play the mice to the giants' dire cats, the giants begin to realize that they like it here. Not many folks around. Lots of big trees. Warmer than the moor. Nice place to live. The giants may hate orcs, but that doesn't make them nice giants, so the PCs need to dissuade them before they get too comfortable in their "new home."



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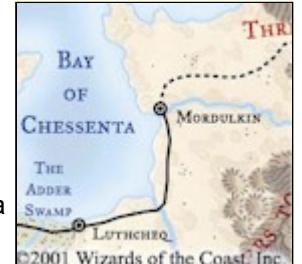
More Old Empires and Sembia!

By Rand Sharpword

Rand Sharpword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Old Empires and Sembia regions. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#).

Chessenta Locations

Mordulkin (Metropolis, 35,000): Ruled by the most powerful mage of the Jeeda family, Mordulkin is a haven for wizards and sorcerers and the enemy of Luthcheq. Guilds run the city's districts, and all guilds report to the king. Mercenary and adventuring groups have their own district and must register with the mercenary guild or be imprisoned. King Hercubes (N male human Wiz14) is not interested in uniting Chessenta, and his constituents have been calling for a war to eradicate Luthcheq.



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Mulhorand Locations

Azulduth: In past hot seasons, large portions of this extremely salty and shallow lake have dried up to form salt flats for months at a time. Strong rains this spring have allowed water to seep into lower portions of the salt bed, where magically preserved eggs of wyverns and dragons have finally hatched, crawling and flying north, eating whatever they can find. Enterprising wizards in Mulhorand are trying to catch these creatures while young, hoping to train them as guardians or to aid the war against Unther.



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The Giant's Belt: This band of high mountains has only two passes; both of them treacherous, so most travelers go around despite the added distance. The locals, a nation of civilized stone giants, call the northern part of the range Fuirgar.

Sembia Locations

Ordulin's Rot Grubs: Unlike most Sembian cities, Ordulin also possesses a thieves' guild, of sorts. The "Rot Grubs" are would-be revolutionaries who want to turn Sembia into a theocratic monarchy. The accession of the Selkirk family has given the Rot Grubs pause -- although the Silver Raven looks like he might make a fine king, he shows no signs of wanting or needing the Rot Grubs' help, which is a fact that spoils the expected rewards of instituting a monarchy.



(Click to Enlarge)

Plots and Rumors

Dark Rituals: The occupied city of Unthalass was largely destroyed by the battle between Gilgeam and Tiamat. Although most of it was rebuilt before the attack by Mulhorand, strange and temporary effects from the battle occasionally manifest in the city, transforming people into reptilian forms with temperaments like evil dragons, imbuing others with phenomenal strength and aggressive personalities, or causing mundane objects to take flight and crash to the ground hundreds of miles away. Rumors abound that the church of Tiamat has found a way to siphon this latent power and store it for dark rituals to their deity, with which they plan to permanently alter her worshipers into powerful new forms.

Corruption Spreads: The church of Tiamat in Unther is led by Tiglath (LN female human Ftr3/Clr14 of Tiamat). Though not evil, Tiglath is finding that her deity is slowly corrupting her, using her to promote the power of the church. Tiglath can call upon the green dragon Skuthosiin, although their relationship is not friendly. She is allied with Furifax and coordinates the activities of her followers with his bandits to harass the Mulhorandi army.

Silver Raven: Some say that Kendrick's son, Miklos the Silver Raven, has another plan that follows on the heels of his father's. If the drow prove difficult and betray the Sembians along the road, Sembia could protect its interests in the name of the Dales and possibly gain a greater hold along the road than the Dalelands are otherwise willing to allow.

The Startouched: The new fad in Sembia is wearing a small blue star tattooed in the center of one's forehead. The temporary tattoos wash off if the wearer concentrates hard enough. Some of those who are so tattooed have

gained limited spellcasting abilities, usually nothing greater than a cantrip or two, but there are exceptions. Then nobles with blue tattoos on their foreheads begin exploding at public functions. Most people who had blue star tattoos quickly washed them off and denied that they ever had them, leaving the PCs to figure out who is responsible for the tattoo that apparently killed their merchant contact in Sembia. Or is the blue tattoo a red herring that conveniently distracts witnesses from the true culprits?

Go to the [Forgotten Realms main news page](#) for more articles and news about the **Forgotten Realms** game setting or check out the [Forgotten Realms message boards](#) for a lively discussion of all aspects of the **Forgotten Realms** setting.

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Rand's Travelogue

More of the Shining South!

By Rand Sharpword

Rand Sharpword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Shining South. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*.

Great Rift Location

Glitterdelve (Metropolis, 26,000): Glitterdelve's inhabitants don't waste time on politics or religion when there's gold and silver to be mined. Despite centuries of avid mining, there's still gold to be found. The dukes, barons, and counts who parade through Glitterdelve in struggles for status and position make sure of one thing: that the gold keeps coming out of the ground into the gold dwarves' coffers.



Halruaa Location

Lake Maeru: Smaller and much easier to sail than Lake Halruaa. Lake Maeru's fisheries help feed the people of Halruaa's towns as well as the electrum miners at nearby Maeruhal.

Luiren Location

Shoun (Small City, 5,500): Shoun on Luiren's east coast is such a pleasant place to live that hin outside its walls frequently greet each other by saying "How long since you've been to Shoun?" Still, the city stays small because aside from enjoying the sea air and the pleasant breezes off the hills, there's not much to do in Shoun except sit around and get fat. In Luiren, getting fat is a social gaffe that's hard to live down.



Major Social Groups in Luiren

All of the following major groups have revolving memberships and regularly field teams in the Games. The groups all get along fairly well with each other, as you might expect from groups whose members shift serially between allegiances.

Hin Fist: Hin Fist is the most consistent and conservative of the groups, if only because only actual practicing monks can be full members. Hin Fist is also the only major group that occasionally accepts nonhalflings, because humans and other nonhin usually don't understand the spirit in which Luiren's social game is played. Hin Fist members sometimes participate in the Games, but usually beg off citing more pressing concerns, such as killing a marauding group of tall mouthers or performing dozens of one-armed pushups.

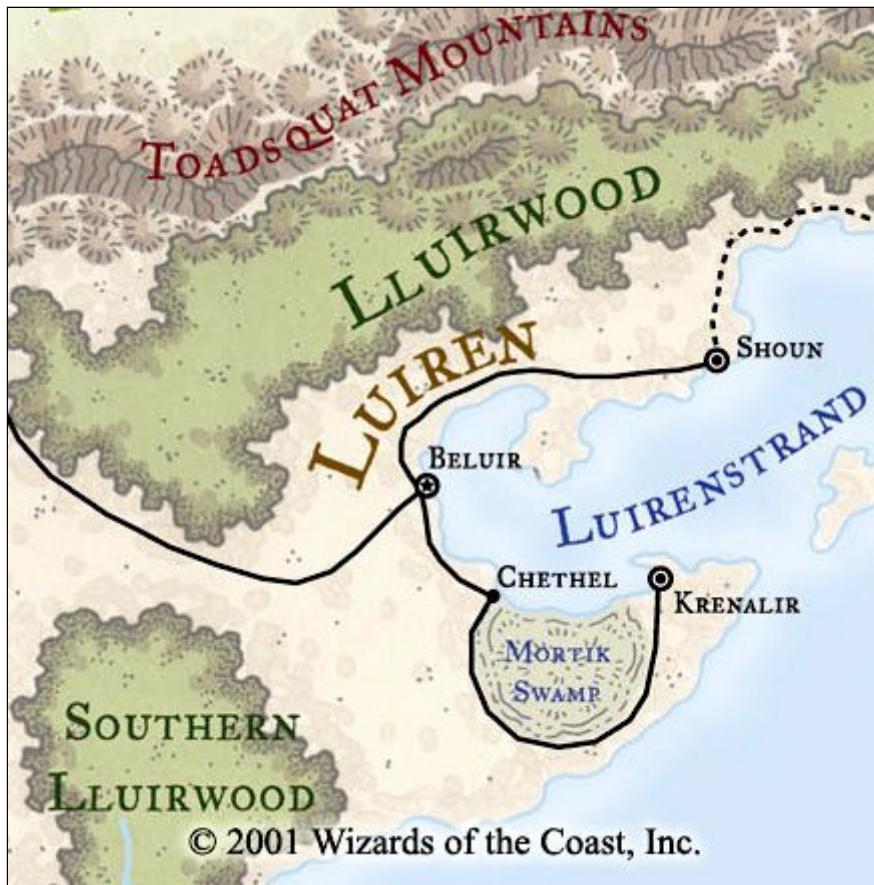
Ruling Party: The Ruling Party hasn't ruled for two hundred years, but prior to the rise of Yondalla's Children, they ran things. They've kept the name because they do, in fact, throw excellent parties.

Tymora's Followers: Tymora isn't in fashion in Luiren since Yondalla's Children advised that human deities weren't as Luiren (their pet adjective) as halfling gods of luck like Brandobaris. But Tymora's Followers like to say instead that the humans worship a halfling deity. They're the most individualistic of the halfling groups, but some of the most fervent competitors in the Games.

Yondalla's Children: Yondalla's Children rule Luiren, which has a benevolent theocracy with an extremely light touch. When big decisions have to be made, a priest of Yondalla is likely to be the one to make them. Organization beyond that one simple fact is difficult to discern.

Yondalla's Children have one serious concern about the very near future: Alaundo's Roll of Years lists 1386 DR as the Year of the Halfling's Lament. Few halflings take warnings from the Roll of Years at all seriously, but many members of Yondalla's Children are convinced that something bad will take place in 1386 DR. How bad? They don't know.

Yondalla's monks maintain rivalry with the monks of the Hin Fist school. It's not a serious rivalry: no one beats each other up beyond what a couple *cure light wounds* spells can patch up.



More Regional History for Luiren

Unlike human realms that measure their success by how much territory they occupy, the wealth that flows through their coffers, or how many people they govern, the hin of Luiren judge themselves by how well they govern and police their own chosen land. This is not to say that Luiren's policies don't contain a smidgen of aggression. In Luiren's case, that aggression plays out at the expense of the belligerent tendencies of its human and half-elven neighbors. Every hundred or two hundred years, the hin of Luiren goad one of their neighbors into invading. One of the hin's favorite jokes plays into this pattern. Noting that the history of northern Faerûn is to be conquered by successive waves of people from the south, the hin say that it's the eventual destiny of their kind to rule all the lands of the Inner Sea. The truth is that the hin don't much care for the idea of such conquests, but they know that it drives the humans who live around them crazy to hear it.

The Dambrathii (who showed the bad sense to invade in 939 DR, the Year of the Vengeful Halfling) and the kingdom of Estagund (which has invaded several times over the centuries) should know better by now -- Luiren has proven a killing ground for would-be invaders. At first invaders make good progress, destroying one or the other town or area of the countryside. But deep within Luiren, every-other house, wagon, or road turns out to be booby-trapped. Rogues strike like assassins attack from all sides, in light or in darkness. Strange magic items that never seem to be used in times of peace turn up in halfling champions' hands, and the invasion turns into a forced march of retreat . . . followed by outright slaughter if the invaders made the mistake of slaying and pillaging during their invasion.

The histories written by Luiren's neighbors and other human nations don't like to mention these episodes, so common folk of other lands may think of Luiren as a weak and vulnerable nation. Halflings, who usually know better, grin when they hear such talk, knowing that some would-be human conqueror will misread history and give conquest another chance.

Rand's Travelogue

More of the Unapproachable East!

By Rand Sharpword

Rand Sharpword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Unapproachable East. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the [Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting](#).

Aglarond Locations

More on Aglarond's Coast: Aglarond's coast is also home to a few hundred halflings, mainly expatriates from Chessenta. They work as farmers, traders, or fisherfolk, and they maintain good relations with the humans and half-elves of their adopted land.

Glarandar (Large Town, 4,500): This fortress, like the Watchwall in the Tannath Mountains, was created by the galeb duhr. Made of obsidian-looking, almost indestructible stone, it is now the center of a small town. Half of the nation's army is usually garrisoned here.

The Great Dale Locations

Mauberg's Oak (Village, 500): This town is populated by old rangers and druids who still wish to live within the forest but are no longer as active as they used to be. The other inhabitants of the forest provide them with basic necessities, and the residents take care of the rest. Many of the exports from the Great Dale are made here by these retired folk.

Impiltur Locations

Bluefang Water: This lake has recently been inhabited by a mad young blue dragon, who not only likes the water but occasionally uses his breath weapon to aid local fisherfolk. At other times he harries boats and lakeshore towns.

Rashemen Locations

Lake Tirulag: This cold lake is filled with hardy trout and is a common site for contests of enduring harsh temperatures. Great treasure is said to be at the bottom of the lake, guarded by a white dragon that is almost invisible to normal sight.

Thesk Locations

Phent (Large Town, 3,650): In addition to its trade and farming, Phent supplements its resources with iron mined from the Thesk Mountains and a small amount of wood scavenged from the Forest of Lethyr. The land south of Phent supports many farms, most of which are partly owned by the orc miners who live in small camps in the mountains.

Two Stars (Large Town, 3,800): This town profits from trade with Rashemen as well as that from the Golden Way. The proximity to the Rashemen berserkers has aroused curiosity among the orcs, and an annual series of games between the two types of "barbarians" has become a popular event in the city, particularly for gamblers.

