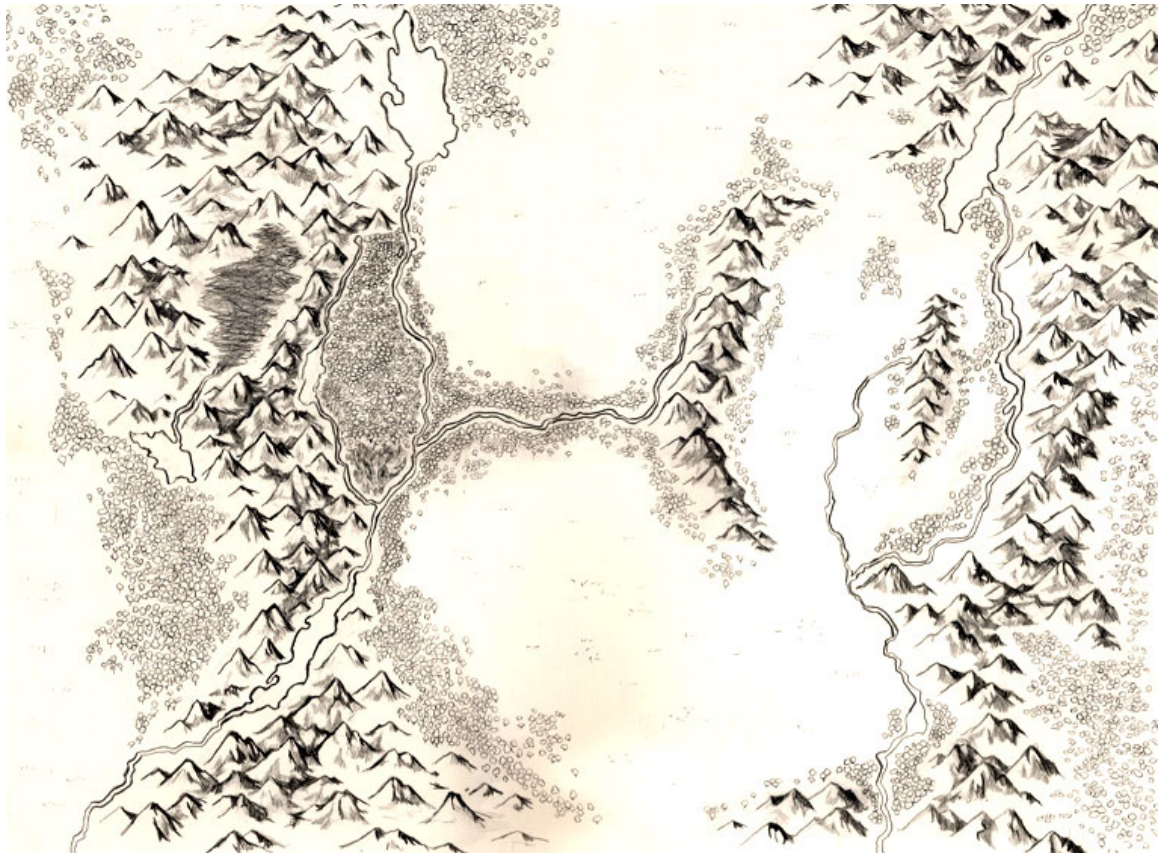


# *Eloheh-I-Dangal's Beyond the Northern Wastes*

*A Guide to the Kingdom of Kaurath and the culture of the Kaurathel*



*By*

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*With*

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*“This Book is dedicated to my sister Catonie, who stayed home for the business while I sought my fortune... without wood chips.”*

*Eloheh-I-Dangal*

## INTRODUCTION

The people of Kaurath are a strong and ancient culture, whose rich and detailed history extends through legends for nine centuries. A land of myth, both savage and noble, where the way of the sword is tempered through the power of the bard; a wild, dangerous land, where forgotten horrors and untold mysteries walk the decimated, savage waste of the Plains of Morathel. In the land of the warrior kings, on the border of the Barrowheart only the strong survive. For this is the land of the Forgotten, the home of the Kaurathel, the Kingdom of Kaurath.

Kaurath is a kingdom on the brink. A land ravaged by centuries of war, brought to the edge of decay by siege and strife. The kingdom of Kaurath is a wild, savage place with enemies on all fronts. To the south, lies the once beautiful land of the Plains of Morathel. It is now a land rent asunder by foul magics and flame; a place where many heroes have died and Icons fear to tread. To the northwest Kaurath is protected by the vigilant guard at the walled bridge of Siltamuuri. There they protect the kingdom from the Darkness of the Barrowheart, a land of unspeakable horrors where the creatures of darkness rule.

The winds of change are raging across Kaurath. High King Vichol, Ruler of the Nine Nations, has issued a call for help. For centuries the kingdom has endured by the duty and sacrifice of its people but now the end of the Kaurathel may be nigh. Worn weary by constant struggle and internal strife High King Vichol fears for the future of his kingdom.

Months after my arrival Sir Janus Ejfel, a Kaurath who is now a King's Knight of Evendarr, came offering High King Vichol a chance to ensure the continued protection of his people. He offered the good king a chance to join the rich, powerful kingdom of Evendarr. Under Evendarr, High King Vichol would become a Duke and his queen, a Duchess. He would have access to forces both great and powerful and be given a chance to defeat, once and for all, the forces of Darkness threatening his people. He would be given a chance to guarantee the continued safety of the Kaurathel.

He presented the possible solution to his many children, most supported the idea, save his eldest, Prince Nicholi. A great argument ensued and Nicholi left the capitol vowing to stand against any treaty subjugating the Kaurathel to the rule of the Evandarrians. King Vichol now has a choice, betray his people for their own protection, or face the evils of his homeland alone.

As a storyteller I quickly fell into the many myths and legends of this ancient northern kingdom. It brings me, as an adventurer and bard, back to the wild, mysterious places of epics and legend. I have entered a world rich in culture and story, where I was quickly lost in the lands and her people. I have investigated the mysterious and secret Surullinen Forest, sang with the bards and feasted with the gypsies of Kasember. I have riddled with the Sidhe and survived (with full thanks to my beautiful traveling partner). Next I plan to try to decipher the ancient runes scrawled on ruins in the land of the Ograth on the western edge of the Plains of Morathel.

Through my many travels since my arrival, I have studied Kaurath's history under the guidance of Sir Ichabod Leagallow, Peacemaker of the Crown and scribe of the Order of Korlin. With Sir Leagallow's guidance it is my pleasure and honor to compose and compile this collection of history, stories, and songs documenting the History of the Kaurath.

And so, as all of the great legends begin: "Once, in the age of time before time..."

## *Eloheh-I-Dangal*

Eloheh-I-Dangal

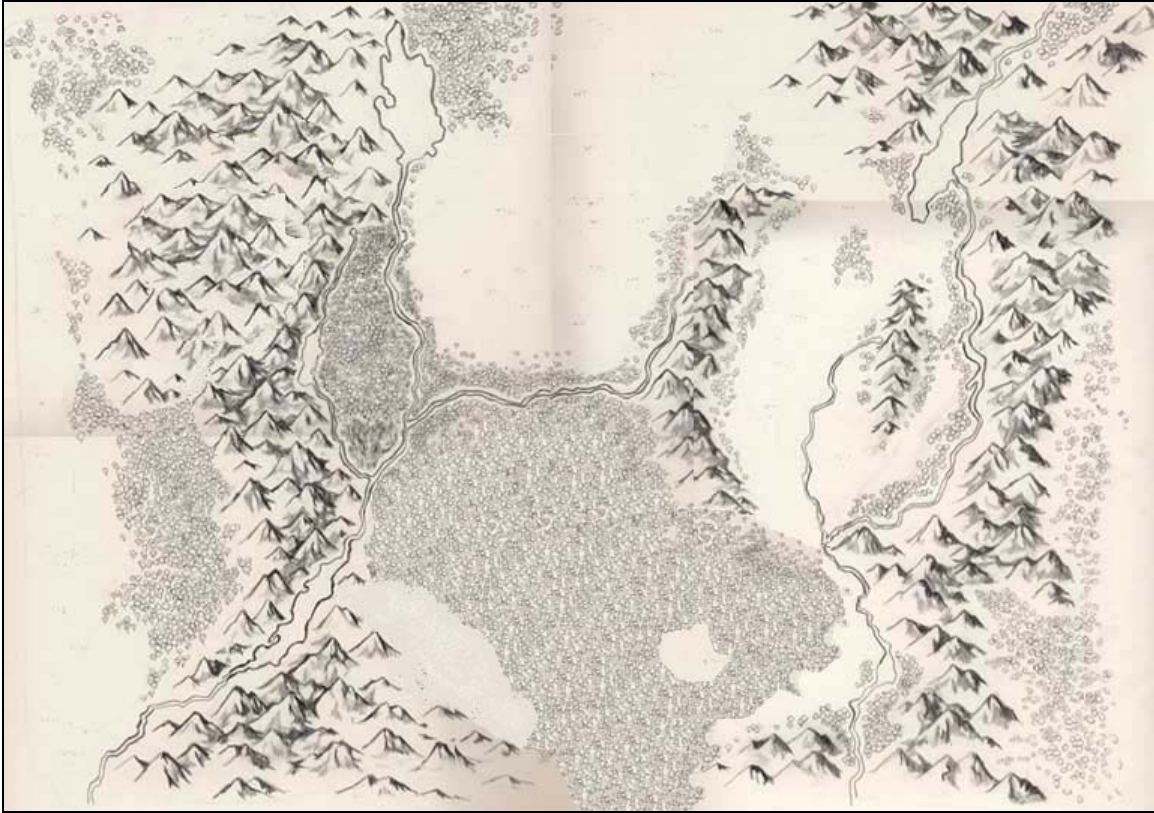
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# CHAPTER ONE

## The Ancient History of the Kaurathel

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The High King Uthios the Kaurath and his wife, the High Queen Anya Valag, formed the kingdom of Kaurath in its modern incarnation, however the kingdom's history lays much farther back than that. To fully understand this land and its people we must start at the beginning in the year 0, by the Kaurath Calendar, or 505 years prior to the established Evandarrian Reckoning.

### **The Founding of the Kingdom**

The Founding of the Kingdom is clouded within the fog of time. Legends and Myth are all that remain and the songs and stories of the Founding differ based on the region of the Kingdom you are in. What we can glean from the common areas of the story are as follows. During the First Age the Kaurathel held the strong and powerful kingdom of Jokai. Because of a great cataclysm called the Sundering, Jokai crumbled and fell into a dark time now referred to, in the poetic style of the Kaurathel, as the Forgotten Age.

Little is known from the time of the Forgotten Age. There are a few remaining stories or legends, and the odd superstitions are no doubt based from that time period. One item of importance that did survive from this age are the Tenants of War which are listed in Chapter Seven of this book.

Over centuries the powerful families formed small clans, which in turn became small Kingdoms led by a Chieftain, King or Queen. These clans and small Kingdoms lacked the strength that was needed to protect the land and their peoples and soon began to succumb to raids from brigands and other clans. During this period of the Forgotten Age a new threat was made clear, that of the Eliahnen. The beastmen.

The Eliahnen slowly took over the northern kingdoms of the Kaurathel, holding the land for hundreds of years. These strange creatures settled in what is now Kasember. An interesting side note, the name Kasember comes from this occupation. Farkasember is the ancient Kaurath word for werewolf. This leads us to believe that the Eliahnen were either Scavengers or some form of Were-creature. We may never know.

The Eliahnen occupation was a time of change for the Kaurath. The Eliahnen brought with them the knowledge of castle building, the secret of the arch, the secrets of steel making, the art of brewing wines (prior to their occupation the Kaurath solely drank mead) as well as the language now prevalent throughout much of Avalon, the common tongue. This hints that the Eliahnen were from the area that is now near the Kingdom of Evandarr.

During the Eliahnen occupation, a young southern king named Verimedve, or the “Blood Bear”, vowed to unite the Kingdoms and rid the land of the Beastmen. Verimedve held land in the center of what is now the Plains of Morathel. In the year 9 EKH, or 515 years Before Evandarrian Reckoning, at the age of 16, Verimedve waged a campaign of unification for the people of Kaurath. Those who did not join were declared Eliahnvella, Beast Servitors, and were either exiled or destroyed. To this day, to call someone an “Eliahnvella” is usually an invitation for a brawl.

The War of Unification, as it has come to be called lasted for roughly 9 years. The kingdoms of the rival clans fell one by one until at last, the northern kingdom of Kotkafarcas was the only remaining Eliahnen stronghold. The battle of Kotkafarcas began December 1, 1 EKH. Verimedve and his wife, the Warrior Queen Laulukirja led their armies into Kotkafarcas and surrounded the capitol city of Lakata on 20 December 1EKH. Verimedve took positions in the east and Laulukirja in the west. Together the two armies laid siege to the walled city. The army within the city, led by the Eliahnvella Vandall Grein, held tight repelling the invaders superior strength.

King Grein’s army stood strong and the siege lasted for eleven days eventually falling the morning of the 31<sup>st</sup>. King Grein opened the gates to his city and surrendered claiming that a woman in white appeared to him and told him that Verimedve was the destined leader of the Kaurathel. On the morning of 1 January 0 K.H, or January 1 in the first year of the Kaurathel, Vandall Grein, the last of the rulers of the north, swore fealty to Verimedve and Laulukirja. The Eliahnen were expelled from Kaurath and Vandall Grein’s life was spared. He was declared a hero of the Kaurath for holding his city for so long and granted title over the north as Lord Grein.

King Verimedve declared that day the beginning of Kaurathel Hallita, or the time of Kaurathel rule. In modern times it not only signifies the Founding of the Kingdom of the Kaurathel, but also the beginning of the Kaurath Calendar. The New Year beginning January first hints at the ancient connection between Evandarr and the Kaurathel. It is perhaps greater than coincidence that the beginning of the New Year starts on the same day in both kingdoms. Most likely the date was altered after the fact to better represent the Evandarr Calendar.

Later that same year, Lord Grein ordered an autumn feast to be held in honor of the unification of the Kaurath, as a way to give thanks to Verimedve for “uniting that, which should never have been broken”. Lord Grein chose time after autumn harvest, the third week of November as the feast date. Today this feast is still celebrated during the third week of November by the Kaurath and is called the Kiittääjauhot, or Feast of Thanks in common.

After this time the history of the Kaurath is blurred and laced with legends. There are, literally thousands of stories about this time period and to try to document them would take a lifetime of work. Aside from the many legendary stories and ballads, little actual history is left save the Litany of the Kaurathel, the list of Kings and Queens from King Verimedve to High King Vichol. I have included the Litany in Chapter Eleven of this work.

## **The Great Betrayal of King Uljas the Brave**

In the year 374 KH (131 BER), great tragedies hit the line of Verimedve with the assassination and overthrow of King Uljas the Brave by his brother Prince Pettää the Betrayer. Pettää the Betrayer, jealous of his widowed brother's power, staged a coup during the Autumn Revel. He waited, hidden in his revel costume, and killed his brother by poisoning him. Shortly after, Prince Pettää hid his brother's body. Later that night Pettää the Betrayer made an attempt on the life of Uljas' only heir, Princess Deynia.

The evil Prince crept into the young Princess' chamber and drew his blade, intending to run his niece through. The Betrayer drove his blade deep into the blankets. The room erupted in feathers as the mattress gave way. There was no resistance of body on blade. Deynia was gone, taken in the night by Suojella, her nanny.

While gathering food for the revel, Suojella had witnessed the familial regicide. She immediately swept up Princess Deynia and fled into the Surullinen Forest where the Sidhe quickly hid the nanny and the Princess.

Pettää the Betrayer quickly took control of the kingdom as the only living heir. The deaths of the King and his Princess were blamed on an attack from the Red Cap gang known as the Tuska Koirra, the Dogs of Agony. Pettää the Betrayer secretly called upon his seers to find the lost princess. It was then that the Vision of the True Hart came to be.

Tuleva Etsia was Pettää the Betrayer's strongest seer and the one that saw the true future. Tuleva Etsia foresaw a great betrayal of Pettää's line followed by a great war. When the war was over Deynia's heir would be crowned king.

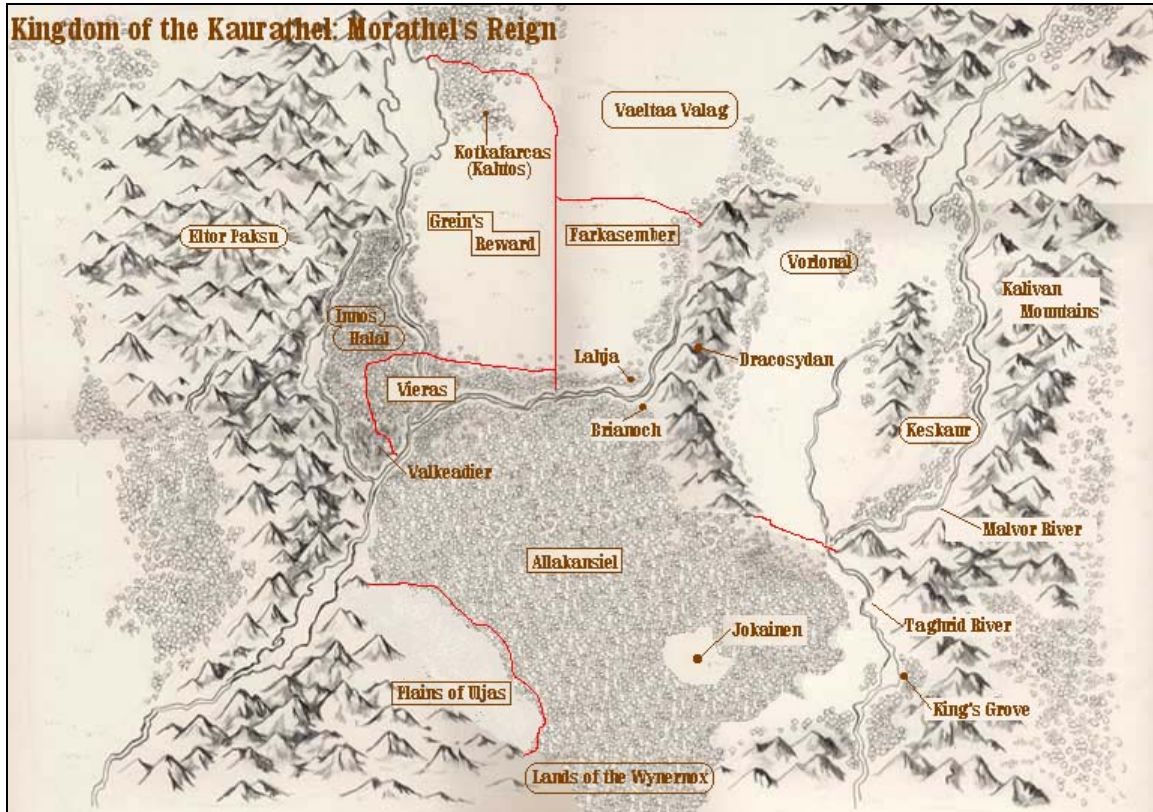
Pettää the Betrayer, fearful for his legacy, launched hundreds of troops into the kingdom in an attempt to find and destroy Princess Deynia; the Princess was never found. Safely hidden with the Sidhe, she was educated in the ways of royalty, and the arts of the Faery. She was taught that one day her line would rule the Kaurathel once more.

The Princess Deynia grew and matured and, as legend has it, married Rehellinen, a Sidhe man, also known in legends as the Forest Prince. The songs say they had many children who lived in the heart of the dark woods of the Surullinen Forest. Their children grew and prospered with their fae hosts and remained safely hidden from the forces of Pettää the Betrayer.

Pettää the Betrayer lived for many years and died in his bed an old lonely man. He had two sons, Tosi and Hyvästi. Hyvästi the youngest the child, disappeared while on a mission to the western Eltor Mountains. Tosi the eldest inherited the stolen crown and ruled with a kind hand. Tosi never considered himself a true king. On his deathbed he requested he forever be referred to as Tosi the Regent-King and that his line be stricken from the Litany until the true king returned. Upon King Tosi's request, the Regent Kings line is all but forgotten save for the last, Regent King Uthios the Just.

# CHAPTER TWO

## The Golden Age of the Kaurathel



The time around the death of Regent King Uthios the Just, marks the traditional beginning of the Golden Age of the Kaurath. It is during this age that most of the legends of the kingdom hail. The death of the last of the Regent Kings also brings about the fulfillment of the Vision of the True Hart. To fully understand the manifestation of the Vision we must look at the situation that surrounds the demise of the Just King.

*Authors Note: Due to the large volume of legends surrounding the Golden Age of the Kaurath only a summary of events most relevant to the history of the Kaurath are present.*

### The Meeting of Prince Morathel and Faranan

Once, in the age of time before time there was an orphaned hunter of royal birth. He was a brave and gentle man who was noble in both blood and deeds. This is the story of the Heir of Uljas, great grandson of Queen Deynia and King Rehellinen and the story of how the White Hart brought him to his love, his eternity.

One Morning Morathel, the Lost Prince was tracking a large white hart through the forests below the Eltor Paksu mines of Eltor Szakall. While tracking the beast he came upon an open grove. Morathel entered the grove and was taken aback by the beauty of it. The grove was a small copse of Blood Birch, white and red in a sea of green. The ancient trees stood at a great height and as the sun shone down through the dark crimson leaves it cast a sanguine quality to the already breathtaking scene. The color had power to it. He felt as if he had passed out of his world and into a world of dreams.



It was then that he saw her. She was standing in the shadows on the edge of the grove and she was beautiful. The good Prince's heart jumped, but not from fear, no, it was because of something different. Something that made his very spirit ache with both sadness and joy. She appeared human, like he, with golden hair and skin as pure as virgin snow. Her eyes were piercing and endless. When she looked at him it was as if she were looking into his very heart. All of his secret desires and fears were exposed for her scrutiny. He was laid bare under her gaze.

He apologized if he frightened her. She said that he did not and he believed her. Her voice had a deep musical quality that made him feel as if he was the only person in the world. He offered her his name and she smiled. He asked hers and she said that she would tell him her name if he could prove himself worthy of her attention. So intoxicated he was by her presence that he readily accepted her challenge. He would have accepted any challenge placed before him, for he ~~new~~ that for her, he would succeed.

She said that he was to bring her the giant white hart unharmed. He could use no magic or alchemy, nor could he use the assistance of man or beast. The act must be pure for the beast was not a normal hart. The beast was magical, like the unicorns, and to capture one, purely, was to prove nobility and strength. Qualities appropriate for one in love with a creature such as her. Kneeling, Morathel pledged his eternal love and promised her the capture of the beast

He left the grove and started tracking the argent beast. The quest took a year and a day. Morathel never lost track of the stag. He tracked the creature to the edge of the forest on the border of a great swamp. There he herded the Hart onto the open moors where it quickly sunk into the foul mud. From that day forth the great swamp in which Morathel captured the White Hart has been come to be called Valkeadier, now Valkadier, simply meaning, the White Hart. Carefully he attached a harness to the beast's head and led it out of the ~~fit~~ to claim his prize.

Morathel led the Stag easily. The journey took him seven days and every day it was easier to lead the great beast. Morathel entered the forest and found his way to the grove of his love. In the grove Morathel waited for her to arrive. How she would know the good Prince was there he did not understand, but he knew she would come. The hart stood tall and graceful under the crimson canopy. He ate the sparse grass and nibbled the blueberries that lined the grove. He let Morathel approach him. It was as if the beast knew he was not going to hurt him. Morathel left the lead on, yet allowed him to roam free in the grove. Morathel knew he wasn't going to run. Standing in the grove, Morathel was captivated by his size and strength and appalled that he ~~was once tracking~~ him to kill him. He stood as high as a war-horse and just as impressive. From his gently sloping brow sprouted two great antlers tall and wide in their presentation. He was majestic.

The beast rose to his full height and lifted his head to reach the tender shoots on a nearby pine. It was then that Morathel saw her, leaning gently against the flaky bark of the massive white tree. She looked up at the great beast and told the Prince that its name was Korlin and that ~~he~~ was now his steed and guardian. She told him that she was a forest creature though Folk or Fairy he knew not which. Finally she lent close, and kissed him on the cheek and whispered.

"Now it is time for your prize. I am Faranan Tunderi, and this is my home."

Morathel's love now had a name and it was Faranan. He knew that she was the one that he wished to spend eternity with. She was his forever. He knew that she would be the one in which he would marry, but that is a story for another time.

### **The Usurper Lord**

With Faranan's love empowering him, Prince Morathel quickly grew in prominence. After many adventures in and around the ancient Province of Allakansiel, in what is now the Plains of Morathel, he quickly grew in rank moving from Ranger under High Lord Knight Assilo to Kings Knight in a matter of a few years. Even though Morathel was the true heir to the throne he did not wish to usurp the Regent King. Morathel, like most of Uthios' subjects, loved their leader and considered the Regent King to be a kind and

noble ruler. As is the way of the Kaurathel, Morathel believed that the good of the nation outweighs the good of one man. Unfortunately, not all in the court had the same moral fiber.

Grand Vizier, Rahaban Zoradieth Alquillonde came from a distant elven kingdom and joined the court of the Regent King as a seer. There he quickly grew in rank until, at last, he became the main counsel of the king. His powers of the Weird Sight were so accurate that the Regent King refused to make decisions without first consulting Zoradieth.



For decades, Zoradieth faithfully served the Regent King and Queen. In truth he was patiently setting a trap. Zoradieth was breeding contempt and raising an army throughout the supernatural Beyrzar lords of the north.

On a stormy summer evening Zoradieth led a group of conspirators through the Castle Zaraphal where they overran the king's guards and entered the Royal chambers. There they slaughtered and obliterated the last of the Regent Kings. From high atop the towers of Zaraphal Zoradieth fired flaming arrows into the night sky signaling the thirteen armies of the north to begin their attack. Led by the powerful supernatural Beyrzar Lords the city soon fell. Early morning, during a sunrise ceremony, Zoradieth declared himself King of the Kaurathel. The war had begun.

### **The Response of the True King**

Morathel and Faranan received word of the attack via courier two weeks after the initial assault. Zoradieth and the Beyrzars had laid siege to the surrounding forest and the Allakansiel militias. High Lord Knight Assilo and his son Lord Assilomar were mounting the offensive. The militias were outnumbered twenty to one and without reinforcements the kingdom would fall.

Morathel, and Faranan sent word to the northern Provinces of Grein's Reward and Vieras and the kingdoms of his great grandfather's people and pleaded for reinforcements. He knew that ~~without~~ a King, and with the provinces divided by great distances that the Kingdom would fall. He set off riding Korlin and traveled to the surrounding farms and villages raising militias to fight against the armies of Zoradieth. One by one they came to the castle at Balta until they numbered in the thousands. Still, Morathel rode and gathered.

Morathel sought Cozobari, the leader of the Razioch, a mysterious race of fierce and proud warriors living deep within the southern Surullinen. He pleaded for assistance and asked them to join his armies and to lead as generals. Upon hearing that their forest home was endangered Cozobari agreed on one condition, that there be a code of honor above and beyond the ancient Tenants of War for the rebellion to follow. Morathel agreed and, upon returning to Balta castle with Cozobari and the Razioch set a council to create the code of honor for the Kaurathel revolt.

### **The Council of Balta Torni**

A council comprised of Morathel, Faranan, Assilo, Assilomar, Cozobari, Malinaugh, and the tribal leaders of the Razioch and representatives from the free races of the Kaurath, convened in the tower of Balta castle. For three nights they met and discussed. At the end of the third night, the code was done.

The Code was called the Luvata Kansa, which roughly translated, means "Promise to my Nation". The code was comprised of one declaration and nine tenants. To this day the Luvata Kansa is still followed by the Kingdom and is, in the author's opinion very similar to Evendarr's Code of Chivalry.

On the morning of the fourth day Morathel and his generals assembled their armies. The generals and rangers called the thousands to order. All present knelt under the morning sun and spoke their promise to their nation.

## **The War of the True King**

Morathel and his generals marched on the armies of Zoradieth. The battles were great and losses were met on both sides. For two long years Morathel fought while Faranan pleaded for reinforcements from her father, Olut, a faery king.

Olut stubbornly refused to assist his daughter claiming he was not going to support any army led by Morathel. Olut despised the fact that Faranan was in love with a mortal, let alone a half-breed, as Morathel was half-blooded Sidhe. Faranan pleaded further until Olut said that he would assist Morathel with troops only if Faranan left the mortal.

Faranan lied to her father and agreed to leave Morathel. She then took charge of an army and, accompanied by her brothers Celtios and Hiiri, led a host of Sidhe archers to Morathel on the battlefield near the Etela Gap. In private, she told Morathel of her betrayal against her father. Morathel, fearing that he would lose Faranan for eternity, married her that night in secret. With Celtios and Hiiri's blessing, High Lord Knight Assilo performed the ceremony on a rise overlooking the quiet battlefield.

The following morning Faranan bid farewell to her husband. She was to lead her father's forces to flank the evil forces of the Usurper Lord. Morathel and Faranan would not see each other for two years.

## **The Quest for Fendreil**

Morathel suffered many restless nights after his true love marched her armies off to war. He had visions of great battles, of men and fae locked in a bitter battle for survival, and of a weapon of such power that armies fell under its blade and heroes rallied behind its might. He woke each morning tired and exhausted, yet ever sure that the visions he was receiving in the night were truth; that deep within the wilderness was a sword of great magic and power.

The visions lasted for a week and became more and more intense as they progressed. Soon Morathel had a name for the weapon, Fendreil, and a location, Roadail; the site of a legendary battle where the lands of men and Fae fought following the horrors of the Sundering. Roadail was legend long before the War of Unification. Morathel knew on the morning of the seventh day that he would quest for Fendreil.

The weak-minded who held resentment and jealousy toward Morathel called it a fools errand, a quest for one who did not possess a grasp on reality. Others claimed that Morathel would die on the quest. Celtios and Hiiri, who were born shortly after the conflict ended and remembered tales of such a blade, supported their brother-in-laws decision to quest for the long lost weapon. Morathel placed his legions in the command of Celtios and Hiiri and rode off to quest for the legendary blade of Fendreil.

Morathel rode hard for two months, following his dreams. His travels took him through the Surullinen to the eastern Kalivan Mountains. There he rode north along the Taghrid River to the Malvor River and into the forests of Keskaur.

The Keskaurani elves were not known for their kindness and understanding. They were a strong and mysterious people who shunned contact with outsiders. The Keskaurani were dangerous, few who trespassed in their lands ever returned.

The Keskaurani were renowned hunters and trackers and soon Morathel found himself face to face with a party of guards. The elves stepped from their places of hiding. They were dressed in the deep forest colors of the Keskaur and appeared that they could disappear by standing still. Morathel slowly dismounted Korlin who, he could see, was preparing for a fight. A tall elf dressed in reds and greens introduced himself as the Keskaurani Fuadaun, Eldrickian. The Fuadain asked Morathel of his business in the forests. Morathel replied, telling the party of his quest. Fuadain Eldrickian thought for a moment and said that



Morathel was to drop his weapons and he would be taken to see the Righ. Morathel agreed and soon found himself bound and being led by the neck to see the Righ of the Keskaur.

Righ Divyan ruled from the great elven palace of Aruinn Brugh. The palace stood on a rise overlooking a deep forest. Aruinn Brugh was made from living trees and stone and rose like a spire high into the sky. The sun filtering through the colored glass and green leaves of the palace cast a warm glow over the surrounding woods. Guards stood watch on the exposed rock surrounding the castle as birds of prey hunted overhead.

With the impenetrable forest of Keskaur behind him, Morathel was led to a gate imbedded in the rock below the palace. Korlin was placed in a stable made from stone in a natural occurring cave and Morathel was unchained yet remained bound. There he was blindfolded and led inside, up stairs, and what seemed like miles of twisting turning corridors. Eventually he was led through a door and stopped. His footsteps echoed as if he was in a deep chamber. He was forced to his knees and soon his blindfold was removed. He was momentarily blinded by the change in light. As his eyes adjusted he found himself standing below an enormous throne made from the living twisted branches of an enormous tree. There, sitting on his throne high above his court was Righ Divyan, ancient leader of the elves of Keskaur.

The Righ called upon Morathel to rise and explain his trespass. Morathel did as he was asked and told of his quest to find the ancient battleground of Roadail. The Righ chuckled and shook his head. He told Morathel that Roadail was not a battlefield; it was an ancient artifact, a portal to the realm of the Sidhe. He told Morathel that Roadail was within Keskaur and he would be delivered to it. He also warned that the Roadail would ask Morathel a riddle. Should he fail the test his life force would be consumed by the gate and he would be lost forever. Morathel stood tall and told the Righ that he was ready for the test. His people were in mortal danger and this was a chance to save them. The Righ agreed and soon Morathel was blindfolded and led to the portal of Roadail.

The forest opened into fields marked with small cabins and elven tree homes. Morathel's blindfold was removed as he was led through the elven hamlet. Turning, Morathel found that he was far from Aruinn Brugh and could not see the palace. He was at the mercy of the elves.

After an hour of riding Morathel could begin to see a fortress in the distance. Ancient and weathered, the fortress bowed from corner to corner of a deep valley. Walking through the gates they traveled within the small valley until they came across a clearing. Standing on the far side of the clearing was a stone arch surrounded by runic writing. On the keystone of the arch was a painting of an eye marked on the stone itself.

The Righ of the elves made Morathel an offer. If he succeeded in answering the riddle of Roadail he would be set free, however he would be beholden to the elves of Keskaur and would owe them one favor in return to their generosity. Morathel agreed and was unbound. Dismounting Korlin, he approached the gate.

