

# Dawn of the Chosen

## Chapter 1: The Crystal Feather

By Henrik Jäderkvist



World of Darkness, Vampire: The Masquerade, Vampire: The Dark Ages, Victorian Age: Vampire, Werewolf: The Apocalypse, Werewolf: The Wild West, Mage: The Ascension, Mage: The Sorcerers Crusade, Wraith: The Oblivion, Wraith: The Great War, Changeling: The Dreaming, Hunter: The Reckoning, Demon: The Fallen, Mummy: The Resurrection, Orpheus, Exalted, Chronicles of Darkness, Vampire: The Requiem, Werewolf: The Forsaken, Mage: The Awakening, Changeling: The Lost, Hunter: The Vigil, Giest: The Sin Eaters, Demon: The Descent, Mummy: The Curse, Beast: The Primordial, Promethean: The Created, White Wolf, Storyteller System™, Storytelling

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## Special Thanks

Onyx Path Publishing for creating an incredible game. My players for inspiring this adventure and for playing through its early incarnation with me before I decided to write it down. My subscribers and patrons for being willing to support me. You for purchasing and taking the time to read this book.

## About the Writer

My name is Henrik Jäderkvist but I usually go by *Ekorren* online. As of writing this book in 2019, I was a Swedish social work student, but also a freelance writer who had mainly been working for *Onyx Path Publishing* as part of their *Exalted* writing team.

I've been making my own games and worlds since I first discovered roleplaying when I was eight years old. I never expected to write in any professional capacity, and I fell into it as a pleasant surprise. I aim to continue contributing to games as well as creating my own, and you purchasing and reading this book is a good way to support me in continuing with that passion.

If you want to get in touch with more of my content, I have a Youtube channel called *Ekorren: Roleplaying & Worldbuilding* where I post videos as often as I'm able to. I also have a website ([ekorrengames.com](http://ekorrengames.com)), as well as a Patreon ([patreon.com/ekorren](https://www.patreon.com/ekorren)) which you can support to get access to special content, such as previews of my original science fiction game *Machineborn*.

The **Dawn of the Chosen** adventure series is based on a game I've storytold since several years ago, and my goal is to create additional chapters where I make more of this story available and playable. If you end up liking this book, I would be happy to hear about your adventures using it. Please leave a review on the *Storyteller's Vault* to let me know if you like it and want to see more.

Thank you!

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## Chapter One

# Setting Overview

This book contains a playable adventure for **Exalted Third Edition**, written with young Solar Exalted in mind, but it could just as well be played with experienced mortals or other inexperienced Exalt types. The story is placed in an established non-canonical setting; a small nation called **Yilali** that is located north of Medo by the White Sea—though it could be placed elsewhere in the North at your discretion.

While the adventure is written with this specific setting in mind, both the setting and the story in this book can be modified to better fit your own campaign. However, if you plan to run this adventure in your own setting, some preparations need to be made in order to convert the more vital setting details into something that works for your game. Throughout the book, there are mentions of when something is important for the adventure and how things can best be changed.

Much of the content in this overview helps to establish the queendom, such as many of the ancestral orders or the capital city **Rosalia**. While the bulk of this adventure takes place outside of the capital city, there is enough information about it to act as a foundation for storylines of your own making within the city walls. If you don't want to play the adventure, you may still benefit from the presented material.

The story behind **Chapter 1: The Crystal Feather** is a quest to find a missing queen. It's inspired by a classic sword and sorcery adventure that involves traveling between places and experiencing hardships along the way. It's an adventure that could very well take a couple of game sessions, with suggestions for how to elaborate or shorten certain sections, as well as how to modify the difficulty to better fit your group.

The most important aspects of the story for this chapter is the fate of the queen, the existence of the White Mountain, and the existence of the Men in the Mountain, though these could be replaced with regents, locations, and orders more suitable to your own story. It's important to remember that while this book provides you with both setting and story, you're the one in control of your own game, and you should ignore anything you feel is ill-suited for the story you want to tell.

As a side note, it's recommended to avoid giving the players access to supernatural forms of travel when playing this adventure, such as the *Stormwind Rider* spell or functional flight. This is a story that involves traveling, and allowing the

players to travel quickly and easily would cheapen many of the experiences they could have in this story. Once this story is over, you may consider removing those restrictions.