More Rashemen Life and Society

Rashemen's harsh climate breeds fierce people, and its forces often hurl back huge invading armies from Thay. In the Battle of the Lake of Tears, Rashemen dealt a crushing defeat to the Tuigans, slaughtering a quarter of the Horde despite being outnumbered four to one.

Trade through the Great Dale brings a steady stream of visitors to Rashemen, but few are encouraged to stay. Outlanders are treated coolly or with hostility. They are allowed to settle only in Mulptan and Shevel, and natives watch these strangers closely. Outlander wizards aren't welcome to linger in the realm, all visitors are discouraged from using magic, and anyone suspected of being a Thayan wizard, spy, or agent will be challenged -- and attacked -- on the spot.

Plots and Rumors

Simbul's Children: Those living in Aglarond are appreciative of the Simbul's practice of taking those that show aptitude for magic, training them, and sending them out of the country to find threats against Aglarond (these students are known as the Simbul's Children). One such student has been missing for a year, and fellow students are now concerned about her whereabouts.

A Bit of Prospecting: Various merchant guilds in Impiltur sponsor expeditions into the mountains and remote ports in the hopes of discovering suitable mines or willing trading partners.

A Diplomatic Mission: Many independent paladins make their home in Impiltur. Their crusades to fight evil and overturn injustice are often at odds with the impartial stance of their country. Sometimes the merchants get together and send one of their number, along with a band of suitably adventurous and diplomatic emissaries, to talk to the paladins and attempt to gently remind them that they risk Impiltur's people when they perform their deeds.

Thay's Slaves: It's usually considered better to harm a single slave as an example than to punish many equally (which lowers morale). Red Wizards who need live subjects for their latest spells use these troublemakers and any slaves who try to escape as part of their experiments. Even should the slave become useless in all possible tasks as a result of this experimentation, it's forbidden to free slaves (the penalty is enslavement). As a result, ruined slaves often are either encouraged to become parents or are killed. Children resulting from any slaves are automatically slaves belonging to the owner of their parents. What happens if a Red Wizard becomes well known beyond even the boundaries of Thay for his or her extremes of cruelty, though? What would any nearby heroes do?

Specialization and Projects: Red Wizards tend to be the most powerful mages of their school, and to have many magical contingencies, magic item collections, alliances and secret pacts, and strange private "side projects" involving undead, monster creation, or automatons that make their sudden removal both difficult and dangerous. Sometimes envious spellcasters wish to gain knowledge of a Red Wizard's current project. How far would such a spellcaster go to gain information about a Red Wizard's work? Could it involve a bit of spy work for ambitious adventurers?



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Rand's Travelogue

More of the Underdark and the Vast!

By Rand Sharpsword

Rand Sharpsword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Underdark and the Vast areas. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*.

Underdark Locations

Zanhorioloch (Small City, 6,000): This strange dwarven city rests on an island in the Underdark's Lake Thoroot. Zanhorioloch was originally built by drow, who in the Year of the Last Hunt (722 DR) launched an attack on the western dwarven city of Kanaglym through a *portal*. The dwarves surprised the drow with the strength of their resistance and forced the dark elves to retreat, following them back through the *portal*, where the dwarves sacked the unprepared city and turned the lake red with drow blood.

Stranded in an unknown location by the closing *portal*, the dwarves settled in the city, reworking its architecture to suit them and their faith. Though they were slow to learn boating, the dwarves of Zanhorioloch (usually called Mhorilot, meaning "dark surface," by its inhabitants) are comfortable on the water and keep their city self-sufficient by fishing and kelp farming. They have small mining expeditions on the near shore and possess wealth of silver, gold, and iron. Having spent several centuries avoiding the elves of Cormanthor, the dwarves recently emerged from a small tunnel leading to Battledale, with whom they now trade weapons and precious metals for grain, beef, and wood.

Underdark Travels: Much of the Underdark radiates a type of magical energy called *faerzress* by the drow. This energy is often responsible for glowing rock formations and is harnessed by the more astute inhabitants to enhance the magic items they create, often supplanting conventional enchantment methods in favor of the easier but more fragile creations possible with *faerzress*. *Faerzress* also causes many creatures to mutate within a few generations, explaining how land predators such as panthers, wolves, and lizards can gain darkvision in such a short time, or how the short subterranean cattle called rothé could adapt so quickly to the strange fungi and often brackish water of their new habitat.

Sounds travel far in the Underdark, as "echoes in the rock." Known trade routes, the passages most likely to be mapped, are closely watched by predatory creatures attuned to any sonic changes.

The Vast Locations

Procampur: Easily the oldest city in the Vast, Procampur has stood unconquered since it was founded in 523 DR as a human city, built over an older dwarven delving. It maintains a powerful army and navy, and it also a useful alliance with the city of Tsurlagol. Unlike other cities of the Vast, Procampur's citizens live under the rule of a hereditary overlord called the Thulyrl. Life in Procampur is strictly regulated by a system of firm but not terribly onerous laws. The city itself is divided into eight districts, each walled off from the others and serving a different purpose. By royal decree, each district sports a distinct color for all its roofs.

Adjoining the Castle District on the north is the silver-roofed, luxurious Nobles District, followed (as one goes west back to the harbor) by the yellow-roofed Services District, home to all Procampan servants, handypeople, restaurants, and taverns. West of that is the blue-roofed Sea District, home to sailors, outfitters, and cargo-storage and shipping businesses. West of Sea District is the harbor.

Moving inland along the south side of the Great Way, one finds the gray-roofed District of the Poor, where the Thulyrl owns all buildings. Most buildings here are rooming houses. Long-term visitors may dwell here alongside beggars, the unemployed, and the poorest city laborers. There's no stigma to dwelling in "Graystreets." Next is the narrow, red-roofed Adventurers' District, home to all who make their living by exploration or other dangerous pursuits, and to businesses having to do with weapons and their use. This gives way to the sea-green roofs of the Merchant District, containing the homes and shops of all Procampan merchants whose businesses aren't directly concerned with the sea or adventuring. This, in turn, adjoins the Temple District, where all buildings have shining black roofs.

River Vesper: A wide and slow river that flows from the Earthspur Mountains at Calaunt, the Vesper has long been a major route for goods flowing out of the Vast and for raiders sailing inland.

Torm's Fall: This devastated area outside the walls of Tantras was the sight of the epic battle between the avatars of Torm and Bane. For years, the whole area was a vast dead magic zone where no spell or item would function. The "Zone," as it came to be called, became a haven for anyone fearing attack or persecution at the hands of wizards or clerics. The dead magic area began markedly shrinking around 1370 DR, probably due to the efforts of the Tormites to repair the damage. Today, magic works throughout the area (though rumors of small pockets of dead magic persist). The area remains a wasteland of furrowed and blasted rock, with hints of greenery here and there as nature heals the scars.

Troll Mountains: An arm of Earthspur Mountains named for the trolls who once stalked their slopes and valleys, the Troll Mountains extend west along the north bank of the River Vesper to the Sea of Fallen Stars along the north bank of the River Vesper. The major passes here are Three Trees Pass in the east and Viperstongue in the west.

Tsurlagol: After being sacked, the indomitable citizens simply salvaged what they could after each disaster and rebuilt, counting on the strength of their trade to set them back on their feet. Today, the denizens Tsurlagol have a reputation for patience and the ability to take the long view. Tsurlagol and Procampur have a long-standing mutual defense agreement beneficial to both cities.

Plots and Rumors

Cairnheim's Giants: Other Underdark communities fear that Cairnheim is preparing to expand its already large domain beyond its current borders, at the subterranean roots of the Giant's Run Mountains. With the size and speed of stone giants, an expansion to the surface would mean the giants could easily threaten Cormyr, the Dragon Coast, and parts of the Vilhon Reach.

Master of Dragons: From time to time, as certain monks seek to be named Master of Dragons, they engage in a deadly initiation: riding a remorhaz. Lone monks using spurs and lassoes leap down onto the backs of passing worms and ride them -- standing upright -- for at least a hundred yards. Other monks may aid each rider in escaping a remorhaz after a riding attempt, but no one helps in the initial pounce and ride itself. Many monks have perished attempting this holy sport.



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Rand's Travelogue

More of the Vilhon Reach!

By Rand Sharpword



Rand Sharpword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Vilhon Reach area. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*.

Vilhon Reach Locations

Deepwing Mountains: These jagged beaks mark the southeastern limit of the Shining Plains. They harbor all manner of ferocious beasts, especially red dragons and other winged monsters (hence the region's name).

Hlondeth: Relationships with Sespech were tense for some time. Dedian's son, Dmetiro (LE male pureblood yuan-ti Sor6), has romanced the baron's eldest daughter for a few years. His suit has not yet met with success, but the lady has not sent Dmetiro packing, either. Beautiful buildings are going up, the most wondrous being the great aviary of Extaminos, completed in 1368 DR.

Nimpeth: Nimpeth, like its fellow city-states, guards its independence carefully. Its citizens are deeply suspicious of Chondath and sensitive about their own power and accomplishments. Visitors who speak poorly of the city or its products are apt to be attacked or challenged to duels, and local authorities invariably favor their own over any outsiders.

Lord Woren (NE male human Wiz14) owns the largest vineyard and the largest slave emporium in the Nimpeth area. He also runs the city, using diplomacy and guile to keep Chondath at arm's length.

Wet River: This meandering stream flows from the west side of the Orsraun Mountains, through the Wetwoods, north to the Lake of the Long Arm thence to the Sea of Fallen Stars. It sees some use as a trade route, with most goods loading and unloading at Assam.

Sespech Locations

Elbulder: Hundreds of years ago, Elbulder was a logging town that used the River Arran to float logs to the Sea of Fallen Stars and the rest of the Vilhon. The Rotting War and the disapproval of the Emerald Enclave put a stop to the logging. The Enclave's objections were well taken, as the Chondalwood once extended south of the river, and miles of prairie lie where trees once stood. During the logging boom, magic boats transported logs up the Arran, so magic is better received here than anywhere else in the Vilhon.

Turmish Locations

Alaghôn: Alaghôn's ancient vaults and catacombs contain secrets best left undisturbed. During the time of Anaglathos, for example, the blue dragon allowed a lich queen from Unther to reside below the palace. When Anaglathos died, the lich quietly stayed on. A few ancient tomes make reference to the lich, but Alaghôn's citizens remain ignorant of her presence.

Gildenglade: The half-elves in Gildenglade primarily serve as the physical labor for the woodcutting efforts, but they enjoy their work and are treated as equals by both the elves and the dwarves of the community.

Morningstar Hollows: Morningstar Hollows was once a quiet village of farmers and craftsfolk. The nearby Alaorem River continued to flood its banks year after year, so the residents finally left the village and moved to nearby Velorn's Valor. The floods have continued, creating a bog. Lately, reports have surfaced that indicate that about three dozen lizard folk have taken over the abandoned town, from which they fish and hunt.

Orbrekh: This slim northwestern branch of the Orsraun Mountains next to the Gulthmere is home to a family of giants who keep the area safe for travelers. The giants are known to have a good rapport with the Emerald Enclave.

Xorhun (Small City, 10,000): Located at the edge of the Holondar Valley, Xorhun serves as a garden spot for nonhumans, especially elves. The city is nicknamed "Corellon's Cradle" and "Lifeblood Falls" by the residents.

Xorhun has an unusual effect on elves and gnomes; it increases their fertility rate. Children are born at a rate two to three times the norm for their races. One must live in the area for five years before the fertility effects begin to show. Other than this unusual property, Xorhun serves primarily as a stopping point along the Holondar, the road that connects Hlondeth to the south and Alaghôn to the north. Primarily craftsfolk and merchants populate the city.

More Turmish Life and Society

The Turmians have a well-known respect for their land, and they have a custom of burying a small amount of valuables on their property. These caches are intended both as gifts to Chauntea and also as "seeds" for future wealth. Needless to say, the Turmians take a dim view of strangers who go about with digging implements in hand.

The people of Turmish have a habit of marking their foreheads with small dots of colored ink or chalk to show ability. If they wear one dot, individuals can read. If they wear two, they can write. If they wear three, they can use magic. The locals usually assume visitors who have not so adorned themselves are illiterate or worse. Different variations of this scheme are used throughout southern Faerûn. Visitors are warned not to treat this custom lightly. Guards and even civilians are apt to stop marked strangers on the street for a demonstration of the abilities noted by the markings. Civilian questions are usually polite, but will not take no for an answer. Guards are more direct and insistent. People found wearing marks falsely are put to death.

Plots and Rumors

Escaped Bandits: When a recent bandit attack wiped out a caravan, Honlinar scrambled to assemble a group of trackers to bring the miscreants to justice. He eventually recovered most of the caravan's goods, but several bandits escaped, and Honlinar still seeks to bring them to justice.

Night Prey: Lord Quwen once more seeks to know who or what lurks in the Wetwoods. Parties answering his summons learn that grazing lands south of the Wet River have suffered mysterious nocturnal attacks that left the animals strangely weakened. Herders who have survived the attacks have seen nothing. Several herders were killed, though none of their animals were. Several different kinds of creatures could have made the attacks. Perhaps a flock of nigh-flying stirges has descended on the area. Or perhaps the attacks are the work of a vampire and its attendant vampire spawn.