As Morathel walked to the gate the pupil glowed a deep red, illuminating the dark clearing. The Keskaurani stood back, some retreating to a safer distance. A deep voice resonated from the stone of the arch. It asked Morathel if he was worthy of the test. Morathel said that he was and the arch spoke further:

“What rules the children of night and rules the children of day but when twilight comes rules nay?”

Morathel pondered for a moment and with confidence said that he and his people did. He said that the answer was Sidhe. The portal said that Morathel was correct and soon opened. Morathel quickly stepped through.

The land on the other side of the portal was obviously in the Otherworld of the fae. The sky was a deep purple with no stars or clouds. Skeletal remains of elves, humans and fae were scattered throughout the realm as far as the eyes could see. The bones of the dead were ancient and fragile, the slightest touch scattered the bones to dust.

In the distance, Morathel saw a pale white glow. Rallying his courage he started for the light on the horizon. Cresting a ridge he saw the glow came from a wizened old woman sitting among the pile of bones, her white glowing robes flowing over the frames of the dead.

Morathel carefully approached the woman. The old woman opened her eyes, looked upon Morathel and smiled. Morathel asked her if she was well and offered her a drink of wine from a flask he had strapped to his side. She gladly thanked him and took a drink. Smiling she asked how she could repay his generosity. Morathel told her that no payment was necessary and that he must be off, for he was questing for the lost blade. The old woman smiled revealing rotted yellowed teeth. She told him that she had been waiting an eternity for him to arrive. Standing, she shifted her robes. Lying at her feet was Fendrail, Sword of the Ancients. She picked up the blade and offered it to him. Morathel humbly accepted the weapon and thanked the old woman. She smiled and vanished.

Morathel emerged from the portal roughly one week after he had entered, though it was a matter of minutes to him. The elves had established a watch to alert them of Morathel's return and soon the elves who led him to Roadail approached. Seeing that he had accomplished his goal they returned him to the Righ.

The Righ was amazed that he had survived at all but reminded him of his promise. In the future Morathel of Morathel's line were to assist the Keskaurani once whenever they so required. Morathel gave his word and was soon escorted out to the forests of Keskaur.

Morathel rode fast and hard back to his armies. Soon he regained control and used the vast powers of Fendrail to drive the forces of Zoradieth on to an even field. With renewed morale the Kaurath rallied the cause. Soon the forces of the Usurper Lord would fall.

### **The Riddle of the Stones and the Quest of Malinaugh**

The war raged on and through the power of Fendrail, Zoradieth's armies slowly fell. Morathel led the people of Kaurath closer to Jokainen. The last major obstacle between the armies of the revolution, and the capitol city of Jokainen were the powerful Beyzars. Their might and abilities were awesome. Hundreds died by their hand and no weaknesses could be found.

Morathel, seeking answers, wrote to the Oracle deep in the northern Surullinen Forest and asked her to help him in his search for a weakness. Her response was in the form a riddle. The riddle, now known as the Riddle of the Stones is as follows:

Twins born of the same heart,  
What was once alone is now apart.  
Ripped in twain by the powers that be,  
To create their own eternity.  
From the Drakes Heart face the setting sun,  
Place chisel to stone, Fourteen from one.  
Green Lords hold the Prison

It took months for Morathel to try to decipher the riddle with no avail. The Drakes Heart referred to a place, most probably located in the Dragon Spine Mountains that separated the lands of Farkasember and Grein's Reward, now Kasember, from the barbarian kingdoms of the northeast. It was the quick wit of the Razioch Second named Malinaugh that solved the riddle. He knew that there was a cave in the eastern face of the Dragon's Spine called Dracosydan, Meaning "Heart of the Dragon". There the river ran blood red due to the clay surrounding the cave. It was said that at nightfall the gate to the Shadowlands, the realm of the Sidhe opened. He also speculated that the Green Lords represented the knights of the Sidhe. They held the gift.

Morathel sent Malinaugh, and those of his choosing, to go and collect the gift from the Oracle. Malinaugh and his band moved quickly and silently through the lands held by the Barbarians and the Beyzars. They reached the Dracosydan and waited for the sun to set and for the gate to open. It never did. Baffled,

Malinaugh looked closer at the riddle. While researching the text, Corvauness, the mighty Razioch warrior found, imbedded in the stone, what looked like a sun setting over the peaks of some mountain range. Below, lying on the ground, was a round rock split in two; one half white, one black. Malinaugh pulled a chisel and a hammer and went to the white stone. He struck hard and it broke evenly into fourteen pieces. He struck the black half hard and it too broke into fourteen more. Collecting the pieces he was struck with a vision. He would imprison the Beyzars in the white pieces. The Black counterpart acted as the key. Once all of the Beyzars were captured both the white and black pieces would be hidden. Gathering up the magical salvation, he returned to Morathel.

Malinaugh returned to the forces of Morathel roughly one month after his discovery. He found Morathel and told him of the stones. Morathel declared that victory would soon be theirs and granted Malinaugh a position as general. Morathel told him to gather forces of his own. He had his pick of soldiers, for he was going to lead the main assault against the Beyzars. He was placed in charge of capturing the Beyzars one by one with the Stones of Malinaugh, as Morathel called them. After which he would hide the stones. Only he was to know of the locations of the stones after the Beyzars had been captured. The fourteenth stone would be placed in a secret hiding place known only to Malinaugh.

Malinaugh set out with his armies and through the use of superior tactics began to capture the supernatural generals of Zoradieth's armies. Slowly and surely Morathel's army to the west, Faranan's to the east, and Cozobari's armies to the north and south pushed hard against the forces of the Usurper Lord. Zoradieth was retreating.

As spring grew near Zoradieth's army consisted of a few battered battalions until at last the final Beyzar was captured. The three armies of the Rebellion closed in on the capitol city. By the end of May they were in sight of each other. The armies surrounded Jokainen and laid siege to their capitol city.

Malinaugh set off to hide the stones. His quest would be difficult, for if anyone would find the stones they Beyzars could be released. He left to fulfill his quest and to personally guard the final stone. He would never return.

In early July the final siege began and the gates broke. The armies marched through Jokainen killing off the last of Zoradieth's forces. Upon entering the castle Morathel and his forces met with stiff resistance. They fought bravely until at last Morathel entered the throne room and engaged Zoradieth. The battle was fierce and ended with the destruction of the Usurper Lord. Though Zoradieth's spirit was strong and he resurrected, he had been routed and driven into exile.

### **The New King**

The Kingdom of the Kaurathel belonged to the Kaurath once more. The people started to rebuild and in a show of kingdom wide unification declared Morathel, true heir to the throne, as the new King. He accepted and declared Faranan as his Queen. Their first order of royal business was to honor those who led the rebellion.

Cozobari and the Razioch were knighted. The entirety of their race was bound to the land and declared as the Silver Legion, Forest Lords of the Kaurathel. They were to forever protect the land and its peoples.

Assilomar was declared as High Lord Knight of Allakansiel. Celtios, Faranan's Brother was granted title over Vieras. Corvauness was made High Dame Knight of Grein's Reward and Farkasember, and Cozobari was declared the High Lord Knight of Jokainen.

The rebuilding was well underway and by mid winter, Faranan found herself with child. With the Kingdom recovering and a new heir to the throne on its way, the people of Kaurath started to let down their guard for the first time in a long time. The Golden Age was now underway.

## **Jokainen**

The city of Jokainen was a beautiful city. Marble lined thoroughfares ran in concentric circles around the blue gilded castle of Zaraphal. Made entirely of the blue granite that was famous in the ancient province of Allakansiel its gilded stags and gold accents gave the future kingdom its royal colors. Deep within Zaraphal the heart of the Kaurath beat strongly.

Faranan gave birth to a strong little boy. They named him Prince Harcos, arguably the most popular of Morathel and Faranan's children. In time the little prince would grow and mature and eventually become a gifted warrior and poet. His poem to his future queen is listed in the Stories, Legends, and Songs of the Kaurath section of this book.

The kingdom grew and prospered. The people were happy, the armies were strong and trade was beginning with the outside kingdoms. The time of peace allowed the heroes of Jokainen to venture out and explore the frontiers of the north. Soon they discovered the Hobbling Colony of Seannaught and the lands of the Gythainen deep within the swamp of The Valkeadier, now called Valkadier. Regular trading routes were established via barge up the Lansí River to the ancient dwarven home of Eltor Paksu, sheep and reindeer were traded with the barbarian lands to the north, and in a few short years the Kaurath were more prosperous than they have ever been before.

### **The Wisdom of Faranan**

During this time of peace, Faranan established the Viisas Talo, a college of learned Kaurath who would travel to towns and villages through out the Kingdom and open Viisas. The Viisas were schools where citizens of the Kaurathel could go and learn.

To ensure parents would send their children, Faranan declared the decree of Suojata Innostas, which stated that any family who sent their children to Viisas and have it verified by the Isanta or teacher, would not be required to pay taxes to the Kingdom. It was said that in the Golden Age, all could read, all could write, and magic flowed freely from the hands of all its citizens.

### **The Return of the Dark Lord**

Years past and the people of the Kingdom prospered. Faranan was again with child. Morathel had just returned from assisting the Barbarian King Vorlanok in the unification the tribes of barbarians in the north and spent many days at home with his wife and son. He was eagerly anticipating the birth of his new child. It was here, in his private chambers within Zaraphal that he received word of the pending invasion.

Cozobari came to Morathel and told him that his Silver Legion spotted a large host marching through the troll infested Tonttuel Peaks. He informed the King that the army appeared to be undead who could travel during the day and that they marched under the flag of the Dark Lord, Zoradieth.

Morathel bid his wife farewell. Faranan, though a fierce and brave warrior was close to giving birth and could not afford to enter combat. In her stead Hiiri, Faranan's youngest brother attended the army. Hiiri was a powerful and gifted rogue, well known for his deft negotiating skills. Morathel intended to utilize this ability of his brother-in-law to try to end the battle before it began. Hiiri would act as the Peacemaker under the Tenants of War.

They gathered the army and marched northwest toward the Tonttuel Peaks. The two armies met on the Plains of Uljas. Hiiri raised the blue, and white flag of the Peacemaker and rode out into the center of the battlefield to wait for an emissary of Zoradieth. Soon a representative of the Dark Lord met with Hiiri and the negotiation began. He offered safe, protected passage through the Tonttuel Peaks if Zoradieth's army quit the field. The Emissary refused. Reaching a stalemate both Peacemakers returned to their hosts. The Battle was about to begin.

The armies charged and many warriors died on both sides. After hours of bloodshed the battle was over. Zoradieth had been captured and his army had been destroyed but at a huge cost. Morathel's army had been decimated. Of the fifteen thousand men roughly three thousand survived. Morathel sent a squad to gather the equipment and personal belongings of his fallen soldiers. They would camp for four days on the battlefield, allowing wounds to heal, equipment to be gathered, and men to rest.



Morathel and his generals questioned Zoradieth. The Dark Lord responded stating that he will resurrect and return with an unstoppable army from the north to destroy the last of Morathel and Faranan's line. He had witnessed the act in a vision and his visions never lied. This would to come to be called the Vision of Zoradieth. The Dark Lord then went rigid and died, his body dissipating, the spirit leaving immediately.

Hiiri ensured Morathel that it could not happen. Morathel was not too sure. He had witnessed Zoradieth's predictions come true first hand. Knowing that seers could not accurately predict visions about their own future was little comfort.

The following evening a great disturbance rocked the encampment. Roughly around the same time as the prior nights battle, part of the undead army they had vanquished the night before rose from the ground. Catching the Kaurathel off guard the undead made quick work of the patrolling units. With lightning wit, Morathel rallied his troops and destroyed the attacking threat. Morathel sent patrols of Silver Legion to search out and destroy whatever Necromancer raised the dead. The Legion found no signs of any sorcerer.

The following evening Morathel posted double the guards of the prior night and again the dead rose. The armies made quick work of their undead attackers, however rumors started to spread that the land they were in was haunted or cursed. Desperate to keep morale high, Morathel ordered the camp to break at first light.

Upon returning to Jokainen, Morathel found that Faranan had given birth to a beautiful little boy. He was named Medve after Morathel's ancestor, Verimedve. Upon seeing his newborn son Morathel could not shake his feeling of dread that had bore a hole in his gut since Zoradieth made his accursed prediction.

The following morning Morathel consulted his sages and granted them the responsibility of finding a way to defeat Zoradieth once and for all. He would do what he could to protect his family and his people. Morathel swore that he would not rest until the Dark Lord was destroyed once and for all.

### **A Grandfather's Displeasure**

Years passed with little events. Eventually the immediate threat of Zoradieth's return had passed. The Silver Legion patrolled the borders of the kingdom yet found no sign of Zoradieth or his armies.

In time Faranan was again pregnant and again she gave birth to little boy. The little prince was named Faracam. All of her children showed signs of their mixed lineage. Harcos the Warriorbard inherited a fierce fighting ability yet could write and sing, he was the greatest bard of the day, Medve the Wild had the gentle pointing ears and gold eyes of his grandfather and could speak to the creatures and trees of the forest, Faracam showed the greatest of traits. Faracam had long pointed ears, much longer than an elf's, and could change his appearance at random. When he grew into a young boy he would pose as a rabbit in the gardens surrounding Zaraphal and spy on his two older brothers. For these abilities he had been given the name of Faracam the Changeling.

The boys grew and played in the castle, attending court whenever their studies would allow. They were strong little boys who enjoyed the pleasures of life yet still understood that a great responsibility would someday be theirs. They were allowed to be children while their family prepared them for the burden of leadership.



Though they had a happy home, all was not right within their family. King Olut, their grandfather, broke all contact when he discovered that Faranan had betrayed his trust. For nine long years he refused to meet with her or his grandchildren. He declined countless invitations to holidays or family events. For all intents and purposes, Olut had disowned his daughter. In one last effort Faranan invited her father to come and attend their tenth anniversary wedding celebration. Much to Faranan's shock he accepted.

Zaraphal was prepared for a Kings welcome. Decorations lined the great hall and great feasts were prepared. King Olut and his court arrived and were escorted to their chambers. There they stayed until the start of the feast.

King Olut was given a seat of honor at the table. He graciously accepted. He was introduced to his grandsons, Harcos was eight, Medve, five, and two year old Faracam who had to be coaxed with sweets to change from the puppy he appeared as to a little boy so that he could properly meet his grandfather.

King Olut was kind to the children and granted each of them presents from his kingdom. Harcos was granted a magic quill, enchanted to turn into a sword when needed, Medve was given a wand, which could heal both plant and animal, little Faracam was given a pendant, which could open a portal to the Brightlands or the Darklands, the lands of the Sidhe. Throughout the presentation of gifts, Olut remained pleasant, almost forcedly so.

The children accepted their gifts and in turn presented their grandfather with displays of their powers. Harcos performed a composition he had written at the age of six entitled "Ode to my Grandfather" and concluded by defeating the Royal Quarter Master in a challenge of wooden swords and shields. Medve displayed his power of Wildspeak and had his animal companions perform complex movements and feats of dexterity. Faracam, with much coaxing from his mother, proceeded to change into a variety of forms and beasts, finishing to a crescendo of laughter when he appeared as a decidedly large-nosed, goblin-like version of his older brother Harcos.

A feast of reindeer, lamb, and salmon followed the recitation of the Luvata Kansa. After dinner came the mead and beer followed by the guest presentations and toasts. The toasts to the King and Queen were many and the following conversation and entertainment lasted for hours.

Olut and his court consumed large amounts of both mead and beer and, by the end of the evening were becoming quite loud. Through out the course of the evening scathing comments could be heard from Olut about Morathel and Faranan. Later at night the intoxicated Olut was unbearable.

At the end of the evening Morathel proposed a toast to Faranan and thanked her for their ten years together. He vowed his love and eternal devotion to her and their children. With tears in his eyes, he recounted the tale of their meeting.

At the end of the tale Olut was visibly angry. In a rage he slammed his fist drunkenly on the table and started shouting, attacking Morathel, calling him a half-breed who childishly fell for his daughter's magical charms. Morathel responded by defending Faranan. Olut threatened to claim the children and take them to his kingdom, where their mortal lives could be salvaged.

Upon hearing the threat, High Lord Knight Assilomar grabbed his sword, the famed Moradan, and lunged across the table taking a guarded stance in front of the children. He declared that the children would not be taken. Olut's court erupted into action, grabbing their weapons they prepared for the worst. Accusations flew like arrows. The argument was a court on court shouting match.

Olut looked at his sons Celtios and Hiiri and said that they had a choice to make, either come home to Olut's kingdom of Vaalea in the Brightlands, or stay forever banished in the mortal realm. Celtios and Hiiri stood behind the children. Bending over they picked up Medve and Faracam and, leading Harcos by the hand took up a position behind Morathel. Their choice was made. They had chosen to stay in the Shadowlands.

Olut was outraged. Grabbing his sword he lunged onto the table and threatened to take the children by force if necessary. Morathel drew his sword and proclaimed that any action against his family would result in a war to end all wars. The respective courts drew their weapons and prepared for battle.

Faranan leapt with great agility on to a table in the center of the room. She called to her father and husband to stop the argument. The candles in the room dimmed and she glowed with an internal light that threatened to swallow up the very castle itself. All movement and noise ceased. Her very words stopped time. She told both sides that the argument would end now.

King Olut started to speak and was quickly silenced by Faranan. She told King Olut that she was a queen in the Shadowlands this was her home and that it was he who had deserted her. She went on to say that Morathel was a fine husband and father and even though apparently quick to anger, a jab that made Morathel flinch he had loved her and was devoted to her as she was to him. She told her father that he and his court was to leave her kingdom on the morrow. She then gathered up her sons and dismissed them from the feast.

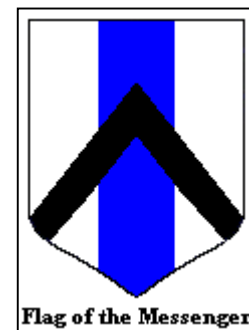
King Olut and his court left the following morning never to return. Faranan and Morathel forever feared that the King would return and seize his grandchildren. As such, extra guards were placed by their bedchambers at night.

### **The Quest for the Lost Stone of Malinaugh**

The next few years were ones of growth for Morathel and his family. Soon the three brothers welcomed a younger sister, Haltia the Pure, and the family was complete. The Children grew and matured. Harcos became a fine man and strong leader. Medve left to train with the Silver Legion, and Faracam started his training in the art of high magics. Little Haltia was gifted with the power of the Walk, the ability to move through the forest at an astronomically high speed. At the age of ten she started her training in the armies scouts and quickly became proficient.

On a trip to the northern elven kingdom of Innos Halal eighteen-year-old Harcos met the elven Princess Makea Alatan and fell deeply in love. Like his father before him his love was complete and total. Four for years they courted until, on bended knee in front of the Alatan Court Harcos proposed. Makea accepted and the wedding was planned. They would marry in the early spring in the great hall of Karsia Castle, on Lake Kostaa.

The day before the wedding, representatives from the surrounding lands came bearing gifts for the bride and bridegroom. Sitting on living thrones in the elven ballroom visitors by the hundreds filed through to see the future King and Queen of the Kaurathel and Haran and Harni of Innos Halal, and present them with treasure and riches. The representatives entered, bowed and placed their gifts at the feet of the soon-to-be-wed. The dwarves of Eltor Paksu brought chests of gold. Barbarians from Farkasember brought rich furs and weapons made of bone. The hobblings from Seannaught brought a stout called Kaurathi Gold, the hobblings from Briar Hollow brought their famed Kaurathi Red Tea, and the Sidhe of the northern Surullinen brought flasks of Faery Wine.



Midway through the day a cloaked figure bearing the Flag of the Messenger entered and knelt before Harcos and Haltia. Reaching into a satchel he brought forth a bound and bloodied cloth bundle. Unwrapping the cloth he laid out the black and white flag on the marble at the Prince's feet. It was the flag of Zoradieth.

Harcos stood and praised the messenger asking him if the Dark Lord was dead? The Messenger rose and lowered its hood revealing a creature with crimson skin, pointed ears, and deep black hair. Locking eyes with the prince the creature said that Zoradieth was not dead, on the contrary he was alive and more powerful than ever, and he was raising an army the like of which had never been seen. He said that the Dark Lord had sent him under the Flag of the Messenger to present a gift, word that the Vision of Zoradieth

was true, and a banner of Zoradieth the Eternal, soaked in the blood of a Stag, one of the magical beasts of Kaurath.

Harcos stood and drew his blade and started for the Messenger as Makea caught him. She reminded him that to slay a courier traveling under the Flag of the Messenger was against the Tenants of War. Harcos sheathed his blade and gave the creature a message to deliver to the Dark Lord. He told the Messenger that the line of Morathel was eternal and that his master would be hunted down and destroyed like the dog he was. Bowing, the creature bid Harcos' leave, gathered up the Flag of the Messenger, and left.

The following day, after the ceremony Harcos told his father and mother of the visit from the messenger. That night, they met discussed the threat. By morning a plan had been devised. The heroes of Kaurath, would quest for the Lost Stone of Malinaugh. Malinaugh had brought fourteen pair of stones from Dracosydan, thirteen were used to capture and imprison the Beyrzars. One remained hidden, guarded for eternity by the Razioch, Malinaugh.

The following month Morathel bid farewell to his heroes as they set off in search of their goal. Crown Prince Harcos and Crown Princess Makea prepared for the worst. Harcos knew his father's devotion to his subjects. He knew that soon the good King Morathel would follow in his heroes' footsteps and search for the salvation of his kingdom.

### **A King's Devotion**

Years passed and no sign of Malinaugh or his stones were found. Morathel and Faranan order the training of more forces and prepare to leave to rally their heroes and lead in the quest. Harcos and Makea are declared King and Queen Regent of Kaurath. On a rainy morning Morathel and Faranan bid farewell to their family and to each other. The Quest of the King had begun. Morathel would be heading toward the Tontuuel peaks with a small guard, Faranan would be heading to the barbarian Kingdom of the north, and Faracam the Changeling would enter the Mountains of the south.

### **The Promise of Harcos**

Harcos and Makea soon found themselves with child. Makea gave birth to a strong little girl whom they called Tiszta. Tiszta was a cunning child who was better with a blade than with diplomacy. Though she appeared elven she possessed the aging properties of her father and powers of her grandmother Faranan. The little girl grew at the same rate as a human until she grew into maturity at which time, like her father, the aging process would slow. Tiszta was Sidhe. She could summon the powers of the Brightlands and travel freely in the gloaming.

Decades passed and Little Tiszta was betrothed to a Forest Lord of the Valkea named Mabanikar. Faranan returned from the north for her granddaughter's wedding. Upon arriving at Zaraphal, she told her son that the Barbarians were sending a host to establish a northern watch and the draconic race known as the Wyvernoth had build a great wall called Etelamuuri and sealed the Etela Pass from the Southern Wastes. She would have to leave again to travel to the Surullinen to rally her people, but would stay for the wedding and a few months after with her children and grandchildren.

The wedding was elegant. Tiszta, mischievous as a child, was more so as an adult. At the reception after the wedding she played practical jokes on her new husband and his family, who in turn, returned the gesture. Much drink and dancing ensued and the great hall was more reminiscent of a very elegant tavern and public house than a ballroom in the castle in the capitol of the kingdom. The party died down and guests started to become sleepy and quite drunk, until at last, Tiszta and Mabanikar bid farewell to their family and retired for the night.

Months passed quickly and Faranan savored every second of it. Harcos was a true king, kind and just. Medve had grown into a man obsessed with duty to his people. Faracam, back from the south, never lost his playful nature. Haltia grew into a beautiful woman who devoted her life to the study of healing. Faranan's children had grown into fine leaders. She only wished that Morathel were there to see it.

Faranan had not seen Morathel in thirty-four years. He had taken up permanent residence at the front and had refused to see her. Though he wrote to her daily professing his love he bid her not to come to see him. He could not explain why, he could only state that it was for the good of the land.

A rider from the front lines entered Zaraphal and delivered Faranan an letter and a bundle. Faranan read the letter and called her family to court. Holding the letter and a parcel from her husband she told the court that the battle was imminent and the fronts were forming. She continued stating that King Morathel has decided to personally lead the main defense on the Plains of Uljas. He has a host of dwarven warriors from Eltor Paksu as well as militia of Gythainen, a race of Lizard creature from the swamp of Valkeadier. The war was about to begin and Harcos must lead his people to safety. Faracam was to attend his father on the front, Medve was to travel with a small band of Silver Legion and escort his mother to the Surullinen. Haltia was to organize and oversee the production of healing elixirs and alchemy. Finally, bowing her head, Faranan said that Morathel and she were abdicating the throne. The coronation of Harcos and Makea were to happen immediately and following the war, Morathel and Faranan would take up residence in the castle of Brianoch on the south western edge of the Dragonspine Mountains.

Taking a deep breath she placed the letter down and slowly unwrapped the reindeer fur wrapped parcel. Everyone in the room stood perfectly still. Lying in the center of the fur was the blade of Morathel, weapon of the ancients, the legendary sword Fendreil. Lying at the pommel of the blade was a note scrawled on a piece of sheepskin.

“My Son, My King,

This is the sword of the ancients. It has served me well, may it now serve you until the end has passed. What is found shall be lost and found again. This is the way my dreams have dictated our fate. So let it be done my son.

Morathel”

The court was in awe. The great Monarchs Morathel and Faranan had stepped aside so that their son could rule. The tone of the letter was one of finality. Morathel spoke as if, in his dreams he had known something of the coming days. As the new King of the Kaurathel raised the legendary Fendreil the court knew, Morathel would die defending his kingdom.

### **The Dark Horizon**

The assault began in late summer. First smoke on the horizon and then the sight of open flame. The Dark Lord was burning the forests and fields as he and his dark host marched. Zoradieth had raised an army of creatures that numbered in the tens of thousands. The very ground shook with their footsteps. Morathel and his heroes put their courage to the sticking-place and prepared for the attack.

The Peacemakers failed and the war raged through the summer at a stand still. A western front was established and reinforcements came. The Barbarians from the north came and joined the western forces, the draconic Wyvernoth left Etelamuuri and joined the forces in the south, and Mabanikar gathered his armies of fae and dispersed along the front.

The fall passed into winter and the fighting continued at a standstill. The armies of Morathel were wearing thin. He knew that the resistance would fall. His heroes had not returned with word of the Lost Stone of Malinaugh and he and Korlin had failed in finding their location.

Zoradieth’s forces were replenished daily and less and less of Morathel’s armies were returning from Resurrection. Hordes Zoradieth’s creatures were arriving daily, each stronger than the one before it. The battle at the front had been decided.

On a cold evening in February the stalemate broke. Zoradieth's new wave of creatures erupted from the frozen earth behind the lines of Morathel's armies. Thousands died. The tides had turned.

The war raged on as the Dark Lord's armies marched forward toward the capitol city of Jokainen and the castle of Zaraphal. The Vision of Zoradieth was coming to fruition. The Dark Lord's armies slaughtered all who got in their way. They were burning and poisoning the lands they conquered. This was not a war of conquest. This was a war of extermination.

### **The Goodbye**

King Harcos received word from his father that Zoradieth's forces had broken through the line and were marching on Jokainen. Faracam had infiltrated the Dark Army when they had broken through and was currently moving with them. His father bid him farewell and had charged him with a task. He was to deliver his goodbyes to his wife and children. Morathel was going to destroy the Dark Lord Zoradieth. Harcos knew his father would never return.

King Harcos had not seen his brother Medve or his mother in months. The risks of going to the Brightlands to see King Olut were great. If they made it to see his Grandfather there was no guarantee that Olut would ever allow them to leave. Harcos feared that he would never see his mother and brother again. Faracam was somehow traveling with the Dark Army, most likely in the form of a dog or some other animal. Haltia was healing the wounded and resurrecting the dead. She would be the only one who would hear her father's letter.

### **The Good News and the Preparations of War**

Over half of the Surullinen forest south of what is now the Swamp of Valkadier had been burned to the ground, its scorched skeletal trees ground into ash by the footsteps of thousands of Zoradieth's creatures. The smoke on the horizon was so thick at times that the sun never shown through. The kingdom was in total darkness for months and ashen rain often fell on the capitol city.

Prince Mabanikar had returned blackened by soot and bloodied. He had recuperated for a brief time and by March Princess Tizsta was expecting. This happy event did little to ease King Harcos fears. Zoradieth was on the move and his kingdom was quickly falling. The Dark Army would be at Jokainen by November. For months Harcos prepared for the long siege.

King Harcos prepared the city for an extended attack, he would not allow for his heir to be destroyed by the Dark Army. The Warriorbard rallied what troops he could and set them as an advanced guard. Fae archers, led by Prince Mabanikar took stances at the gates of Jokainen waiting for the Dark Armies to arrive. The child would be due by December.

### **The Year of the Purge**

In early April, Morathel's army, in a last desperate attempt to stop the forces of Darkness tried to reestablish a front at the walled village of Omena. Morathel ordered his forces to dig trenches and establish a wall of parapets. Sidhe trappers rigged the surrounding forests with explosive and gas traps and the elves of Innos Halal formed units of mounted archers to strafe the oncoming Darkness.

Soon both armies fell upon each other. Thousands of Dark Creatures died and the armies of Morathel lurched forward. The Darkness was stopped and the forces of Morathel held strong. The war had stalled and for two months the tides appeared to be turning.

Late June arrived and the Dark Army pushed through the line. Jumping on Korlin, Morathel rode hard, bounding over the heads of the Dark Army and heading straight for its leader. He rode for hours over the Darkness and flames until at last he saw Avorocain the walking castle of the Dark Lord.

The castle was made from solid granite and moved forward above the burning Surullinen on spider-like legs. The entrance to the castle was a platform forty feet above the scorched embers of the forest. Korlin, though a magical beast and possessed of supernatural strength could not leap as high as the platform. Morathel looked and saw the Dark creatures of Zoradieth stretched on for miles trampling all beneath their ironclad feet. Soon they would be on him and his life would be over.

High above Morathel a giant eagle circled and dove, grabbing him by his armor. Taking flight, the giant raptor lifted him off of the ground and deposited him on the platform high above. The bird then landed and changed into the form of his son, Prince Faracam. Together they entered the castle fighting.

Morathel and Prince Faracam fought their way into Avorocain. Deep in the center of the castle, they entered the throne room of Zoradieth. The Dark Lord had been waiting for them. Within the throne room was the pinnacle of his creations, the feared race called the Choromath.

The Choromath attacked Morathel and Prince Faracam. The struggle was massive and bloody; father and son fighting back to back in a battle for both their Kingdom and their lives. Prince Faracam fell. His body was dragged from the melee and devoured by the Choromath. He did not resurrect.

Morathel, seeing his son's body ravaged by Zoradieth's creatures, flew into a murderous rage. The Choromath attacked but were being cut down faster than they could be healed. Soon the room began to flood with the blood of the fallen.

Zoradieth fled the room and ran to his walking citadel's tallest tower. Morathel quickly dispatched the last of the Choromath and gave chase. Covered in blood and nearing exhaustion the legendary Morathel fell further behind the Dark Lord.

At the top of the tower Morathel came across a large gilded door bearing the skeletal face of a stag. Pushing open the giant door he entered and was immediately taken aback. Lining the walls of the chamber were the shields and banners of his heroes, long since rusted and worn. Sorrow overcame him. Scanning the room he saw the Dark Lord standing in front of a large glass case. Zoradieth turned to face Morathel, smiled, and stepped sideways to reveal the contents. There in its glass lined coffin, was the dried, mummified body of Malinaugh.

Rage drove out the sorrow and Morathel lunged at the Dark Lord. Zoradieth dodged and reaching into his robes brought forth the Lost Stone of Malinaugh. He spoke the name of Morathel and a great light filled the room. The light diminished. Morathel was gone, trapped forever in the Lost Stone of Malinaugh. The Year of the Purge was nearing its end. The Kingdom belonged to the Darkness.

### **The Escape of the Little Prince**

In Early November Quinos Arathi, leader of the armies of Innos Halal, approached Zaraphal hours ahead of the Dark Army. He was riding Korlin and bore word of the slaughter of the forward defense and of Morathel's heroics and ultimate demise. King Harcos hid his devastation and asked that for the sake of morale his troops not be told until the battle was over.

The Dark Army attacked. The Castle of Avorocain could be seen in the distance raised on its spindly legs. Deep inside the castle, the Dark Lord Zoradieth turned the Stone of Malinaugh over in his hands and smiled. Jokainen would fall, Zaraphal would be destroyed and his former nemesis' seed would be purged from Kaurath forever.

In the capitol city of Jokainen, in the castle Zaraphal, King Harcos was in a meeting with his advisors when he received the news that his daughter's water broke. He rushed from the meeting chambers and summoned Princess Haltia, to attend her. Deep in the hidden dungeons of Zaraphal preparations had been made for this event. Princess Tiszta was taken to the safe room and Princess Haltia soon joined her when a loud crash echoed through Zaraphal. The eastern wall of Jokainen had collapsed. The Dark Army was now within the city.

The forces of Jokainen were quickly falling to the Dark Army. Avorocain could be seen in the distance start to lurch forward on its arachnid legs. Choromath flooded through the city killing all in their way and setting buildings alight. Soon they arrived at the walls of Zaraphal.

Hundreds died at the hands of Zoradieth's menace while below Zaraphal's towers Princess Tiszta was in labor, the Heir of Harcos on its way into a war-ravaged world. King Harcos and Prince Mabanikar left the birth and headed to assist in the reinforcement of the gates.