### Yilali

The nation **Yilali** was founded near the end of the Shogunate atop the ruins of older mysteries. It's a feudal society ruled over by noble families originating back to the country's founding, though they all pay tribute to the current Rose Queen—**Neiya Karamat**—the only known heir to the former regents. This queendom thrives off its strategic position at the White Sea, granting it access to trade flowing from the **Haslanti** League to the north and east, as well as the Realm's satrapies to the south and west.

Though regularly besieged by Haslanti raiders, Tear Eaters, and Icewalkers, Yilali has managed to hold its ground thanks to its ancestral orders as well as the masterful masonry and the plentiful mines always offering ores for new fortifications. Most famous are they for the black ore mined within the White Mountain, unseen outside of Yilali and only able to be worked by smiths and masons trained in the secret ways.

Though the capital of **Rosalia's Old Town** has been around since the early Shogunate, the country itself was first united in the Shogunate's dying days by **Altren Karamat**. He was a Dragon-Blood of the Earth Aspect and the right hand man to the regional daimyo, charged with seeing to the people's safety as the tattered hosts began their final charge against the invaders from beyond the world.

Altren Karamat led his daimyo's people towards the summit of the White Mountain, though he foresaw that their stand would not be for long. By calling upon the mountain's favor, he turned his ancestral sword **Skyfang** to the task of carving out a bulwark from the black bones of the earth. He led this bulwark like a serpent around the Old Town of Rosalia, forming the town's first fortification against the Fair Folk. Once the fairies arrived expecting helpless prey, they saw only a grand and impenetrable bastion of a black stone that could shatter their gossamer blades.

Rosalia's walls held for a year and a day, until the hordes of chaos brought forth a mighty behemoth in a final attempt to



bring down the fortifications. Though the First King stood strong. Even as Skyfang shattered from the strain of the countless battles, he roared out his defiance.

The Scarlet Empress' seizure of Creation's defenses would be the culmination of this apocalyptic war. However, that miracle was preceded by another, as a falling star smote the behemoth as though announcing that Heaven's favor had fallen upon the steadfast defenders in their refusal to go quietly into the night. Skyfang was reforged using the ore extracted from that star, and it's been mounted in a secret shrine at the top of the Rose Castle as a symbol to the Crown's authority in the days to come.

The black bastion that defended the people of Yilali was named Rosalia after the mother to the First King's beloved queen Ember. Centuries of tales told that Ember had been sired by Rosalia and an actual dragon sleeping upon the White Mountain's summit. The name of Altren's and Ember's house, Karamat, became the symbol for both the rose and the dragon—which together formed the Royal Crown.

Through a treaty forged by the First King in the early days of the Empress' reign, Yilali promised thirty percent of their income to the Realm, as well as free supply and succor meant to bolster the growing legions. In exchange, the First King and his Royal Household would be recognized by the

Realm as rightful sovereigns, with any satrap placed within their walls being a glorified diplomat more than a political force. The Empress honored the treaty and Yilali saw generations of peace.

These peaceful times eventually came to an end, though. With the Scarlet Empress' disappearance, many throughout her Dynasty had decided that they would rather bring the rich trade hub under their own banner—both to serve as a garrison against the Bull of the North's expansion, and to strengthen the coffers of the house lucky enough to take control. When the Royal Household refused to agree, many of them were murdered, the sole survivor being Princess Neiya Karamat by the hard work of her Rose Guard.

Though Rosalia still stands strong after the war, Yilali as a nation is broken. There is next to nothing remaining of their standing army, despite recent efforts in recruitment and training. Little is invested in the lands outside of Rosalia's walls as the lords and ladies become increasingly paranoid of coming attacks or assassinations in the dark. It is a time where a kind queen is manipulated by a greedy court and the future of the queendom is determined by who can navigate the politics the best.

At least until the day comes when the queen disappears, a feather of crystal cold as ice being the only clue to her fate.

## Ancient Orders

Yilali is a land that favors tradition, and the ancestral orders are one of the oldest traditions they have. While often more ceremonial in function, the handful of orders calling Yilali their home have been respected and revered for longer than people can remember why. Some of the orders, such as the **Men in the Mountain**, precede Yilali itself, while others, such as the **Nightland Sisters**, are said to live outside of both life and death.