Supper Surprise: The latest rage in Nimpeth is to dine on Vilhon eels -- long, ribbonlike, black (with green mottling) creatures that were the bane of net-fishers in the Reach for centuries. Eels are marinated in wines, fried, then slit open and stuffed with herbed eggs and cheese. In recent months, over two dozen eels were found to contain gold rings, gems, and bracelets of linked, chased plaques of electrum, mithral, and silver, set with eyeball-sized sapphires. Where are these riches coming from? How is it that eels end up swallowing them? Where can more be found?

Chondath's Ruler: Lord Eles Wianar devotes his time to reading and influencing the deeds of others inside Chondath and around it. He has multiple spies (none of whom know of each other) in the households of all self-styled nobles of Arrabar. He openly confronts and slays those who try to assassinate him or launch serious attempts to wrest his throne from him. He is equally jealous of his treasury.

Sespech's Danger: Lord Eles Wianar's current plan for invading Sespech involves an overland strike against Elbulder along the Old Road, timed to coincide with an amphibious assault on Mimph. Wianar believes the two-pronged strike will divide and confuse Sespech's defenders. The previous assault on Elbulder was merely a reconnaissance in force, and the naval harassment of Mimph has the same purpose.



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Rand's Travelogue

More of Waterdeep and Lands of Intrigue!

By Rand Sharpword



Rand Sharpword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Waterdeep and Lands of Intrigue areas. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the **Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting**.

Amn Locations

Lake Weng: This small lake sports many small villages on its shore, although it is best known for its three old temple-cities to Lathander, Mystra, and Shar, abandoned hundreds of years ago when the theocratic settlers vanished without a trace after an unseasonable blizzard. Minsor Vale, the fourth theocratic city, is still inhabited by Selûne worshipers.

Shilmista: Also known as the Forest of Shadows, the elven king here has declared that no more trees or elves of this forest will die, and slays any who try. Only one small tribe of elves remains, and they prefer to stay in small, hard-to-find camps rather than in larger settlements. They have established a tenuous contact with the rulers of Tethyr that may ease their paranoia.

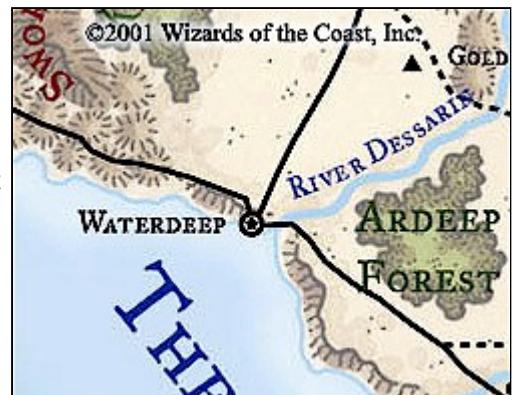
Tethyr Locations

Saradush (Metropolis, 23,450): This fortified city produces agricultural and dairy products. Unusual in that there are no large temples, the devout in Saradush prefer to worship in small shrines within their own homes. It is becoming an important waystation for trade to and from the Lake of Steam. With its proximity to several kinds of terrain, it is also a haven for adventurers.

Waterdeep Locations

Mount Waterdeep: Seven hundred feet tall, this imposing peak shelters the city from the worst of the sea's winds. Lookouts and griffin riders stationed on Mount Waterdeep watch over the city, flying constant patrols against aerial attack and providing reports to the headquarters farther down the mountain at Castle Waterdeep.

Waterdeep Harbor: The harbor that gives Waterdeep its name is also wide and well sheltered, and it is capable of docking up to 50 large ships at the same time. Merfolk living within the harbor cooperate with members of the City Guard keeping watch from towers on Deepwater Isle.



Field of Triumph: Waterdeep's arena is noted for magical pyrotechnics and spectacular staged bouts. Deaths happen, but most contests are not meant to be fatal. Healing is available for those who choose to receive it, and the combatants are professionals or volunteers, not slaves.

Plinth: Located in Trades Ward, this set of sacred rocks is kept as a place of worship and meditation for all faiths. Many long-dead deities hear from their worshipers only at the feet of the Plinth. For the record, the Monks of the Old Order eschew worship at the Plinth, preferring to leave their departed god alone, if in fact they ever had a god.

The giant stones of the Plinth are always festooned with flowers and other offerings. Anyone wishing for a sense of the diversity of Faerûn need spend only an hour near the Plinth. Guards from the City Watch usually stand by as well, but not for their edification: They break up theological discussions that turn violent.

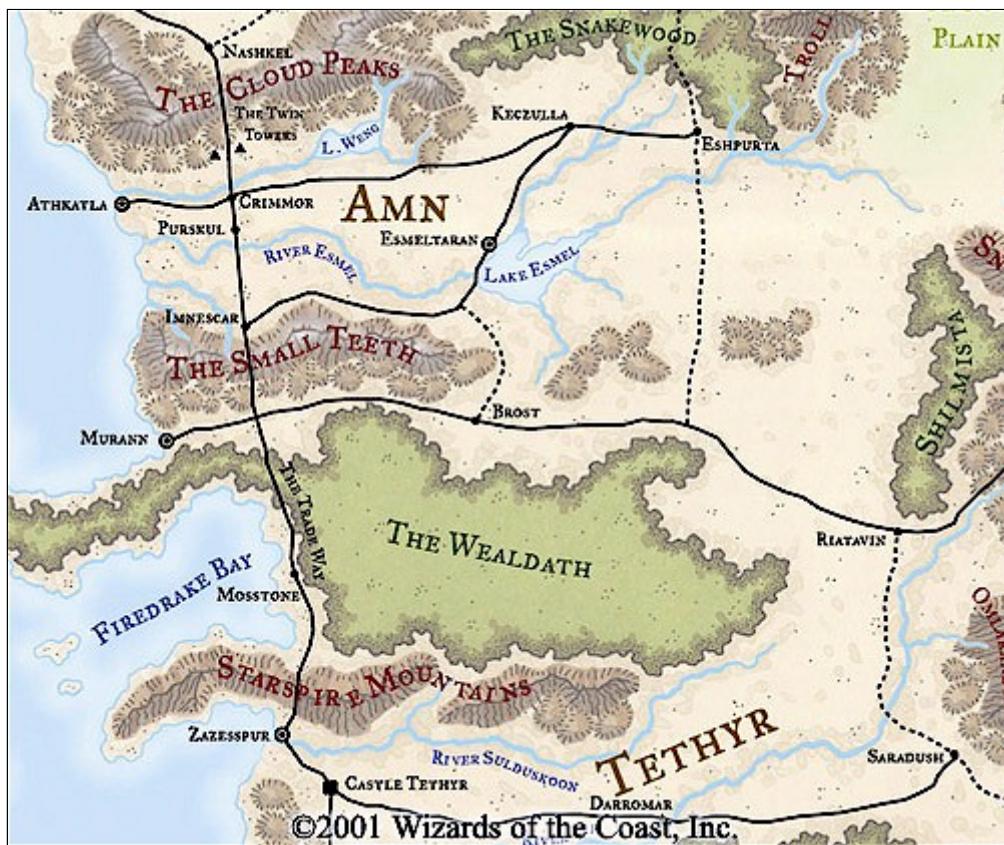
Plots and Rumors

Forays: Lycanthropes from the Snakewood have begun making forays into nearby settlements, stealing food, jewelry, and children. The clerics of Eldath in that forest have been unavailable for help in the situation. Followers of Malar are suspected to be behind these activities.

Sneak Attacks: The town of Ithal Pass is the newest line of defense against evil in Tethyr, for the cult of Xvim (now Bane) took over the town of Kzelter two years ago under the leadership of Teldorn Darkhope. The two towns have been fortifying ever since, with occasional small skirmishes achieving little. General Paulus has been recruiting adventurers (especially spellcasters) to execute sneak attacks on the Banite town.

Games with Gods: An all-out battle threatens to erupt when a street jester makes an enormous production of making a Banite pilgrimage to the Plinth to worship a "dearly loved but sadly departed megalomaniac tyrant deity." The PCs can decide if they want to encourage the joke, piece together the jester's true aims, or hang back to see if any worshipers of Bane rise to the bait.

New Laws on Magic: A wizard selling minor Thayan magic items (*faerie fire* stones, one-use *feather fall* belts, and so on) refuses to join the Watchful Order of Magists and Protectors despite their rules, prohibitions, and attempts to levy fines. When the City Watch comes to arrest the wizard, they are routed by a well-prepared group of Red Wizards who happen to be nearby. In the chaos that follows, the wizard petitions Khelben (as an independent wizard) and Piergeiron (as the Open Lord) for the right to found a new guild in the city -- one for vendors who merely sell magic wares rather than cast spells. Is this a cunning Thayan plot or just an honest man who has discovered something bigger than he is?



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Rand's Travelogue

More of the Western Heartlands!

By Rand Sharpword



Rand Sharpword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Waterdeep and Lands of Intrigue areas. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the **Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting**.

Western Heartlands Locations

Corm Orp: The mayor of the town is human but Corm Orp's culture is halfling dominated. The town has thirty human militia members who wear chain and sport green felt strips on their right arms and left thighs -- the town has another thirty or forty halfling militia members who don't make the mistake of identifying themselves so openly, preferring to strike from the shadows.

Those unfamiliar with Corm Orp's actual defenses wonder how a halfling town with a small militia can stay nearly unharmed within screaming distance of the Zhents of Darkhold. Rumormongers whisper that certain of Corm Orp's inhabitants have cut deals with the Zhents, receiving promises of protection for information on rival caravans, adventurers, and whatever else passes through the town's zone of control. Stating this rumor out loud is a good way to receive the unpleasant halfling equivalent of a punch in the nose -- a blow that lands smack in the groin.

Dunkapple Castle: An upside-down flying castle hovers above the center of the Marsh of Chelimber. Some laugh at first hearing the castle's nickname, but few adventurers who actually see it join in the laughter. Once upon a time, the castle clearly hovered proudly in mid-air, but magical artillery and centuries of neglect have undone a portion of its levitation magic. Once every 30-60 seconds, the castle's highest (now lowest!) towers bob 2-6 feet above the marsh down to 2-6 feet *below* the marsh waters. The bobbing motion is accompanied by wet slooshing sounds, or by enormous sucking noises in the rare instances in which the tips of the towers stick all the way into the muck. The entire process is somewhat sickening to observe, but nausea is the least of the problems faced by adventurers who climb or fly up into the upside-down castle's traps, treasure rooms, and menagerie of flying monsters and anti-social wizards. As with a few other powerfully magical adventuring sites, Dunkapple Castle has an interior life of its own, changing its layout and contents according to some inhuman schedule.

Durlag's Tower: Adventurers who consider digging through the volcanic rock composing the tower and its base should be warned that even the tomb tappers, masters of tunneling into hidden treasure troves, have given this up as a suicidal approach to Durlag's Tower. Adventurers who are not so wed to tunneling through the earth, and who can fit within the tower's standard-sized doorways without needing to alter the tower's basic structure, might not trigger the same devastating defenses.

Fields of the Dead: The area now known as the Fields of the Dead has been a battlefield since the earliest days of Faerûn, long centuries before the reign of the dragons and thousands of years before the arrival of the elves and dwarves. In the earliest days, when only the deities and the Eldest Races walked or flew above the oceans and lands of Toril, the sharn and the phaerimm fought a great war in the mountains of what would become the west coast of Faerûn. As the phaerimm's magic cascaded off the sharn's shields, the land beneath the battle warped and shrank. Mountains that had formerly soared to scrape the foundations of the homes of the divine powers collapsed in upon themselves until they turned into low hills. The great western mountain range of Faerûn disappeared, seen only in garbled visions of the cataclysmic past, by seers who misstep while viewing the future.

Greenest (Hamlet, 150): Greenest is a caravan stockade town near the edge of the Green Fields with one good inn, two mediocre ones, and all the sundries that caravans and travelers need to keep going. Whether it survives for another five years is anyone's guess. Agents of Darkhold prefer that it disappear before it makes it onto the map, so life in Greenest is likely to turn interesting.

Reaching Woods: The Reaching Woods surround the River Reaching from the Dusk Road in the north, down to Scornubel, and farther south to the Ulード Trail that connects Berdusk and Asbravn. The river splits the woods into northern and southern halves.

Compared to the Forest of Wyrms to the north and the Wood of Sharp Teeth to the south, the Reaching Woods is a pleasant and beautiful forest, and it's also an easy place to maintain a shrine to the Green Gods and visit the peoples of the woods. Unlike most younger forests of the west and north, the Reaching Woods is mainly deciduous -- full of elms, maples, beeches, and oaks. The woods are cared for by the druids of the centaurs, hybsils, and satyrs, as well as human druids and rangers who cooperate

with the nonhumans to fight goblinoid tribes that despoil the shrines to the Green Gods. Curiously, the woods' small population of gnolls tends to cooperate with the fey and human druids against the goblinoids, as long as they are otherwise left alone.

Serpent's Tail Stream: This wild highland stream provides water and occasionally waterborne transport to various creatures lurking in the High Moor and Serpent Hills. Upon descending to the lowlands beside the Forest of Wyrms, the Serpent's Tail Stream joins the Winding Water.

Triel Hills: The hills to the north and east of Triel provide shelter for many quiet communities of gnomes and a few somewhat louder bands of halflings. Miners occasionally find silver and gold deposits in the hills, occasioning a small-scale gold rush, but the veins never last for long and most of the humans soon leave, allowing the gnomes to fade back into the shelter of the hills.