The Castle of Avorocain lumbered over the corpse of Jokainen and collided with the walls of Zaraphal tearing large cracks in its blue granite face. Huge rams mounted on the side of Avorocain slammed hard on the side of Zaraphal. The wall crumbled under the onslaught. Zoradieth and his Choromath were now within the heart of the castle.

King Harcos and Prince Mabanikar led a unit of Silver Legion to the breach. The battle was hard and fierce yet in the end the forces of Harcos were no match for the Darkness. The King and Prince were dead.

Deep in the dungeons of Zaraphal Princess Tiszta was deep into labor. Accompanied by Princess Haltia and Queen Makea the last of the monarchy waited desperately for the heir to be born. Princess Tiszta screamed as a spasm wracked her body. Soon after a head appeared and then a shoulders soon Princess Haltia was holding a strong baby boy who was named Veszithios. Princess Tiszta screamed again. Another child was coming. Tiszta was having twins.

From the upper chambers shouting could be heard and soon blood could be seen dripping from the ceiling. The battle was raging above and within moments they would find the entrance to the hidden chambers. In a moment of terror footsteps could be heard outside of the door to the room. Everyone froze save for the agonized mother. The lock on the door unlatched and it swung open. Standing in the doorway, above the threshold stood a tall powerful man dresses from head to toe in pure white robes and a white fur mantle. From his forehead two stag-like horns bordered a deep blue crystal.

The room filled with an air of quiet calm. The Man-beast stepped forward and reached for the newborn child, dressed it in swaddling clothes and held him close to his chest. Looking over the assembled monarchs the beast spoke. In a deep calming voice he said that he was the servant of Morathel and his people and that he was here to save the heir. A unit of Silver Legion remained in the forests to the east of the city and awaited him and the child. He could not save the family, but the line of Morathel would rule again.

A large crash shook the castle. Footsteps and light could be heard at the top of the stairs. The secret chambers had been found. With great emotion and a palpable sense of despair, the man-beast bid farewell. With tears in his eyes he held the child turned and fled from the castle and into the night.

Outside of the city the forces of the Silver Legion waited for Korlin. Soon the Stag burst through the smoke and the trees, flames licking its belly as it leapt. With the escort of the last noble Lords of the Kaurathel, Korlin and King Veszithios quietly slipped into hiding.

# CHAPTER THREE

## The Dark Age

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After Zoradieth's purge of the Kingdom and the destruction of Jokainen the Dark Lord and his creatures occupied the devastated wasteland for fifty-years. Korlin and the knights of the Silver Legion took King Veszithios to the legendary Kings Grove deep in the eastern ranges of the Kalivan Mountains. There they trained the young king in the arts of war and peace. Soon he would emerge from hiding and rebuild his kingdom

As the last noble lords of the Kingdom, the Silver Legion continued to ride their giant warhorses across the ruined devastation of the vast plains of ash and bone. There they would raid and destroy the small Choromath encampments and try to instill hope in the refugees living in the outlying lands. They would not rest until Karauth was free again.

Decades passed and King Veszithios grew and matured. He was strong and just like his father and mother before him. He had been gifted with the blood of his father. He was Sidhe in nature and appearance and so would live for centuries. At the age of forty-five, King Veszithios bid farewell to his knights and rode Korlin to the lands of the north to look for a partner in which he could share his mantle of leadership. He went in search of a Queen.

### The Time of the Quest

While King Veszithios quested for a bride the peoples of the kingdom began their rebuilding. In the years of the King's quest four major events occurred in what is now the borders of the modern kingdom. They are: the pact of Nu'ori Kansa, the War of the Dubhember, the Holocaust of Eltor Paksu, and the The War of the Vuoritontu. Though not involved in the quest for a queen, they are listed chronologically for the sake of ease in understanding.

### Innos Halal and the Pact of Nu'ori Kansa

In the years since the destruction of the Kingdom of the Kaurathel, most refugees migrated north and east. One group who did not flee were the elves of Innos Halal. With their Haran and Harni dead the kingdom of the elves entered a state of emergency organization. A Haran and Harni, or king and queen, were chosen to protect and reestablish the Kingdom of the elves until the true king returned. The Haran and Harni were chosen from the heroes of the War of the Purge as it had come to be called by the elves.

Of the hundreds that fought, five elves of Innos Halal survived. The five heroes were equally suited for the task, however only two were knights of King Harcos. The declaration of Quinos Arathi and his lifemate, the beautiful and powerful Galanya occurred on a cold summer day in the year 228 ER.

Quinos and Galanya refused the titles of Haran and Harni choosing instead the titles of Taar and Taari or Regent King and Queen. Both were knights under King Harcos and Queen Makea and both felt that King Harcos and Queen Makea's heir was the rightful Haran or Harni of Innos Halal. The Taar and Taari would lead their people until the Heir of the True Haran returned.

The Taar and Taari organized their people, knighted leaders, and established the heart of their kingdom at the castle of Innostas. The castle was abandoned at the start of the War of the Purge as the elves of Innos Halal moved south to establish camps on Lake Kostaa. After driving out the bogles and portunes which had taken up residence in the empty halls of the living castle the Taar and Taari of the elves held court and established the Pact of the Nu'ori Kansa.

The Pact of the Nu'ori Kansa stated that the elves of Innos Halal would first reestablish themselves in their homeland, after which point, as is the Innostian way, they would seek to help the Nu'ori Kansa. Literally



translated, Nu'ori Kansa means "young people". In the language of the elves, the ancient language of the Kaurathel, this term refers to the young races of Kaurath, such as the half-ogres, hobblings, and races of man.

The Pact of Nu'ori Kansa was ratified by the Lords of Innos Halal and was immediately implemented. The elven kingdom of Innos Halal was quickly reborn and soon they found themselves assisting the local peoples in the rebuilding of their farms and establishing settlements of Nu'ori Kansa on the banks of lake Kostaa. Though it is not widely talked about among the elves, the Pact of Nu'ori Kansa is widely thought of among the "young peoples" of Kaurath as the turning point in the survival of the region.

### **The War of the Dubhember**

Little is known about the War of the Dubhember. The records of the conflict were destroyed during the Holocaust of Eltor Paksu. All that survived are tales and songs passed down from family to family.

Deep in the mines of Eltor Paksu the dwarves uncovered a deep cave. They searched the cave walls and found that it was littered with hidden doors that led to dark, well-crafted tunnels. The dwarves thought they knew all of the races of the earth, yet the craftsmanship of the tunnels did not match any style they previously knew. The cave was sealed off and guards were posted around the entrance until the creators of the tunnels could be discovered.

The dwarves feared that they had discovered the passages of the legendary Sihtehl, the dark dwarves. Eons before, the dwarves and dark dwarves were one people. The High Thanes wanted to establish trade with the outside races, the Sihtehl refused. Eventually the Sihtehl joined forces with the mining Sihteeeri and a great war erupted. The war lasted for one hundred years until the heroic dwarf Oskar Danilheim led a charge to the Sihtehl caverns and drove them out of the Undermount. Since that time no Sihtehl has been seen, though cave-ins and kidnappings are often attributed to them.

If the dwarves had stumbled onto the hiding place of the Sihtehl the entire dwarven kingdom would be in danger. The High Thanes met and a plan of action was established. A dwarven host would be formed and sent to investigate each of the tunnels. Should anything be found or if the dwarves did not return, the Kingdom of Eltor Paksu would enter in a state of war.

The Host split into equal parts, and along with their trusted hounds, set off into the darkness. They never returned. The kingdom began their readying of their forces and for two weeks heavy guards were set at the mouth of the cavern.

After two weeks the hounds returned, covered in dried blood and gore. Tied to their collars with a piece of leather were bundles and notes, all bearing the same message: "The invasion forces have been destroyed. Prepare to die." When the bundles were opened horrified gasps echoed through the chamber. Wrapped in the dirty cloths were the scalped beards of the missing dwarves.

The armies of Eltor Paksu raided the tunnels and marched for what seemed like ages. They traveled down a single tunnel until they became tired and had to stop. They made camp, established a watch, and settled in for their rest. Midway through the camp the fires died and went out. Screams erupted from the dwarf host and blood flowed freely. The dwarves fought blind for what seemed like hours.

Soon their eyes adjusted to the dim light emanating from the glowing moss on the walls. Their attackers had come from secret doors that opened from the sides of the wall. They were the size of the dwarves, about the size of a human. They had deep black skin, long pointed ears, and hair as black as soot. They did not have the gray skin and the long white hair and beards of the Sihtehl. These were not the tunnels of the dark dwarves as they had originally thought. This was an enemy none before had encountered. The dwarves had made a costly mistake. The war was on.

The dwarves that survived the first attack, and returned to Eltor Paksu told of the dark assailants. They were called the Dubhember, or dark humans. The dwarves retaliated and finally caught a small foothold in

the following battle. The Dubhember were caught unawares and the dwarves broke through the secret doors and into the main complex of the dark ones.

Guerilla bands and strike forces from both sides conducted raids. Hundreds were killed or destroyed. Finally, after the daughter of the High Thane was kidnapped, tortured, and killed. A truce was called.

Through use of the mysterious race known only as the Messengers a treaty was established and signed. The High Thane of Eltor Paksu and the Davan of the Dubhember met in the original chamber and signed the treaty. Hostilities would end and the Dubhember would leave Eltor Paksu. They would go to the mountains of the south, in what is now called the Dubhember Peaks. The original chamber would be permanently sealed and the dwarves would never again enter tunnels of the dark ones. Eltor Paksu lived in relative peace for years, until a fateful visit from the fae during the Dark Age of the Kaurath set their doom upon them.

### **A Tale of Fire and Pride: The Holocaust of Eltor Paksu**

The following tale of the fiery destruction of Eltor Paksu is a summary of the dwarf ballad entitled "A Tale of Fire and Pride". The ballad is considered one of the few pieces of work still shared between the many dwarven descendants of the disaster and serves as a lesson to those who would be foolish enough to trust the Green Children. The song tells of a tale of dwarven conquest, of their insatiable search for gold and riches beneath the face of Tyrra and their betrayal by the Coblynau.



The race of mining fae known as the Coblynau had existed in competition with the dwarves of Eltor Paksu for centuries. The dwarves would leave offerings of beer and mushroom pie in shafts that they had claimed. The Coblynau would accept the offer and mine elsewhere. This unspoken pact had been commonplace.

One day, deep in the dwarven great hall, the Coblynau presented the dwarves with a right proper bargain. The Coblynau offered the dwarves two magical items, though they could only choose one. Their choice was either a hearth that would forever produce bread, or magical picks that could mine stone as if it were made of cheese. For payment, the fae demanded all of the treasure produced by the Kingdom for one year.

The Lords of the Undermount held council and agreed that the offer was fair. In their infinite wisdom they chose the picks. More treasure would purchase more grain making the hearth but a novelty. The dwarves brought their decision to the Coblynau and the deal was made. The fae would return in one year and one day.

Eltor Paksu was well stocked and the underground farms produced more than enough grain to get the kingdom through the year. The picks made light work out of the mining and the miners finished a day's labor in half the time. The miners would then return home early every night and soon many children were on the way.

For one year the dwarves mined and many riches were harvested for the fae. A chamber of untold size was created and the treasures of the Eltor Paksu were piled high. The picks worked the stone and soon the chamber quickly filled.

A year and a day later the mining stopped and the Coblynau returned. The Lords of the Undermount brought the fae to the chamber and showed them their riches. Great care was taken to ensure that not even the dust from finished gems was left out of the booty.

The fae looked pleased and then frowned. With a sly smile they said that not all of the treasure was present. The dwarves were outraged. They demanded to know why their word was challenged. The

dwarves said that their picks made fine work of the mines and all of the treasure that was hewn from the stone was presented.

The Coblynau's faces split in a wicked grin. They stated that the bargain was that all of the treasure produced by the kingdom would be presented, not just the treasure mined. Confused the dwarves asked what treasure was absent. The Coblynau replied by asking a simple question: "Do you not treasure your newborn children?" They told the dwarves that their children were produced because of the leisure time created by the picks.

The dwarves were outraged. When they reached for their picks and weapons to retaliate for the threat they found that they could not move. Faery magic held them strong. The Coblynau declared that the bargain was not met and punishment would be dealt. For the dwarves greed they would mine until they reached a stone that could not be mined. With a wave of their hand the gold and the newborn children vanished. The Coblynau then stated that their children would soon be changed into Henkies, protectors of the mining Sihteeri. They bid the dwarves farewell and with a nod vanished.

A fever overcame every dwarf. They grabbed their picks and shovels and mined for months with out rest. The miners dug deeper and deeper until the air was thick and boiling with heat. Soon the vein of fire had been opened and the stone that could not be mined came pouring in. The spell was broken and the dwarves fled their once glorious home. Cavern walls crumbled and the heart of Eltor Paksu was buried forever.

The dwarves fled, and the dwarven nations of Kaurath were formed. The dwarven gem and tin miner caste created the kingdom of Eltor Szakal, the dwarven gold and silver miner caste created the kingdom of Kultra Kerros, and the dwarven lords who agreed to the fae plot were driven from their mountain homes. They now are known as the Ahkera and are forever banished from their mountain homes.



### **The War of the Vuoritontu**

The Ograth are a secretive people. Almost nothing is known about their culture or legends. The Ograth are self-proclaimed protectors of the forests. They are rumored to serve the fae, though that rumor is unsubstantiated. What is known is that they take trespassing in their lands very serious. After the destruction of Eltor Paksu the Ograth patrolled the foothills and borders of the mountains. Prior to the discovery of this tale no one in Kaurath knew how the Trolls became so powerful or why the Ograth all but disappeared during the Dark Age. Had it not been for the detailed investigations by Sir Ichabod Leagallow, this tale and section of history may never had been discovered.

The destruction of the mountain kingdom of Eltor Paksu created havoc in the Eltor Mountains. The collapse of the largest mountain on the range sent shockwaves through out the whole of the kingdom. The thick black smoke that belched out of the ruined dwarven halls sent Kaurath into a week of night.

During this upheaval a new and dangerous enemy emerged from the Eltor Mountains. The Troll Masters and their Vuoritontu. The trolls of Kaurath, called the Vuoritontu, or mountain goblin, were once much like the trolls of Evendarr. They were massive brutes of little intelligence that any well-seasoned adventurer could defeat. This changed with the coming of the Troll Masters.

The Ograth had long sought to contain the Trolls in the peaks and had developed powerful weapons of flame to counter their numbers. To retaliate, the Troll Masters began to breed their trolls to become more and more powerful. The Ograth would lead raids into the Eltor Mountains and conduct raids on the trolls and their masters during the day, when the trolls are at their weakest. They would wipe out whole camps of Troll Masters and their stock. At night the Vuoritontu would retaliate.

As the Ograth would develop newer, more powerful weapons the Troll Master would breed resistances for the trolls. The war raged and the forces of the Ograth were slowly diminishing. The troll masters bred more powerful beasts until eventually they became too dangerous to control and began turning on the Troll Masters.

The Ograth waged a final valiant push to destroy the Troll Masters and the Vuoritontu. The battle was great, but in the end the trolls had turned on the Troll Masters and eventually the Ograth succeeded. The remaining Troll Masters went into hiding. Trolls still stalked the mountains but rarely entered the forests. The war had ended.

### **The Vadoni Queen**

King Veszithios searched for years for true love. His quest took him throughout the lands of the north into what is now northern Kasember and Harcos and deep in the Plains of Renszvarvas. At the age of sixty-five, though appearing only twenty he met his true love.

While traveling deep in the Plains of Renszvarvas, King Veszithios came upon a nomadic tribe of humans called the Vadoni. They were hunters and made their living by hunting the reindeer of the plains and occasionally hiring themselves out as guides to the hobblings of Seannaught.. When the reindeer would move on, so would the Vadoni.

King Veszithios rode Korlin to the outskirts of the camp when the guards of the Vadoni stopped him. He introduced himself simply as Veszithios the Kaurath and stated that he was a lone traveler in need of food and shelter and that he would pay well for hospitality. The guards agreed and escorted King Veszithios to an empty tent. The guards then collected a few sovereigns, escorted Korlin to a pasture a few yards away from the tent, and returned to the tent to escort the traveling king to dinner.

The inside of the tent was cavernous and lined with delicate carpets of died wool. King Veszithios changed into a set of clean clothes. He then washed his hands in a basin of water that was supplied within, beat the dust out of his traveling clothes and packed them. Choosing a bedroll near the middle of the tent then laid down his pack and exited the tent.

Outside the night air was cool and crisp and King Veszithios was hungry from the long days ride. The smell of roasting reindeer and vegetables could be detected wafting on the cool night breeze. The Vadoni and a few extra travelers were assembled around a large cooking fire. Turning above the flames and embers was the carcass of a reindeer.

The meat was cut from the bone and the vegetables unburied from the coals, their clay wrappers shattered exposing the tender bulbs of roast turnips and carrots. The food was presented on the fennel trenchers made famous by the Vadoni. The King sat down and ate a rich and hearty meal, all the while exchanging stories with his fellow travelers and Vadoni hosts.

After the meal the Vadoni told stories of the great heroes, now lost on the southern Plains of Morathel as the scorched and dead lands of Allakansiel had come to be called. After the tales came dancing and eventually singing from the Vadoni Singer of the Hunt.

King Veszithios was lost in thought when she walked to the center of the assembled group. It wasn't until she began to sing and her ethereal voice hit his ears did he notice her. King Veszithios looked at the beautiful Vadoni woman singing and fell deeply in love. Her name was Rakastaa and he had found his queen.

King Veszithios traveled with the Vadoni for two years and courted Rakastaa. They fell in love and were married in a ceremony in the northern Plains of Renszvarvas with all of the Vadoni and the Silver Legion in attendance. After the ceremony Veszithios revealed that he was King and heir of King Morathel and King Harcos and that Rakastaa was now his Queen. Together they would rebuild the kingdom that was stolen from them by the evil forces of Zoradieth.

The Vadoni became his court, the first knights of the new kingdom and the hunters of the king. They began the preparations for the rebuilding of the Kingdom of the Kaurath. The Vadoni and the Silver Legion escorted King Veszithios to the Castle of Brianoch in the southern tail of the Dragonspine Mountains. The trip took two years, and by the end of their journey, Rakastaa was with child.

The Heir of Kaurath was born in early December. The halls of Brianoch Castle had been cleaned and insulated with reindeer hides and the once bitter castle was now warm and safe. The King and Queen doted over their newborn Prince and named him Uthios after the great Regent King.

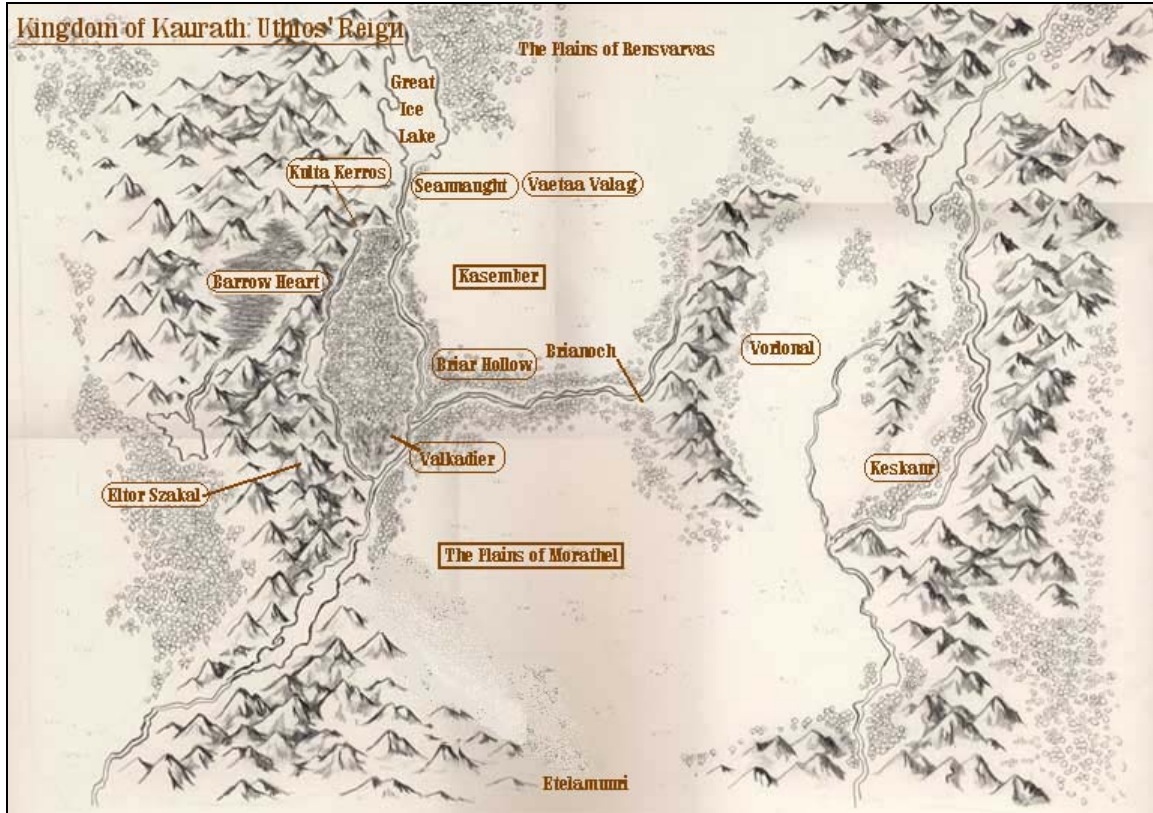
Prince Uthios grew. Like his father he was of the Otherworld. Like his mother he possessed the gift of the hunt. The little prince grew and matured into a fine and strong man and attended his father and ailing mother.

King Veszithios knew the curse of his Sidhe blood. He had barely aged a decade in the fifty years that he and Rakastaa reigned. His love for his queen was total, and he sat near her bed every day as she grew older and nearer to death.

On a cold October evening Queen Rakastaa died. She was seventy-one. King Veszithios, was devastated. He abdicated the throne and bid farewell to his only heir. Entering the bedchamber King Veszithios walked to his Queen and lay beside her body. Though he appeared only thirty, he died a few hours later. It is said that the King of the Kaurathel had died of a broken heart.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## The Age of Kaurath



The coronation of the High King Uthios the Kaurath marks the beginning of the modern age of the Kaurathel. It is these few hundred years that brings us to the kingdom we know today. In this time period the Kingdom of Kaurath rises from the destroyed remnants of a once great empire, to a diverse Empire made up of many different Kingdoms all ruled by a High King. Though vast and dynamic, the new kingdom started with one man, a Stag, and a vision.

### **The Return of the Lost King**

The coronation of King Uthios' was held shortly after his father and mother's death. He and his Vadoni cousins met in the great hall. He knelt before the Lords of the Silver Legion and recited the Luvata Kansa. They crowned him with the steel crown of his father and the coronation was complete.

The Silver Legion took him by the shoulder and let him into the wilderness. Unlike his father or mother, Uthios and the Silver Legion performed a ceremony binding his will to the land. King Uthios was chosen by the Stag to rebuild his kingdom. He had been chosen by the power of Korlin and the wisdom of the Razioch.

The following morning his father and mother's bodies were burned in the way of the ancients. On a peak over looking the castle he saw Korlin. In his heart Great King Uthios knew it would be the last he ever would see of the strong steed of his ancestors.

The fire raged into the night. Early the following morning Great King Uthios gathered the ashes of his father and mother and assembled the court. He said that he was leaving on the morrow to bring his father, the lost king, home. He declared that it was a new tradition of the Kaurath. Once the monarchs died their

final death they would be burned on the pyre collected and escorted with King's Guard to the home of the heroes and the dead. The following morning Great King Uthios bid his cousins farewell and set off with the Silver Legion for the ruined city of Jokainen and the Cemetery at Kiranoth.

### **Kaurath Reborn**

Word soon spread through the lands that were once Grein's Reward and Farkasember that the true king had returned and had established his reign at the ancient royal castle of Brianoch. Large migrations of Kaurathel traveled south and settled in the hills and valleys surrounding the ancient castle. The settlement came to be called New Jokainen, and was soon considered the new capitol of Kaurath.

The old provincial ties were lost and the former provinces of Grein's Reward, Farkasember, and the eastern portion of Vieras had become the lands of Kasember. The provincial capitols of Lahja and Kahtos grew and soon became important trading centers for the kingdom, each city specializing in its own commodity. Lahja in the south traded in grains and vegetables from the areas farms and imported beer and tea from the hobblings of Briar Hollow, Kahtos in the north specialized in livestock, furs, and imports from the Vaeltaa, Vorlonal, and Ijjen of the Plains of Renszvarvas and the hobblings of Seannaught.

Through this new economy, the Kaurath started to grow and prosper and soon their power was felt through out the lands of Kasember. The people of Kaurath grew and spread north through the lands of Kesember. King Uthios was quickly rebuilding the kingdom of his people.

### **Praise for the Fallen**

For a short time the Kaurath enjoyed their prosperity, however such success in the face of hardship caused dissent among the neighboring kingdoms. Soon bandit and brigand bands were robbing and pillaging the southern countryside. Hiding in the devastated former province of Allakansiel, now called the Plains of Morathel, the brigands would raid the farms and hamlets scattered throughout the south. In the north, rogue forces of Ijjen tribes raided the caravans and small farms scattered over the northern countryside.

The lands of the kingdom soon became a harsh and inhospitable place. Hundreds died and the Vadoni knights and Silver Legion were already spread thin. To remedy the situation King Uthios called a council of the bravest and noblest of commoners throughout the kingdom. There he presented his scheme of protection to them all; to follow the Luvata Kansa and the Tenants of War and to protect his people as knights and lords of Kaurath. Warriors and Rangers would become Knights and would use their bravery and steel to stand watch over their people. Wizards and Mages would become Lords and use their magics to protect, heal, and defend their charges. They all accepted and in the presence of King Uthios and his Silver Legion, recited the Luvata Kansa as the oath of their position.

King Uthios had a grand feast prepared honoring his new knights and lords of the Kaurath. The knights and lords assembled and King Uthios rose and prepared to speak. His new nobility sat in rapt attention. King Uthios quietly picked up his goblet and looked out over his new nobles. He then took a deep breath and addressed the room.

“We have traveled through devastation and hardship. We have died at the hands of the Darkness and have been reborn. We have lost our heroes and our path, but through it all we have found our way home. We have forged our legacy from the blood of those who died ensuring our survival as a people. And so let it be to those who have died that we sing our praise for the fallen.”

In a powerful response the knights and lords replied: “Praise to the fallen!” To this day this toast is still used. It is spoken at every feast and seasonal Meet and is considered the proper way to honor the dead.

Soon the Knights of Kaurath traveled forth and established their estates. Similar to Evendarrian Barons, these knights had the power over life and death. They had the power to write the laws and raise an army within their estate. Soon armies were raised and defenses mustered and life was returned to relative safety

under their protection. For years the odd peace was held and the Kaurath grew further. A time of prosperity returned.

### **A Promise Fulfilled**

As a relative peace settled over Kaurath, the Silver Legion prepared to move on. They addressed the king in a private meeting. Sir Esau, the leader of the Legion told King Uthios that the kingdom had been rebuilt and that their duty to their king lied elsewhere.

They said that they must return to the Plains of Morathel to begin the healing of the land after the devastation of the southern Surullinen. They said that their duty to their kingdom would not be fulfilled until the Plains were healed. King Uthios agreed and told them that they would forever possess the bond granted to their ancestors by the great King Morathel. They would be forever considered heroes of Kaurath, keepers of the Luvata Kansa, and possessors the bond of the Kings blood. Their nobility was a birthright and placed upon Esau the right to lead his people as a Prince. He could knight and lord as he saw fit and levy judgment over the skeleton of Allakansiel.

Prince Esau, told King Uthios that they were forever loyal to the Kings of Kaurath. They would not be gone forever, though. When needed they could be summoned by the true king of the Kaurathel. The Silver Legion left the following morning at daybreak and rode headlong into the Plains of Morathel.

King Uthios publicly addressed his court and told them that the Legion had returned home to heal the devastation of the War of the Purge. He then went on to say that he had never been graced with the large family of his Grandfather, King Harcos. He had never had a brother or a sister until now. He declared Esau Prince of the Kaurath, and an heir in line for the throne.

### **The Kingdom of Darkness**

Years of a harsh peace followed and strange word came from the Ahkera workers who traveled seasonally with the reindeer herds. They spoke of settlements in their old destroyed homeland of Eltor Paksu. Which lies past the walled bridge called Siltamuuri, beyond the crumbled tower of Kulta Hazhoz, and through the Troll infested Dubhember Pass,

First they spoke of the odd campfire, then of stone buildings built from the rubble and of the barbarian hoards that had taken up residence since the destruction. The once great dwarven kingdom had become a place of ever-night. Thick black smoke rose from the lake of fire at the buried heart of Eltor Paksu. The smoke drifted skywards and was trapped by the tall surrounding peaks of the Eltor Mountains. There it hung like a blanket of night over part the buried heart.

The destruction of the Akhera settlements followed. Queen Adalisz, of the Valag, ruler of the Vaeltaa sent forces to assist the Akhera. They fought along side of the Akhera but it was of little help. Soon the former dwarven lords were driven out of their homeland.

As the displaced Ahkera left the Barrowheart, they started to tell tales of construction under the darkness of the ever night. They spoke of towers and ramparts and of groups of farmers beginning to till the small part of land still bathed in daylight. They spoke of a great tower, which they had claimed, appeared overnight.

Rumors reached King Uthios in Brianoch. Fearing that the tower signified the return of Avorocain and Zoradieth, he ordered a scouting party to travel through the Dubhember pass and investigate. They never returned.

### **Royal Meetings and Runaway Horses**

Months past and with no word from the scouts King Uthios grew anxious. If Zoradieth was rebuilding an army he would soon march on the still vulnerable people of Kaurath. King Uthios ordered the knights and



lords of his people to start raising an army. He then sent a Messenger north to the Vaeltaa Valag to seek an audience with Queen Adalisz, ruler of the gypsies.

Soon the messenger returned and a meeting was established. King Uthios was to travel north to the small outpost of Kallio on the northern ridge of the Dragon Spine Mountains. There he would meet with the Queen of the Valag and negotiate.

King Uthios rode north with the Vadoni and soon arrived at Kallio a day early. They set camp on the outskirts of town and waited for the arrival of the Vaeltaa. Morning came and soon the caravan could be seen on the horizon. King Uthios and the Vadoni mounted their horses and rode out to meet the visiting Queen.

King Uthios and the Vadoni met with the Vaeltaa and rode with them to their campsite next to King Uthios' own. King Uthios and the Vadoni helped the Vaeltaa set the tent and prepare dinner. They ate and drank together, and enjoyed the company of the Vaeltaa. After dinner they told stories and sang songs. Soon they grew weary and retired for the night.

Early the next morning, King Uthios was awoken by a crack of thunder in the valley above the camps. He stretched. As he was leaving his tent heard a distant screaming. It was early morning and both camps were quiet and still. Searching for the source of the noise King Uthios saw a horse riding out of control in the distance. Dangling from one foot, hanging from the saddle, was a little girl.

King Uthios jumped onto the nearest horse he could find and rode hard and fast toward the panicked horse. Riding alongside of it, he reached down and grabbed the child by the ankle. He lifted with her and drawing his short sword slashed at the piece of leather wrapped around her foot. He cut through the strap with ease and hefted the child into his lap. He slowed down his horse, reached into his pouch and produced a clean rag with which he offered her to clean the tears from her eyes. She took the rag. King Uthios asked her if she was hurt and in a deep Vaeltaa accent said that she was not.

King Uthios rode back sharing the saddle with the child. The camp was still quiet when he returned. He dismounted and reached for the child as he did so he saw that he was looking at little Princess Anya, heir to the Vaeltaa Valag, Crown Princess of the Gypsies.

King Uthios asked her what happened and she responded that she had wanted to go riding, but her mother's guards would not allow it, so she poisoned them with a Sleep elixir and went for a ride. She said that the horse got spooked by the crash of thunder and took off leaving her in the state in which King Uthios found her. She pleaded with him not to tell her mother. King Uthios told her that he would not lie to the queen, however if she didn't ask there was no reason why she would have to know. Princess thanked him, gave the good king a big hug, and ran off back to the tent of her sleeping guards.

### **The Treaty of Kallio**

Later in the day the King of the Kaurath and the Queen of the Vaeltaa met. King Uthios gave his sympathies for her recent loss of her King who had died in a skirmish with rogue Ijjen. She responded in kind commenting him for his knighting of such just and honest nobles.

With pleasantries over they discussed the potential dangers of the new settlement in the Barrow Heart of Eltor Paksu. She agreed and soon a treaty was written and signed. The treaty, now called the Treaty of Kallio, said that groups made up of both Vaeltaa and Kaurath, would patrol the lands surrounding the Dubhember Pass. Such precautions had to be taken. There was a war brewing with the Trolls deep in the Eltor Mountains and the Sidhe of the Surullinen broke all contact with the mortals after the destruction of their southern home. Both the Trolls of the mountains and the Sidhe of the forest were powerful enemies, which threatened any party that ventured into their realm.