### THE FIRST BATTALION

The **First Battalion** of the ancestral orders is a military order named after the legion that stood against the Fair Folk at the country's founding. This order acts as Yilali's standing army, and it's the only one open to foreigners and commoners that meet their strict standards, both offering ways to earn citizenship and lesser nobility through its rising ranks.

They are a thoroughly drilled and well-equipped army consisting of heavy cavalry sent into the toughest fighting, traditionally even rented as mercenaries to neighboring lands. It is said that a charge of the First Battalion is enough to reduce most raider formations to rubble, and they have several units patrolling roads and defending settlements both in and outside of Yilali.

After the Realm's recent betrayal, there are only about ten thousand members of the First Battalion left in service. While many of them are patrolling the fortifications of Rosalia, most of them are riding around Yilali, finding recruits in towns and villages along the nation and patrolling the country's borders. All who are strong and healthy with an interest in the order are allowed to test themselves against Battalion soldiers in contests of strength and courage across the Yilaleen landscape.

The ranks of the First Battalion are the following:

- **Lord Marshal:** In charge of the First Battalion.
- **Cavalry Marshal:** In charge of no more than ten Cavalry Commandants.
- **Cavalry Commandant:** In charge of no more than ten Cavalry Captains.
- **Cavalry Captain:** In charge of no more than five Freeriders and no more than twenty Ensigns, including their Aspirants.
- **Freerider:** Acts as a side to the Cavalry Captain.
- **Ensign:** In charge of no more than fifty Aspirants.
- **Aspirant:** New recruit.

### THE MEN IN THE MOUNTAIN

An order of wise men and forgemasters, the **Men in the Mountain** are said to trace their beginnings back to **First Queen Ember Karamat**, she who reforged the mighty Skyfang with the fallen star, but some believe that the order

preceded even that. Known by their red robes, the Men in the Mountain are called upon by the Royal Household and many others to provide wisdom and healing, as well as provide masons and smiths who can work the black ore.

The Men in the Mountain are traditionally made up of members with esoteric gifts that identify as male, though this is not an enforced rule. It is more common that those identifying as women who show affinity for the esoteric arts are adopted by the Nightland Sisters instead. Those who identify as either or neither gender can be found in any of the orders. Traditionally, the separation of men and women were to discourage romantic relations or the siring of children, since doing so could distract them from their scholarly duties. However, it's not uncommon that some Men in the Mountain find love within the order, and some have even used sorcery to sire children.

They are led by the *Elder Three*, who in turn are led by the *Grand Elder*. The man chosen as the Grand Elder wields the mighty **Susanoo** (p. 30) and bears the key to the Forbidden Tomes. Many aspire to be chosen as elders so that they would be allowed entrance to the Forbidden Tomes, but those who read them often pray that they hadn't as they contain wisdom better left forgotten. The current Grand Elder of the Mountain is **Ulfar**, a man of one hundred and twenty years who's better known as the *Prophet Upon the Mountain*.

It is not easy to become recruited by the Men in the Mountain, since most recruits are young boys who have shown some kind of esoteric skill; they could be intellectual prodigies, have knowledge of thaumaturgy, or have shown potential for sorcerous initiation. The boy who is selected must leave his family behind and come to the Mountain Keep, don a white robe, and train with the Men in the Mountain until he becomes deserving of the iron dye used to color the robe red. Despite having to leave his family behind, being selected is considered a great honor, since it means that the boy is now beyond and above the realm of mortal men.

There are currently only about a hundred members of the Men in the Mountain. Since only a handful of children reveal the required gifts each generation, recruitment is slow, but the Men in the Mountain sometimes adopt children from outside the country's borders to bolster their ranks.

### THE NIGHTLAND SISTERS

Birth and death are two very important concepts in Yilaleen culture. Since it is women who bear and deliver children to the world, it is also women who tuck the elderly in for their final rest; thus completing the cycle of birth and death. The **Nightland Sisters** is an order of women who serve as doctors, priests, seers, and undertakers to the citizens of Yilali. They are believers in ancestral worship and they make sure that every citizen of Yilali, both rich and poor, move peacefully to the Underworld where the prayers of their still living relatives will guide them towards the light of reincarnation.