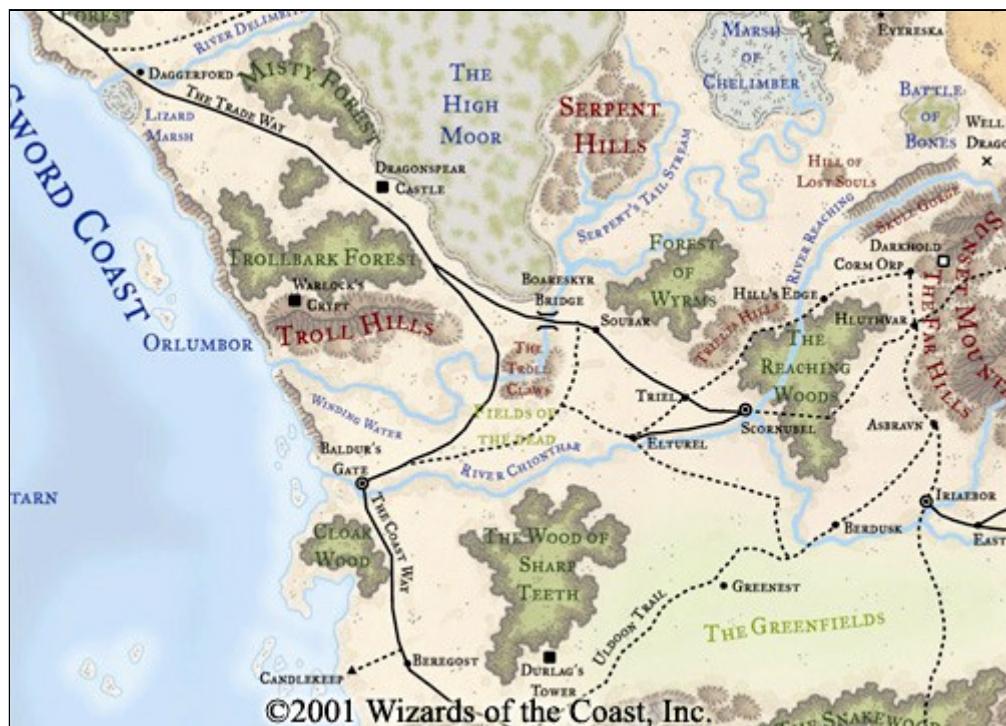
The Forest of Wyrms, to the south, troubles the region with wandering dragons. Most of these dragons can be tricked into turning back by the gnomes or driven off by halfling heroes, but occasionally the gnomes of the hills have to engage adventurers to deal with a dragon that doesn't know when it is not wanted.

Sites of interest in the West include the final refuge of the moon and sun elves in Faerûn (Evereska), the graveyard of dragons (the Well of Dragons), the monastery that keeps the Roll of Years (Candlekeep), the western headquarters of the Harpers (Berdusk), the western headquarters of the Zhents (Darkhold), and the most tolerant free port west of Westgate and south of Waterdeep (Baldur's Gate).

Plots and Rumors

A New Map: The existence of a new map for Durlag's Tower floats in to tantalize nearby adventurers. Rumor has it that it shows a magical way to get into the tower. Some say a halfling found it and intends to sell it, but others state that it rests within a traveling wizard's chest. Where is it? If the heroes find it, do they intend to seek out the tower?

Visions of Glory: Each night for a tenday, all humanoids have a dream that shows them drifting through a castle. The one strange thing about the castle is that it seems to be upside down. Each person sees the same room, also. What is this dream? Can anyone figure this out?



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The Herald's Holdfast

By Ed Greenwood and Jason Carl



Rand Sharpsword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Silver Marches area. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the [Silver Marches](#).

The Herald's Holdfast

Few inhabitants of the Silver Marches can claim to have visited the remote and mysterious residence known as the Herald's Holdfast. Those who know of its existence call it a repository of lore or a storehouse of much that has been forgotten in all other places.

A day's rough journey north and west of Silverymoon (or south and west of Quaevarr), the Herald's Holdfast is within an isolated dell hidden in the southern eaves of the Moonwood. A short stone tower (more like a fortified manor house than a genuine stronghold) squats in the dell like a misshapen woodland idol. Three-quarters of the tower is set against the slope of a steep hill that surrounds the dell. Only one door is set into the tower wall, and it is a moss-covered stone portal worn smooth by time and use. So well concealed is the tower within its wreath of vegetation that even those who know what they are seeking must make a Spot check (DC 20) to identify the tower, and a Search check (DC 20) to locate its single entrance. The tower door remains unlocked at all times, and it swings open freely to the touch.

Brief History

Where did this place come from? Who built it, and why? And how has it remained untouched by the orc hordes and other creatures of the region? The tower's caretaker, a knowledgeable woman named Shalara Swordshigh who insists on referring to herself as Old Night, receives these questions with patience and an enigmatic smile. Her replies are cryptic at best, however, and not terribly useful. Old Night and her companions have lived in the Holdfast for untold decades, possibly centuries: No one can be certain exactly how long they have been here. The elves of the High Forest believe that Old Night is a member of an obscure and tiny secret organization known as the Heralds (hence the name of the tower), and that the group dedicates itself to collecting and preserving Faerûn's past. They count among their enemies any who would destroy or revise history, and number among its allies the Harpers, who give them aid from time to time. Others claim that there is a portal that leads to Silverymoon located somewhere hard by the Holdfast that only Old Night and her associates know about. (Old Night won't answer questions about these topics, either.)

Important Sites in the Herald's Holdfast

The following locations are among those that adventurers will most likely see and visit.

The Chambers

Beyond the main door is the Chamber of Humanity, which is a single room dedicated to human history. Human arms and armor from various eras, along with numerous other human artifacts, hang from the walls; above them tapestries and the carved rafter beams depict important scenes from Faerûnian human history, as well as some human heroes and heroines. A doorway leads from the Chamber of Humanity to a corridor delved straight into the hillside. Therein are more chambers similar to that of the Chamber of Humanity, and each is dedicated to a single race, including dwarf, elf, giant, gnoll, gnome, goblin, orc, and halfling. According to rumor, secret doors exist elsewhere in the tower that lead to many other chambers. Each racial chamber is decorated with items created by or for the race it represents. Some of the items are priceless due to their

Herald's Holdfast (Outpost):
Magical; AL N; special gp limit;
Assets special; Population 5;
Integrated (dwarf [20%], elf [20%],
gnome [20%], half-orc [20%], human
[20%]).

Authority Figures: Old Night, female human Brd6/Rgr4.

Important Characters: Dargin Stoneweaver, male shield dwarf Wiz7/Lor2; Llyllanndra Havenstar, female sun elf Wiz7/Lor3; Naithée Uvarkk, female rock gnome Wiz7/Lor1; Hakan, male half-orc Bbn3/Sor3.

Symbol: The Herald's Holdfast uses as its recognition mark the emblem of an open book, in silver, on a dark gray field.

Out of Character

Locating a particular piece of information or a specific volume of lore in Old Night's library is easier said than done. Each character that seeks something in the library may make a Search check. Calculate the DC for the check as follows:

Character has ranks in a Knowledge appropriate to the topic of his or her

extreme age or historical significance, while others are valuable for the precious metals or gems they bear.

The Library

At the very end of the corridor, beyond all the chambers, sits the structure's largest room: the library. Said to be a storehouse of knowledge equal to or even greater than the Vault of Sages in Silverymoon, the library contains a bewildering number of books, tomes, scrolls, stone tablets, all shelved or piled high on numerous tables. Almost all these sources of information pertain to the history or genealogy of the races to which the chambers are dedicated.

Old Night permits all visitors who conduct themselves politely and without aggression to examine the contents of the library, but visitors are not permitted to remove any of the books from the Holdfast. (They are welcome to make a copy of whatever information they find, however.) Old Night does not make a habit of aiding visitors with their quests for information, other than to point them to either the appropriate chamber or the library.



inquiry (arcana, history, local, and so on):

DC 20 -1 for every Knowledge rank above 5 (to a maximum of +10).

Time required: 5d20 hours -1 hour for every Knowledge rank above 5 (to a maximum of -5).

Character has no ranks in an appropriate Knowledge:

DC 30

Time required: 10d20 hours

A character who possesses the Bardic Knowledge class feature gains a +2 synergy bonus on his or her Search Check.

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Rand's Travelogue

More Everska

By Ed Greenwood and Jason Carl



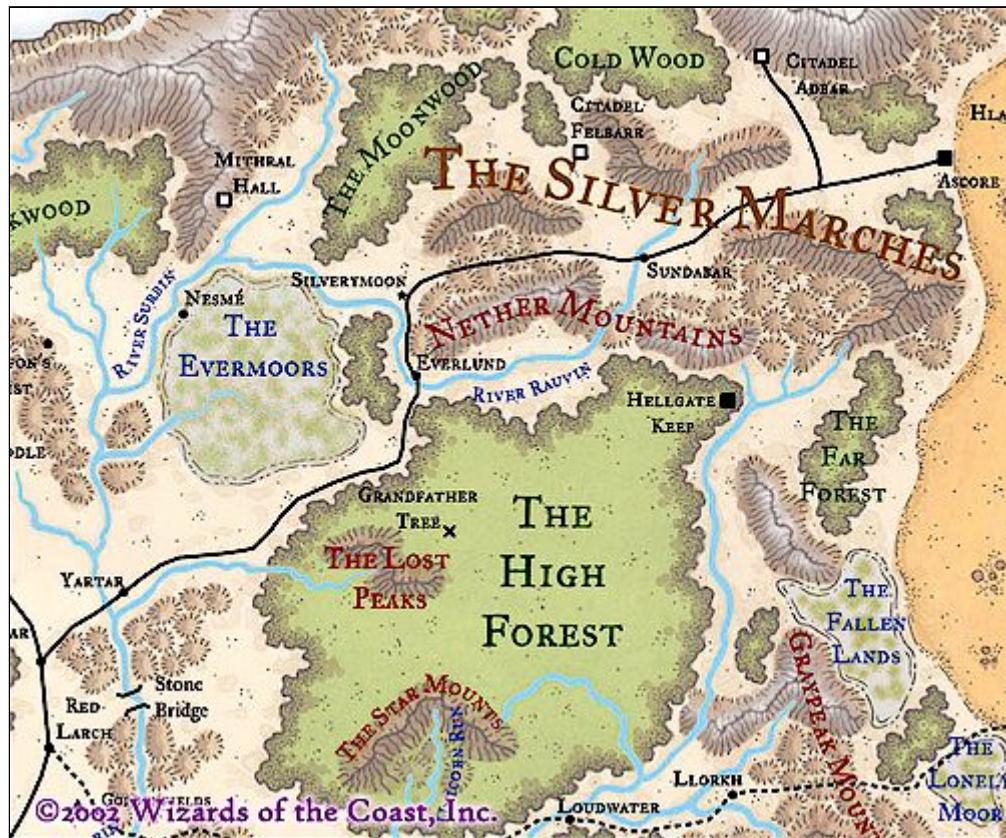
Rand Sharpword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Silver Marches area. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the [Silver Marches](#).

Everska

For years the elven refuge of Everska was a lush garden paradise and the largest moon and sun elven city left on Faerûn. None but the elves were allowed into the Last City, although a lucky few half-elven and human "elf-friends" caught tiny glimpses of its beauty through the entrance most used by the elves. Mighty elven warriors clad in enchanted armor that allowed them to fly kept guard over the area, and they did not hesitate to use the wands, rods, and blades of mighty magic that they possessed to protect their valley.

Everska was a verdant valley encircled by twelve high hills. The elves sculpted the entire valley into a terraced garden. Homes worked into the landscape so as to blend in with the growing plants and form a series of beautiful bowers, dells, and vistas. Everska itself had no streets, but only winding paths. Large items floated through the city by magic, not on wagons, and no inch of the inner slopes of the encircling hills was wasted. Blueleaf trees sculpted alive by Evereskan-perfected elven magic wreathed much of the valley in royal blue foliage. A powerful *mythal* that governed weather and physical conditions within the valley inhibited certain sorts of magic and worked against blights and diseases.

Here moon and sun elves dwelt in harmony. While personal rivalries and feuds arose in plenty, no widespread antipathies threatened the city's peace. Instead, Evereskans devoted themselves to becoming individuals of learning, craft, and deep reason. Many Evereskan elves never left the valley, or desired to, since they loved to dedicate their time to creating beautiful paintings and sculptures or mastering the music of voice and instruments. A very few crafted new spells in deep caverns, where they worked in careful concert with the ruling Hill Elders so as to create no unforeseen danger to the city or weakness in its defenses by their work. (By common agreement, existing *portals* were either destroyed or girt about with protective magic to prevent their use by invaders.)



Since metal ore was scarce in the hills and the rock beneath the city, the Evereskans traded their wines, paintings, carved coffers and boxes, and statuettes for what outside goods they needed and thought little of the world. Unfortunately, the world *did* remember them -- and just a few months ago, the freed phaerimms of Anauroch attacked Evereska with gleeful savagery.

Exulting in destruction, the ancient workers-of-evil shattered the city and toppled or blasted open many of its mansions. The *mythal* was left in tatters of wild magic, and it now flickers and fades into sporadic, strange bursts of power. The slaughter of the elves was widespread and terrible, and the phaerimms raged through the bowers and beautiful chambers, destroying everything within reach, as the bewildered Evereskans fought -- too few and too late -- to defend their refuge.