## **The Rise of the Barrowheart**

The parties of Vaeltaa and Kaurath patrolled the northern Surullinen forest and the Dubhember pass. Soon they penetrated the mountains and carefully made their way unseen into the Barrowheart. They saw a vast and impressive castle, with tall stone towers rising into the eternal twilight. In the valley, on the center of the ruined valley there was a lake of fire glowing. The lake, called Lo'chellan, cast an eerie red glow over the lands beneath the blanket of smoke. Further on, they came upon the area at the edge of the blanket. Here were farms and settlements for as far as the eyes could see. They traveled further on, toward the entrance of the Dubhember pass. The pass was once the former tunnel that led to the opening at the tower of Kulta Hazhoz and Siltamuuri, long collapsed after the Holocaust of Eltor Paksu. At the entrance of the pass they saw a host of warriors standing in rapt attention. Some appeared human, others undead, and others still appeared foreign and alien to the scouts on patrol. They numbered in the hundreds and appeared as if they would be ready to battle at a moments notice.



The scouts silently left through the mountains in which they came. Only four made it to the other side. While traveling through the mountains they came across a solitary troll the likes of which they had never seen. The troll killed twenty-one of the scouts in a matter of seconds.

The four left the mountains and hunted and fished along the Lansi River. When they had enough for themselves, and enough to pay their toll through the Surullinen they headed home to presented their findings to King Uthios and Queen Adalisz. The group stopped for suppliues at Kahtos and split, two headed for Brianoch, and two headed for the plains of Rensvarvas to find the Vaeltaa Valag.

Both King Uthios and Queen Adalisz had the same response. They prepared their forces for war. King Uthios rallied his troops and established a border Guard along the banks of the Keskus River. Queen Adalisz sent her forces deep into the Surullinen, where they gathered on the eastern side of the crumbling walled bridge of Siltamuuri and waited. The kingdoms of both people grew tense waiting for the initial strike. The waiting lasted for a decade.

## **The Quest for Fendrail and the Long Awaited Goodbye**

The waiting was intense and soon grew on the morale of the kingdom. Every month word of casualties at the hands of the Sidhe came to the capitol city and recruitment into the armies dwindled as time went by. Those scouts that survived the wrath of the trolls reported that the build up of troops at the western side of the Dubhember pass had grown to a huge size. Legions upon legions of warriors stood at the ready in the Barrowheart.

King Uthios needed something to rally the morale of his people and lead his troops into the inevitable war. He knew what he must do. He must quest for Fendriel, the legendary sword of Morathel and Harcos.

He assembled the Vadoni and told them that they must rule in his stead as he quested for the blade of the ancients. He told them of his quest. The Vadoni feasted and drank in celebration of his bravery and foresight. He declared his cousin Kafsiya as Queen Regent and left the following morning to the Plains of Morathel and the ruined castle of Zaraphal.

The Plains of Morathel looked like a blasted, scorched wasteland. For miles in all directions lay the ancient husks of burned trees. Black ash and soot could be seen through the thin scrub and grasses. Areas of vast raw earth and charred sand spread out across the once great forest.

King Uthios would often find odd footprints and skeletons of unfamiliar beasts scattered across the landscape. At night would hear creatures lurking in the darkness and saw the dead walk as ghosts and specters across the lands. He traveled safe and slow and many times had to hide from the evils of the Plains. Goblins and packs of Kobolds prowled the nights and creatures of unspeakable evil lurked in the

debris and caves during the day. He had traveled to the outskirts of Jokainen once before, when he buried his father and mother in the Cemetery at Kiranoth.

Hundreds of destroyed and ravaged villages and towns were scattered the devastated landscape. After a month of moving and hiding in the skeleton of the past kingdom, surviving on wits and luck alone, he traveled past the Cemetery at Kiranoth and came upon the burned out ruins of Jokainen.

The castle of his ancestors rose defiantly out of the ashes of the dead city. Zaraphal stood tall among the ruins of Jokainen. King Uthios knew that his grandfather, King Harcos had died wielding Fendrail in the halls of Zaraphal. Screwing his courage to the sticking place, he entered the dead city and made his way through the ruins to the castle of Zaraphal.

The city appeared deserted and showed no signs of the former occupation by Zoradieth all those years ago. It was then that he knew the Dark Lord came only to destroy the line of Morathel. Zoradieth went on a war of extermination, not conquest. When the city fell, he eliminated anyone living and left. He didn't establish camp, or grow crops to support his army; he simply annihilated the Kaurathel, and left.

King Uthios made his way through the deserted city, over the crumbled marble thoroughfares, and into the courtyards of Zaraphal. The castles blue granite and gilded stags and gargoyles still shone with a defiant beauty. Even among the devastation and debris Zaraphal still stood as a noble reminder of King Uthios' family legacy.

The good king carefully moved the fallen debris and entered the castle. The castle of his ancestors was in an advanced state of disrepair, moth eaten tapestries hung loosely from the faded, painted walls of the inner chambers. Few of the many stone staircases that ran an elegant spiral up the inside of the tall spire remained passable. Most crumbled under the weight of the upper walls as they were battered open three stories above them.

King Uthios drew his sword and started up the nearest passable stairs to the second floor. Skeletons of fallen heroes lined the staircase. Zoradieth's forces left the dead where they lay their equipment still with the bodies. The blue tower was haunted with the dead of his people. Their spirits walked the halls and grounds in a tormented state. The castle Zaraphal was no longer a castle it was a tomb.

The second floor was worse than the first. The white marble floors had been stained a rusty brown by the constant flow of blood dripping from the dying soldiers during Zoradieth's final massacre of the Kaurathel. The skeletal bodies of his ancestors were laid out on the floors. King Uthios searched for yet another staircase and again slowly crept his way further up the inside of the castle to the third floor.

The third floor was ripped apart by the forces of Avorocain's rams. Pieces of marble and granite lined the outer walls of Zaraphal and a massive gaping wound lay in the side of the castle. Skeletal bodies were everywhere, some misshapen, others obviously those of human, elves, and half-orc.

In the center of the room lay the skeletal body of a man in rusted armor. His mummified flesh was still clinging to the body. A large gaping hole had been sliced through the man's chest, and on its head was a thick, rust colored stain. It was the remnants of a crown.

King Uthios was staring at his great grandfather, King Harcos the Warriorbard. He knelt over his grandfather's remains and mourned the hero he never knew. Gently, with dignity the King then delicately searched for the sword of his ancestors. He found naught but an empty scabbard. The sword of his ancestors had been stolen.

King Uthios threw caution to the wind, and gathered up the remains of the tapestries and old ancient furniture and piled it in the center of the floor. He wrapped the body of his grandfather in an old tapestry and placed him on the unlit pyre. He searched for the bodies of his other family lost in the onslaught.

King Uthios knew the location of his ancestors from the stories told to him by his father. Zoradieth had left the bodies where they lie and soon the macabre task was done. When the bodies of his ancestors were laid upon the pyre he stood back and threw the torch on the dried pile. As the sun set in the west the flames of the pyre grew stronger and higher. For one night the King of the Kaurathel had returned to Zaraphal and had reclaimed it as his own. With the first morning light King Harcos gathered up the ashes of his ancestors and buried them in the Cemetery at Kiranoth.

### **Like Grandfather Like Son**

King Uthios left the Cemetery at Kiranoth and traveled through the Plains of Morathel, hiding by night and traveling by day. After four months of walking, with little provisions left, he came across a wide scar in the land. Sand stained black with ash and soot stretched far ahead of him. Covering his face against the blowing ash and sand he made his way into the desert.

King Uthios traveled for a day through the black desert when he came across an island of stone in the center. Burned trees stood in and among island plateau. King Uthios climbed the stones to look for water and to view the desert from a higher vantage point. At the top of the stones, in a surrounding bowl in the rock, covered in ash and soot there lay a body of a man wearing long white and red robes. He appeared recently dead.

King Uthios climbed down to the man and reached for him. When he turned him over he saw that he was just barely alive. King Uthios pulled the last of his wine from his pack and cradling the man, let him drink his fill. The man emptied the skins and soon color began to return to his cheeks. Though King Uthios knew that without the wine he would surely die in this forsaken place he knew that he would rather die so that the man could have a chance to live.

King Uthios stayed with the man that night and stood guard over his weak frame. By the early twilight of dawn the man was strong enough to stand. He thanked the good king and asked him if he would like payment for his generosity. King Uthios said that it was not necessary and that it was his privilege to help. Again, the man offered some trinket for the king's generosity, and again King Uthios merely stated that the man's company while traveling would be enough.

The man smiled at the king's response and told him that his great great grandfather Morathel said the same. King Uthios was in shock and inquired how the man knew King Morathel. The man smiled with a large toothy grin and said that long ago when the King was but a young prince he had braved the unknown and entered his grove. He was a Changeling and the Guardian of the Sword of the Ancients and the Crown of Power; charged by the Green Lady herself to protect both from the corruption of the Shadowlands. They were to be granted only to those who can walk the worlds of twilight and the worlds of light. Morathel had proven worthy and claimed but one, but for King Uthios' great sacrifice he would be granted both.

The Guardian then turned and stepped toward the stone which surrounded them, there he reached for the rock and in a language long since dead on Tyrra, spoke words of power. A door in the rock opened and light poured out into the early morn. There, resting on a golden table lay the legendary Fendrail and a simple steel circlet, the Crown of Myrdhan. The Guardian entered the stone, gathered the sword and crown, and returned as the first light of morning broke over the eastern horizon. As the light touched the stone, the door vanished.

The Guardian handed Fendrail to King Uthios, removed the King's crown, and placed the Crown of Myrdhan on his head. Placing his father's crown in a small sack, he handed it back to King Uthios saying that Myrdhan possessed great powers. With the crown he could walk through realms and travel safely in the Otherworld. It would allow safe travel through the Valkea and our groves. He went on to say that the Darkness it going to attack, and soon. The Guardian instructed King Uthios to place his hand upon the stone and walk through it to the Otherworld.

King Uthios could feel the magical warmth in the blade and the crown on his head grow within him. He thanked the Guardian and inquired for his name. Smiling, the Guardian replied that no one ever asked him

such things before; they were too caught up in the greed that drove them to seek out the artifacts of the ancients. He smiled and said that his name was Viisachol the Keeper, Protector of the Artifacts of the Valkea.

King Uthios thanked Viisachol for his generosity and asked if he would like to accompany him home to Brianoch and join his court. Viisachol told the ageless king that he could not. His place was in the groves of power protecting that which the Fool had hunted. King Uthios told the old keeper that he would never be forgotten and would live forever in the Litany of the Kaurathel.

King Uthios turned, placed his hand upon the rock face, and stepped through. The stone washed past his face like warm water and he found himself in the Otherworld. There he traveled instinctively from glen to glen, grove to grove to Brianoch.

He walked from a wall in the great hall to the gasp and shock of all assembled. Calmly, he walked to the throne, turned and addressed the court. He said that Fendreil and Myrdhan were his, gifted to his family by Viisachol the Keeper, Protector of the Artifacts of the Valkea. He then said that the war would begin soon and we shall fight, and with the powers of the Artifacts of the Ancients, survive.

King Uthios declared that the new banners of the Kaurathel would forever fly over their people. He declared that the colors of the banner would be the Blue and Gold of Zaraphal, legendary castle of their people. Blue as the blue granite, meaning loyalty and truth, gold as the golden stags that protected Zaraphal, meaning generosity; blue a field and the gold a Gyron to represent the unity between the Kaurath and the Vaeltaa Valag. As a charge in the center would be the head of Korlin issuant from a gold crown with red felt. He went on to say that this would fly as the Pride over our forces as we meet the Darkness.

The court erupted in a mighty cheer. Flags, banners, and sir coats were made. Belt flags and sashes were sewn and distributed. Under the color of the Kaurathel's Pride the forces stood at the ready. It was not long after that Zoradieth's forces began their march.



### **The Darkness**

The thundering could be heard through the Dubhember Pass, thousands of feet marching in unison. The armies of the Valag stood at the ready. The Kaurath, with Vaeltaa of lower tribes, and gangs from Seannaught and Briar Hollow stood on the eastern Banks of the Keskus River. Peacemakers of the four kingdoms were sent to wait atop the crumpled ruins of Kulta Hazhoz. As the thundering footsteps grew nearer, boulders surrounding the ruins of Kulta Hazhoz and the walled bridge of Siltamuuri began to rain down on the valley below.

The armies of the Dark Lord appeared within sight of Siltamuuri. They had been reduced in numbers due to attacks from the trolls in the Dubhember Pass, however they still appeared to outnumber the armies of the four kingdoms by three to one.

What appeared to be a human broke ranks from the Barrowheart forces and rode under the flag of the Peacemaker to Siltamuuri. Negotiations between the five Peacemakers were swift. The Peacemaker of the Darkness said that the only way for their host to quit the attack was for the Valag to remove the queen from power and abdicate their control over the Vaeltaa. They had assisted an enemy of their Master and needed to be dealt with. If they were to do this with haste the army of the Barrowheart would leave. The Peacemakers of the four said that that was not an option. The Peacemaker of the Barrowheart replied that the extermination of the Valag should commence with the setting of the sun.

The Peacemakers of the five armies rode back to their hosts. Word was quickly sent to Brianoch and the Vorlonal that Zoradieth had returned. As the sun set, a roar erupted from the ruins of Kulta Hazhoz. The second War of the Purge had begun.

## **The Survival of a Monarchy**

The forces of Darkness swarmed over the ruins and engaged the Valag under the cover of darkness. The Valag were quickly driven back and soon regrouped at the second front along the Keskus River. The Dark Host soon arrived and a tenuous front was formed along the Keskus River. Reinforcements from the east were on their way but wouldn't arrive in time.

Upon receiving word from the front King Uthios and Queen Adalisz placed Princess Anya in the care of Dame Kafsiya. The Vadoni knight was to place Princess Anya under heavy guard and she was to enter into hiding in the Dragon's Spine. Princess Anya raised protest. She was no longer the little Princess that King Uthios saved all those years ago. She was a woman and a strong and powerful ranger who should be leading her people on the front.

King Uthios agreed, and told her that all she said was true, however now the safety of the Vaeltaa rested in her hands. By placing her in hiding they would guarantee the survival of the tribe of Valag, rulers of the Vaeltaa. She reluctantly agreed and left the following morning for the Dragon's Spine Mountains.

King Uthios then suggested to Queen Adalisz that she and the remaining forces of the Valag ride south and plead for shelter in the castle of Drakon in the Vorlonal city of Vanhakard. In her stead King Uthios would have the lords of the Vadoni lead a host north to reinforce the troops at the front while he rode to Briar Hollow and Seannaught for more troops to attack the Darkness from behind. She was insulted at the suggestion claiming that to have others fight in her stead was not the Valag way. The King urged her to reconsider, but she refused. Queen Adalisz rode to the front the following morning with a host of reinforcements. She traveled north and then west. King Uthios left soon after and traveled to Briar Hollow to gather more troops. From there he would head north, up the Keskus to lead an assault from the rear.

## **Reinforcements**

At the front, days passed and the battle raged on. Soon reinforcements from the Barrowheart arrived and marched toward the waiting army on the far banks of the Keskus River. They met the waters edge and continued to walk under the water. The troops were undead day-walkers. They emerged on the eastern banks of the Keskus and soon destroyed the line. Hundreds of dead scattered the battlefield as the armies of Darkness marched into the lands of Kaurath.

The forces of Darkness marched into Kaurath and headed north following the retreating forces of the four armies. Soon the four armies were met with reinforcements from the Ijjen and the kingdom of Vorlanal. The war waged on and both sides suffered massive casualties.

King Uthios arrived in Briar Hollow and met with their leader, the Grand Sheriff Chester Barnstead. King Uthios pleaded the Grand Sheriff for more troops. The Grand Sheriff said that he had sent all that they could spare, however should the King wish to recruit volunteers he could do so.

That night King Uthios walked onto the stage of the Glass and Spoon in the town of Linder's Pool. There he said that anyone brave enough to join him in his charge would be greatly rewarded by his kingdom. Soon volunteers started to stand and approach the stage. He thanked them for their bravery and outfitted them with weapons and armor from local merchants.

The next morning the forces of Uthios, along with one hundred hobling conscripts, marched north, behind the enemy lines, to County Sondleton and the hobblings of Seannaught. There he met with their leader, the Grand Foreman Padrick Turlough in the upper rooms at the Scally and Scalp in Sondleton. He again asked for more forces and again he was denied. King Uthios then mentioned that that was the same response he received from Briar Hollow. Within minutes the Grand Foreman sent word out to the Public Houses of the county seats and soon gangs of Seannaught arrived to assist the good king.

First to arrive were the Sondleton Scallies, Gang of County Sondleton, followed by the Ballyburr Brawlers, Gang of County Borrdeigh and finally the Tomb Skuldugery, Gang of County Cran. Within a day other gangs and adventuring companies arrived to show up the Briar Hollow volunteers. Within a week the armies size had reached double what it was when they left Brianoch.

The army marched in the early morning toward the rear guard of the Barrowheart forces. Spirit and morale was high. King Uthios, was confident that he would be victorious over the forces of Darkness. Last word to reach Seannaught was that the front had been broken, but had retreated into Vorlanol, where they had been met with reinforcements of the Ijjen. The front had reformed and the forces of Barrowheart were suffering massive casualties.

The Pride of the Kaurath, and of the gangs of Briar Hollow and Seannaught were held high as the troops marched onward. The many banners flew proudly and defiantly over the forces of the free kingdoms. They knew that they could be beaten and bloodied, but that the legacy of their people would live on; the purge would be stopped.

### **The Scattered Darkness**

Within a month after marching from Seannaught, King Uthios' forces met the rear line of the Barrowheart army. The forces of the Barrowheart were beginning to fall under the might of King Uthios and the powerful Fendrail. Thousands of Barrowheart warriors fell and rose every night for three nights after they were cut down. King Uthios would slaughter all in a brigade, retreat, and wait for nightfall to clean up the returning undead.

After months of battle, the leader of the Barrowheart forces could be seen in the distance. The evil commander was nicknamed Lord Droch by the hobblings after a character in a popular hobling children's story. The derogatory name stuck and soon the Seannaught pipers were playing the Dirge of Lord Droch during the battles. Rallied by the success the troops had been having they fought on and on until they had slaughtered the guard personal guard of Lord Droch. The evil commander had escaped, but the point had been driven to heart. The Kaurath would defeat the Darkness and drive it back to the Barrowheart.

### **The Last**

In a desperate attempt to complete their mission, splinter brigades from the forces of Darkness broke off and fought to rout out and destroy the forces of the Valag, often bypassing other tribes to do so. Soon many members of the Valag met their final death at the hands of these groups. In time the Queen her self was routed and killed by the suicide squads. Over the course of the yearlong battle, the numbers of Valag had diminished to less than a hundred. In time the remaining Valag's spirits grew weak. The end of the tribe would come soon.

With the forces of King Uthios pushing hard to the west, Lord Droch personally led attacks against pockets of remaining Valag. Reinforcements of Vaeltaa, Vorlonal, Ijjen, and Kaurath poured in to support the dying tribe, but it did little help. The Valag refused to enter hiding deciding it better to fight to extinction than allow others to fight in their stead. Soon Lord Droch's forces routed and destroyed the last pocket of Valag, the Queen fled to the lands of Vorlonal. Lord Droch marched the remnants of his troops after her, slaughtering all who stood before him to reach his goal.

The Vorlonal suffered massive casualties at the hands of the Dark forces. Soon the Vorlonal hid the Queen, of the Valag in Drakon Castle in Vanhakard. The forces of Darkness surrounded the castle and Lord Droch, leader of Zoradieth's army, ordered the Necromancers to raise the dead to supply fodder for the fight.

King Uthios and his forces collected broken and wandering bands of Vorlonal, Ijjen, and Vaeltaa and rallied them to the fight. Gaining strength and growing in morale daily, the good king marched on Drakon Castle until Lord Droch's army was surrounded. The battle lasted for a month and at the end both sides suffered heavy casualties, but King Uthios never broke the siege against the Darkness.

During an intense battle, King Uthios felt a deep sense of loss in his heart. The feeling of remorse was so great that the King almost fell off his horse. Soon after the Barrowheart forces broke and King Uthios ordered a charge. Hundreds of the Barrowheart were slaughtered.

King Uthios charged down the host and saw a group of large fast warhorses riding hard and fast south toward the Plains of Morathel. King Uthios and his guards turned their horses and rode after the fleeing figures. The gap soon closed and King Uthios could see that it was the evil Lord Droch and a group of his forces. The fleeing invaders were caught and a great fight ensued. King Uthios leapt from his horse, Fendrail held high above his head. The blow from Fendrail hit Lord Droch firmly on the shoulder killing him instantly. His upper body slid free from the lower half and was trampled by the rushing mounts. Soon the remaining forces of Darkness were hunted down and destroyed.

When King Uthios reached Drakon he was in shock. A large hole was torn into the castle. It was similar in size to the gaping wound of Zaraphal. Entering the castle he found few survivors. He made his way through to the throne room and was in shock at what he saw. In the center of the floor was the Formal Magic circle, at its center were two bodies. King Uthios ran to the nearest body and rolled him over. It was King Taivuu, King of the Vorlonal. Covering the dead monarch gently he moved on to the next, it was Queen Adalisz. Both had been ritually obliterated. They had met their permanent death.

King Uthios had proven himself to be the great leader of his people. The second War of the Purge was over but at a great cost. Princess Anya was the last of her tribe, the last of the Valag.

### **The Treaty of Vahnakard**

The war had cost a terrible price. In the end two monarchs were permanently dead, and the ruling tribe of Vaeltaa had almost been annihilated. Zoradieth had returned and had proven that he was as strong as ever. He could attack at any time and the people of the five Kingdoms must be ready.

King Uthios, who suffered the least destruction and loss, led the rebuilding of the kingdoms and soon his heroics and generosity were legendary. He placed Princess Anya under the protection of the Vadoni until the tribes of Vaeltaa had returned to her. He ordered the rebuilding of Castle Drakon and soon there after was an honored guest of Prince Valdoz when the heir of the Vorlonal thrown was crowned king. He had opened up the lands surrounding Briar Hollow and gave every family that assisted twenty acres each. The hoblings of Seannaught, for their generosity, were given the surrounding royal wheat fields and royal orchards of the north.

On a warm July day a meeting of the Five leaders was arranged in the rebuilt Castle Drakon at Vahnakard. In attendance was King Uthios the Kaurath, Queen Anya of the Valag, King Valdoz of the Vorlonal, Grand Sheriff Chester Barnstead and Grand Foreman Padrick Turlough. Together they debated and entered into negotiations for a week. Queen Anya had suggested they form a union. They would each remain sovereign nations and operate as they saw fit, but would all declare and serve a High King of the Kaurath, as the peoples of the lands had come to be called. She then nominated King Uthios and his line to take over as High King of the Kaurath.

A roar of agreement filled the room from all in attendance. King Uthios rose and very calmly said that he did not agree with the proposal and that tyrants were born in such ways. He declared that a counter balance had to be issued to keep the high king honest. He proposed that a meeting would be held once every season so that the High King could sit and hold council with the Kings of the sovereign nations. The sovereign leaders would then debate and cast votes on issues important to Kaurath. After which time the High King had the power to accept or deny any ruling from the council. All agreed and the treaty was drafted and signed. King Uthios rode back to Brianoch as High King of the Nations of Kaurath.



## **The Love of an Ageless King**

High King Uthios had given Queen Anya chambers in Brionoch from which she could rule her people. The young Queen found that she had grown very fond of the High King in the years that followed the war and soon discovered that she was deeply in love with the ageless monarch. He would often turn her away or ignore her all together, catching glances and shy hellos from the monarch in the halls of Brianoch. She found that the great and mighty ruler of the Five Kingdoms was terminally shy in matters of the heart. As was they way of her people, she took it upon herself to win the High King.

Queen Anya gently pursued King Uthios for a year. At last the monarch swallowed his fear and gave into the beautiful queens requests and attended her for a private dinner. They ate and spoke late into the night.

At the end of the evening King Uthios stood to leave, Queen Anya stood with him and approached him, gently taking his hands in hers. Looking into his eyes she told him that she had fallen deeply in love with the High King. The King flushed deep red with embarrassment and starting to shake with nerves. The hero of the Five Kingdoms began to stutter a mangled response. Leaning closer, Queen Anya asked for King Uthios to repeat what he had said. This only caused the High King's heart to beat faster and for his color to darken to a deep crimson. The queen then leaned in to kiss him. The high king quickly pulled away.

He told her that he loved her with all of his being, but he had seen his mother grown old and die while his father stayed forever young. He said that he could not bear it if it happened to them. Smiling she took his hands and looked at him until their eyes met. She said that she was not worried, that he had saved her twice before and that he would save her again. Leaning closer she kissed him, the High King did not pull away. He had given in to his heart.

The King and Queen were married in a ceremony in the outpost of Kallio. The leaders of the Five realms were in attendance and the celebration lasted deep into the night. The Kingdom of Kaurath been granted a High Queen and had doubled in population. King Uthios had become the King of the Vaeltaa.

## **The Wise**

High King and Queen Uthios and Anya returned to Brianoch and after a few months, High Queen Anya was expecting. Preparations were made and healers and midwives were called in. The High Queen gave birth to a young prince, with High King Uthios by her side. He looked down at his wife and child with deep love and admiration. Brushing the hair from his wife's forehead he told her the full story of his quest for Fendriel. He told her of his discovery of the old man and of his promise. Queen Anya smiled and told her husband that the name Viisachol was an ancient name that was derived from the ancient Vaeltaa word Viisas, meaning the Wise. She said that Viisachol meant wise one and would be a wonderful name for her first born.

Years passed and it was found that the little Prince was a fast study. As he grew and matured he specialized in the art of tactics and war. At his mother's request, Prince Viisachol was taught the ways of his subjects. He was taught to respect the cultures that made up Kaurath. At the age of fifteen, Prince Viisachol was sent to study with the finest teachers in the Five Kingdoms. When he returned at twenty-one Crown Prince Viisachol was a noble and just man

## **The Order of Korlin**

In the decades that followed the attack of Lord Droch, High King Uthios and Crown Prince Viisachol, developed an elite order to act as an army of the High King. Called the Order of Korlin, they reported to the High King and marched as his personal army during wartime. They were trained and supplied with the best training and equipment the High King could find. After fifteen years of training they were considered the greatest and bravest heroes in the land.

The Order of Korlin led the watch of the Barrowheart. They were trained in hiding from the dangerous Sidhe in the northern Surullinen Forest and of how to deal with them when they were spotted. They were

trained in combat against the trolls of the Dubhember Pass and would often spend long weeks on watch in and among the Eltor Mountains. They infiltrated the Barrowheart and walked in secret through the cities of undead and brigands that fill the evil empire of Zoradieth. They were well versed in negotiation and diplomacy and acted as ambassadors to the elven nations of Innos Halal and Keskaur, and the dwarves of Eltor Szakal and Kulta Kerros. The Order of Korlin acted as the King's Representatives in the Five Kingdoms. They served as national leaders of regional forces. It is because of the order of Korlin that the Kaurath survived to this day.

### **A Rain of Spells and Arrows: The Guard at Siltamuuri**

Word reached Brianoch that the Barrowheart had mounted forces at the mouth of the Dubhember Pass. Hundreds massed at the entrance of the pass. The order of Korlin, led by High King Uthios stood tall against the darkness at the walled bridge of Siltamuuri.

Lord Droch marched his troops through the Dubhember Pass. Hundreds died at the hands of trolls inside the pass. With half of his troops surviving, Lord Droch reached the entrance of the Dubhember Pass. As before, Peacemakers were sent and again a reasonable solution could not be found. The Peacemakers returned and the armies waited for war.

A deafening roar sounded from the valley below and the armies of Zoradieth charged. Casters and archers from the Order of Korlin started to rain spells and arrows down on the forces of the Barrowheart. The army of Lord Droch was quickly decimated. Those who survived retreated through the Dubhember pass to almost certain death at the hands of the trolls.

Inspired by the victory, High King Uthios ordered that Siltamuuri be rebuilt with the stones and debris from the original walled bridge and the destroyed tower of Kulta Hazhoz. The High King hired stonemasons from Eltor Szakal and laborers from Seannaught and Briar Hollow. Soon Siltamuuri grew and reformed into a huge impenetrable structure.

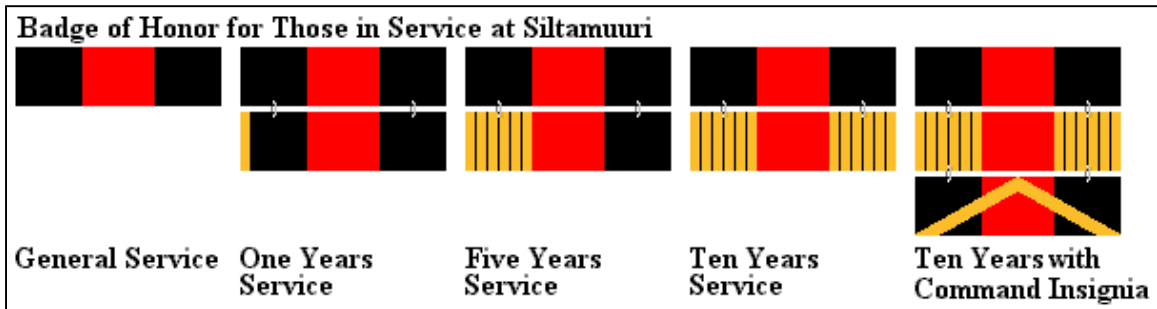
Siltamuuri is set between two steep cliffs and spans across the canyon walls of the Dubhember Pass. Large bonfires are set on either end to ward off the constant troll menace. The Kings Watchtower is the highest point on Siltamuuri and reaches a towering fifty feet off of the valley bellow. The wall is a large curved semicircle wall bows inward allowing archers in turrets near the bonfires the ability to fire at any forces scaling the face of the forty foot high wall.

Housing for one hundred and fifty soldiers and fifty commanders is located within the wall itself and can be sealed via magical means to protect those within should the wall become overrun, which can and does happen. Within the living area are common rooms, kitchens, and a great hall for feasting and tactical meetings. The eastern face of the wall lies one mile from the Lansi River. A guard station was established. The support town of Deathach, which is the ancient hobling word for smoke, soon rose and was quickly populated by hardy and brave adventurers and merchants.

High King Uthios declared that the Order of Korlin lead the watch and that it will be manned by soldiers and volunteers from each of the Five Kingdoms. He declared that tours of duty would last from one month to a year and could be decided at the time of enrollment. Serving at Siltamuuri is an honor and volunteers are awarded the Mark of Siltamuuri. All who serve proudly wear the Mark of Siltamuuri and are often granted a higher level of respect.

Once completed, Siltamuuri successfully stopped hundreds of attacks from the forces of the Barrowheart. The towering wall seemed nigh invincible. Peace once again returned to the nations of Kaurath as an uneasy calm fell over Siltamuuri and the castle of Brianoch. The wall had grown quiet, and the Darkness grew.





### **The Breach**

Lord Droch's forces attacked with such force and ferocity that Siltamuuri trembled. A gate had been opened in the valley below the wall and thousands of forces poured out. Hundreds of ladders were raised and hordes of the Dark Host poured up and over Siltamuuri. High King Uthios and Crown Prince Viisachol ran from the King's Watchtower and fled downstairs and into the melee. High King Uthios was overrun and sensing defeat, the High King threw Fendriel to his charging son. Crown Prince Viisachol caught Fendriel and charged for his father's body. The High King was torn to shreds. The Dark Host seized High King Uthio's body and threw him into the waiting horde below. The body was brought to the rear of the line where a caster was waiting to perform an Obliteration.

For fifty minutes Crown Prince Viisachol fought his way to his dying father. The forces of Darkness fell before the might of Fendriel, and the Crown Prince slowly waded through the bodies of the dead toward his father and the caster. Arrows from the still living archers rained down around him as threats were being picked off.

Crown Prince Viisachol was now within range of the formal caster. He stepped through the circle and swung Fendriel in a wide arch killing the caster. The spell was at its end and the backlash was immediate. A shockwave filled the valley killing all within. Casters from the top of Siltamuuri fought their way into the valley below.

Crown Prince Viisachol was reached first and a Life spell was administered. For High King Uthios it was too late. Despite the backlash, the Obliteration had taken effect. The great father of the Five Kingdoms was dead.

### **Twenty Years of Mourning**

High Queen Anya was devastated at the news of her beloved husband dying at the hands of the Barrowheart. The backlash weakened the spirit of Crown Prince Viisachol to the extent where resurrection was impossible. Prior to mourning the loss of her husband, the great and noble High Queen thought first of her people and swiftly went into action notifying the citizens of the Five Kingdoms that their High King was dead.

Crown Prince Viisachol brought his fathers preserved body back from Siltamuuri. He was laid out in the great hall of Brianoch and the masses were allowed to walk through and pay their respects to the noble ruler and his family. Hundreds came. Nobles and heads of state from the Five came and offered their condolences to the High Queen. The following day the body of High King Uthios was cremated and placed into a golden urn crowned with a stag's head and placed in the catacombs until High Queen Anya would join him.

In a ceremony in Brianoch castle Crown Prince Viisachol presented his mother with the Crown of Myrdhan and Fendriel. She was the sole leader of the Five Kingdoms and sole head of the Order of Korlin. Her duty was set and her path was clear. She would rule alone until her death when she would at last join her husband and be forever placed in the Cemetery at Kiranoth.