Unleashing every magic at their command, the elves of Evereska eventually broke the phaerimm attack. In the end most of the phaerimms fled from Evereska, perished, or were left much weakened and wounded in their wits and capable of only feeble magic. Some few of these still wander the valley today.

Only the youngest and least powerful elves survived the fighting, for their elders spent their own lives protecting their heirs. Many of these elves also wander the valley wounded and dazed in their wits. The dying *mythal* now cloaks Evereska in a mist or fine rain most of the time, and the untended gardens are beginning to overgrow the mansions, terraced lawns, and sweeping paths. Many of the beautiful arched bridges are broken and lie fallen, but the valley is so beautiful that it can still awe humans who see it.

Ambitious human adventurers and plunderers, hearing tales of unguarded elven treasures, now seek the unguarded gates of the valley. Hungry monsters long barred from the elven realm by its protective magic also skulk about its edges, growing bolder with each day. However, forlorn and beautiful Evereska is still decidedly dangerous. The *mythal* erupts in unpredictable magical effects from time to time, elves and phaerimms still stalk each other and skirmish with dreadful magic, and menacing mansion guardians such as helmed horrors and shield guardians armed with a variety of deadly magic items rise up to strike at intruders.

Riches and treasures lie everywhere in the shattered mansions, but spells that do strange things to intruders protect some areas. Constructs of various sorts and the occasional group of hardened young elves also meet intruders with their own brands of destruction. The angry young elves view all strangers as looters and thieves that deserve nothing but a swift death, while the constructs simply carry out their last command to destroy all who enter the area they guard.

Elves from other lands now head for Evereska to join the remaining Evereskan elves. A few of these think to remove what things of beauty and value still remain in the valley and return to safer retreats; most plan to stay, and rebuild Evereska's greatness. Evereska has been sorely wounded, but it may in time return to something approaching its former glory.

Plots and Rumors

To Guard Unknowingly: A group of elves have met with some terrible foes on their journey. The PCs stumble across these elves in time to assist them. Due to their weakened condition, they request that the PCs accompany them for a little way on their current journey. However, they request this assistance for only one day and one night, and they do not tell the PCs where they are headed. In return, the PCs will gain an item (DM's choice). Will the PCs accept these conditions and aid the elves? What other dangers can befall the group during that span of time?

Nature's Prerogative: An elf druid has taken control of a small portion of the city. She believes that nature should make the city its own and is willing to defend that notion with an assortment of natural assistants, other druids of like mind, and traps. She has had several months to build up her forces (and her traps). Unfortunately, she has also taken steps to expand her area of influence. Will she continue to grow in power? Can she take over the whole city if given enough time?

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Rand's Travelogue
Politics in the Silver Marches

By Ed Greenwood and Jason Carl



Rand Sharpssword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Silver Marches area. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the [Silver Marches](#).

A Brief View of a Council Meeting

(As Told to Rand)

". . . and I will NOT send the heart of my army to defend a town that's already in ruins five hundred miles from my walls!" Harbromm, King of Citadel Adbar, slammed one thunderous fist down on the dark wood of the council's high table. "What call does Nesmé have on the warriors of Citadel Adbar?"

"The call of need, you dunderheaded lout!" Bruenor Battlehammer rose to confront his fellow dwarf. Pausing to tug at the patch covering his eye, which was put out in battle years ago, the King of Mithral Hall never backed down from a fight. "Would I have my throne if none of you had chosen to help me against Menzoberranzan? Of course not! Now my duty is clear to me -- to repay the favor done for me by aiding another in need." He turned to face High Lady Alustriel. "My lady, we of Mithral Hall stand ready to march tomorrow. All you need do is say the word."

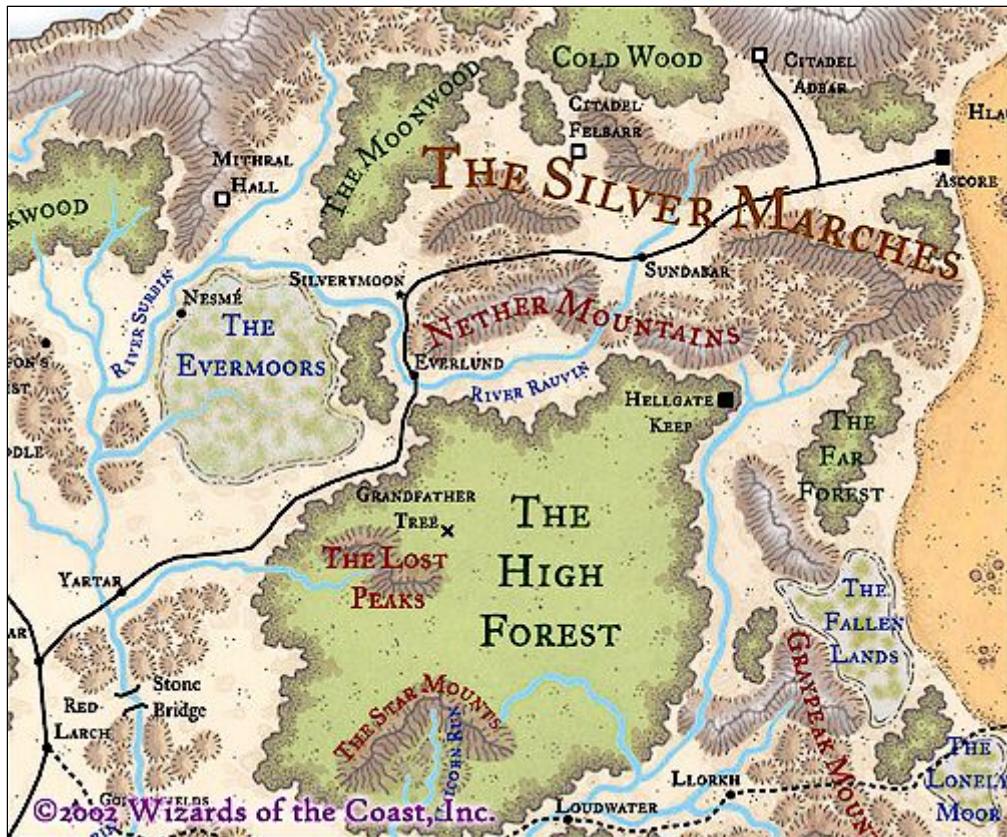
"That is not entirely true," said Helm Dwarf-friend, Lord of Sundabar. "We have conferred upon the High Lady many powers, but she may not order our armies into battle unless we ALL agree to it. And I am not at all certain that it is in Sundabar's interest to shift significant forces hundreds of miles to the west, when our true peril lies in the north." Helm rarely spoke at the High Council of the League, and his words brought the arguments of the bellicose dwarven kings to a halt.

"I stand with Helm Dwarf-friend," growled Emerus Warcrown, lord of Citadel Felbarr.

"A force of five hundred, drawn from all of our cities, would do Nesmé a world of good, without causing any real harm to anyone's ability to defend himself," offered Taern Hornblade, High Mage of Silverymoon. "We are hardly asking for the entirety of King Harbromm's army to abandon Adbar. I tell you, if we admit Nesmé to our league, we will be made stronger thereby -- not weaker."

"Balderdash!" snorted Harbromm. "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link." But the dwarf king did not immediately resume his attack.

In the momentary silence, Alustriel shifted in her high seat and made a small motion with her hand. The monarchs and rulers in the council room turned their eyes on her -- when she spoke, they listened. "I favor admitting Nesmé," she said quietly, "but as I see it, we have two members that favor such a course, and three who stand against it. My word means nothing until we know how Everlund stands." She looked meaningfully across the table to Lord Kayl Moorwalker, First Elder of Everlund.



Moorwalker frowned and rested his chin on his hands for a long moment while the others waited on him. "I am afraid I cannot answer now," the nobleman replied. "I am only one of six Elders, and this is a complex issue --"

"You mean, your merchants won't want to see a rival like Nesm  put back on its feet," Bruenor Battlehammer interrupted.

-- and I will need to solicit their support for Nesm 's admittance," Moorwalker continued, as if the dwarf king had not said a word. "I favor it, myself. But I know the Master of Guilds and the Keeper of the Bridges will feel differently." He spread his hands in a gesture of resignation.

Alustriel nodded slightly, as if she'd expected Moorwalker's reply. "Very well, then. I suggest we adjourn for now, to give the High Captain an opportunity to consult with his peers in Everlund. We will take up the issue again next month, when we meet again." She leaned back in her seat as the others rose and made their way out of the chamber. Somehow, she mused, she'd have to find a prize to dangle before Everlund's merchants -- a bribe, really -- to secure their support for action.

"Why is it that nothing can be done in a day?" she sighed, and then rose herself to carry on with the rest of her afternoon.

Playing with Politics

The underlying principle for federation politics is that this confederation is a completely new and tentative venture. The Articles are only recently signed, and not all of the details have yet been worked out between the parties involved. The strength of the pact has yet to be tested; what happens when the long-expected orc horde finally hurtles down out of the mountains and smashes into the towns below is anybody's guess. Perhaps the pact will hold firm and the orcs will be repelled by the combined might of the defenders -- or perhaps one of the signatories will decide not to come to the aid of a neighbor in a crucial moment. None can say with any certainty what the outcome of the Marches' first true test will be, and this very uncertainty shapes and informs the political landscape of the territory.

Lady Alustriel's chief concern is keeping the peace in the vicinity, and that is no mean feat even without the threat of orc invasion. She and her associates must pay constant attention to the innumerable political undercurrents that flow through the Silver Marches. The natural rivalries between several communities and important personalities, for example, have existed for decades or longer and won't vanish just because they are now nominal allies.

The trade rivalry between Sundabar and Citadel Adbar is a good example of the sort of political tension that can arise even in peacetime. Both communities pride themselves on the quality and quantity of their mining output. Many are the ore and metalwork merchants from both cities who compete with one another in trying to bring the best quality merchandise to market more quickly than the others, or in obtaining the custom of important customers. In times past this rivalry has created difficult

circumstances for the citizens of both communities, and on occasion it has led to hostile words and the threat of more serious consequences.

It was never Alustriel's intention to dictate, or insist upon, the manner in which the Silver Marches signatories interact with one another, nor the manner in which they choose to govern themselves. However, even one as powerful and well-liked as the High Lady cannot be everywhere at once. Brokering an agreement on voluntary contributions to the Marches' defense fund between Everlund and Citadel Felbarr may require her presence at the negotiating table for weeks. Such protracted diplomatic efforts leave her, and the Marches, in sore need of a skilled and trustworthy diplomatic corps. Popular rumor has it that the High Lady of the Silver Marches is attempting to form just such a group, but to date she has made no public announcements regarding when such emissaries might be available to minister to the confederation's concerns, nor exactly what its authority might be.

Plots and Rumors

Player characters can become enmeshed in this political situation in a number of ways -- in fact, it may be almost impossible for them to avoid political dilemmas if they are acting as agents of any of the league signatories or their leaders.

One Bad Apple: The characters discover evidence suggesting that an important individual in one of the league towns is corrupt. Maybe the individual is accepting bribes from an unscrupulous merchant and turning a blind eye while contraband or dangerous goods are conveyed into the area. Or perhaps it's worse than that: The characters run afoul of an individual who is selling secret information to one of the Silver Marches' enemies (say, the details of Citadel Adbar's defenses to King Obould). The confederation doesn't yet have any formal means by which the signatories have agreed to define or punish treason, so the testimony of the characters who apprehend such miscreants should influence those who decide the traitor's ultimate fate.

Secret Ambitions: The High Lady leads the Silver Marches today -- but what of tomorrow? There are those who believe that someone else (perhaps even themselves) would be a better leader than Lady Alustriel. The characters uncover a plot to replace the current High Lady, instigated perhaps by a power-hungry government official or a cartel of merchants who desire a confederation that gives more consideration to trade than defense. The plot might not call for Alustriel's demise, but it might seek instead to embarrass her or compromise her credibility so thoroughly that she has no choice but to step aside and allow someone else to take on the role of High Lord or Lady.

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Rand's Travelogue
Odd and Ends for Silver Marches

By Ed Greenwood and Jason Carl



Rand Sharpsword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Silver Marches area. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the [Silver Marches](#).

Driftglobe: A Traveler's Aid

If you are considering exploring areas that get dark, consider finding and using a *driftglobe*. *Driftglobes* are very popular with adventurers of all types, and they often assist those who have such a tight traveling schedule that they cannot stop moving even when night falls.

This small sphere of thick glass radiates *light* on command, and it can shed *daylight* for up to an hour by a second command (50 charges). A third command causes the driftglobe to rise into the air and follow the creature touching it when the command is uttered, much like *Tenser's floating disk*. The globe floats about 6 feet above the ground within 5 feet of its owner, and it has a speed of 50 feet. It sinks to the ground if its owner moves too fast for it to keep up. The *driftglobe* can support up to 5 pounds of weight if some kind of sling or net were fastened over it to hold the weight. It sinks slowly back to the ground again when commanded or touched again by the creature it is following.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *daylight*, *Tenser's floating disc*; *Market Price:* 7,200 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

Traveler's Advisories

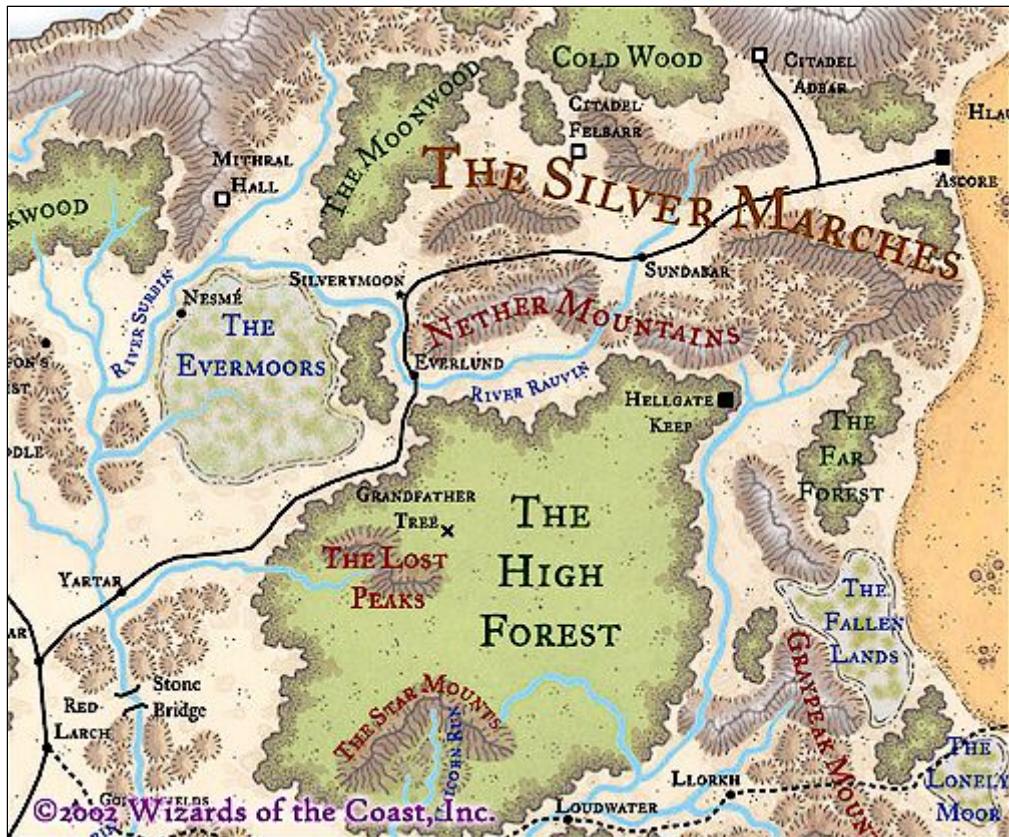
Stone Giants: Those traveling through the mountains be wary. Less dangerous to the Silver Marches communities than their brethren, the stone giants tend to remain in their mountain strongholds unless some greater need forces them to enter the lowlands. It has been at least a century since a gang of stone giants last attacked a settlement in the area. Travelers in the mountain passes may find their route endangered by the sporting events these folk sometimes conduct right in the middle of the passes. The wise traveler retreats to a safer distance and waits out the game, rather than risk being pounded flat against a mountainside by a stray boulder.

Treants and Water: If you are thinking of dealing harshly with treants for whatever reason, watch out! The treants of the High Forest have learned an unusual trick: waterlogging themselves to reduce their vulnerability to fire or carrying water for firefighting in the forest. A treant must stand in a pool of water at least 2 feet deep to do this, and it requires a full-round action to absorb 100 gallons of water. Water carried in this way counts against the treant's carrying capacity.

A typical treant can carry 1,864 pounds (roughly 200 gallons) of water or less as a light load, 3,732 pounds (400 gallons) as a medium load, and up to 5,600 pounds (700 gallons) as a heavy load. To lose its fire vulnerability, the treant must carry a heavy load of water, suffering the normal penalties for doing so (refer to Chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook*).

A treant can release 100 gallons of water through its leaves, bark, or roots as a standard action.

Tree Ghost Guards: Though you may already be aware of this, a force of no fewer than ten Tree Ghost warriors (CN human Bbn2) is always in the vicinity of the Grandfather Tree. So, if you have business there and aren't exactly friends with these folks, watch your backs, and don't expect an easy visit.



Tales Told around the Fire

The Dangers of the Road

--As told to me by caravan guard Melenthros

Melenthros had a bit of bard in him. At least that's what the rest of us thought. He told numerous stories around the fire when he traveled. It seemed to be his way of calming down after a long day of journeying and settling in for the evening's watch. After he lost his arm in a fray with trolls in the High Forest, he headed for Silverymoon. He mentioned that he'd be working shorter trips around there. His skills were such that the lack of an arm didn't slow him down much, but clearly he felt it was time to settle in a bit more than he had been. He told us this short tale of warning before he left us for good.

The common room of the Auvandell Arms was busy this night, Nimoeth thought. Lean and strong like an old wolf, the tavernkeeper paused in his work to survey the room in case trouble lurked. Nimoeth carried a cudgel at his belt instead of the sword he once wore as an adventurer, but he was handy in its use. He missed those days, of course -- just this morning he'd seen off a band of freebooters headed for Silverymoon.

The taproom seemed peaceful enough tonight. A dozen townsfolk and a dozen more travelers stranded by the snowstorm murmured and laughed, shouted and stomped, as if through artificial good spirits they could keep at bay the bitterly cold winds roaring down the pass. On a night such as this, no one but a fool would dare the Silverymoon Pass, and so Nimoeth had a roomful of customers to ply with hearty food and good drink. By the end of the night he'd have plenty of their gold in return. The wind moaned outside, cold and bitter, and Nimoeth found himself hoping that those adventurers had had the sense to find shelter early. Maybe he didn't miss it so much, after all.

The heavy oak door of the tavern rattled and thumped, then burst open wide as a thick-shouldered dwarf battered his way inside the room. Snow and cold blasted past his heavy form. Many of the room's denizens swore and huddled closer for warmth. "Close the door, fool!" someone snarled from one corner. Other patrons added their protests. Nimoeth straightened from the tap to hurl a friendly imprecation of his own, but the words died on his lips.

The dwarf's face and hands were deadly white. A rime of ice clung to his beard, and fine snow powdered his cloak. And he half-carried another traveler, an elven woman who lolled at his side, eyes closed, ice masking her face. The dwarf took two steps into the taproom, and then sagged down on a bench, trying to steady his companion. "Tea," he croaked. "Cider. Something hot, and now. And for Moradin's sake, someone fetch a cleric or healer."

The room fell silent. Nimoeth seized Barik, the kitchen boy, by the sleeve and pointed him toward the back door. "Quick, lad, bring Brother Thamin!" Then, as the boy slipped out to seek help, the innkeeper and his barmaids rushed over to the two frozen travelers with blankets and steaming mugs. "Here, Sir Hurwald," the innkeeper said quietly. "We'll look after her, now. Are others of your party still out in the storm?"

The dwarf looked up, grief unreadable on his frozen face. "You won't find them. Avalanche, maybe 5 miles into the pass. The mountain took them, friend."

A Description of Felbarr

--As told to me by Caravan Master Llythnul

Caravan Master Llythnul had this to say about our destination when I had the honor of working for him once. I'd not been to Citadel Felbarr at that point, and I wasn't much looking forward to it after hearing this, either. It's accurate.

Felbarr isn't the end of the world, but you can see it from there. We have to stop in Sundabar to hire on extra guards, and we always end up needing at least a third more than we can get. Sometimes, if we're lucky, we can engage the services of a party of adventurers who are headed the same way. You have to be careful about such groups, though: There's adventuring bands as will turn on you halfway to your destination, strip you of coin and cart, and leave you waiting for the dire bears to rend the flesh from your bones.

And once you finally reach the Citadel, it's all looming stone towers and massive iron spikes and more deadly traps and pitfalls than you can imagine. And smoke -- lots of stinking, foul smoke, because the dwarves vent their smelters above the ground. And all around, in every direction, nothing but screaming wilderness. But believe it or not, the folks of Felbarr are some of my best customers.

About Dogs and Experience

--As told to me by caravan guard Alena Strathford

I heard this one while at the Dancing Goat. If a lesson is to be learned with this tale, it's "never underestimate your foe," and perhaps even "dogs can make great allies." The guard who told it was a pretty thing, though she had a wicked way with dual blades. A besotted (and sozzled) downy-faced boy tried to show her a bit too much attention, and he found himself on the ground with both blades at his throat before he could take another breath. What made for an even better show was the great dog that landed on his chest and sat there for over an hour, keeping him down while she caroused nearby. Alena is said to have at least one dog or even wolf around her at all times.

The dogs probably saved Helver's life.

He was sound asleep, buried under a thick wool blanket against the bitter cold of the early spring night, when Fang and Knuckle set up a racket that would have roused a stone-drunk dwarf. Helver came awake in an instant, hurling aside his blanket and leaping out of his bed. Outside, the dogs' barks became snarls and growls, and now Helver heard the coarse shouts of orcs -- several of them.

He turned to the mantle and seized the old greataxe that hung above the fireplace. Its blade gleamed wickedly in the ember-light. Helver hefted the weapon once and turned to the door, but just then the whole cabin shuddered as a hulking orc kicked down Helver's front door. "You think I fear an axe in a farmer's hands?" the orc roared.

"I don't care what you think," Helver replied. He scowled and waited.

The orc roared a challenge and rushed forward brandishing a wicked-looking sword. With a mighty leap, the orc hewed straight down at Helver's skull. But Helver was not there. He twisted to one side and spun, bringing his greataxe whistling around in a deadly arc that plowed through the orc's shoulderblade and out of his chest, hammering the raider to the stone-flagged floor. Then the homesteader wrenched his axe free of the first orc and ducked beneath the wild swing of a second orc. That one caught the edge of the axe just under his chin and had most of his head taken off.

Helver wiped the blood from his face and looked up at a third orc filling his doorway. That one hesitated, glancing at the bleeding shapes sprawled on the floor of the cottage. "That's right, I killed them," Helver growled, striding forward over the body of the second one. He shook his axe at the orc in the doorway. "I've killed giants with this axe, you boar-faced oaf. How long do you think it's going to take me to kill you?"

The orc backed out of the door cautiously, then turned and ran -- but not far. Fang and Knuckle dragged him down out by the stone fence. Helver sat down in his doorway, looking out over his land at the moonlit mountains beyond. "Damn orcs," he

muttered, but there was a grim smile on his lips. It was good to know that the lessons he'd learned in ten years of adventuring still remained with him.

Dangers Met While Scouting

--As told to me by caravan guard Hiran

Hiran says this happened to Morvin, a friend and compatriot of his sister Amhira, while scouting out a bunch of orc patrols. I don't know if it's the truth, but it certainly reminds you to make no moves until you know for certain what you face. Sometimes, the situation gives you no breaks, however, so you could also take away the lesson that bad things just happen and there may not be a thing you can do about it but do the best you can. Personally, I would've at least faced death with my eyes open and tried to seek a further advantage out of the situation just in case one was presented to me at such a terrible moment.

A freezing mist settled over Morvin as he crawled across the forest floor under the cover of night. The chilling fog descended so quickly that he at first believed it to be the work of an enemy sorcerer or wizard. Then he realized that the icy fog was natural in origin. This sort of phenomenon happened all the time in the Silver Marches, particularly at this time of year. Only a few minutes ago he had been navigating easily, if slowly, by the filtered starlight that seeped between the bare autumn tree branches; now he could see almost nothing.

That's just terrific, he mused. Bad enough that there's an orc patrol somewhere ahead, but now he couldn't see the orcs even if he stumbled into them! He crouched on his heels behind the dubious safety of a young birch while he took stock of his situation. A quick glance to his right and left confirmed what he suspected -- he could not see either of his companions. He ground his teeth in frustration. Without Amhira and Punarthan, this mission to scout the movements of the orc patrol stood little if any chance of success.

Suddenly Morvin's nostrils filled with a rank, bitter odor. He grimaced silently. Whatever it was smelled like a rotten carcass that had lain too long under a hot summer sun. Then it dawned on him: Orcs! Nothing else smelled so bad. He must be right on top of the patrol. But his eyes could bring him no help while the mist lingered.

Straining his ears, he held his breath while listening for some clue to the orcs' location. Then he heard it: Something moving off to his left, perhaps two or three dozen paces away. Judging from the sound, it was one, maybe two, orcs skulking through the forest. Probably separated from the rest of their patrol, Morvin mused, just like me. But what do I do now?

The question was settled for him as the noise and smell grew stronger. Carefully he loosened his sword in its scabbard and reached for the hunting dagger tucked into the top of his boot. The odor of rotting meat grew even stronger, and he could hear distinctly the deep, panting breath of one of the creatures as it struggled through the wood.

Morvin gripped his weapons tightly. He should see the orcs any second now, and he would get only one chance to attack from surprise.

Wait for it, he told himself. Wait until you see them. Wait for it. . . . Now!

Morvin exploded out of his crouch, weapons clearing their sheaths with a metallic ring that was somewhat muted by the fog. He dove forward toward the creature that loomed through the mist. His blades cut a deadly arc through the air and struck home, but it wasn't until the creature howled in surprise and pain that Morvin realized that something was totally, awfully wrong.

Not an orc. His mind registered that fact already. Too damn big. And shaggy. What the --

The ranger never saw the blow that caught him in the torso and sent him flying backward to crash against the birch tree that only a moment ago had been his shelter. He felt it, though, and felt the claws as they tore through his leather armor and shredded his flesh as though it were paper. The back of his skull slammed against the tree and his vision blurred, even as his sword dropped from his quickly numbing hands. As he slid to the ground, his mind was still working to make sense of his predicament.