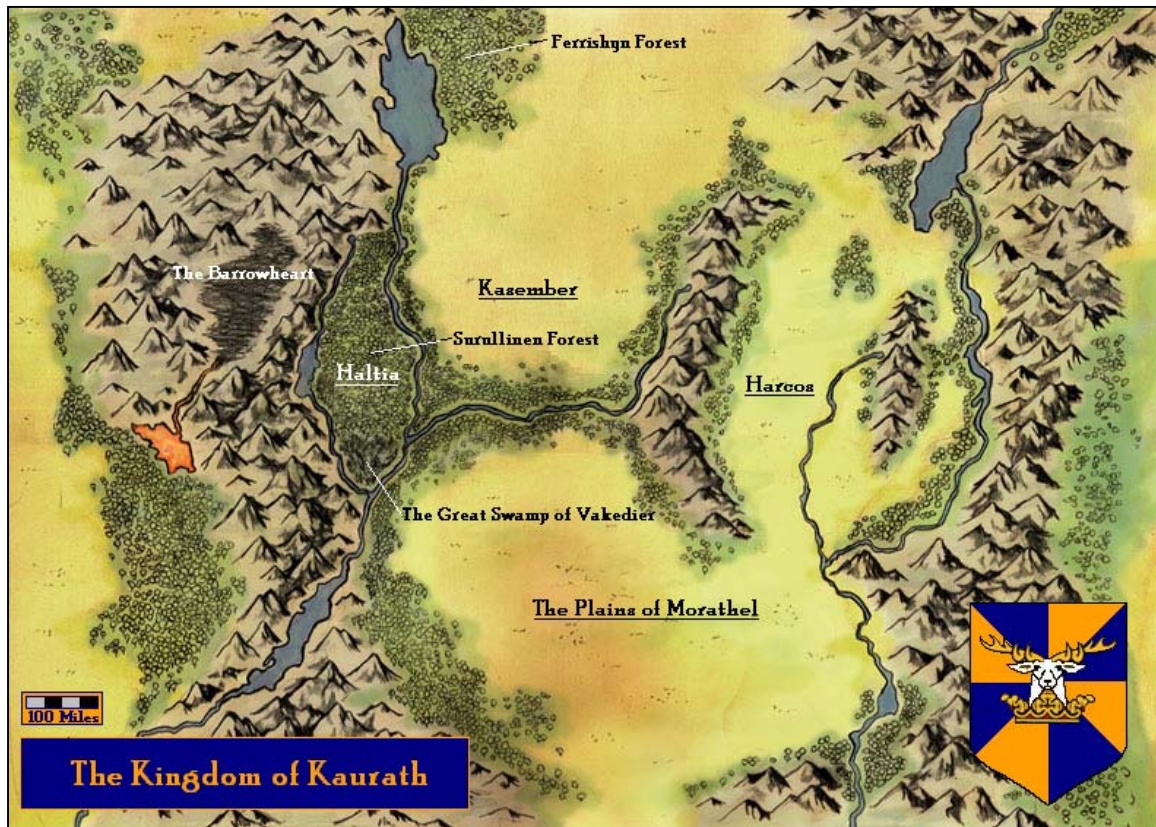
The High Queen first ordered the drastic increase of the guard at Siltamuuri followed by a strict increase of the military. During her reign, the Barrowheart attacked many times over, and under her military command they never once broke the defenses at Siltamuuri. The great warrior queen of the Kaurath led her troops to victory countless times. She is the only monarch in the years since the creation of the Barrowheart, that has never lost a battle.

The great Queen died in her bed twenty years after the death of her husband. Her body was cremated, as is the way of the Kaurath. High King Viisachol, with a king's guard made up of the finest and bravest of the Five Kingdoms left for the Cemetery at Kiranoth. The first High King and Queen of the Kaurath were laid to rest with their ancestors in the ancient cemetery. Over the graves of the fallen kings and queens the litany was read.

High King Viisachol looked up after the reading of the Litany and saw something almost unbelievable. In the distance, standing on a rise overlooking the royal graves stood a man dressed in full white and red robes. The man was alone and carried with him an old, worn wineskin. High King Viisachol looked around to see if others had seen him, but no one did. When the High King looked back the man was gone but in the distance, a white Stag could be seen bounding off into the wilds of the Plains of Morathel.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Modern Kaurath



The death of the High King and Queen and the coronation of High King Viisachol take us into the modern era of the Kaurath and to our present day. This time period ushers in the under-kingdoms of Innos Halal, the Magocracy of Gythai, the nations of the Ograth, and the return of the Razioch. This time period also saw the worst of the attacks by Zoradieth's Barrowheart and an increase in the harassment by the Valkea and Sihteeri of the Sidhe.

### The Wise King

King Viisachol's reign was for only a brief twenty-five years. Shortly after his coronation High King Viisachol married his long time love Eliasana Ellyllon; the Ben Rigan of the human clans in the Ferrishyn Forest, north of the Great Ice Lake. Together High King Viisachol and High Queen Eliasana ruled in a tenuous peace. Soon the High Queen was with child and gave birth to a little boy.

Crown Prince Vichol, named after the High King's childhood nickname, was an introspective child who was often lost in thought. Like his father he was a quick study and received the best education available to the Kaurath. He began his education at the age of three and would spend hours with the finest scholars in the kingdom.

When Crown Prince Vichol was five, High Queen Eliasana gave birth to a rambunctious little boy. High King Viisachol and High Queen Eliasana named the child Robkiel. As the boys grew it was obvious that Crown Prince Vichol and Prince Robkiel had little in common.

## **The Paths of the Two Princes**

Crown Prince Vichol was a somber child with a voracious appetite for knowledge where as Prince Robkiel was jovial and an upstart troublemaker. Both princes were educated abroad like their father, however their training was drastically different. Crown Prince Vichol was trained in the arts of the king, such as diplomacy, history, and tactics whereas Prince Robkiel was trained solely in the arts of war.

Crown Prince Vichol studied with the greatest minds of the Five Kingdoms where he was trained to be a just and compassionate leader. He quickly grew in status and reputation as a passionate, honest, and somewhat stubborn man.

As a young man of twenty, Crown Prince Vichol was granted title over the Order of Korlin. He led the guard at Siltamuuri and stood watch vigilantly from the King's Watchtower, only leaving the wall to act as Peacemaker for his father. Crown Prince Vichol's life was that of duty and servitude. For his brother, however, life offered more choices.

Being second-born and therefore not directly in line for the crown, Prince Robkiel was granted a special freedom by his birthright. He had the opportunity to pursue subjects that interested him. At a young age he chose the military and the greatest heroes of the Five Kingdoms trained Prince Robkiel in the art of war.

The young prince grew and in time took command of the armies of the Five Kingdoms. There he made vast and radical changes such as introducing the special units of the Provinces such as the Kasember Harriers and the Harcos Talons as well as the separation of the armies into companies composed of mixed units of healers, soldiers, casters, and rogues. Soon the army grew to an unparalleled strength.

On the off chance of relaxation, the good prince was still as rambunctious and wild as ever choosing parties and revelry to the quiet contemplation preferred by his brother. Prince Robkiel was a rabid gambler and would often take unnecessary risks for the thrill of the act.

As a young man Prince Robkiel had a rabid temper. The young prince was infamous for starting the odd bar fight and random brawl. After which he could often be seen talking to the air, as if there was another present. Soon rumors started flying around the kingdom that the good prince was not quite in tune with this world and operated on a skewed reality. Many believed that the young prince was going insane.

## **Of Autumn Revels and Debts Unpaid**

The Autumn Revel is a time when the two courts of the Sidhe, the Valkea and Sihteeri, would meet in our realm for a revel. According to the Legend of the Green Lady and the Fool, the purpose of the revel is to celebrate their truce and renew the vows of the otherworldly monarchs. During the revel the Sidhe walk freely among the Kaurathel and often hold wild parties in and around the taverns and public houses of the Five Kingdoms. To walk safely among the Sidhe, citizens of the Five Kingdoms will sometimes don elaborate costumes and masks.

It was during the autumn revel of 499 that the reign of High King Viisachol and High Queen Eliasana ended. Prince Robkiel was gambling with a group of Sidhe. The game lasted for hours and the morning light was soon approaching. Eventually it was down to Prince Robkiel and a Sihteeri of the Tuska Koira, often called the Dogs of Agony. The pile of Kaurathi Pounds, coins, and items littered the table. The cards were laid on the table and it was evident that Prince Robkiel had lost.

The Sihteeri offered Prince Robkiel a chance to win back the prize double or nothing. The prince agreed and the rules were set. The Sihteeri was to declare a riddle. If Prince Robkiel guessed correctly, the Sihteeri would double the winnings on the table. Should the prince fail, the Sihteeri would own the subject of the Riddle. Prince Robkiel agreed and the riddle was set forth:

“Moon for a moment in a fiery gilded sky.  
Three Suns in orbit two burned out one is nigh,  
I am not the Moon or the Suns that have died.  
I am the last and brightest tell me now, who am I?”

Prince Robkiel thought long and hard. At last as the first light of the false dawn lit the eastern sky the Prince spoke his answer. He said that the Moon was the Kingdom of Jokai, which was powerful until its destruction during the Forgotten age. The first Sun was the kingdom of King Verimedve, lost during the betrayal of King Uljas the Brave, the second Sun was the kingdom of Morathel, rent asunder by the War of the Purge, the last, brightest sun was the kingdom of his father, the Kingdom as it stands today. Prince Robkiel then stood and began to collect his winnings.

The Sihteri smiled a sinister smile and stopped Prince Robkiel from collecting the treasure. The Sihteri told the good prince that his guess was incorrect. The Moon was Princess Tiszta, the two suns were King Veszithios the Lost, and High King Uthios the Kaurath. The last, brightest sun was High King Viisachol. Prince Robkiel stood, mouth agape at the answer to the riddle. It seemed so obvious once he had heard it. The Sihteri thanked Prince Robkiel, gathered up his treasure and left into the early dawn.

One week later Prince Robkiel and Crown Prince Vichol received word of their parents state. The morning after the Autumn Revel the High King and Queen were found in their beds. Both had been reduced to mere shells of their former selves. Both were invalids and catatonic. Mages had been called in to investigate their state and it was soon theorized that the Sihteri arcane magics had stolen their minds and had cursed their flesh with a wasting disease.

The following week was difficult in Brianoch castle. The High King and Queen were steadily deteriorating. By the end of the week they were both gaunt and pale as a corpse. The following morning nothing was left of the High King and Queen save their clothes and a pile of filth and black slime. The Kingdom entered a state of mourning.

The following weekend, during the Autumn Meet, Crown Prince Vichol was crowned High King of Five Kingdoms. Shortly after he and his younger brother led their troops and a King's Guard to the Cemetery at Kiranoth. The High King and Queen of the Five Kingdoms were laid to rest next to the graves of their ancestors.

### **The Mad Prince**

The loss of the High King and Queen devastated Prince Robkiel. His responsibility in their fate was too much for the young prince to bear. Haunted by the unending guilt Prince Robkiel slipped further and further into madness. Though still a strong and powerful military leader, his mind was slipping. It is said that the Sihteri took not only the High King and Queen on that fateful night, but also the Princes mind.

### **The Return**

In the year 500, a year after the death of High King Viisachol and High Queen Eliasana, the kingdoms were still reeling from the unexpected loss. A harsh frost had devastated the spring crops and by early autumn, the kingdoms were on the brink of famine. Morale was low and High King Vichol and his court were struggling to keep the Kingdoms of Kaurath fed.

Lord Droch took this opportunity to launch a massive assault on Siltamuuri. After a twenty-one day siege the guard at the wall broke and the host of the Dark Lord marched into the northern Surullinen where their advance was halted on the banks of the Keskus River. Seannaught gangs and the King's Army formed a strong front and soon the Darkness was routed and herded south toward the hobling colony of Holly Head on Loch Sydan. Word was sent to Brianoch and soon a second army made of the King's Guard and the Order of Korlin stopped the Darkness and forced them back into the Surullinen towards the elven kingdom of Innos Halal.

High King Vichol led a host south, along the Etela River through Lindher's Pool to Innos Halal. Lord Droch's forces had arrived days earlier and High King Vichol found the elves deep in a bloody fight for survival. The High King fought forward to meet Taar Quinos Arathi. He marched under the Blue and Gold banners of the Kingdoms of Kaurath to Innostas Castle. The short march from the battleground was tough as the forces of the Barrowheart were attacking from the depths of the forest.

During lulls in the combat, High King Vichol's army whispered about the dangers that lurked in the shadows of the Sidhe's wood. Most of the soldiers had never set foot in the faerie's forest and, if given a chance, most never would again. The men and women of the armies fidgeted with their vials of honey and sacks of bread, preparing to be stopped by a Sidhe at any time.

Soon the tall spires of Innostas Castle thrust out of the Surullinen like a giant tree, reaching forever skyward. The battle raged on around the base of the living fortress; its main gate closed by the massive roots surrounding the castle. Elven guards of all types manned the earthworks surrounding Innostas and fought with dignity and honor.

High King Vichol led his troops into the fray and soon found themselves deeply entrenched in a fight to the death. The Forces of Barrowheart, caught between the two armies, pushed outward and formed a shield wall on either front. The wall held strong. After what seemed like hours hundreds of great flashes of light could be seen coming from within the ranks of the Barrowheart. Within minutes, great screaming could be heard from the entirety of the elven nation. The forces of the Barrowheart lurched and soon moved closer to Innostas, the defenses of Innos Halal had broken.

From the vantage point of High King Vichol, hundreds of dark creatures could be seen running up the embankments of Innostas' defenses, over taking the elves as if they were reaping wheat. The elves rallied and formed a protective barrier in the path of the dark creatures. The elves suffered heavy losses, but the dark creatures began to fall.

High King Vichol's troops met the army of the Barrowheart with an unbridled ferocity and soon most of the Dark Lord's army was driven back into the Surullinen where the Sidhe would make quick work of their lingering numbers. The High King then turned his attention on the dark creatures brought forth from the foul magics. They had driven the elves and were encircling them. The armies of Innos Halal and Kaurath were outnumbered by the dark creatures and soon, both sides were falling under their might.

Word from the front line reached High King Vichol. The forces of Kaurath could not affect the dark creatures. All blows dealt the cat-like creatures would immediately heal. High King Vichol's greatest fears were confirmed; the Darkness had summoned the legendary Suith'brogair, the Pantherghasts.

In the distance the elven nobles were falling under the combined forces of the Pantherghasts. The dark hunters were Obliterating all who fell. The cycles of magic were not as they are today, an obliteration meant permanent death. The army of Kaurath threw themselves in front of the Pantherghast's claws, trying with all of their might to protect the elves, to give them a chance to destroy the foul creatures. Still the elves fell.

Within half an hour after the summoning of the Suith'brogair, the armies of Kaurath and Innos Halal were outnumbered three to one with the gap swiftly growing. If the surviving forces of the Barrowheart were to return the battle would be over. It seemed as if all hope was lost.

An exhausted High King Vichol stopped his push and closed his eyes. According to letters and songs written by those who survived the high king was glowing, others say he grew in size, others still said he spoke with such ferocity that the battle itself stopped. What we do know is that the High King spoke in a language long forgotten in Kaurath. As he did, the very forest itself erupted with a deafening thunder crack. From the four directions of the compass they came. Long gone from Kaurath, they had returned, called by the True King, Morathel's Heir; for standing on the forests edge surrounding Innostas castle were four Stags. The battle would soon be over.



## The Haran of Innos Halal

A battle cry erupted from the High King and the forces of Kaurath pushed hard forward. The Stags tore through the line of Pantherghasts as if they were zombies under a hero's sword. Soon the line broke and the Pantherghasts fled into the shadowy forest followed in close pursuit by the Stags. High King Vichol rode forward to search for the Taar and Taari of Innos Halal. He soon found them.

Taar Quinos Arathi and Taari Galanya Arathi had fallen under the Suith'brogair. The Taar and Taari of Innos Halal were no more. Their bodies were wrapped in linen and brought within Innostas Castle. Word of the elves loss reached High King Vichol and he soon approached the castle to pay his respects to the fallen leaders of the elves and to offer his support to their son and rightful heir, Quinar Arathi

The High King and his generals were escorted to Quinar. The heir of Innos Halal met with High King Vichol and his generals in the great hall of Innostas Castle. Quinar was distant and in mourning when he met with the High King of the Kaurath. Quinar bowed deeply and offered the High King a chair. High King Vichol sat and the discussions began.

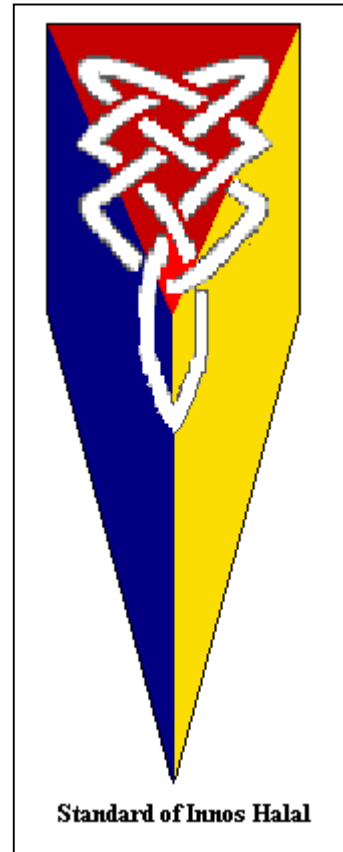
Quinar told High King Vichol that his father was awaiting his return, that after the end of the War of the Purge he had chosen the title of Taar and Taari rather than Haran and Harni out of loyalty to King Harcos and Queen Makea. He went on to say that when Harcos and Makea's Heir returned, they were planning on stepping down to serve the true Haran. He also said that it was obvious by High King Vichol's demonstration of his royal powers that he was the heir of Harcos and Makea and therefore rightful Haran of Innos Halal.

The news gave High King Vichol a start. He never considered that he could be the heir to the elven homeland. High King Vichol knew what to do, he asked Quinar for a few days of consideration. Quinar agreed and arranged a room for the High King. In the following days he learned much of Quinar, his love for his people and his philosophical beliefs. On his night before his final day High King Vichol made his offer.

High King Vichol addressed the assembled mass of Elven Houses and to all who were assembled spoke his terms. He said that he was the heir of Harcos and Makea, and as such Innos Halal was his birthright. He said that the Taar and Taari had led the people of Innos Halal with dignity and without their help hundreds of common folk would have perished over the centuries following the War of the Purge. He said that the Pack of Nu'ori Kansa had saved the younger races of the Kingdoms and without the wisdom of the Taar and Taari civilization would have ended in Kaurath. He then went on to say that the Taar and Taari were no more and it was time that the Haran returned. A low murmur spread through out the room at this comment. High King Vichol said that, as the heir of Harcos and Makea he would now claim his privilege and the Naming of the new Haran of Innos Halal would now begin.

High King Vichol walked and stood beside Quinar. Placing his hand on Quinar's shoulder he said that the assembled houses, those mighty and glorious of houses that had chosen the Haran and Harni after the War of the Purge had also decided the Haran at present. High King Vichol, under his birthright, named Quinar Arathi, son of Quinos and Galanya Arathi, Haran of Innos Halal. A crescendo of applause filled the chamber as one by one the heads of the houses stood to honor their new Haran and show their support for the High King's decision.

High King Vichol knelt before the new Haran and gave his thanks for all that they have done for the free races of Kaurath. Standing, he made his offer. He wished that Innos Halal would join the Kingdom of



Kaurath in much the same way as the other Kingdoms were bound under the Treaty of Vanhakard. The Haran agreed and the following Wintermeet was chosen to serve for the negotiations to incorporate the kingdom into the union of the Five.

As a promise of support and show appreciation, the Haran offered the High King the island castle of Karsia and the surrounding cleared lands around Lake Kostaa. The High King agreed and declared that the kingdom would be included within a new Province west of the Keskus River, it would be named Haltia, after the great healer, and his ancestor. The new Province would hold the new capitol of the High King. Named Kaurath, it would be established on the eastern banks of Lake Kostaa and Karsia would be the High King's new home.

The following morning, the High King rode to Brianoch to inform his household. Wintermeet would be held in the great hall of Karsia Castle. There they would decide the fate of the Six Kingdoms and the integration of Innos Halal. Leaving half his host in Innostas under the control of Haran Quinar, High King Vichol rode east toward the rising sun.

### **The Treaty of Karsia**

Upon High King Vichol's return to Brianoch, preparations were made to move the Royal Household to the island castle of Karsia. The treasures were packed and the household prepared for the long move. Brianoch castle was granted to Prince Robkiel and the city of New Jokainen was named as a Princely Estate.

By November of the year 501, High King Vichol and his household were prepared to make the journey to Karsia. Barges were prepared on the Etela River where they were loaded with the personal effects of the High King. An armed guard would follow the barges while the High King and his Household would travel by land. The High King would wait for the barges in Linder's Pool, Wopplingshire. There the barges would be loaded on wagons and escorted by the Vadoni to Lake Kostaa and on to Karsia Castle.

The total trip took a month, and by the Feast of Thanks, High King Vichol arrived at Karsia and preparations for Wintermeet were taken. High King Vichol's household rid the castle of faeries, cleaned, and hung tapestries. At the end of December the castle was ready for the meeting of the Kings. The date of Wintermeet was chosen and sent to the leaders of the Five. Soon the leaders of the Five were on their way.

In February 502, in the great hall of the castle, the Five drafted the Treaty of Karsia.. The treaty was very similar to the Treaty of Vanhakard signed all those many years ago. In it, the elven kingdom of Innos Halal was officially inducted into the Kingdom of Kaurath, and the Haran of Innos Halal pledged to lead his people in the way that he saw fit, in return he would swear fealty to High King Vichol. The Surullinen between the Lansi and Keskus Rivers would be called the Province of Haltia. The Kingdom of Innos Halal would act as the provincial army and protectorate.

### **The Offer of the High King**

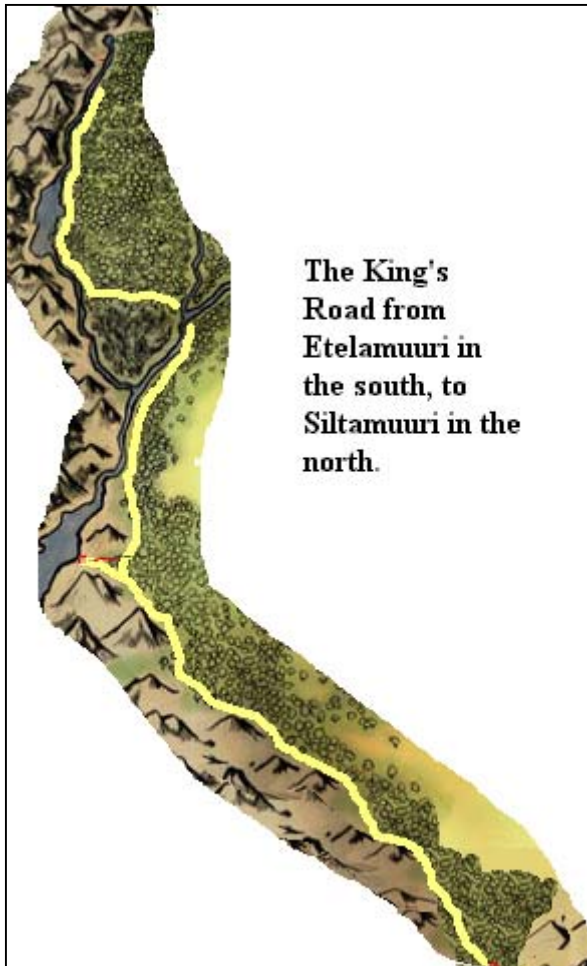
To populate the new capitol city, High King Vichol granted land in the city of Kaurath to merchants and farmers willing to make the journey. The compensation offered to the settlers differed based on the style of settlement. Farmers were granted a set acreage of land and an ox, merchants were granted a plot of land in the city itself and a five-year stipend of Kaurathi Pounds, and fishermen were granted a small plot of waterfront land and a small fishing boat.

Over the following years the brave and fool hardy accepted the offer and settled in the new city and soon the capitol grew. Though much smaller than New Jokainen, the village-sized city of Kaurath attracted the roughest and toughest of the Six Kingdoms. Adventuring companies were established in and around the city and most reside there to this day.



## From Etelamuuri to Siltamuuri

Merchants were slow to populate the new city because of the high dangers and lack of roads to and from the capitol. By 503 there were only three businesses in the city of Kaurath, a blacksmith, a cooper, and a tavern and public house, each owned by Phineas Barnstead, a retired adventurer from Hollyhead.



To draw more merchants High King Vichol ordered the building of a King's Road from the sturdy southern wall of Etelamuuri to Siltamuuri in the north. On the road, one days travel from each other, would be gatetowns. Each Gatetown would be led by a chosen Keeper and manned by both the Order of Korlin and hired adventurers. The gatetowns would be under the direct control of the High King and would, therefore be exempt from provincial or under-kingdom control.

The gatetowns would be stocked with supplies and act as an armory. In the case of regional conflicts the nearest gatetown would serve as a headquarters for the High King's army. Once the conflict ended, the Keeper would serve as the governor, should one be declared.

The building of the Kings Road and Gatetowns started in the spring of 504. Two crews were designated, one building the road from Kaurath south to Etelamuuri and the other north to Siltamuuri. The construction on the roads took a total of six years. The north King's Road was completed on August 21, 507. The road to Etelamuuri was completed on September 5, 510.

A total of five hundred workers died while constructing the King's Road, five permanently. To honor those who had permanently died High King Vichol named the first five gatetowns after the fallen workers and memorialized them with a

ballad of remembrance. The Call of the Highwaymen is now hung in every gatetown from Beyjarat in the south to Deathach in the north.

## Storms, Secrets, and Promises

In the years that followed the completion of the King's Road life in the city of Kaurath was moving at a fast pace. The city was being watched over by Haran Quinar and his Forest Knights, and the adventurers and merchants of Kaurath were going about their business in relative safety. An eerie peace settled over the capitol city broken only rarely by the threat of the Sidhe or an occasional raid from the Barrowheart.

With his kingdom safely defended, High King Vichol took a regular watch at Siltamuuri, often traveling between Kaurath and Deathach a few times a year. The High King enjoyed the trip and looked forward to his journeys, traveling by day and staying in the Gatetowns at night.

While staying in the Gatetowns the High King gained a reputation as a free spirit who loved his beer, stories, and song. Where his brother was often considered reckless in leisure, the High King was reserved and, somehow regal in these frontier taverns. Even while relaxing and enjoying himself, the High King presented a calm of quiet dignity.

In July of 512 ER, High King Vichol decided to winter at Siltamuuri and ordered Autumn and Wintermeet take place in Deathach. He left from Karsia with his entourage of soldiers. The High King traveled for three days with little distraction. On the evening of the Fourth day a strong storm gathered over the western mountains, one of the many thunderheads that gathered so often over the Barrowheart. Soon the storm would be on them and their travels would become much more dangerous. As the rain started to fall the Gatetown of Goranathel could be seen on the horizon.

As lighting pierced the sky the High King's party approached. Boronos, the Keeper, met them at the gate. He welcomed the royal party with open arms and led them inside the walled city. The Keeper led the High King to the tavern in the center of the town. From this vantage point the walls could not be seen through the thick trees and the scene reminded the High King of the days of his youth and the small villages and shires so prevalent throughout his lands.

The High King and his party entered the tavern and ordered dinner while the Keeper's steward fed and sheltered the horses from the growing storm. The wind grew as their small feast came. The weary travelers ravenously attacked their food and soon packed their bellies full. Tired and sore from their long days journey the royal party was escorted to their quarters, most fell fast asleep as the storm tore outside.

The High King fell into a restless sleep and dreamed of a wondrous world where the forest glowed with an inner light. In his dream the High King heard the beautiful song of some far-off maiden. He searched for what seemed like hours for the source of the beautiful melody and soon found her. She was kneeling by the side of a red stream, washing the dusty sir coat he wore on his long journey. He silently approached her and called to her, with a start she dropped the sir coat. The blue and gold material was quickly swept down stream and into the realm of dreams.

She stood quickly and straightened her skirts. She was beautiful. She had dark raven hair and the brightest green eyes. The odd ever-light shone off her perfect pale skin. She spoke, and excused herself for not noticing the good King.

The High King blushed at the sound of her voice. Never had the sound of someone's voice affected him so. He felt as if he knew this woman forever and wanted very much to take her and hold her, and marry her. She was no stranger to him. She was a part of his heart. She was his eternity.

In his dream he told her that he loved her, and she told him that she loved him. He told her that he wanted to make her his queen and she told him that he could not; it was not the way it was supposed to be. With that, she stepped close to him and kissed him, he could feel his heart race and a deep sense of loss grow in his heart.

As she stepped back from him she smiled and held her hands to her belly. She whispered that she loved him and turned, returning to the river. On the banks of the stream she knelt and folded her hands in her lap. Looking at the High King she smiled, and fell backwards into the flowing stream.

High King Vichol woke with a start. The wind was howling outside and rain pounded at the shutters over the windows. Rubbing his eyes with his hands he sat up and sought his bearings. The ride had left him tired and sore, but he was done with sleep. Rising, he donned his clothes and cloak and left into the storm. Lightning arched across the sky and the rain and the wind whipped at his cloak. The sky was still dark and song and merriment from the tavern was quieting as, one by one, those who drank their fill left for their beds.

The High King went to the tavern, as he approached, the last of the nights merry makers were off and on their way to bed. As the High King entered the tavern it was all but empty save for the odd traveler drinking stew and ale and eating their nights meal from trenchers of day old bread. The High King took a seat opposite the door and ordered a pint of Seannaught stout. The barman delivered it and the good king drank his fill and settled in to play a game of bones and staves.

The high King was quickly lost in thought when he heard the door to the tavern open. Looking from the game he saw a slender figure wrapped tightly in a cloak. The summer warmth was driven away by the storm and the small figure, obviously soaked to the bone, rushed and huddled by the raging fire.

High King Vichol, always one to help those in need called over the barman and ordered warmed mulled wine. The barman returned with the spiced drink and the High King brought it to the small huddled figure by the fire. He placed the drink beside the traveler and said to drink it up, that the warmth would do the traveler well. He then offered the traveler his cloak, which was warm and dry and would do far better than the soaked garment the traveler was currently wearing. The traveler spoke words of thanks, which were quickly covered up by the strong winds howling outside. The High King then took the wet cloak from the traveler and set it on a nearby table.

He could see by her form that the traveler was a young hooded woman, wrapped in soaked well-worn clothing and a large mantle, and who was now shivering in the damp air. He quickly placed his cloak upon her shoulders and inquired her name. She said that it was Aisling and that she had traveled here to seek employment in the tavern.

They talked for a short while, the High King and future barmaid. She did not notice who the kind stranger was and the good king had no intentions of telling her. For a moment they were equals; two weary travelers talking as weary travelers often do. Her voice sounded familiar and comforting. He could not see her face under her deep wool hood, but the High King knew he knew her from elsewhere, though he could not remember an Aisling in his travels.

The conversation lulled as both the High King and the future barmaid watched the flames lap at the cindered wood. The wind howled outside with greater ferocity and the force of the gale broke a branch loose from a nearby tree. The bough struck the roof of the tavern with a loud crack causing the High King and Aisling to jump. The two adventurers laughed off their small embarrassment and settled back into conversation.

The fire warmed Aisling and soon she found the cloak and mantle much too hot. She removed the cloak and lifted the mantle from her shoulders. Her beautiful raven hair cascaded down her back. The High King stared in utter disbelief. The traveler with whom he had conversed for so long was the woman from his dream.

Speechless, the High King stared in amazement. The feelings from the dream returned. It was as if he had known her his entire life. He was home in her presence and as such, she was all that has ever been and will ever be in the world. She was his future and his past.

She asked the good King if there was anything the matter. He replied that there was not. She asked him why he was traveling so far from safety and was he seeking employment at the Gatetown or was he taking Guard at Siltamuuri. The High King chuckled under his breath. He said that he was bound to take Guard at Siltamuuri and it was his duty to his people to protect them. She smiled and said that it was a fine man who looks after his family so, and asked if he had many children. The High King commented that he was unmarried, and though he had no children of his own felt as if he had thousands.

The two talked until long after the storm ended and the false dawn shown in the morning sky. Aisling then stood; the High King rose with her. She leaned close to him and kissed him on his cheek, thanking him for his kindness and generosity. She then said that she must be off to bed if she was to impress the Barman to hire her.

The High King escorted her to her quarters and bid her good night. She smiled and kissed him again, full on his lips. He gave in to her and held her, as the sky grew brighter. He then spoke softly and told her to sleep well, kissing her again, he bid her farewell.

The following day the High King did not see the woman from his dreams. He and his men hunted cony in the nearby forests and ate them while safely watching a troll stalk on the far banks of the Lansu River. The

High King and his party returned for dinner. Full from the rabbits the High King skipped the feast for a well needed rest. He dreamt of a beautiful maiden, Aisling, washing his sir coat by a river and woke with a start as she fell backwards into the river.

The night was full and deep when he left his cabin. The tavern was empty and the fire was but low coals. He entered, upset that he missed his raven-haired beauty, and sunk into a well-worn chair in front of the embers. He soon found himself lost in thought. He did not hear the kitchen door open and close, nor did he hear the soft footfalls on the worn wooded floor behind him, but he knew it was she. He stood and rose from the chair. He heard a screech behind him and quickly turned.

Aisling was leaning on a table, hand clutched tightly to her heart. She said that he had startled her. She then calmed and went to him. Taking his hand she led him to the fire, and bid he sit. She then pulled a cushion from a nearby bench, placed it on the ground in front of him, removed her shoes and stockings and sat, leaning against him. She stretched her tired feet and put them on the hearth to be warmed and told him with a sweet laugh that he should work the soreness out of her back and shoulders. He agreed and started kneading the knots from her back.

She asked him his name he said that he was named Vichol. She commented, like the King and he agreed. Very much like the King. They talked and held each other close. She told him that she had dreamt of him the night before. That she was washing a royal sir coat by the side of a river and he approached. She went on to say that it was as if she had known him all of his life and that she knew she loved him. She then said that he kissed her and she returned to the bank by the stream, when she did, he fell into the water. It was then that she woke.