A terrifying roar and another wave of the putrid odor rolled over Morvin as he tried to pick himself up off the frozen ground. His vision cleared, and now he could see the creature that towered a good 14 feet above him, its blood trickling scarlet from the scratchlike sword wound in its side.

Morvin closed his eyes as the dire bear charged.

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Rand's Travelogue

More of the Conclave of Silverymoon

By Ed Greenwood and Jason Carl



Rand Sharpsword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Silver Marches area. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the [Silver Marches](#).

Miresk's School of Thaumaturgy

Miresk's School of Thaumaturgy is a building of dark stone that bristles with flying buttresses, small side-turrets, and balconies. Here applicants to the Lady's College and 'wild talents' (persons with a 'natural gift' for causing minor magics, perhaps better called 'untaught sorcerers') are evaluated to see if or where they should be placed on the waiting list.

Eltro Miresk is a tall, gaunt, haughty man who strides about in black robes. Three floating rods, nicknamed "The Triad" by students, whose powers he can wield without touching them, trail him around. Miresk is a superb teacher, and he is especially concerned with balancing magic use with the other natural forces of Faeržn. He also loves to work with cantrips and other small, useful, "everyday" spells. As he often says, "the novice who knows all the ways an *unseen servant* can be useful is worth six reckless *fireball*-hurlers. Or more."

Rumor: Longtime students say the *Triad* appears to collectively muster the powers of a *rod of negation*, endless *hold monster*, *hold portal*, and *unseen servant* spells, and dusty rose, dark blue, vibrant purple, pearly white, pale lavender, and many lavender-and-green *ioun stones*. Whether this is true or not has yet to be discovered.

Eltro Miresk: Male Human Wiz 20; CR 20; Medium-size humanoid; HD 20d4+20; hp 70; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Atk +10/58 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger); AL NG; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +13; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 22, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +29, Concentration +24, Heal +3, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (nature) +16, Knowledge (planes) +16, Knowledge (religion) +16, Profession (herbalist) +11, Scry +29, Spellcraft +29; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Conjuration), Spell Mastery (*dispel magic, ethereal jaunt, protection from spells, teleport without error, unseen servant*), Spell Penetration.

Spells Prepared (4/6/6/5/5/5/4/4; save DC 16 + spell level): 0 -- *detect magic, mage hand, read magic, resistance*; 1st -- *charm person, comprehend languages* (2), *unseen servant* (3); 2nd -- *bull's strength, cat's grace, detect thoughts, endurance, locate object, see invisibility*; 3rd -- *clairaudience/clairvoyance, gaseous form, haste, hold person, slow*; 4th -- *detect scrying, Evard's black tentacles, improved invisibility, minor globe of invulnerability, remove curse*; 5th -- *cone of cold, hold monster, Rary's telepathic bond, teleport* (2); 6th -- *antimagic field* (3), *globe of invulnerability* (2); 7th -- *ethereal jaunt* (2), *forcecage, teleport without error*; 8th -- *ethereallness, mind blank, protection from spells* (2); 9th -- *dominate monster, gate, Mordenkainen's disjunction, time stop*.

Spellbook: 0 -- *arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st -- *alarm, burning hands, cause fear, change self, charm person, comprehend languages, detect secret doors, expeditious retreat, feather fall, grease, hold portal, magic missile, Nystul's magical aura, Nystul's undetectable aura, protection from evil, shocking grasp, sleep, summon monster I, unseen servant, ventriloquism*; 2nd -- *alter self, arcane lock, blindness/deafness, bull's strength, cat's grace, continual flame, darkness, darkvision, detect thoughts, endurance, fog cloud, invisibility, knock, levitate, locate object, resist elements, scare, see invisibility, summon monster II*; 3rd -- *clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic, explosive runes, fireball, fly, gaseous form, greater magic weapon, halt undead, haste, hold person, invisibility sphere, lightning bolt, nondetection, sleet storm, slow, suggestion, tongues, water breathing*; 4th --

arcane eye, bestow curse, charm monster, confusion, detect scrying, dimension door, Evard's black tentacles, ice storm, improved invisibility, locate creature, minor globe of invulnerability, polymorph other, polymorph self, Rary's mnemonic enhancer, remove curse, scrying, stoneskin; 5th -- cone of cold, contact other plane, dismissal, dominate person, hold monster, lesser planar binding, major creation, passwall, permanency, prying eyes, Rary's telepathic bond, sending, stone shape, telekinesis, teleport, wall of iron; 6th -- analyze dweomer, antimagic field, chain lightning, contingency, disintegrate, globe of invulnerability, greater dispelling, guards and wards, legend lore, planar binding, programmed image, summon monster VI, true seeing, veil; 7th -- banishment, control undead, ethereal jaunt, forcecage, greater scrying, limited wish, plane shift, power word, stun, reverse gravity, sequester, spell turning, teleport without error, vanish; 8th -- demand, discern location, ethereallness, greater planar binding, iron body, mass charm, mind blank, polymorph any object, protection from spells, summon monster VIII, symbol, sympathy; 9th -- astral projection, dominate monster, freedom, gate, imprisonment, meteor swarm, Mordenkainen's disjunction, teleportation circle, temporal stasis, time stop, wish.

The Triad: The *Triad* is a substantially powerful magic item that was crafted long ago and probably had a different name than the one given to it by students of Miresk. The lore involved in its crafting has long been lost, but the one remaining known *Triad* now floats behind Eltro Miresk. Each of the three rods consists of a very shiny black metal. The powers of the Triad are as follows:

Rod One

- Absorbs spells up to 8th level (after absorbing 150 spell levels, one of the Triad rods loses luster but continues to trail the owner around) in a manner similar to a *rod of absorption*. However, absorbing the spell requires a readied action, and the rod cannot be used to empower spells.
- *Unseen servant* upon command.
- Owner gains Alertness (as the feat).

Rod Two

- *Hold monster* upon touch, if the owner so commands (DC 15). The owner must choose to use this power and then succeed with a melee touch attack to activate the power. If the attack fails, the effect is lost.
- *Hold portal* upon command.
- Stores six levels of spells. Stored spells must be placed by a spellcaster but can be used by anyone (see *ring of spell storing*).

Rod Three

- Upon command, the rod acts exactly as a *rod of negation*.
- Owner gains a +1 deflection bonus.
- The owner regenerates 1 point of damage per hour in a manner similar to a *ring of regeneration*. However, it cures damage taken only while the character is using the *Triad*.

Caster Level: 16th; **Prerequisites:** Alertness, Craft Rod, Craft Wondrous Item, *dispel magic, hold monster, hold portal, imbue with spell ability, limited wish or miracle, regenerate, spell turning, and unseen servant*; **Market Price:** 226,850.

Esklindrar Iol of the Conclave of Silverymoon

The Map House's master is one known as Esklindrar Iol, and his service in this role has been exemplary. Not only does he have a sharp memory, but he is also quite the expert on the topic of Sword Coast human writings. Though he possesses a sharp tongue, those who impress him may find his help extraordinarily useful. In fact, he has befriended several adventuring parties. You can never go wrong if you count this man as one of your friendly contacts.

Esklindrar Iol: Male Human Exp 7/Div 4; CR 11; Medium-size humanoid; HD 7d6+21 plus 4d4+12; hp 67; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Atk +9/+4 melee (1d4+2/19-20, +1 dagger); AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +11; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +15, Appraise +15, Concentration +13, Craft (mapmaking) +15, Gather Information +10, Heal +12, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (geography) +19, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (planes) +6, Profession (scribe) +12, Scry +12,

Speak Language +12 (Abyssal, Aragrakh, Chondathan, Common, Damaran, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Halruaan, Illuskan, Loross, Netherese, Orc, Sylvan, Thorass), Spellcraft +17; Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Still Spell.

Spells Prepared (5/6/4; save DC 15 + spell level): 0 -- *detect magic* (2), *detect poison*, *read magic* (2); 1st -- *burning hands*, *comprehend languages* (2), *expeditious retreat*, *identify*, *magic missile*; 2nd -- *detect thoughts*, *knock*, *locate object*, *summon monster II*.

Spellbook: 0 -- *arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st -- *burning hands*, *charm person*, *comprehend languages*, *expeditious retreat*, *hold portal*, *identify*, *magic missile*; 2nd -- *detect thoughts*, *knock*, *locate object*, *see invisibility*, *summon monster II*.

Go to the [Forgotten Realms main news page](#) for more articles and news about the **Forgotten Realms** game setting or check out the [Forgotten Realms message boards](#) for a lively discussion of all aspects of the **Forgotten Realms** setting.

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Rand's Travelogue Bonus Edition

Organizations of the Silver Marches

By Ed Greenwood and Jason Carl



Rand Sharpsword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Silver Marches area. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the [Silver Marches](#).

Patrols of the Argent Legion

The Argent Legion, a thinly scattered army of soldiers drawn from each of the member cities of the league of the Silver Marches, makes efforts to extend the region of patrols from the vicinity of the major settlements into the wilds. To the west they go as far as the junction of the Rauvin and the Surbrin rivers. To the south, they watch the Evermoors and the shadows under the High Forest. To the east, the Argent Legion patrols no farther than Moon Pass in the Nether Mountains, but on the other side of the mountains in Old Delzoun they patrol as far as the ruins of Ascore. Finally, to the north, the soldiers patrol up the Surbrin, skirting the verges of the Moonwood and Cold Wood, and into the wild Ice Mountains in the east.

The patrols raid when necessary into the Moonwood, Evermoors, and Far Forest to harry giants, goblinoid tribes, and beasts. They make regular forays into the Silverwood and along the Evermoor Way to make sure its run between the Silverwood and the High Forest remains open and relatively safe. They heavily patrol the Rauvin Vale on both banks, as far north as the Nether foothills and as far south as the verges of the High Forest between Silverymoon and Jalanthal. Standing guards are maintained in the vital Moon Pass and in Silverymoon Pass, and large armed escorts regularly accompany caravans along the Fork Road, Redrun Gallop (between Sundabar and Citadel Felbarr), and along the Adbar Road.

Right now, the Argent Legion tastes battle most often along the Adbar and in the rolling lands of the North Run between Quaervarr and Citadel Felbarr -- and they recommend that travelers not attempt either route without their escort. In practice, this means caravans must arrange to accompany Argent Legion forces and follow the orders of Legion commanders -- it does *not* mean that any traveler can call for an escort or expect timely aid if they go alone and get into trouble.

Other highly dangerous areas at present include the Evermoors, the Fork Road east of the Adbar road, and Turnstone Pass. It's not recommended that travelers enter these areas, and they can expect no assistance from the soldiers of the Silver Marches if they do.

Druids of the Silver Marches

It comes as a surprise to no one that the Silver Marches area is a stronghold for good druids. The followers of Mielikki maintain strongholds in Silverymoon and in the eastern edge of the High Forest (a sacred grove known as Tall Trees). The folk of the Silver Marches respect good druids, but they don't expect the nature priests to get involved in the day-to-day affairs of the communities unless doing so supports or affirms their religious convictions. Evil druids and their destructive tendencies are feared, especially when they associates (as they so often do) with bands of evil humanoids. Druids also congregate in small groups known as druidic circles, which is a reference to the natural life and death cycle. One can find a druidic circle located beneath the northern foothills of the Rauvin Mountains, where the border of the Coldwood meets the rising high ground.

More on the Red Tiger Tribe

One of the characteristics outsiders remark upon most often about the Red Tigers is the manner in which its members tend to stick together. Mutual support is a concept known and practiced among most of the Uthgardt tribes, but the Red Tigers seem to carry this behavior to an extreme. Folk of other cultures often hold back and give their comrades the opportunity to cope with their difficulties before stepping in to help. This isn't in the least true of the Red Tigers. Should a Red Tiger befriend a person from outside his tribe, he or she expects that friend to accept help from his or her Red Tiger comrade even when help was not requested. He or she also expects the same treatment in return and doubtless will be offended if the friend does not offer aid immediately. The Red Tigers exhibit this trait even in battle by seeking to aid their fellows and allies when they have downed their own opponents.

Current Rumors: Tribes of the Silver Marches

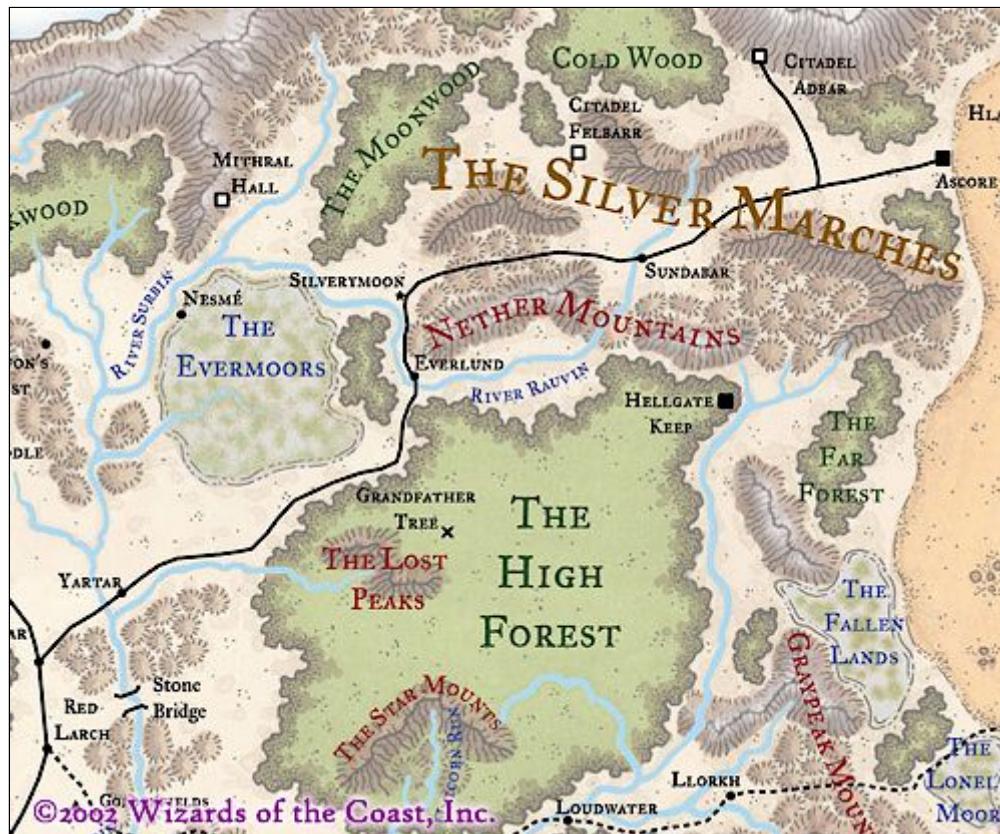
Black Lion: The Black Lions fear their ancestor mound (Beorunna's Well) as much as they revere it, and perhaps moreso. They do not post guards at Beorunna's Well itself, but rather leave that task to the Red Tiger tribe.

Black Raven: The Black Raven tribe appoints an honor guard of no less than ten warriors (CN human Bbn2) and the same number of giant ravens to remain at Raven Rock at all times. The guardians watch over not only the tribe's ancestor mound, but its sacrificial treasure shrine as well.

Gray Wolf: The Gray Wolf tribe no longer participates in helping the Black Ravens guard Raven Rock.

Red Tiger: Protecting the ancestor mound at Beorunna's Well is a task appointed for the Red Tiger's young members who are about to take their tribal vows. At any given time, three to six young men and women (CG human War1) are guided by a tribal cleric (CN human Clr4 of Uthgar).

Sky Pony: The Sky Pony tribe considers it an honor and a sacred duty to provide a constant guard for its ancestor mound. It considers the watch more ceremonial than practical, however. A trio of tribal warriors (CN human Bbn1) is always on guard at One Stone.



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Rand's Travelogue
Monks of the Long Death

By Ed Greenwood and Jason Carl



Rand Sharpssword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Silver Marches area. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the [Silver Marches](#).

Monks of the Long Death

Though the organization known as the Monks of the Long Death is strongest in Thay, it does have monasteries in several other parts of Faerun, including the Silver Marches. Some two dozen members of the order dwell in a hidden stronghold built long ago by unknown hands in the Turnstone Hills, not far from where the pass is blocked by a gigantic landslide. From here the monks pursue their one abiding interest: death.

These monks seek for the secrets of life by studying death. It is the condition of being dead that concerns them most, and not what lies beyond: The afterlife holds little interest for them. Their laboratories are full of decaying, dying, and dead animal and plant specimens that they study with detached interest; they frequently purchase rare specimens that they cannot obtain easily themselves from adventurers and merchants. But such studies are only part of the monks' daily life: They seek to understand death as it pertains especially to intelligent living beings.

To this end, they exhume corpses from crypts and graveyards, and then they transport the corpses to their monastery. There they examine the cadavers in their well-stocked laboratory and observe them as they decompose. They also -- and it is for this that they are most reviled and feared -- purchase living slaves and put them to death, slowly, recording their observations and asking the perishing slaves questions about their fatal experience. Slaves are hard to come by in the Silver Marches, however, because Lady Alustriel and her confederations condemn the practice. The order has been obliged to obtain its living specimens by other means, such as abducting them from outlying farmsteads and poorly-defended hamlets in the dead of night. The monks suffer no moral qualms about these deeds: Death is the most natural thing in the world, from their perspective, and to expire in service to its principle is the most profoundly holy experience any living being can hope to enjoy. It is for this reason that the monks themselves do not fear death, and while they may study the dead, they do not seek that state themselves.

Most of the order's members are either scholars who share mutual fascination with and worship of death and dying, or clergy who worship one of the deities concerned with death. Some of the monks consider themselves to be nothing less than visionaries whose work will pave the way for a better future for all Faerun: When death is truly understood, it can be harnessed and used as a tool for the betterment of all, or so they rationalize to themselves. Others who take the Vows of Death could not possibly care less about anything other than increasing their personal measure of understanding about their chosen subject.

The Monks of the Long Death are easily recognized by their pale skin and gaunt features. They eat little, and they spend most of their time inside their monasteries, in crypts and graveyards, and other dark places where there is little natural light. They affect the trappings of death in their garb, wearing long, dark robes and shroudlike hooded cloaks to hide their features. Though fearful of those who do not understand them and who might seek to thwart their studies, they can be civil hosts if approached by learned folk who offer to share knowledge or wisdom. Their narrow vision and single-mindedness makes them dull hosts, however, and the rigid structure of their society seems quite stifling to outsiders.

High Crypt Information

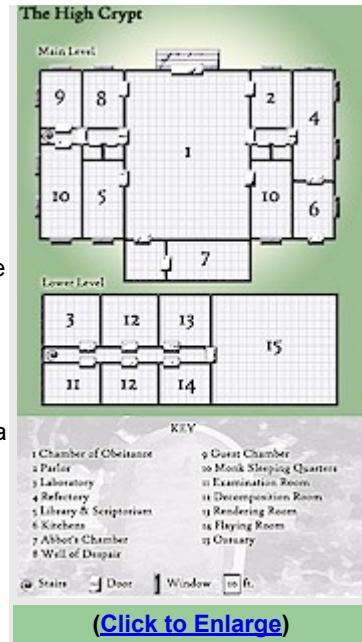
The Abbot of the High Crypt, as their base in the Silver Marches is called, is Seyjayanus (LE male human Mnk8/Ftr4). This enigmatic man embodies the mystique of the warrior-scholar, and, like many cast in that mold, he harbors a plan that he has not yet shared with those he leads. Seyjayanus believes that the mere study and understanding of individual deaths is not enough: He is convinced that the only way to truly serve the core principles of death is to study it on a grand scale.

Encounters with the Monks of the Long Death in the Silver Marches are likely to be with grave robbers, crypt breakers, or slave purchasers who will not take kindly to being discovered. The monks try to avoid moving openly among the general populace for fear of retribution fueled by misunderstanding. They are quite prepared to defend themselves if attacked.

Plots and Rumors

Deity Ties: Kelemvor believes the Long Death to be his enemy, while Velsharoon is attempting to actively sway the monks to his service. Recently, a former monk of the High Crypt left her brethren in favor of worshiping Kelemvor. Before she died at the hands of her fellows, she gave the plans to their temple in the Silver Marches to a couple of adventurers, mercenaries, merchants, and travelers. She did this in the hopes that someone would go in well prepared to face the monks and destroy their numbers in the Silver Marches. Will someone step up to the challenge?

Seyjayanus's Plot: Currently Seyjayanus is formulating a plan that will result in the mass deaths of thousands of citizens in the Silver Marches so that he and his monks can observe the process and its results. It is his desire that the orc hordes of King Obould ravage as much of the area as they possibly can, and to that end he is considering the best way to help the orc lord attack and destroy the cities of the confederation. Encounters may occur if travelers or adventurers happen upon monks who are engaged in discussions with King Obould's forces concerning the best methods of emerging victorious from a war against the Silver Marches.



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Rand's Travelogue

Personalities of the Silver Marches

By Ed Greenwood and Jason Carl



Rand Sharpssword, collector of bits of travel and geographical information, brings you further details about the Silver Marches area. Rand provides these to supplement the information found in the [Silver Marches](#).

King Emerus Warcrown

The 153-year-old King Warcrown boasts the broad, muscular build that is the hallmark of the rugged shield dwarves, and the noble bearing common to monarchs everywhere. His most distinguishing physical features are his flaxen beard, which he keeps brushed to perfection at all times, and a livid scar that runs from just above his right eye, across his right cheek, to end at the lobe of his right ear (a souvenir of the [battle against the orcs](#) for control of Citadel Felbarr). He wears his badge of office -- a simple golden crown adorned with three large sapphires -- whenever appearing in public.

Emerus Warcrown has always known that he was born to fight. All his life he has felt at ease only in time of war or when planning for its arrival. He is much more at home astride his war pony than on his throne, but he is acutely aware of his responsibilities as a figure of authority. He strives to be a good and wise ruler, but sometimes his passion for warfare threatens to get the better of his judgment. Fortunately, he has selected able advisors, on whom he relies rather heavily for counsel in matters that do not pertain directly to the security and defense of his realm. Likewise, he delegates a fair amount of administrative work to them so that he can find a few spare hours each day to visit one or more of the ongoing projects that are under way. In recent months he has sometimes visited the mines that his folk are reclaiming steadily: He is considering whether it might not be better to hire adventurers to locate the lost mines and clear them of unwanted residents.

King Emerus Warcrown: Male shield dwarf Ftr 16; CR 16; Medium-size humanoid; HD 16d10+48; hp 136; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Atk +22/+17/+12/+7 melee (1d10+8/19-20/x3, +2 *defending dwarven waraxe*); SQ dwarf traits; AL LG; SV Fort +15, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14. Height 3 ft. 10 in.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Craft (metalworking) +12, Craft (stoneworking) +16, Diplomacy +6, Intuit Direction +3, Jump +8, Knowledge (local -- the North) +6, Ride (horse) +5, Sense Motive +5, Swim +12; Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Expertise, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (dwarven waraxe), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization (dwarven waraxe).

Shield Dwarf Traits: King Emerus has a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls against orcs and goblinoids, a +2 racial bonus on saves against spells and spell-like abilities, a +2 racial bonus on Fortitude saves against all poisons, and a +4 dodge bonus against giants. As a shield dwarf, he has darkvision (60-foot range) and stonecunning (+2 racial bonus on checks to notice unusual stonework; can make a check for unusual stonework as though actively searching when within 10 ft. and can use the Search skill to find stonework traps as a rogue can; intuit depth). King Emerus also has a +2 racial bonus on Appraise checks and Craft or Profession checks related to stone or metal (these bonuses are already figured into the statistics above).

Possessions: +3 dwarven plate of spell resistance (SR 17), +2 *defending dwarven waraxe*. (The DM can add more items as needed, but be sure to take this into account in terms of experience and challenge should King Emerus work either for or against the PCs.)

Trevis Uhl

Trevis Uhl served for years as a captain in the army of Zhentil Keep army. When the city was besieged and went up in a blaze of holy fire, he decided that remaining to fight would be nothing short of suicidal. He left the army and used his savings to purchase a modest inn in the intact part of the city, naming it The Defiant Gesture.

During his time as an innkeeper, Trevis made the acquaintance of Sergeant Garyth Ilgarn, who liked to drink at the inn's taproom despite its upscale prices. The two men became friends over the course of their

ongoing dialogue about the undesirable nature of Zhent army life. Together they conceived a plan to lead a band of like-minded soldiers, and their families, westward to the Silver Marches, to which other retired Zhents had supposedly emigrated in recent years. When the time came, the two comrades led over 100 people safely to their destination.

Today Trevis is excited by the prospect of a new life. He genuinely wants to make a good home for himself and his followers, but he knows that they must earn the respect and acceptance of the Silver Marches residents who have every reason to be suspicious of the Zhentarim. Trevis also knows that it is very possible that his party of settlers contains one or more moles who are spying for his old masters, and he has warned Garyth to keep an eye out for such folk. Should he discover any Zhent spies, he intends to eliminate them quietly for the good of the community.

Trevis Uhl: Male human Ftr 9; CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 9d10; hp 49; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22; Atk +14/+9 melee (1d10+6/17-20, +1 *bastard sword*), or +11 ranged (1d4/19-20, masterwork hand crossbow); AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 15. Height 6 ft. 1 in.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +6, Jump -1, Profession (brewer) +7, Ride (horse) +6, Sense Motive +5, Swim +9; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (hand crossbow), Expertise, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Possessions: +2 half-plate armor, +1 large steelshield, +1 bastard sword, masterwork hand crossbow, crossbow bolts (20), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (3), *potion of endurance* (3), *cloak of resistance* +1.

Cefrey Duskriver

Cefrey is a young woman from Luskan who is currently employed by the Shades to spy on certain activities in Silverymoon. Using her good looks and charm to advantage, the brown-eyed beauty frequents upscale inns and taverns where she chats with military officers who go there to relax on their off-duty hours. Any information she learns she relays to her employers on a biweekly basis. She carries two gifts from her employer: 100 gp for expenses and bribes, and her magic dagger.

Cefrey Duskriver: Female human Rog 3; CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d6+3; hp 13; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19-20, +1 *dagger*), or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, traps, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +6, Balance +9, Bluff +7, Climb +4, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +5, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +10, Hide +9, Intimidate +4, Jump +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Spot +7, Tumble +7; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Gather Information)

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Cefrey takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

Possessions: Masterwork studded leather armor, +1 *dagger*, light crossbow, 20 bolts, 2 *potions of Charisma*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, grappling hook, 50 feet of silk rope, thieves' tools, 114 gp.