The High King told her of his dreams. After word they sat in silence listening to the crackling of the dying fire. Leaning her head to his chest she said that she did love him. She knew little of him and soon he would have to leave for his post, but something in her heart told her it was true. He told her that he loved her as well and that after his watch he would come for her and take her home, if she'd have him. She said that she would and laid her head on his chest to hear his heart beat. Hours passed and the two held each other tight. When the first light hit the sky, he led her to her quarters. They kissed and embraced and again he bid her goodnight and left.

The same happened for the next four nights. The High King would meet her late and they would hold each other, and talk of their dreams and desires. She made the High King feel like a normal man, a man untouched by the burden of leadership. They would talk of their childhoods and the deaths of their parents, for they were both orphaned. They talked of their families, he of his brother and her of her aunt, who had raised her after her family died. They talked for hours and grew deeper in love.

On the fifth night, the High King didn't leave her in the morning, but went with her to bed. As the morning sun broke over the horizon the two lovers were lost in each other's embrace. The High King had found his Queen and she loved him for his heart, not for his title. He had found his eternity and on the following morning, he had to leave.

The two rose in the early afternoon and broke their fast with apples and bread. The High King knew what he must do. He knelt before the barmaid and took her hand. He told her of his secret; that he was the High King of the Six and that she was his. He asked her for her heart and devotion. He asked her to make him whole, to be his wife, his Queen. Aisling wavered and fell to her knees. With tears in her eyes she said that she would be his wife and would take him as her husband.

The High King left the following morning and bid farewell to his betrothed. He would send a guard to take her to Karsia where they would prepare for their wedding. She packed her things, moved them to the royal quarters, and waited for her escort to her new home.

On the road to Siltamuuri High King Vichol spotted movement on the road ahead. In the distance he saw a woman in white standing in the road watching him approach. The High King called out to her. As he did a white Stag stepped from the trees and walked to the woman. She climbed onto the back of the magical

beast, turned to look at the High King, placed her hand to her heart, and bowed her head. As fast as it came, the Stag, bearing its rider, bounded off into the forest. When the King's Party arrived at the spot of the woman and Stag they found a small circle of mushrooms with a small red rose growing from its center.

### **The Circle and the Rose**

The Autumn and Winter were a long time for High King Vichol. When the good king arrived at Deathach he sent word to send for a King's Guard to escort Aisling from Goranathel to Karsia, but by the time the message reached the capitol late autumn had set in and Autumnmeet and the Autumn Revel had come and gone. Over the winter word reached Siltamuuri that Aisling was expecting the High King's child.

Escorting her while she was with child would prove too risky. The future queen would be stranded at Goranathel for the winter. Because of the snows and Barrowhearts marauders, a party could not risk getting her until April, the time she was due. The High King sent word to Goranathel to inform Aisling that she would continue to stay in his quarters and receive anything she wanted. He would personally travel to her to be with her and his child and to marry her prior to the child's birth.

The winter passed and no word had arrived from Goranathel. The High King and his escort rode hard and fast to the King's Bride. After weeks of hard riding they came to the Gatetown of Kaltiel, one day's ride from Goranathel. That night the king once again dreamed.

He was back on the river bank in the magical world, Aisling was there holding a small baby boy. She walked to him and said that his name was Bulzaric and he was their son. The family embraced and the High King took his son in his arms. He held him close and could feel his warmth against his arms. Aisling stepped back and told the High King that she loved him. She then began to change. Much to his horror her body twisted and a sharp spasm shot through her body. She screamed and changed. Within moments she was gone, replaced by a perfect red rose growing from a small circle of mushrooms.

The High King woke in horror. He ran from bed and threw on his clothing, ran to the stables and rode hard toward Goranathel. By early morning he reached near where the woman and stag had been seen. Rounding the bend he saw her, standing all in white. She was facing the forest and held in her arms a small bundle.

The High King jumped from his horse and drew Fendrail. He ran to the woman and demanded to know who she was and what happened. The woman in white nodded and told him that she was the Oracle of the Ancients. She had returned and saved his heir. He demanded to know what had happened to Aisling. The Oracle replied that she was not meant to be. Though their love was pure and true, she was not meant to be queen. That was destined for another.

High King Vichol demanded that he see her but the Oracle said that she was gone, returned to the home of her birth in the land of light. She then stepped from her circle and presented him with his son. She offered the baby to the High King, he sheathed Fendrail and reached for his son. He knew that it was his and that his name was Bulzaric. He knew it in his heart. He also knew that Aisling was still alive and would still be waiting for him. He vowed he would love her forever, whether the Green Lady released her or not.

Holding his son he asked the Oracle what had happened, why was he cursed with the loss of his love. She replied that Aisling was never meant to be his. They met in the realms of the brightland and consummated their love in the land of the shadow, of the mortal and so birthed a mortal. They had somehow changed fate and had something that was pure and true magic. Whether they would meet again the Oracle did not say. Her visions and wisdom would not reach into the clouded future created by their meeting. She went on to say that the Green Lady claimed Aisling however would not claim the boy out of respect for the High King's heritage.

The Oracle then returned to her circle and told the High King that she had returned to the shadowlands and when needed could be found. She then bid the good king farewell, knelt and vanished.

High King Vichol stood, empty and hollow on the King's Road. The thunder of hooves could be heard behind him. Little Bulzaric didn't make a sound; he simply stared into his father's eyes with a look of devotion and sympathy. The little prince was special and pure. He would grow to be a great leader that was certain.

As the frantic King's Guard rode hard and fast to surround and protect the High King, Vichol noticed something in the little prince's hand. Reaching he gently opened the tiny fist and quickly held his son close, tight against his chest. Clasped in the prince's hand was a lock of raven hair tied with a purple ribbon.

### **Contracts and Noble Blood**

Prince Bulzaric had a happy childhood. His father raised him and trained him. Regardless how much the High King wished it, he could not see his son to be king. In the Kaurathel culture, royal children born outside of the contract of marriage could not inherit the throne, yet still, the training Prince Bulzaric received was a King's education. The young prince excelled at his training and more. He had a strong and kind, compassionate heart.

When he reached his late teens he proved himself a hero, often patrolling the provinces keeping piece wherever he went. At the age of twenty he took a long guard at Siltamuuri and in 539, at twenty-five, led the first invasion of the Barrowheart holding the Barrowheart village of Carthan for five weeks.

After being routed from Carthan Prince Bulzaric returned to Siltamuuri and led the defense against the Barrowheart's retaliation. The good prince stopped four subsequent retaliations and in the end established the Patrol, a group of elite soldiers of the Order of Korlin who infiltrate and watch the Dubhember Pass.

### **The Forging of Finndragol**

In 540, Prince Bulzaric was having dinner in the tavern at Deathach. He was enjoying his meal and watching the Sotetlatas perform a play based on the good Prince's invasion of the Barrowheart. The Sotetlatas were a tribe of Vaeltaa who were often known to inspire visions in those who watched their performances. The performance that night was no exception.

While Prince Bulzaric was watching the show he was struck by a powerful vision. He was standing by the wall with his father. He reached to the chain around his neck and found the small gem at its center. Below the gem was a piece of his mother's hair, given to him by his father all those years ago.

In the vision the forces of Lord Droch were attacking. Their mocking black and white banners charged with a skeletal stags head, flying high above their host. They attacked and as they did Lord Droch grew in both size and stature. Soon he was towering over the High King and his son. The agent of Zoradieth reached out and began tearing great heaps of stone from the face of Siltamuuri. Soon the wall collapsed save for a rough pillar of stone surrounding the High King and Prince Bulzaric. As the hordes of the Barrowheart erupted from the Dubhember Pass Lord Droch reached for the High King. Seizing him around the waist he wrenched the High King skyward.

Prince Bulzaric reached for his weapon, but did not find it in his scabbard. He then felt the burn from his necklace. He reached and tore it from his neck. As he did the piece of hair below the gem grew and formed into a brilliant weapon. Prince Bulzaric leapt and swung his new sword and in doing so lopped off the hand holding his father. He landed and threw the sword at Lord Droch. The blade hit him firmly in the chest and drove him backwards into the Dubhember Pass. Blood poured down the pass like a river as Lord Droch's body erupted in a shower of filth and gore.

Prince Bulzaric's head cleared as he was beginning to fall. He caught himself and quickly took in his bearings. He was still sitting in the tavern at Deathach and the play was still being performed. Looking around the room he had noticed that no one had seen him begin to fall. At once he knew what he had to do. He stood and raced to the stables.



Prince Bulzaric rode as fast as he could stopping only to refresh his horse and occasionally sleep. He rode for days and was soon nearing the Gatetown of Goranathel. As he rounded a bend in the king's road he found what he was looking for, the Circle and the Rose.

Prince Bulzaric jumped from his horse and ran into the circle. As he hit the center he was transported into another world. He was in a strange grove by a river, standing at its center was a woman in white, the Oracle. She lowered her hood and looked at him, smiling she asked him for his necklace. He handed it to her. She looked at it closely and asked for he to follow her.

She walked to the side of the grove and stepped into the side of a massive oak. He did as he was asked and emerged in a stone room. At its center there was a gold table and in the corner, a forge. The Oracle called out, but there was no answer. She called again and again received no response. She then walked to the gold table and called out again, this time by name. She called for Viisachol the Keeper, Protector of the Artifacts of the Valkea.

A door that was not there prior opened and a small haggard old man dressed in white and red robes came stumbling out brushing dust off of his worn robes. He looked at the Oracle and asked her what she wanted. She said that she required him to forge a weapon of power. The Keeper laughed and said that such a thing would be impossible. Only the Greene Lady could make such requests.

The Oracle then leaned closer to the Keeper. The light in the room darkened as the Oracle spoke. She told the Keeper that he would do as he was told, grabbed the prince by the shoulders moving him into the center of the room and stated that Faranan's blood required his service. The Keeper visibly wilted under her presence.

Upon seeing the young Prince and the Keeper livened up and welcomed him to his home, commenting how much he looked like his great-grandfather. He asked the Prince what it is he would like to have done. The Prince relayed his vision to the Keeper. The Keeper looked at the Oracle and asked if this was true. She said that it was very most likely that it was.

With a sigh the Keeper took the necklace from the Oracle and brought it to his forge. He snapped the gems apart and took the piece of hair from between them. He heated his forge and with a pair of tongs placed the hair in the fire. Prince Bulzaric called out in protest. Such a flame would destroy the hair and it was the only thing he had from his mother. The Oracle calmed him and told him that it was all right. That the Keeper knew what he was doing.

The Keeper removed the hair from the fire. It was glowing white-hot. He brought it to his stone anvil and with a magical hammer began to pound away. As he brought the hammer down on the hair it grew and lengthened. After what seemed like hours the hair did not look like hair at all. It was long and sharp, like a sword. The color had changed from black to silver. The Keeper worked for another hour. The blade became more pronounced and the cross-guard took on a shape and color of its own.

The keeper finished and began to polish away the filth from the forge. After a short time he picked up the gems and fixed them to either side of the cross-guard. Wrapping the handle in padding and leather he handed the blade to Bulzaric.

As Prince Bulzaric took the blade he found it warm to the touch. He knew it was a sword of true power; it possessed his mother's love for he and his father. It would protect them and their people.

He bid farewell to the Oracle and the Keeper and returned to his horse. As he mounted the stallion noticed movement down the King's Road. As he looked more closely he was taken aback. Standing in his path was the white Stag. As the Stag bounded into the woods he heard a whisper on the breeze. He knew it at as the name of his blade. Finndragol.

## **The War of Valkadier**

In 541 the lizardmen and goblin tribes of southern Valkadier attacked the reptilian tribes of the Gythainen. The mage-led Gythainen put up a strong resistance but soon fell to the sheer numbers of lizardmen and goblins. Emissaries of the Gythainen traveled to Karsia Castle in a desperate attempt to gather troops to drive out the forces of the south.

High King Vichol and Darweshi the Elder, leader of the Magocracy of Gythai met in the great hall of Karsia and the conditions were set. Since the Gythainen had lost so many assisting the Kaurathel during the War of the Purge High King Vichol was happy to lend assistance, but feared for their future safety. In return for the Kaurath assistance, and for their safety, the Gythainen must agree to join the Six Kingdoms of Kaurath and swear fealty under the High King. Darwishi the Elder pondered and agreed and the conditions were set.

The High King ordered Prince Bulzaric and Prince Robkiel to lead the assault. Prince Robkiel led his troops down the King's road and attacked from the south while Prince Bulzaric led the troops from the north directly against the occupying army. As both armies marched on Valkadier the legions of Lizardmen and goblins were quickly driven out and retreated in devastation. Soon the Gythainen were returned to power.

The High King ordered Prince Bulzaric to stay and act as the governing body while the leadership structure of the Magocracy could be rebuilt. After the rulers were in place High King Vichol ordered a council of leaders. Meeting in Karsia Castle the Treaty of Valkadier was drafted and signed.

Bulzaric and his legion remained in Gythai for three years training Gythainen warriors and mages in the art of tactics. The Gythainen trained and quickly mastered the lessons. An elite force, called the Majasi, was created to serve as the special warriors of Gythai. Though Gythainen do not have gills the Majasi were magically manipulated to breathe in the water. They had excelled in their lessons and by the end of the training the Majasi had secured the southern borders of their lands and had reestablished the southern watch. The Magocracy of Gythai was strong once more.

## **The Oracle Returns**

Years came and went. The Seven Kingdoms of Kaurath went on as they had for years before. Trade had established over the King's Road and soon bands of professional highwaymen sold their services to ensure safe travel along the long dangerous road. Crops were sown and harvested and children were born as the elders died. Eighteen years passed and still High King Vichol did not age.

During the harvest of 559 a farmer outside of the capitol city found a faery circle in a field of wheat. The occurrences of faery circles were nothing rare. What was odd about this one was what was found inside it. Growing from the center of the circle was a single red rose.

Word of the strange occurrence was immediately sent to Ichabod Leagallow, the King's steward at Karsia. Ichabod delivered the word and soon the High King was on his way. When the High King arrived he walked to the circle and knelt beside it. Convinced that it was the same as the circle he experienced on the King's Road, he stood and stepped through.

The High King did not enter into another world, nor did he age or passed into a faery trick. He just stood in the center for all to see. Nothing appeared to have happened. When the High King exited the circle he looked concerned. When asked what had happened he said that a voice, the voice of the Oracle had told him that his Kingdom was in danger. In order to secure the safety of his people he was to seek out the Ograth, the half-ogres of the Sidhe, the warriors of the Surullinen.



## **The Drawing of the Ograth**

High King Vichol traveled south, through the Plains of Morathel to the Southern Surullinen below the Swamp of Valkedier. There he and his guard came across a small man, no taller than a child, sitting on a rock by the side of the road.

Calling from his stone he hailed the travelers and bid them come near. The King, suspecting that he was in the presence of a fae did as he was asked. He rode close to the man. The small man demanded a toll of milk bread or honey be paid. The High King reached into his traveling pouch and withdrew from it his toll, wrapped in a small bundle and tossed it to the fae.

The High King then withdrew a small flask and told the fae that in the bottle was full of a fine hobling stout and that if he helped the High King the bottle and its contents were his. The little man asked what it was that the High King wanted. The king replied that he wished to be escorted to the Ograth. The fae quickly agreed and reached for the bottle. The High King said not until they had reached the Ograth. The fae smiled and said that the job was done. The Ograth were behind them.

The meeting with the Ograth went well. They had said that they were expecting the High King and that they would join his Kingdom. The exact details of the meeting and of the treaty signed are still considered secret and therefore locked deep within Karsia. It is known, however, that in the summer of 560, the Treaty of Si'ell was signed in the southern Gatetown of Kiisa on the shores of Lake Aismir. The Nations of Kaurath were now Eight.

## **The Warrior Princess**

In the year 562 forces of Ijjen and Vanastagg were regularly raiding the Vorlonal. Soon the armies of Harcos were growing slim. Prince Robkiel asked his brother for more troops and soon a large host was moving through Kasember toward the Dragon's Spine.

The forces arrived and were split under the leadership of Prince Bulzaric, Prince Robkiel, Warrior Princess Arianith Ulfark of the Vorlonal, and King Uthgar Ulfark of the Vorlonal. The forces set a tenuous front between the Dragon's Spine and the Keskaur Mountains. The front would hold and weaken. When it did more forces were brought in to halt its collapse. The war raged for years and in the end, the forces of the Kaurath were weakened considerably.

The conflict lasted for nine years. Hundreds permanently died and the Province of Harcos was left in utter ruin. Even though the forces of Ijjen and Vanastagg had been driven back, rogue bands and marauders are a constant threat to this day.

Feeling that if High King Vichol acted sooner the devastation of Harcos would not have been as great, King Uthgar demanded an emergency meeting of Kings in march of 572. The Council met in the great hall of Brianoch and the outlook was dreary. King Uthgar was adamant that something be done to guarantee the protection of his kingdom and province or else he would break the Treaty of Vanhakard.

The Council debated for two weeks and in the end they came to a conclusion. High King Vichol and Warrior Princess Arianith would wed. The resulting union would secure and guarantee the safety of the Vorlonal as well as ensure an heir to the throne of the Kaurath.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of June in the year 572 High King Vichol and High Queen Arianith married at Karsia. The heads of the Eight Kingdoms were present. High King Vichol was ninety-eight, High Queen Arianith was nineteen.

## **One Hundred Years and The Seven Heirs**

Over the next few years the High King and Queen grew to love each other. By the early spring 573 Arianith was with child. Soon the true heir of the Kaurath would be born. Little Prince Nicholi was born in October of 573, a year and a month before his father's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The following year the kingdom prepared for a massive celebration, to celebrate both the birth of the heir as well as the High King's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The finest of food and drink was brought from all around to Karsia castle. The celebrations would last for ten days and kingdomwide faires and carnivals would be erected in shires and glens to join in the celebration. The celebrations arrived and went and the morale of the kingdom was on its way to reparation. After the long Vorlonal war the heart of many a Kaurath was worn and broken. They now had permission to start to heal.

The following seven years, from 575 to 581 saw the most prolific growth of a royal family since before the reign of Morathel. Five princes and princesses were born; Prince Naivan, Princess Ruthiel, Prince Vaellan and the twins, Prince Wulfram and Princess Makea. The rooms in Karsia were quickly growing full.

By the age of five it was discovered that Prince Naivan was suffering from a wasting disease. Scholars from across the land were called in to investigate the young prince's condition. No cause could be found however conclusions were made. He would most likely live a normal human lifespan, however he would not be as strong or as resilient as his siblings.

The children grew and matured and could soon be seen delving into the arts offered to Royals. Crown Prince Nicholi was trained in the arts of the King while Prince Naivan studied the realms of Celestial Magic, much to the distain of his mother. Princess Ruthiel quickly delved into the arts of war, often spending months on end with her dying grandfather, King Uthgar. Prince Vaellan was an entirely different story all together.

As a child Prince Vaellan would often play intricate pranks on his older brothers and sister. He was a raucous troublemaker who could often be found hiding from his tutors in the bars and back alleys of Karauth, often playing dice or occasionally shoplifting from local merchants. In 588, at the age of ten, as punishment for a particularly felonious act, the young prince was sent to serve with his half brother at Siltamuuri. Vaellan quickly excelled and seemed to fall into track. Shortly after the birth of Prince Talvi, the youngest heir, Vaellan was assigned a place in the Order of Korlin and reassigned to Karsia castle. Where he dutifully looked after his little brother, Prince Talvi.

Prince Talvi was born ill like his brother Naivan. He too suffered from a wasting disease, however the strain was far more devastating than Naivan's. Little Talvi suffered his first death from the disease in 592. Within a month the seven children all returned to Karsia castle to assist in the care of the young prince.

## **The Haran and Harni of Innos Halal**

In 594 Prince Talvi was suffering, Princess Ruthiel, now a beautiful warrior and leader in her own right, led a party to Innostas to seek aid from the Haran of Innos Halal. The Haran was a powerful healer and his potions and elixirs were legendary.

He met her in his labs and was taken by the sight of her. She had an otherworldly beauty, which, no doubt, was an effect of her fae heritage. He had prepared the elixir for her in advance and handed it to her. She thanked him and as she turned to leave he asked if she needed escort to Karsia. She knew that she did not, She was powerful enough to hold her own against the Barrowheart, a simple journey through the Surullinen she would survive though she said that she did. She was taken with the elven king and sought to spend time with him and learn more about him. Due to the occasional Barrowheart patrol, the trip took longer than anticipated and by the time they had arrived at Karsia little Prince Talvi and suffered another death.

Haran Quinar stood watch over the dying prince administering him potions and elixirs to try to keep him alive. Princess Ruthiel fell in love with Haran Quinar for his devotion to her brother, and in time he fell

deep in love with her and though the marriage of an elf of Innos Halal and a human was considered taboo, Haran Quinar asked for her to make him whole and to become his Queen. Princess Ruthiel accepted.

In a quiet ceremony in the garden of Karsia they were married. The officiator, Sir Ichabod Leagallow, onetime steward of the High King, performed the ceremony. As he neared the completion he called for the Cords of Binding, the lengths of cord used to bind the couple in the contract of marriage. The small crowd parted as Prince Bulzaric carried the small frail Prince Talvi in his arms. He walked to the officiator and as he did Prince Talvi handed Sir Ichabod two lengths of leather cord. Prince Bulzaric then placed the young prince down on a small chair next to his sister, and returned to the line. Sir Ichabod continued and soon the cords were wrapped and the ceremony was complete. The Haran and Harni of Innos Halal then picked up the young prince and returned him to his chambers. The celebrations would have to wait..

### **The Death of the Little Prince**

Shortly after the marriage of the Haran and Harni Prince Talvi slipped into a deep coma. Within the month the little prince was dead. The nation mourned the loss of the little prince and gifts and condolences flooded in from the kingdom. As is the way of the Kaurath the body was cremated and placed in a small silver casket fashioned by the dwarves of Eltor Szakal. The royal family held a public funeral in honor of the prince. Hundreds came to listen to the High King speak.

A King's Guard was formed and the small casket was marched to the Cemetery of Kiranoth. As the casket was lowered into the ground thunder tore across the sky. The High King jumped at the sound and as he did he noticed a brilliant white Stag watching from a far distance. This time the Stag did not run when it was noticed. Instead it appeared as if it bowed its head to the High King. The High King returned the gesture and started to break down. Prince Talvi had always wanted to see a Stag.

### **The Wilderness**

The royal family was devastated by the loss of the prince. High King Vichol became quiet and withdrawn in private, however was still a strong ruler. The Princes and Princesses each dealt in their own way. Prince Bulzaric returned to Siltamuuri. Prince Nicholi attended the High Queen, Harni Ruthiel returned to Innostas Castle with her husband, and Prince Vaellan reverted back to the wild days of his youth, while the twins delved deeper into their lessons.

The High Queen, devastated by the loss of her youngest son, became angry and violent. She would train in the armory for hours and her temper grew more and more severe. In the summer of 597 High Queen Arianith broke down and demanded that she be alone. She retired for the night and by the next morning was gone. It has been theorized that the High Queen, the warrior queen of the Vorlonal, entered the wilderness.

The High King organized a search that spanned the entire kingdom. The High Queen was never found. He ordered that the few permanent circles in the kingdom report immediately if she resurrected. She never did. The High Queen was gone.

### **The Loss of a Son and the Threat of a Kingdom**

After the death of Prince Talvi, High King Vichol focused on the defense and protection of his Kingdom. Over the previous five years all of his focus was on saving his youngest son. Now he had to return to his kingdom. They needed him.

The Barrowheart had fought their way through the Dubhember Peaks and had fortified a path through the troll-infested mountains. They were now sending in huge assaults from this secret road through the impassable Eltor Mountains.

The Sidhe were increasing their harassment of the city of Kaurath and in the autumn of 598 kidnapped many children from the surrounding farmlands. The sale of false potions and talismans to ward off the fae had increased and his people were relying on unproven remedies rather than the proven, faerystones.

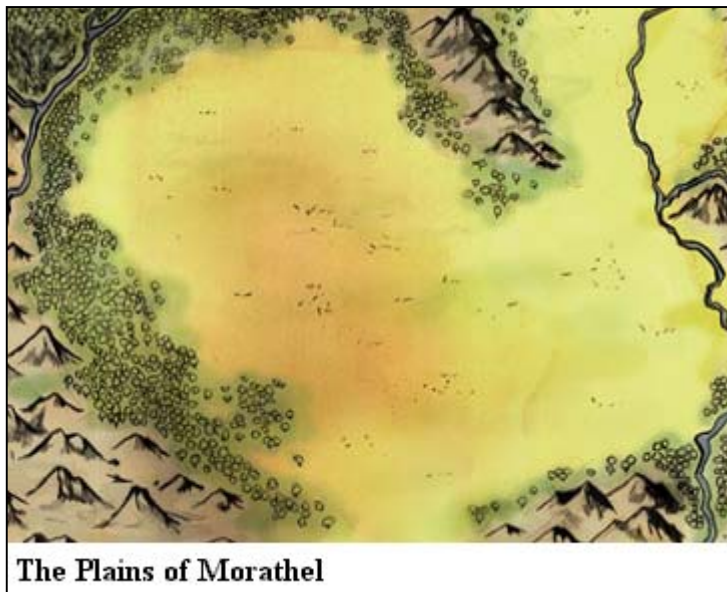
In Harcos the unrest of the Ijjen and raids by the Vanastagg grew and now bordered on an all out war greater than the War of Vorlonal fought all those years ago. To make matters worse King Uthgar was lying in Castle Drakon at Vahnakard dying. Soon he would be gone and his warrior lords may try to seize control of the Kingdom.

In an attempt to correct the problem High King Vichol assigned his sons to seize control of the provinces. Prince Nicholi was granted title over the Province of Harcos and would choose the successor of his Grandfather. Prince Naivan was granted title over the Swamp at Valkedier where his knowledge of Celestial magics would serve the Magocracy of Gythai, Prince Vaellan would rule the Province of Kasember. Haran Quinar and Harni Ruthiel would take their rule outside of Innos Halal and serve as the provincial rulers of Haltia. Prince Bulzaric would seek the return of the Razioch and if he succeeded would be granted title over the Plains of Morathel. The fight for the survival of the Kingdom had begun.

### **Eight Become Nine**

Prince Bulzaric left with a host on May 1, 599 to seek out the lords of ancient Kaurath. He sought to find the Heir of Esau. The journey was long and difficult. Before he left his father told him to follow his heart and he would find them and so he did. Prince Bulzaric kept to the Funerary Trail and headed straight for the ancient city of Jokainen.

His mind and heart was on visiting the grave of his young half-brother. However he knew that he would not. He must find the Razioch, true noble lords of the Kaurath. His father said that they were the key to the survival of the kingdom. He would not fail. After a long journey Jokainen was in sight.



It is better to read the words of one who had witnessed the event. Richard Kanodar, a loyal soldier of Bulzaric's guards, was with the Prince when he reached Jokainen. The following is his words:

“As we approached the faded city of Jokainen, our expeditionary force was filled with quiet awe. The once beautiful capitol of our people lay in ruins faded blue granite parapets and walls collapsed and left useless, worn away by the ages.

Though the city looked dead, those of us who traveled with His Highness, Prince Bulzaric, knew that it was not so. Here, in the Heart of the Plains of Morathel, the Half-Orcs had built their stronghold. Had we not been with the Prince, I think that we would not have had the courage to carry on.

Known for their ferocity, dedication and skill in battle, the half-orcs of the plains would be a vital component in the solidifying the union of the Nine Kingdoms. These savages were feared, but also greatly respected. There were some who said that they were the ancient and noble Razioch, others say spawn from Zoradieth's horde. So, led by our Prince, we had marched here through the wasteland of the Plains of

Morathel. Many horrors and wonders had we encountered along the way, but what awaited us in the ruined city of Jokainen was nothing we could be prepared for.

As we drew closer to the ruined citadel of our ancestors, we began to see signs of life. Fire pits, horse droppings, all around us there were signs of habitation. It was difficult to keep calm, but the presence of his Highness bolstered our resolve. After all, he was the great Bulzaric, Warrior Prince of the Kaurathel. We crept silently closer to the ruins that were the Half Orc stronghold. Though we could not discern how they could defend something with few standing walls, and little shelter.

Entering the city, we continued to see small signs of life and yet there were no people inhabiting the place. Deeper into the ruins we carefully made our way, eventually arriving at the once great castle of Zaraphal. With sadness in our hearts, we walked through the ruined halls that had once held the pride of our folk. Even the great Prince was struck by the truth of this place this, and the men could sense it.

The inner walls of the castle at the center of Jokainen were scorched bare and faded by the harsh winds, and what little we did find inside was ancient and rotted. Nothing lived in this place. The stories had been wrong. We would not find the Lords of the Plain in this crumbled palace; we probably wouldn't find them at all.

That night, we set camp within the weathered great hall of the castle. Guards were kept as normal, though none of us really slept. I could not tell you whether the place was haunted or not, but memories of the tales of it's once splendor and ultimately it's terrible fall weighed heavily on each of the men. His highness was no exception.

After a sleepless night, we gathered our belongings and set out once more. The Prince was determined to find what his father needed, in the blasted Plains of Morathel, or in the Dragonspine peaks. Prince Bulzaric would not fail his father. With heavy hearts we made our way out of the ruined city, and into the wilds again.

Upon leaving ruined city of Jokainen we were met by a host the likes of which this humble scribe has never seen, and never wishes to face again. The half-orcs met us there. There stood a great host arrayed before us, orich weapons and armor gleaming in the harsh morning sun, beautiful in its terrible majesty. Those we had come seeking had found us. The men were frightened, and even the presence of the Prince could not keep them from showing signs.

A voice rang out. T'was thick, gravelly, a voice that well matched this barren place. The Lord of the Orcs was addressing our Prince in a language that I could not understand, and our Lord spoke back to him in the common tongue of the Kaurath. I remember it well. The mighty Prince drew his blade, Finndragol, and declared in an even voice that he had come to claim the armies of the Plain as his own.

The leader of the Orcish host signaled to his men, and there was a flurry of action. We were separated from our liege, and he was brought to face the large Half-orc. Encircled by a ring of the gray skinned soldiers, we could not see the fate of our Lord. Pushing forward in an attempt to join the Prince, we were met by a wall of ironclad warriors. A fight broke out, weapons drawn, but was quelled when the voice of Bulzaric rang out ordering the peace be kept. Laying down our blades, we gave in to the Half-orcs at the behest of our Lord.

Our party was taken away to an impromptu camp set up by the Half-orc legion. We could still hear Bulzaric's voice, as well as that of the Orcish leader speaking in his strange tongue. The voice of our Lord gave the men hope that we would survive this encounter, though we still expected the worse and were ready to fight our way to Bulzaric's side should the need arise.

The day passed with little change, and as night fell we were fed and then taken to tents outfitted with pallets for sleeping. We had still heard nothing from our Lord, but needed the rest. Under orders to keep the peace, the company chose tents and settled down to a night of uncertainty and unrest.

The next day, as we woke from fitful sleep, Prince Bulzaric came to us. He had with him the blazon of the Half Orcs, which he handed to us. He had battled the Half-orc Lord in ritual combat, and he had defeated the gray and green skinned Plains Warden. It was time for us to return to King Vichol with good tidings. Prince Bulzaric the Kaurath had been victorious, and now the Lords of the Plains of Morathel were his to command. The Eight Kingdoms were now Nine.”

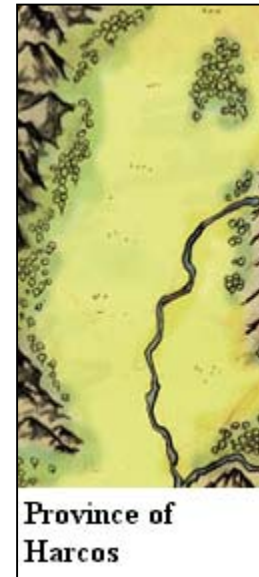
### **The Coming of Evendarr**

In the spring of 601, word reached Kaurath City that a traveler had come from the Southern Wastes claiming that he was Sir Janus Ejjel, a king’s knight from a kingdom known as Evendarr. He said he had come as an emissary of his king and would like to seek audience with High King Vichol.

The King agreed to a meeting and sent Prince Bulzaric south to serve as escort to the visiting knight. The Journey along the King’s Road was long and tiresome and by the time Prince Bulzaric and the Evendarrian knight reached Kaurath City it was late summer.

Sir Janus met with High King Vichol and his advisors in the great hall of Karsia. He told the good king that he was born from human stock in Harcos and left as a young man to seek his fortune. During that time period he joined the forces of the Duchy of Volta, south of the Southern Wastes. Eventually he found himself in the Duchy of Ravenholt where he joined the armies of the Barony of Eastwyck. He rose to high rank during a war with an invading force called the Sessuar. With full military honors he left the Eastwyck Rangers and traveled to Evendarr City. After receiving his knighthood he wished to establish contact with his birthplace. He said that he had returned to offer the High King a chance to establish contact with the powerful Kingdom of Evendarr and to potentially open negotiations of higher matters.

High King Vichol agreed that allies were just what might be needed to ensure their survival. He told Sir Janus the trials and tribulations of the past twenty years. He also reminded the former Kaurathel that their kingdom had not accepted contact with the outside kingdoms since before the War of Unification.



Sir Janus said that he understood. When he left times were hard for the Kaurathel, and that he suspected that things would have gotten more dangerous. He said that the Kingdom of Evendarr offered many improvements to Kaurath life. They had a Guild run Healer system where permanent circles were established and maintained by Guild chartered representatives. Currently Kaurath had private resurrection circles scattered through out the land where travelers would pre-pay for their services. Should payment not have been made, upon dying a family member would travel to their nearest circle, which had been chosen prior to death and pay to have their family member resurrected. No payment, no resurrection.

Sir Janus also said that Evendarr was very powerful. Under their protection they offered a chance to ensure the continued protection of the Kaurathel. He offered the good king a chance to join the rich, powerful kingdom of Evendarr. There he would become a Duke and his queen, the Duchess. He would have access to forces both great and powerful and be given a chance to defeat, once and for all, the forces of Darkness threatening his people. He would be given a chance to guarantee the continued safety of the Kaurathel.

High King Vichol told Sir Janus that he would consider the offer. He called in his scribes and had them transcribe the offer. He then sent word to his family and under-kings. This was something that had to be decided at Autumnmeet. Prior to the council, High King Vichol bid that Sir Janus prepare a presentation about the Kingdom, its cultures, and its merits. He would present them at the Meet.

As summer turned into fall, Sir Janus met with the Royal family and the leaders of the Nine and spoke of the cultures and lands of Evendarr. Many listened with great interest taking notes and asking questions about the subtleties between the kingdoms. As Autumnmeet approached debate ran rampant in the halls of



the elven lords, the taverns and public houses of the hobblings, the vardos of the Vaeltaa and the castles of the Vorlonal. There was much discussion of the coming of Evendarr and of the wonders they offered and the evils they harbored.

The Evendarrian duchy of Niman supported slavery. By endorsing the duke of Niman King Mykell of Evendarr was endorsing such atrocities. Slavery is considered a great evil in Kaurath. In the history of the kingdoms there were times when every race was once the slaves of another. To join King Mykell and swear fealty under Evendarr would be tantamount to supporting the legalizing of slavery.

Autumnmeet was held in the great hall of Karsia. All in attendance voted on the proposition of joining Evendarr. The voting was split evenly. The High King had to make his deciding vote. He refused to decide, instead choosing to enter into an elongated negotiation phase with the Evendarrians.

### **The Rogue Prince**

Following Autumnmeet Crown Prince Nicholi met privately with his father. He spoke his mind to his father and announced his shame. The Prince could not believe that his father would consider dissolving the Kingdom of his ancestors. High King Vichol tried to explain his actions and intent at the negotiations. The High King had to decide whether to betray his people for their own protection, or face the evils of his homeland alone.

Prince Nicholi still refused to accept his father's explanation and a great argument ensued. Prince Nicholi declared to his father that if he continued to entertain such traitorous thoughts that he would leave Karsia and establish his own hold on the kingdom. The High King and the Crown Prince argued into the night. In the end Prince Nicholi left the capitol vowing to stand against any treaty subjugating the Kaurathel to the rule of the Evendarrians. In response, High King Vichol named Harni Ruthial as provincial leader of Harcos.

Under the traditions and laws of the Kaurath, High King Vichol had to deal with the rogue Prince in the way of his people. The High King charged the Vadoni to hunt the Crown Prince down. The Vadoni gathered and set out in search of the Crown Prince. They are to bring him in without harm if possible, however his traitorous ways must be punished.

Prince Nicholi is now somewhere in the wilds of Kaurath. He moves like a fox, always staying out of the sight of the Vadoni. He has gathered followers and has knighted warriors and the learned to lead his cause. These Ranger Knights are still given the same courtesy as others knights of the Nine, however they are often held for questioning.

In February 603, High King Vichol offered a pardon to his son should he give up his revolt and stand once again at his father's side. Prince Nicholi responded with the following letter:

"Dear Father,

Your offer of pardon is most gracious, however I have made my decision and will stand for the good of my people. In return I offer you this offer of pardon; cease all negotiations with Evendarr and you will be forgiven. I will return to Kaurath and stand by your side. Do this not, and I will fight for the protection of my people.

Crown Prince Nicholi"

### **Valmis**

The Kingdom of Kaurath's long history is still writing itself. In my short time here I have done countless hours of research and yet I have much to learn about this place. What the future will hold I cannot say, for I am a storyteller, not a seer. The Kingdom is changing, though for good or ill I know not.

It is my hope that you read through this document with an open mind and a sense of wonder and curiosity. What is presented is a summary of thousands of documents, tales, legends, and songs. It is not the fact of the place, but it is its spirit. So come, and join me at the Barnstead's where we'll raise a pint and sing our praise to the fallen.

# CHAPTER SIX

## The Peoples and Cultures of Kaurath

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### The Nine Kingdoms of Kaurath

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The Nine Kingdoms of Kaurath are: the Kaurathel, the Vaeltaa, the Vorlonal, Seannaught, Briar Hollow, Innos Halal, the Gythainen, the Ograth and the Razioch. For a better understanding of the Nine Peoples of Kaurath, I have compiled stories of races as well as interviewed many of the regions adventurers so to better paint a picture of the rich cultures of the region. Most notably absent however are a few peoples common in other lands such as the Mystic Wood Elves, Dark Elves, Biata, Stone Elves, and most notable, those of my race, the Gorbe, or Sarr. This is not to say that these people do not exist in this northern kingdom, only that they do not have a known established homeland here. As you can see from the “established” races of Kaurath, most of those listed in the below essays and writings were once former kingdoms united with Kaurath by one of the various ancient and contemporary treaties.

On an interesting side note there are some different names for the races. Kaurathel means human, Ijjen refers to the barbarians of the plains that emulate the skills and behavior of animals to survive, Vorlonal refers to Barbarians that do not follow or emulate animals, but rather survive by brute force, and Vaeltaa, meaning wanderer, refers to gypsy tribes that were once led by a ruling tribe called the Valag.

### Elves of Innos Halal

There are two major elven groups in Kaurath, the Elves of Innos Halal and the Keskaurani bordering the Kalivan Mountains. I have asked representatives of both cultures to write brief essays about their cultures. My request was greeted with kind

The Elves of Innos Halal are strong protectors of Kaurath. They look on the other races as grandfathers look upon their children’s children. They offer guidance and understanding while maintaining a firm hand.

It is widely considered that the elves of Innos Halal saved the civilizations of Kaurath with their doctrine of Nu’ori Kansa. Through their assistance, however subtle it may be, they led the other peoples of Kaurath through the Dark Age and into the present day.

Haran Quinar Arathi and Harni Ruthiel Kaurathel Arathi rule the Elves from Innostas Castle. There Haran Quinar, and his elite Forest Knights, launch patrols into the Sidh infested Surullinen Forest. It is said that his Forest Knights are bound to the fae, though such rumors are wholly unsubstantiated.

### Gythainen

The Gythainen are a race of reptilian living in the northwestern corner of Valkadier. They are not lizardmen, rather they are a race of what appears to be reptilian humans, similar to scavengers. They possess the same size and shape of humans with similar hair and facial hair covering. Their skin is covered in scales that range in all color from greens and blues to reds and whites and even metallic. The difference in coloration seems to be a result of their powerful magics as it directly corresponds to the Kafele in which the Gythainen belongs.

### **A Brief History of the Gythainen**

Long ago, the lizardmen and Goblin tribes of the south attacked the tribes of the Gythainen. Although the Gythainen are stronger and poses greater power than either the sinister goblins or the warmth loving lizardmen, through force of numbers, they were driven out.

In an attempt to retain their homeland Darweshi the Elder traveled to Karsia Castle in the new capitol of the Kaurathel. He pleaded with High King Vichol for assistance. The Gythainen had helped the Kaurathel in

the past and had suffered great losses during the War of the Purge. High King Vichol agreed on the condition that the Magocracy of Gythai joined the Six Kingdoms.

Darwishi the Elder pondered and agreed and conditions were set. Soon a host of warriors led by Prince Bulzaric and another by Prince Robkiel marched on Valkadier. The legions of Lizardmen and goblins were driven out and the Gythainen were returned to power.

Prince Bulzaric and his legion remained in Gythai for three years training Gythainen warriors and mages in the art of tactics. The Gythainen trained and quickly mastered the lessons. An elite force, called the Majasi, was created to serve as the special warriors of Gythai. Though Gythainen do not have gills the Majasi were magically manipulated to breathe in the water. They had excelled in their lessons and by the end of the training the Majasi had secured the southern borders of their lands and had reestablished the southern watch. The Magocracy of Gythai was strong once more.

The line of Darweshi still rules to this day. Bakar Darweshtu, Kawei of the Gythainen, and his two sons, Bomani and Kamau live in the Gythainen capitol of Maji. Kawei Bakar has taken a long leave at castle Tanek deep within the swamps at Maji. His son Bomani, Jom of the Darweshtu, has taken his duties during the Kokous while Kamau had taken over leadership of the military.

### **The Culture of the Gythainen**

The Gythainen rule their people under a Magocracy that is controlled by a hereditary leader called the Kawei. Similar to a King or Queen, the Kawei rules over a council of mages known as the Kabila Uchawei. The Kabila Uchawei is in turn made up of representatives from the clans or Kafele.

Representatives, or Jom for the Kabila Uchawei are chosen differently based on which Kafele they are to represent. Some give tests of strength others of magical might, though most are chosen through a battle of wits against competitors. Once the Jom has been decided they serve on the Kabila Uchawei for three years at which time they must compete again.

Gythainen live in family groups within the Kafele. Though reptilian, the Gythainen give birth to one or two live children as humans do. Because of this, family groups remain small numbering no more than 10 or 12 children per family.

The Gythainen build their houses on stilts over open water. Below which, they farm both fish and underwater plants. Dry land is reserved for trade, visitors and settlers and is often marked by the Kafele's Formal Platform and resurrection circle.

The instinctive Gythainen rose above their animal natures and have become powerful casters from both sides of magic. As such, they harvest and trade exclusively in formal magic items and components. On occasion the Gythainen have been known to team with the dwarves of Eltor Szakal to produce great and powerful magic weapons.

Gythainen farmers and herders raise water crops such as wild rice, watercress, various alchemical components and animals such as the Valkadier water buffalo and meat animals such as the Valkadier nutria, and fallow marsh rabbit. Their largest trading partners are the Hobblings of both Seannaught and Briar Hollow where the fallow marsh rabbit is considered a delicacy.

### **Hobblings**

Hobblings are well known for their love of life, brew, and song. The two hobbling colonies of Kaurath are no exception. Their small counties and shires span the great Keskus River, from Ballyburr on the banks of Loch Borrdeigh (the Great Ice Lake) in the north to Linder's Pool at the intersection of the Keskus and Etela Rivers in the south. Separated geographically by the mixed area around Loch Sydan the two colonies each have a rich history.

Though the two colonies of Seannaught in the north and Briar Hollow in the south have similar cultures, almost indistinguishable from each other in government outlook, and meal schedule, the rivalry between the two is legendary. The two colonies claim to be the first hobbling settlement in Kaurath, both dating to shortly after the War of Unification, both claim to be founded by the legendary hobbling boss Binky Wopple and both claim to produce the finest beer, food, and rogues in all of Avalon. Whether true or not is up for endless debate.

### **The Hobblings of Seannaught**

The Seannaught claim to have been founded shortly after the War of Unification by Binky Wopple and his cousin the famed boss Sean O' Tile. Legend has it that Binky and Sean found the most beautiful place in all of Avalon and established a settlement named Sondleton after Sean's father Sondle O'Tile.

Soon the hobblings grew and prospered and the great Binky Wopple established a form of self-rule. Seannaught was broken up into thirteen counties each named after the founding family in the county. The county was then ruled by a by a Boss operating out of the county seat. Each Boss was required to vote a member of their ranks to Grand Foreman of Seannaught. The Grand Foreman would be the leader of the Seannaught for Seven years. The Forman's responsibilities would include running the monthly Assembly of Bosses, commanding the colonies national gangs, and approving the budget for colony-wide programs.

Due to the fact that Seannaught was an agrarian culture where the pulse of life is focused around the village public house, Binky declared that a Public House located in the county seat would serve as the location of the meetings of the Assemblage of Bosses. A militia, called a Gang, was formed for each county to act as a military and police force. Led by a Gang Boss, each gang was named after the Public House in which they were stationed.

### **The Hobblings of Briar Hollow**

The hobblings of Briar Hollow claim to have been founded shortly after the War of Unification by Binky Wopple and Giles Linder. Legend has it that Binky and Giles found the most beautiful place in all of Avalon and established a settlement named Linder's Pool.

Soon the hobblings grew and prospered and the great Binky Wopple established a form of self-rule. Briar Hollow was broken up into ten Shires. Each Shire ruled by a Reeve operating out of the Shire capitol, called a reevestown. Each Reeve was required to vote a member of their ranks to Grand Shire Reeve, or Sheriff, of Briar Hollow. The Grand Sheriff would be the leader of Briar Hollow for Seven years. The Sheriff's responsibilities would include presiding over the monthly Parliament of Reeves, commanding the colonies national gangs, and approving the budget for colony-wide programs.

Binky declared that a Tavern located in the reevestown would serve as the room for the Parliament of Reeves to meet. As in Seannaught, a militia, called a Gang, was formed for each Shire to act as a military and police force. Led by a Deputy, each gang was made of volunteer citizens.

### **Razioch**

The Half-Orcs of Kaurathel are not the savage barbarous creatures of my homeland. They are strong and noble creatures that embody the true spirit of this land. As keepers of the Litany of the Kaurathel and Warders of the Landbond the Half-Orcs of Kaurath are intricately woven into the nobility of the kingdom. They are the descendents of the legendary Razioch and the lone noble survivors of the War of the Purge. For decades they held the true land bond to the kingdom and through their magic, lore, and teachings the Kingdom of Kaurath was reborn.

To better understand the Half-Orcs of Kaurath I have asked Sir Ichabod Leagallow to recount the tales of his youth. He had been newly assigned as Peacemaker to the Crown and was privileged enough to assist Prince Bulzatic's Legion in a last attempt to bring peace between the Kingdom and the forces of Darkness. The following is his story.

## **Bulzaric's Legion**

Known for their cunning in battle, and military strength, these guardians of the Plains of Morathel carry the honor of the Kingdom in their hearts and cold steel in their hands. Having been offered a chance to travel among them, I of course jumped at the opportunity. At the behest of his Highness, King Vichol, I traveled with the Legion to the walls of Siltamuuri, there to make offerings of peace with the emissary from the Barrows Heart.

Bulzaric's Legion arrived in the twilight hours of the morn and as usual they were well ahead of schedule. I looked down upon them from the high walls of Karsia Castle for a time, amazed by their precision, and attention to detail. Despite the days of travel from the ruined city of Jokainen, their well-polished armor and could be easily seen even in the distance and weak morning light. Each man had his place in line, and the Legion marched towards the edge of lake Kostaa like an endless silvered serpent. A thousand men, each moving as part of the greater whole; individual scales in the armored hide of the Kingdom.

The Legion carried with them the litany of the Kings in the form of banners and pennants in the ancient colors of the Kaurath. These were held high for all to see, even in the relative darkness before the light of dawn. This was a duty handed down to them in the days of old and never forgotten. The colors of King Vichol were most prominently displayed, including the various pennants and colors associated with each of his children, followed by the colors of Prince Bulzaric and the Legion.

As the half-orcs approached the edges of the lake, I rushed to finish my preparations and join the force that would be sent in an attempt to make peace, one last time, with the Barrow Heart. Typically, the king himself would go to the Wall to deal with such matters, but in this harsh time things were different. King Vichol had sent word to his son Bulzaric in the south, calling the Prince and his Legion away from their holdings on the Plains of Morathel. He would ask them to travel to the north, to the walled bridge of Siltamuuri. There the Prince would speak of peace with the representatives of the Barrow Heart; our deadliest enemy. The King had chosen Bulzaric's legion for one purpose, to show the wretched Barrow Heart dogs that the people of Kaurath were not to be toyed with. When last there was talk of peace, three emissaries were dead already, and the King himself had almost been taken by the foul Lords of that blasted place. King Vichol would play their game no longer.

As I stood on the ferry that would carry me across Lake Kosta to the encampment of the Plains Wardens I could see more clearly than ever why the King had chosen this course. The Legion stood arrayed before me in perfect formation, armor shining brightly even in the dim morning light. These warriors were the stuff of legends, harkening back to the tales of Knights and Heroes of the Kaurathel, the Silver Legion come to life and standing at attention in service of their King. These men were an example of our past, and with any luck our future. Though I have heard stories speaking of the ferocity and barbarism of the Half-orcs of the plains, looking at them and standing among them I learned that not everything you are told can be believed.

I was met with warm smiles from the men of the Legion as I disembarked my small ferry and joined their ranks. Much to my amusement, they all bent knee before me. It was all I could do not to laugh aloud, such noble creatures kneeling before the likes of me, a Leagallow! And not even a Lord. I would never wish to offer offense to these men however and so I kept my somewhat uncalled for amusement to myself and bid the men to rise. We shared a pleasant first breakfast together. The Legion, myself and His Highness the prince Bulzaric partaking of bread and fruit and dried meat before we set out on our way up the Kings Road to Siltamuuri.

Their tack was hard, like them, but their manners were impeccable. I was even able to get a strong cup of my favored tea, Bungalow Whetherbottom Longleaf, which was quite pleasing. Quieter than I would have expected, the men of the legion were not unfriendly but did seem to have a way of keeping to themselves, the sort of calm that one might attribute to a blooded warrior on the eve of battle. Each man knew his work, and his place, and everything was done with pragmatic efficiency. Everything including eating

breakfast, or having a conversation. No food, nor time, nor breath ever seemed to be wasted among Bulzarcic's faithful. Pity.

After first breakfast was done, the Prince ordered camp be broken down and the men prepare once again for travel. Not a word of complaint was uttered as the men went about their business. The endurance of these people was shocking to be sure. Two days travel from the Plains to the heart of the Kingdom, not even a few hours of rest and they were on their feet again and ready to go. We would set out to meet our fate within the hour, of this I was assured.

Facing the dreaded Barrow Heart upon the wall scared me more than I am often willing to admit, but I will tell you something. The Half-orcs of Bulzarcic's Legion took much of my fear away. Indeed, I think that were I made of nothing but bone and hatred, a horrid and wilting servant of the Dark lord himself, only then would I truly have cause to tremble before the Legion.

Tremble they would, for at the end of this day no accords of peace would be struck, but battle would be joined. The forces of the Barrow would face the Champions of Kaurath and be taught a lesson in humility. However that is another tale all together for another time.

### **Ograth**

The Ograth are a race of half-ogres which some say have a definite alliance with the Sidhe. They are a mysterious and powerful race. The following is from a meeting Sir Ichabod Leagallow had with a group of Ograth.

“The Ograth of Kaurath are a mystery to many. They are said by some to be wild creatures, born of the fae, known for their fury and strength in battle. It is said they are given to barbarism, and their lands are not safe to travel or to hunt. Others say that the Ograth are the guardians of nature, gentle and solitary creatures given to a life of care taking and protection of the wild places of Kaurath. Their loyalty to King Vichol going only so far as to give their spears in defense of the Kingdom should the call ring out.

Driven to learn the truth of the matter, I set out to the lands beyond the Great Swamp in search of this hidden race. While I was not expecting to learn much, if anything, I was once again surprised by my own deft negotiations and stunning good luck. It was not more than a few days before I had traveled the length of the swamp, and into the lands said to be the home of the Ograth, the Half Ogres. I spied a campfire, and moving silently, I got my first glimpse of these powerful creatures.

Creeping closer, I finally mustered the courage to call out to those sitting by the fire. To my shock, I was answered from behind. A deep voice returned my greeting and large hands dropped casually onto my shoulders and lead me to take a place by the fireside. It certainly was a fright, but as I had mentioned earlier, I have outstanding luck.

Around the fire I was informed that had I not called out as I did, my life would have fallen into peril. Now however, I was welcomed to the fire, and offered a meal with my seemingly primitive yet very well spoken hosts. It was simple fare, cooked over the roaring fire before us. Of course, I had eaten dinner not too long past. It is commonly known however that I am not one to quibble over meal times, and not wishing to seem rude I attacked the meal with gusto. There was fish, cooked on the open fire, as well as some sort of stew with roots and tart berries. Others ate only greens, some even eating what looked like flowers. I had to sample everything of course, and found each morsel quite appetizing.

After the meal, the group of Half Ogres insisted that I share with them a tale and that they would then share one with me in return. They seemed to good-natured lot, and though I am not given to storytelling I found myself agreeing quite amiably despite. It must have been my full belly. I began with a song sung by my people called the Rocky Road to Sondleton and then meandered into an abridged telling of the legend of the Dwarves of Eltor Paksu and their demise at the hands of the wily and despicable Coblynau. As I had mentioned, I am not given to storytelling and so at this point I allowed the Half Ogres to share their tale with me.

The lot of them seemed disturbed by the tale of the poor dwarves, and they murmured amongst themselves for a time in a language I could not understand. Though, perhaps it was just my hearing failing me. I waited for them to finish, and for their story to begin. As their murmuring stopped, one of the Ogre-kin stood before the fire and looked only at me. I could see the wild places of Kaurath reflected in his eyes. There was boundless rage and strength that runs as deep as the roots of the Surullinen hidden in the Half Ogres gaze. Also, there was a kindness and gentleness evident there that is not commonly found in warriors of human blood. His face so close to mine, I could see the sharpness of his ears and the lines of his face in the firelight. These were no normal half bloods; the strength of the Sidhe was evident in their features.

I was taken aback by the suddenness of his words as he began to speak, and I will never forget them. He told a tale called the Fool and the Lord of Fire, a tale I had never heard before despite my time at court. He told it with such deep emotion and conviction that I am still not assured that he had not witnessed the truth of the matter with his very own eyes. I thought it strange, yet poignant, that the tale should make a hero of the Sidhe lord while my tale had vilified his faerie children. It was not difficult for me to discern that the Half Ogres were teaching me valuable lesson with this tale, and I promised myself that when I returned home to Karsia castle, I would put pen to paper and see to the preservation of the tale I had been given this night.

I spent the rest of the night sharing stories and drinking apple wine with my newly found friends. I slept comfortably by their fire, the watchful eyes of the Half-Ogres keeping me safe in the night. Come morning, the Half Ogres informed me that they needed to move on, that they had pressing business dealing with Half-orcs on the plains. I took from their tone that the business would be none to pleasant.

Leaving me some of their breakfast meal, my wild companions took their leave. As I watched them running towards the plains I wondered what their fate would be, and whether I would ever see them again. I took solace in the thought that I would be able to speak truthfully of my experience with these gentle folk, and share the tale of my time with the Half Ogres with those who might never have the chance to learn for themselves.”

### **Ijjen (Totemic Barbarians)**

Long is the history of the Kaurathel who inhabit this war torn land, and the numerous clans of Vaeltaa. Their distant cousins the Ijjen have thus far avoided closer inspection within these pages. Though they appear in numerous tales of the Kaurath and have played a decisive role in the history of the Kingdom. They blend in so well as to easily go unnoticed. Such is the depth of their effect on the cultural growth of the Kingdom of the Kaurathel.

Years of adding their strength to that of the humans has caused much of the Ijjen lore to be lost while the Kings of Man have flourished by “barbarian” blood and sacrifice. I hope that I can shed some light on these strong and storied people that have had such an effect on the prosperity of our great Kingdom, and in that way show them the respect and honor that they deserve. The place of the Ijjen is, as it has been throughout time, at the side of the true King.

Not an easy people to define, the Ijjen are numerous and live throughout the lands of Kaurath. Divided into clans, each clan follows very different ways, usually emulating an animal or spirit that is indigenous to the lands in which they have settled. Some of the clans have become so ingrained within the structure of the Kingdom that they have given up many of their old ways, and been absorbed in a way. Make no mistake, these Ijjen are a strong willed folk who have a great deal of faith in the old ways of their people. They have, however, adapted over time to fit on more easily with their surroundings, and have become a vital part of the Kingdom.

Some call them civilized barbarians, but most simply refer to them as the Kaurathi tribesmen, those who give our Kingdom the strength to endlessly toil on despite the odds. These clans are most commonly found within the heart of Kaurath, blending in with the other races easily. Examples are the Corvii clan, the Clan



of the Raccoon, and the Clan of the Coy-dog. While these clans, and many others have integrated themselves into the fabric of the Kingdom, they are still wild at heart and often battle amongst themselves for territory, or for sport. It is common for such tribes and clans to hold competitions during which deaths are not uncommon. While they have made their place in society, we must remember that the society of the Kaurathel is in many ways still seen by many to be quite barbaric.

There are other clans of Ijjen spread across all of Kaurath, old clans who still follow the ways of the ancients. These clans are called the Vanastagg by the Kaurathi Tribesmen, and they are whispered of in fearful tones. Though I have never had the misfortune of meeting one of these wild men, I have heard gruesome tales of their barbarism in the Provinces of Harcos, and Kasember. As well I have heard tales of some tribes that actually manage to survive in the harshness of the Plains of Morathel. If nothing else, it is a testimony to their strength and fortitude that they have managed to survive so long in the lands of Princess Ruthiel, and her brother Prince Bulzaric.

Though the tribesmen are loath to speak of their wild cousins, whisperings are heard, and information is gathered. Still, few of the tribes of the Vanastagg have been identified. The Kestrel, and the Wolf are said to be the dominant tribes of the outskirts of Kasember, nearest the Lake of Ice. The Clans of the Drake and Lion plague the Province of Harcos, and bring no end of trouble to our Warrior Princess. It is said that there is but one clan that hunts in the Plains of Morathel, and that is the tribe of the Bonespider. Prince Bulzaric has been known to speak of these terrors himself, and I for one would never wish to run against them in battle.

Though the Kaurathi tribesmen and the Vanastagg are two very different peoples, we must always remember that they come from the same stock. Once, they were one people, vicious, cunning, and strong enough to survive this harsh land. It is through the strength of their daughters and sons that our people rule this domain. In these hard times we must look to the past for hope. It may well be the blood of the tribesmen or their dark cousins that brings our kingdom out of hardship and back to glory.

### **Vaeltaa (Gypsies)**

Unlike most other kingdoms, Gypsies or Vaeltaa as they are called make up a large population of the kingdom; most prominent in the center province of Kasember. Below are stories of a few of the tribes whose culture and lifestyle are most markedly different than those of the Evendarr ilk.

#### **A Treatise on the Balaj** by Sir Ichabod Leagallow

Like most Vaeltaa, the Balaj tend to be secretive and keep to themselves. What is odd is that these Vaeltaa seem to shun even their own kind, and avoid Vaeltaa of other clans, trusting only their small tribe. It is unlikely to find a Balaj outside of their territory unless it is during one of the seasonal Meets, when they come to barter their trinkets, tell fortunes and offer protective charms to keep unhappy spirits at bay.

Unlike the Sotelatas the Balaj do not profess to have any skill in dealing with the spirit realm other than their knowledge of how to create charms that will fend off restless spirits and ghosts. Mostly they use their charms to keep their caravans safe in the deep wilds of what was once the Northern Surullien Forest, now the Lake of Ice, but one trait they share with the other tribes is their great willingness to take money from the Gaje. So they sell trinkets to those smart (or gullible) enough to buy them.

Most of what I have learned of the Balaj is based on information gleaned from area scholars, and other Vaeltaa. Determined to shed new light on this secretive people I set out into the Wilds of Kasember to discover what I could on my own. My discoveries, while seemingly inconsequential, are more than most can profess to having learned about these wandering folk.

With much difficulty, I finally found arguably, the smallest of the Kaurathi Vaeltaa tribes deep in the eastern plains of Kasember. As the smallest of the tribes of Kaurathi Vaeltaa, the Balaj tend to stay mainly to a small woodland territory near to the Dragonspine Mountains on the border of Kasember and Harcos.

Their territory ranges well into the Corvauness Pass, deeper into the wilds than any of the other tribes are likely to travel.

Lucky enough, I was, to happen upon one of their camps just as they were settling in for the evening. It was dusk as I found my way into their midst as an unwelcome intruder. I was met with violence by a band of Balaj youths, and then dragged to face their “Prince”. Prince Lupo was a large example of a man, and although filthy and coarse the leader of the tribe had a certainty and power about him. As Lupo decided whether or not I would be permitted to live, some of the nearby women started sniffing at me like wild dogs, and then ran off to their tents, cackling and squealing. Lupo decided to let me live and share a meal with his tribe. I am, after all, a skilled debater and negotiator. Not to top off my own pint, but I do believe that I would have otherwise been lining his stew pot.

And so it was that I shared a meal with this odd people, and observed. Lupo got first pick of the meat, then the children were served, followed by what I can only assume were Lupos wives. Then the rest of the tribe was allowed to feast. I was startled by the ferocity with which they ate, and at the fact that they actually fought over the choicest bits of meat. When I say fighting I mean actually bashing each other with fists and daggers, battling for dinner. At one point Lupo rose from his place, and proceeded to beat a young man about the head and neck with a steaming thighbone, knocking him to the ground after he took meat from a younger male who I believe may have been one of Lupos sons. Such brutality among family, especially Vaeltaa, I have never seen.

I myself decided to decline eating, as the meat was not well enough cooked for my weak stomach, and I was still feeling much the worse for wear after my beating. Not wishing to seem an ungracious guest, I drank vomaia, with the men of Lupos tribe. Much to my intestinal dismay I quickly discovered that vomaia was fermented goats milk, a bitter lump filled brew with an aftertaste reminiscent of rotting eggs. Feeling as if I was going to die I decided it better that I offer up a bottle of the expensive brew of Kaurathi Gold that I had picked up in my travels. They accepted with haste and soon we were feeling quite nice, Kaurathi Gold is an excellent brew though not as complex in flavor as fermented goats milk, it is by far, more potable.

After the meal, I was sent away, or, I should say, I was dragged away by the same youths that had met me in the first place. Thankfully they were not as harsh with their fists and sticks at this time, and I managed to escape into the woods with just a bloodied nose and few extra bruises. To my surprise however, I found that someone had slipped rations, and one of their fabled protective charms into my knapsack at some point before I was sent on my way.

As you can no doubt tell, I know not what to think of these strange Kaurathi. Wild, aggressive, down right rude, lacking the sense of merriment that most Vaeltaa keep so close to their hearts, yet still possessed of some courtesy, and the slightest of desires to welcome others into their midst. I can only say that next time I seek out these people I will be more careful, but my curiosity is far from sated and there is decidedly so much more to learn.

Yours in Service,  
Squire Ichabod Legallow, Loyal aide to his Royal Majesty.

### **Harkies**

Long ago the Valag had a clan of Vaeltaa who served as the guards and protectors of the ruling clan. It was rumored that they were connected through an arcane bond to the forces of magic and could call upon the powers at will. They were the Piken and were the pride of the Vaeltaa.

For centuries the Piken loyally served the Valag as the Vadoni served the Kaurathel. They were the guardians of the north and protected the people of the Plains of Rensvarvas and the Ferrishyn Forest from the early attacks from the Barrowheart.

The forces of the Barrowheart were attacking in small bands to test the strength of the people of Kaurath. Each time they attacked, they were stopped and destroyed by the Piken riding under the command of the Valag. Though the attacks grew in size and frequency the Piken always defeated them.

The new threat from the Barrowheart alarmed Queen Adalisz. She met in secret with Rasputin Harkov, the leader of the Piken. Rasputin would lead a group of Piken down the Dubhember Pass, into the Barrowheart, and attack the source from within. The plan, though brave, would have dire consequences.

Rasputin led his troops down the Dubhember Pass and into the waiting armies of the Barrowheart. The Piken and their arcane bond were now in the hands of Lord Droch. The armies of the Barrowheart tortured the Piken and interrogated them. They said nothing save that they served their queen with loyalty and vigilance. It was enough for Lord Droch, the Valag had to die.

Sensing that the captured Vaeltaa were special, Lord Droch decided to turn them to his cause. Through unknown magics, Rasputin and the Piken were corrupted to serve the Barrowheart. Throughout Kaurath, the Piken were now his.

Lord Droch launched his war of extermination and waged it using information derived from the Piken. Rasputin Harkov fought by his side during the war and led him directly to the Queen of the Valag Vaeltaa.

During the seige of Drakon Castle in Vanhakard, High King Uthios permanently killed Rasputin Harkov. The spell was broken and the Piken were released from their magical enslavement. Though the enslavement was gone, the corruption was not. The Piken had become the antithesis of their former selves. They had turned from duty-bound heroes to cutthroat criminals. They were more focused on making money than protecting the Vaeltaa. Shortly after Queen Anya's coronation, she removed the Piken from service and sent them on their way. The heroes of the Vaeltaa had become a liability that none were willing to deal with.

Over time the Piken spread through out Kaurath. They traveled in mass caravans and usually stopped for months at a time and established squatter villages. Called "Harkies" after Rasputin Harkov, they robbed and swindled their way through the Provinces. Over time they came to settle along the Keskus River between the colonies of Briar Hollow and Seannaught.

Some say that the magical corruption is gone; others say that it is not, what we know is that the Harkies have a reputation for being dangerous to ones pocketbook. Over time the Harkies have established legal forms of trade, such as traveling carnivals and tournaments.

Living close to the hobling colonies has done much to the Harkies, most relevant is their accent. Their speech has changed much from the deep accent of the north. It is a mix between a Seannaught brogue, Briar Hollow accent, and the traditional accent of the Vaeltaa, they deliberately talk fast so as to confuse dealings.

It is not uncommon to go to the Harkies to purchase a vardo and leave with a vardo, dog, and a sheep. It is also not uncommon to later find that the vardo is termite infested and ready to fall apart, that the dog is pregnant and the sheep has hoof and mouth. Further action at this point is useless. The Harkies are well versed in packing up and leaving quickly. This is not to say that all Harkies are cheats and swindlers. It is safe to point out however that you will know who are not by their reputation.

It is theorized that the magical curse that corrupted the Piken is not passed down to some offspring. These children, though raised by the corrupted, usually leave their clan to pursue an honest living. It is rumored that some of the Piken not cursed by the taint of their ancestors have established a colony and are living the old ways. If this is true, than the return of the Piken will be more than just a vision. The Piken were the heart of a nation, with luck, will be again.

## **The Other Races of Kaurath**

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### **Dubhember**

The Dubhember are a mysterious race of beings that live deep within the Eltor Mountains under the Dubhember Peaks. They are the color of soot from head to toe resembling dark elves in appearance, however whether they are elves, sidhe, or another species altogether is unknown.

Little is known about their culture or nation. They are led by a leader known as a Davan; how this leader is chosen, or what their powers are is unknown. They enter the aboveground lands infrequently and only to trade.

### **Dwarves**

Following the fiery destruction of the ancient dwarf kingdom of Eltor Paksu, the dwarves of Kaurath separated into three main peoples, the dwarves of Kulta Kerros, the dwarves of Eltor Szakal, and the former lords of Eltor Paksu, the Ahkera.

#### **Kulta Kerros**

The Dwarves of Kulta Kerros originated from the precious metal miner castes of Gold Silver, Copper, and the Iron of the north (if you wish to debate whether iron is a precious metal, best to take it up with a dwarf.) They traveled north after the Holocaust of Eltor Paksu and established a settlement in the gold mines of Kulta Kerros, next to the Great Ice Lake. They emerge only rarely to trade or lend defense to the neighboring kingdom of Kaurath.

Their hierarchy is based on precious metals. The leadership of the clans is decided by which clan discovered a rich new vein of a particular metal. Only the clan corresponding to each metal is allowed to work and mine that metal. Should a lesser clan discover a vein of metals more precious than their own then they can advance through to the next caste. The power of one's family in any clan is dictated by the wealth of the family.

The ruling clan is Platinum. The families of the Platinum clan choose a High Lord Thane from their ranks to lead the kingdom of Kulta Kerros. The next powerful clan is the Gold clan who serve as the military and defend of Kulta Kerros. The Silver clan acts as the lorekeepers and educators of Kulta Kerros. The Copper clan serves as outside merchants. It is not uncommon to see this clan on the surface trading their wares and buying wares in return. The Iron clan is the worker clan, and by far the most populous clan in Kulta Kerros.

Dwarven men are in charge of mining and of running their households. Their duties include cooking and cleaning. Women raise and teach the children and craft the ores that the men mine. Because of this, women's beards are considerably shorter. Some even go so far as to shave their beard down to close-cropped goatees so that they do not get singed in the forge or in the way of their work. All dwarves whether men or women wear a braid at each side of their beard or temple covered in the beads of their Clan and usually tied with materials matching the colors or tartans of their families.

#### **Eltor Szakal**

Eltor Szakal was created hundreds of years ago as a gem and tin mining colony of the ancient dwarven kingdom of Eltor Paksu. The colony grew after the discovery of precious metals and soon the colony housed more than one fifth of the total population of Eltor Paksu. Over time the colony took on its own culture. It is said that if the Holocaust of Eltor Paksu hadn't occurred, the dwarves of Eltor Szakal would have inevitably seceded from the kingdom.

Situated across lake Kostaa deep in the Eltor Mountains, the kingdom of Eltor Szakal produces the finest gem cutters and tinsmiths in all of Kaurath. Their workmanship and artistry is legendary. The artisans of Eltor Szakal produce the majority of common wares sold in Kaurath.

Eltor Szakal is ruled by a monarchy led by High Lord Thane Vord and High Lady Athane Maravan Danenheim. The Kingdom is divided into six fiefdoms. A Thane or Athane leads each fiefdom. The six fiefdoms are Brauboch, Balta Paksu, Komdesden, Mordenheim, Tanonheim, and Torsdalvi. Fiefdoms are split into domains led by Lord or Lady. The Lords and Ladies meet in council monthly to decide the fate of their Domains. The council is ruled over by the Thane or Athane of the fiefdom who in turn meet in council ruled over by the High Lord Thane or High Lady Athane.

The dwarves of Eltor Szakal are a resilient and adventuresome people. As a rite of passage into adulthood, all dwarves of Eltor Szakal leave their mountain home to prove themselves worthy of a place in society. They adventure among the human lands until they feel that they have proven to themselves that they are worthy enough to return. During this time period they often serve as trade contacts between their families and the Kingdoms of Kaurath.

Eltor Szakal means "the Beard of the Dwarves" and as the name infers, the beard plays an important role in the society and culture of the Kingdom. Rank and status are reflected in the beards of the wearer. Men wear their beards long and beaded with the gems and metals of their family, while women prefer close-cropped goatees and wear their gems and beads in long braids in their hair. To ready themselves for combat, men will often braid their beards or wear them tucked through the leather beard-keepers that are fashionable among the dwarves of Eltor Szakal.

### **Ahkera**

The Ahkera dwarves were once the dwarven Lords of Eltor Paksu. Under their leadership Eltor Paksu flourished until a fateful agreement with the Coblynau reduced their kingdom into so much molten rock. Following the Holocaust of Eltor Paksu the surviving dwarves gathered and the High Lord Thanes were judged. It was decided that their involvement in the destruction of the Undermount was so great that not only would they be banished from the mountain kingdoms, but so would their offspring. The surviving dwarves went on to form the kingdoms of Kulta Kerros and Eltor Szakall while the former Lords of the dwarves were left to their own devices; most remained in the valley created by the collapse of Eltor Paksu and formed small farming villages. Others cleared a pass through the ruins of the great tower of Kulta Hazhoz and traveled the lands of Kaurath as outcasts.

Unaccustomed to the harsh life, many died; of the hundreds of noble families that survived the banishment, around one hundred fifty survive to this day. All Ahkera dwarves are related to one of these families.

The descendants of the former Lords have taken to wandering the provinces in search of work. Ahkera means "worker" in ancient dwarven, and that is what they do; they work hard and without rest hoping that their labors can bring recompense for the crime of their ancestors. .

The Ahkera often become adventurers as means of integrating themselves into Kaurath society. This can prove difficult as the Ahkera are looked upon as a second race of dwarf. They have relegated themselves into a servant class.

Though striving to make amends for their ancestors' destruction of the Undermount, the Ahkera hope that one day they can restore their place within the kingdoms of the dwarves. They hold in their hearts the key to rebuilding Eltor Paksu and desire to reunite Kulta Kerros and Eltor Szakal under one nation. Their desires have fallen on deaf ears. The Kingdoms of Kulta Kerros and Eltor Szakal have less love of each other than they do of the Ahkera.

The Ahkera dress in the styles of the people to which they are employed. They prefer colors of earth and gems and still wear their beards long and hearty as they did in ages past. Their life is hard as they move from place to place. It is not uncommon for these dwarves to accompany Vaeltaa as workmen or guards.

As such it is not uncommon to hear an Ahkera with the thick accent of northern Kasember and the plains of Rensvarvas.

### **Goblins**

The Goblins of Kaurath are the strongest and the smartest of their race. Instead of stupid louts they are animalistic, savage and sadistic tyrants. Cunning and evil, they are one of the least trustworthy of all of the monstrous creatures. Pain is like honey to them, torment is quality fare. The Goblins of Kaurath are the epitome of evil. The more you scream, the more they smile.

Goblins live in tribes. The leaders are chosen through tests of strength and political maneuvering. Any other tribe can challenge at current leaders anytime. Once the chief is killed the goblins will follow the winner lest the winner be tested. Upon resurrection the former chief is exiled. If any tribe member sees the former leader after exile, the former leader will be killed.

Goblins form extensive raiding parties and will collect everything in its path. They will then trade with local villages for more powerful weapons and spells. Goblins harvest the land, swamps, and forests for magical and alchemical components and are currently one of the top suppliers.

### **Keskaurani Elves**

Little is known of the Elves of Keskaur. What is known comes from the many legends of Morathel's quest for Fendriel and from the sparse elven merchants who often travel in and around the Province of Harcos. They are an isolated culture that hides behind the old ways.

### **Kobolds**

The blue kobolds of Kaurath are larger than their counterparts. They are not evil; rather they are opportunistic scavengers similar to hyenas. Their intelligence is low, however they are not stupid but rather more instinctive. They are nocturnal and hunt by ambush. They are essentially cowards, however large groups will attack and continue to fight until their numbers dwindle. During battle it is not uncommon to see kobolds trap the dead after searching them.

Kobolds live in troupes with no real dominant leader. They are quick to follow any strong individual and are usually ruled through fear. It is not uncommon to see other races as slaves in a kobold troupe. They will capture such creatures and manipulate them through the use of Enslavements. They are greedy to a fault and will steal whatever they want if it's not bolted down.

Kobolds live in the mines that they work in. They trade exclusively in metal, gems, and semi-precious stones. Because kobold casters are almost unheard of, kobolds will do almost anything for magic. Components, scrolls, or potions are treasured over all else and trading treaties are quickly set up if such items are offered.

Kobolds live, work, and run mines, because of this, their hostility with the dwarves is legendary. It is not uncommon for kobolds to raid the mines of dwarves to filch treasure. The kobolds of Kaurath are one of the few creatures that can steal gold from the famed dwarves of Kulta Kerros.

### **Trolls**

Trolls of Kaurath are like none I have ever seen. They are the epitome of both power and rage. A single troll in town is enough to set every soldier against it. It is not uncommon to hear about rogue troll wiping out entire adventuring companies. They stay to their mountains, but when they come down it is best to run.

## **Sidhe**

Though similar to our Folk, the inhabitants of the Otherworld are the people of the Sidhe, those whom we call the faery-kind, or fae. The name Sidhe literally means “mound” and for good reason as the gateways to their kingdoms can often be found beneath the giant earthworks that litter the Kingdom of the Kaurath. In the Kingdom of Evendarr, the name "faery" conjures images of gossamer-winged creatures slightly bigger than insects. If we are to have any understanding of the people of the Sidhe we must erase such connotations and understand that they have a far greater stature and power than we can conceive. Immortal, able to pass between the three lands at will, with resources that seem magical to the common folk, they appear as major protagonists in both in the past and now. Many a traveler knows that a toll must be paid to travel Sidhe lands. A typical homage of milk or beer, bread, and honey are often laid upon Sidhe shelves on carriages to ensure safe passage. Travelers on foot would be advised to always carry some form of food or trinket to use as homage to avoid harassment from the fae.

A Kaurathi merchant I had met while traveling wrote the following text. He was a wizened old man who, so the locals told me, had inadvertently stepped into a fairy circle. He had disappeared for roughly three months until he was found, crawling from the same circle, seventy-five years older. For a few gold pieces I had convinced him to write a short treatise on the nature of the fae or Sidhe.

### **A Treatise of the Sidhe**

By Guster Tundair

The Sidhe should be considered as neighbors, a race that requires a great deal of respect, which can help or harm according to the nature of the alliance that mortals have with them. Among characters with little or no esoteric framework there is a healthy and exaggerated care NOT to become too involved with the faeries, lest they fall unawares into their realms and cannot find their way out again, as I had done. Speaking from experience, it is only the foolhardy or the intrepid otherworldly explorers who actively seek out the fae and walk the pathways to their realms.

The fae are a race apart. The Sidhe are from our plane of existence, hidden deep in the shadows of our reality. They are guardians of the natural world and they will protect their territory with a passion few can muster. They are broken up between two houses, one “good” and one “evil”. Both houses are extremely dangerous. Neither houses have any love for the mortal races and will rarely interact with them. The smaller, more dangerous fae will taunt, harass, and even hunt the mortals for sport, however the major houses themselves are not supposed to interact with the mortals. Rumor has it that the Greene Lady and the Fool can both be summoned if a formal magical summons is correctly performed however once forcefully summoned they act upon their own free will. All fae are immortal, which means that they do not age. They are by no means invincible, this I have found during my stay. Granted some are harder to kill than others but they can all be killed. Because they are all magical creatures, it is theorized that mundane weapons have a powerful effect on them.

Their power is great however not unstoppable. Naturally occurring magic will render all of them powerless. This is done through the use of faerystones. Because water and Tyrra possess strong natural magic a stone with a hole bore through it naturally with water becomes a powerful focus. The wearer of such a focus gains no power outright other than the fact that fae magic has no effect on them, similar to a cloak versus faery magic item. I have found through much pain to myself, that damage done through physical means is still registered and the wearer can still be affected by all other magic.

All fae fall under the rule of one of the two houses. They are either Valkea or Sihteri. Their alliance is based on their natures and disposition. It is not uncommon to find one breed of fae in both houses.

The Sidhe exist deep in the hidden parts of our reality. They are imbued to the magic of the natural world and have come to embody the unexplainable. Their “Lands” as they call them, are not true lands, but

rather, I have theorized, are pockets of the subconscious, of hidden places in the lands of magic. These lands are broken into three territories: the Brightlands, the Darklands, and the Shadowlands.

The Brightland is the natural home of the Sidhe. It is their reality and where they feel most comfortable. It is the land of dreams and wishes. The Brightlands are the realm of the Valkea, or “Good” fae. Though good is a misnomer.

The Darkland is the land of the Sihteer. It is dark and dank and resonates with an air of malcontent and misgivings. It is where dreams and hopes go to die.

The Shadowland is a land made up of parts of the Bright and the Dark. It is the land of the mundane, the land of Man. The Shadowland is the land where dreams are made.

There are gates in the Shadowland to the other two lands. Some are hidden, such as odd forest groves and hidden trees of power, some are exposed like, as I unfortunately found, faery circles and willow rings. Either way entering into the Bright and the Dark is almost certain death for the average mortal. Only because of my possession of a faerystone and expert groveling had I survived and, eventually after 75 long years, escaped.

### **Scavengers**

Because of the prejudice against scavengers caused by the occupation of the Eliahnen in early history, most scavengers were considered Elianvella. Because of this most scavengers go into hiding and are rarely seen. In fact, the successful scavengers are found in tribes, each consisting of a single species. The most common are the bison, bat, coyote, squirrel, and hyena.

The Bison tribe is quiet and peaceful, healers and lore keepers mostly. They Live close to the human settlements in Kasember, and enjoy good relations. Visit them and trade stories, they also make a lovely pot of honeyed tea.

Bats are the most industrious of the tribes. If it can be grown in Kaurath, the bats know how to grow it. Beyond their talent in farming, they also excel at brewing their crops into alchemical elixirs or alcoholic beverages. They are extremely friendly and social, making frequent forays out of the forests to the cities and towns of the Kaurathel to trade their wares.

The Coyote tribe seems to be a troublesome group. Reputed to be dishonest thieves and cutthroats, they often cause diplomatic issues with neighboring settlements.

While I visited Kaurath, I heard of no less than 6 raids in the North of Kasember that the Coyotes were responsible for. When their chief was summoned to the Magistrate, he was less than cooperative, to the point of being rude. It makes me wonder why such miscreants are tolerated and not punished more severely for such behavior.

The Squirrel tribe is little better, though for different reasons. Shiftless lay bouts, the lot of them. Doing nothing all day, save for sunning themselves and playing at games among the trees, nothing like their smaller animal kin. It amazes me that they eke out an existence given the little time they devote to work. They all disappear to their village when the sun goes down, and visitors are not welcome. Not welcome indeed. Perhaps they are up to some sort of dirty work that they don't want the rest of the world to know about.

But whatever they, or the coyotes, may be up to, it pales in comparison to the savagery of the Hyena tribe. These filthy beasts have allied themselves with the Orcs of the Tarnished Legion. Following like pets and attacking the stragglers of the Orcs battles, they are truly Scavengers in the worst sense of the name.

None of this is to say that you will never encounter a Scavenger of another type than these; it is just even more rare than in Evendarr. However, one type you will not encounter is a Wolfen. I asked one of the



Kasember Harriers why, and her reply was simply “ Best to ask the Coyotes where the Wolves went”.  
Something about her tone suggested that perhaps I'd rather not.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Tenants of War and the The Luvata Kansa

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The Tenants of War and the Luvata Kansa define justice to the moral code of the citizens of Kaurath. Considered barbaric to some, they are elegant in their simplicity. Together, they form the basis of culture in Kaurath.

### **The Tenants of War**

The Tenants of War are ancient and have been followed by the Kaurath for centuries. Established in the Forgotten Age, they are followed in all races and cultures in Kaurath. They are established for all formal engagements and it is long believed that to refuse any tenant of war is considered to doom ones army to defeat.

- ❖ Peacemakers must negotiate to try to end the conflict by peaceful means. During the negotiation a Peacemaker cannot be harmed. To harm a Peacemaker is to curse your host to defeat. Failure to meet a peaceful conclusion shall result in a proper engagement to be planned in a set time and a set place in which the armies shall solve their differences through blood.
- ❖ A Messenger traveling under the Flag of the Messenger shall not be harmed unless the Messenger acts in a way contrary to his charge.
- ❖ The pride of an army shall ever fly over a proper engagement. To hide ones banner when fighting a proper engagement is to curse your host to defeat.

### **The Luvata Kansa**

The Code is one part Chivalric code and one part oath. All nobility within the kingdom have spoken the Luvata Kansa as their oaths to their nation and liege. The Luvata Kansa serves as a guide to the low crimes of Kaurath and as such is used when dealing out justice.

Though the term “blood” is used in the first line of the declaration, the Luvata Kansa is not a blood oath in traditional sense. In the times of the Golden Age, “blood” was synonymous with “family” or “lineage”. Translated into the contemporary style the declaration would actually read: “By my honor and the honor of my Family I shall swear this promise.” As a warning, to suggest, however, that the Luvata Kansa should be changed to meet the belief of the speaker is considered a grand insult to the Kaurath and would probably result in a beating or death.

### **The Luvata Kansa**

By my honor and the honor of my blood I shall swear this promise. For my blood is the blood of my nation.

By my honor I shall respect the weak and declare myself the defender of them.

By my honor I shall dutifully serve the king and his lands with love and honor.

By my honor I shall not show fear before mine enemy.

By my honor I shall perform my duties with vigilance, patience, and passion.

By my honor I shall not lie and shall remain true to mine own words.

By my honor I shall be generous and give freely mine own wisdom and protection.

By my honor I shall be everywhere and always the champion of my people.

By my honor I shall fight with dignity and honor until first blood is drawn.

By my honor I shall stand tall against the darkness.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## The Laws of Kaurath

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The laws of Kaurath are complex in their simplicity. Low crimes are considered the realm of the noble or official in charge of the trial. They are relatively undefined and are therefore open to interpretation. I have found in my travels however that the accepted definition of the Low Crime is very similar to the definition of its Evendarrian counterpart.

The sentence of guilty parties is decided by returning to the all-encompassing Luvata Kansa. All punishments must be handed down without violating the code established in the Luvata Kansa.

Unlike Low Crimes, High Crimes are non negotiable and are not open to interpretation. They are considered great offenses and are therefore dealt with either: death, obliteration, or expatriation.

Expatriation is Kaurath's answer to banishment. Similar to Banishment in the Evendarr Duchy of Volta, when an offender is expatriated they are stripped of name and citizenship thereby rendering them countryless. This means that they are not entitled to the same protections as the citizenry and are not protected by the laws of the Kaurath.

Expatriation is not an unredeemable state. Expatriots can redeem themselves in three ways. The expatriot can seek a pardon from High King Vichol or an under King. This rarely happens and when it does happen it is usually posthumously because of heroic acts of the expatriot. The second way to seek redemption comes from a yearlong tour at Siltamuuri. Siltamuuri is a harsh and dangerous place. Those who seek redemption through this manner are usually meet with a violent end. Those who do survive return as respected members of society. The third way comes from declaring a Quest of Redemption. The declaring of the quest must be witnessed by an emissary of the High King and must be sponsored by a noble. Should one seeking redemption fail or is convicted of another crime prior to redemption, they cannot seek to be redeemed for one year and a day after their failure or violation.

### **The Laws of Kaurath**

Nobility, magistrates, sheriffs, or individuals granted authority under a Writ of Leadership shall deal law to the common.

A Writ of Leadership is defined as any writ, granting rule over a group, faction, host, or caravan.

### **Low Crimes**

Low Crimes are defined as any crime that is not considered a High Crime. These include, but are not limited to: Arson, Assault, Bribery, Conspiracy, Contempt of a Noble, Defacing Property, Forgery, Public Disorder, and Theft. Punishment for low crimes shall follow the guidelines set forth by the Luvata Kansa and should not exceed fining or incarceration in the form of assigned duty, save for multiple offenses, or offenses against nobles or noble houses.

### **High Crimes**

The following crimes are punishable by death, obliteration, or expatriation.

**Kidnapping:** Kidnapping is defined as the abduction of an individual against their will.

**Murder:** Murder is defined as the taking of another's life, even if a Life spell is administered. Defending ones honor through combat in an established Honor Duel is not considered murder.

**Necromancy:** Necromancy is defined as the raising and manipulation of undead or the possession of items that raise or manipulate undead. The casting of Chaos magic within town or city limits is considered necromancy.

**Pretending to a Noble Title:** Pretending to a noble title is defined as falsely declaring oneself as a noble.

**Slavery:** Slavery is defined as ownership of another individual, or the buying or selling of another individual.

**Treason:** Treason is defined as the betrayal, desertion, or treachery to Kaurath. Attempted overthrow of Kaurath or any of the Nine Kingdoms shall be considered High Treason and shall result in expatriation.

**Obliteration, Expatriation, and Redemption**

Obliteration is defined as three successful deaths. At no time shall formal magics be used to obliterate offenders. Failure to attempt to resurrect at the established circle shall result in the expatriation of the offender.

Expatriation is defined as having ones identity, citizenry, and nationality stripped. Expatriated individuals are no longer considered citizens or visitors of Kaurath and are no longer protected under the laws of Kaurath.

Expatriated individuals can seek Redemption in one of three ways. By receiving a pardon from the High King, seeking redemption through a one-year tour at Siltamuuri, or by accepting a formal Quest of Redemption. A Quest of Redemption is defined as a dangerous quest witnessed and sponsored by a noble and emissary of the High King. Conviction of any crime or failure to complete a Quest of Redemption makes the offender ineligible to seek redemption for a year and a day.

# CHAPTER NINE

## **Legends, and Songs of the Lands and Kingdoms of Kaurath**

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The Kingdoms of Kaurath are overflowing with legends and song. They are told and sung in every tavern or around the communal fire. Of the many that I have heard, the following are some of my favorites.

### **The Story of the Green Lady and the Fool**

*Traditional Kaurathel Legend*

Hidden deep within the shadows of our reality the King and Queen ruled the children of magic. Eons ago when a magical Nexus magically rent the land of the mortals in the Shadowlands, the kingdoms of the Sidhe King and Queen, were rent asunder within the Bright and Dark lands. Thousands of Sidhe died. The King of the Sidhe vowed revenge for the careless acts of the human race. The Queen vowed to hide her people instead and protect them as best as she could. The two difference of opinion pulled at the binds of power and the war of the Sidhe erupted. The carnage brought about because of the Nexus was nothing compared to the war of the fae. Both sides, equal in power and determination, sat in bloody stalemate for decades.

During the Celebration of the New Year, a day when all trespasses are temporarily put to rest, the two lovers met under the new moon. The Queen, still deeply in love with the King laid out the boundaries of their truce. She would lead the children of light to the Brightlands and rule there with out interference from the King. The King would then rule his children of darkness from the Darklands. The Shadowlands were to remain untouched by either kingdom; however children from both kingdoms could pass between lands at will during the Gloaming, the period during sunset when it is neither night nor day. Likewise, one month out of the year, in the fall, both kingdoms would meet for a revel to celebrate their truce and renew the vows of their strained love. The king reluctantly agreed.

For centuries the two have ruled their respected kingdom each living in their own hedonistic ways. Over the centuries the Queen has come to be called The Lady by some, The White Lady or Lady Greene by others. She has remained in hiding for centuries only to enter the Shadowlands during the Autumn Revel to meet and feast with her true love. The King has taken a more active role in the manipulation of the Shadowlands. His Great Hunt has been feared for centuries. He is known as the Amadán-na-Briona, Leader of the Dark Sidhe. He is most well known and most feared as The Fool, the Evil One among the Sidhe, or as the elves of Innos Halal call them, the Sihteeri.

### **The Tale of the Fool and the Lord of Fire-**

*Traditional Ograth Legend*

This tale is one of the tales of the Sidhe and Elemental War. This story is purported to detail the conflict and outcome of the battle between the King of the Sidhe, and the Lord of Fire. This “fable” is part of a series of similar tales detailing the battles and fates of each of the elemental lords that have set their sights upon this small corner of Tyrra. The Epic of the Bound, a title I myself to not understand, is spoken or sung quite frequently around Half Ogre campfires. It seems the stories themselves are passed down among the Half Ogre clans only in verbal form, and are kept by the Elders as a vital component of the Half Ogre’s ancient history. There are few written copies of the Epic, though I did manage to find one in my travels thanks in no small part to Sir Ichabod Leagallow. I shall share part of the Epic with you here, in these pages.

“Many seasons past, before our families left us and traveled back to the Otherworld, there came a great conflagration to the lands now called Kaurath. Great fires washed over the forests and the plains. The Surullinen burned brightly, and all life fled in the wake of the fires. Our people tried to stave off the burning of the wood, but there was nothing we could do. These fires were supernatural, unstoppable.

The Sidhe came to us then, aware as they always were of danger in their wood. They battled at our sides among the trees, facing foes made of flame. Even their magics could not hold back the fires for long, and the forests continued to burn. Strange creatures we faced in the woods in those days, born of fire and impossible for either ourselves or the Sidhe to destroy. Forced to run, or die, we fled the burning portions of the wood and waited. Together with the Sidhe, we wailed as our world burned to ash around us.

It is said that the Fool heard the crying of his children, and came to see what was troubling his Sidhe kin. Their suffering and deaths at the hands of these strange beings of fire and their conflagration had stirred the Great Lord of the Fae into action. Our people watched as the Fool strode deep into the fires, into the wood. Unscathed by the burning licks of flame that stood in his path, the King of the Sidhe forced his way deep into the Surullinen. Following a path that only the Fool could see, he made his way to the heart of the wood, the heart of the flames. There, he faced the Lord of Fire.

We are told that there was a great battle, in which the Fool looked on in amusement as the Lord of Fire tried to destroy the King with his power. It was all for not, as the Fool is no ordinary Sidhe, nor is he an ordinary man. The Fool mocked the Lord of Fire, and yet knew he faced a powerful adversary. The Lord of the Darklands was aware that while the flames could not harm him there was also no easy path leading to the defeat of this being of flame. While the fires rages around him, the Fool planned as only the Fool can. He knew what must be done.

The Fool spoke to the Lord of Fire then, and asked him what he sought. The Lord of Fire replied in sharp tones that he wished to see the Surullinen awash in his flames. He wished to see the sky burn, and the mountains turn to ash. Only then would he be satisfied of his conquest. The Fool then offered to make all these things come true, and the Lord of Fire was too foolish to see the trap. Blinded by his desire to consume all things in his flames the Elemental Lord agreed to the bargain, and sealed his fate.

We are told that the Fool left then, and returned to the Darklands. The Lord of Fire was swept away, to a place high in the mountains, where he is bound even to this day. High above the kingdom, beyond the Dubhember peaks there is said to be a place where the mountains burns and are turned to ash by the heat of the Lord of Fires presence. Others of the elemental-born were bound to the trees of the Surullinen themselves as they burned. When autumn comes the forest is awash in the colors of flame as the old elementals try to use what strength they still have to stave off the cold of the dying time and winters chill. Others of the elemental kin are trapped in the clouds above Kaurath, bound there for all time. They color the sky red with flame on nights when their anger grows hot, and their warmth can be felt in the air on the days that follow.

This is another of the many gifts that the Sidhe have given to our people. The Surullinen survives even to this day only because of the mercy of the Lord of the Darklands. Had it not been for the intervention of our cousins and the charity of their Lord, we would be nothing and our lands would be sundered beyond repair. Keep this on your minds children, as you go about your tasks. Remember that every day you must earn what has been given to you. Only then will our people return from the Otherworld, and our family be reunited.”

### **The Beginning-**

#### *Traditional Keskaurani Legend*

Once there was Nothing, then there was Everything, then it all began.

In the beginning, there was a great Nothingness, a Stillness, a Waiting. From within that Stillness formed two beings: Time and her brother Void. Each Child tried to prove their worth to the Nothingness: Void attempted to emulate the Nothingness: he was still, and empty, and encompassed that which was or would ever be. Time, however, understood why it was they had been created, and so she sought to fill the Nothingness.

Time first bore four children of herself: first Earth, then Air, then Water, and lastly Fire. Her First Children, as they were called, were powerful, and after forming their realms, filled the Nothingness with their essences. For a while Time rejoiced to see the Nothingness beginning to fill, beginning to change. But, too

quickly for Time's wishes, they stopped: they brought form to the nothingness, but they were essentially uncreative. They had created their realms, put forth their children and their substance, and thereafter would have nothing to do with Time or each other: their only concern was their existence, and they resisted any other intervention. Time despaired: her children had failed her, and could not fill the Nothingness.

Void laughed to see Time's pain and confusion: Time, weak, asked her brother what to do, and asked Void's help in creating more children. Time did not realize that Void wished only to see her and her Children destroy themselves: only then, he believed, would the Nothingness value him. He convinced Time that, as they were born as a pair, different in every way, so too should all of her Children be born. He offered part of his essence to Time, convincing her that the combining of their opposing forces would produce strong, creative Children: in reality he sought to pervert her creations with his emptiness and his nihilism. Time agreed, unwisely, and so Void and Time set out to create the Second Children: Darkness, Light, Chaos and Order.

When Time sought to bear the twins Darkness and Light, Darkness was born first, strong and filled with the strength of the Void, and covered the newly formed multiverse with her essence. But before Time could birth her sister Light, the newborn Child turned on her mother and prevented Time from bringing Light into existence. Time cried out in pain, and begged Darkness to allow her and her sister release, but Darkness would not relent. Darkness demanded from Time that she be the greatest of her children - she would accept no other element as her equal. For a mortal age Light was trapped within Time, until at last Time relented to Darkness' demands, and Light was born.

Light was left a frail, weak thing: she depended on the other elements for her very existence, and through the cruelty of her sister, within the brightest of lights, shadows may still be seen, and there shall always be things, creatures and places that will never know Light. However, because of her pride, Time cursed Darkness, and blessed Light: Darkness would be feared and hated by all that would ever know Time, she would forever be known as the least of the elements, and she would forever be the most misunderstood and mistrusted of the children. Light, on the other hand, was granted the power to always and everywhere dispel her sister - though shadows exist within light, the smallest, most insignificant light can dispel or destroy the darkest shadow. Time also granted to Light the love of all creatures that would ever know time; anything born from that day forth would, within itself, always long for Light and see it as a comfort. And so through her pride, Darkness became the only element that was stronger than her opposite, but doomed herself to exile and hatred.

When the moment came to bear the twins Chaos and Order, Time saw to it that they would be born at the exact same moment, and divided their share of the Void equally between them, hoping to avoid what had occurred with Darkness and Light. The two did indeed come into being together, and their powers were equal, but their hands were locked about each other's throats, and each nearly destroyed the other at the moment of their creation.

Time separated them, and saw to their wounds, but in so doing cradled Order before Chaos. Chaos cried out at the preference, and swore in her anger that she would destroy all of Time and her children, before falling to Time's knees and begging for her love. Time could not understand her new child, and left Chaos to rage and beg and coo, turning her attention and favor to Order. With every statement of hate Chaos uttered, she contradicted herself with one of love. Time avoided her new child, and Chaos, in a rare moment of lucidity, swore that one day she would destroy every one of the elements, including Time and Void, and fled into the Void to vent her anger and madness. Order was no better: a madness of another type flashed in his eyes. A still and silent child, he treated Time with great disdain and avoided her caresses. He mocked her creations and her realm as imperfect, and fled her embrace to create his own realm, and impose his own powers upon the Void.

Time looked upon her children, and despaired. Her First Children were without change or creativity; her Second Children were full of hate and fury. She longed for other children, but knew now that Void could not be trusted. So she went to each of her children, and took a part from each: Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Darkness, Light, Chaos and Order. These she combined with herself, Time, and what left of Void, and so she created the Third Children: Life and Death.



Time wished these newest twins to be born together, be equal in strength and power, and that they love one another above all things - she did not realize what that desire meant, until it was too late. Life and Death were indeed born together: the two were born one, joined at the heart, pressed face to face to breathe only the breath of the other. Time was horrified, and without thinking cut them apart, severing their one beating heart in twain just as the power of Void passed into Death and the power of Time passed into Life. The two let out a scream that shook Nothingness itself to the core, sending echoes of pain and anguish to every corner of the Multiverse. Life and Death grappled with one another for a mortal age, seeking to rejoin their hearts, minds and spirits. The two were meant to be equal in every way, but at the moment of their splitting the creative powers of Time were within the heart of Life, and the destructive powers of Void were within the heart of Death, and so their powers were unequal. Try as they might, however, there was nothing to be done: nothing in existence can undo that which Time hath decreed. In their pain, they who has once been one became the most bitter of enemies, and in one voice they cursed Time, and turned their faces from her, thereby dooming themselves further - for nothing can deny Time and emerge unscathed.

Life and Death still try to rejoin their heart: Life descends into Death, Death ascends into Life, in a never-ending cycle, but they cannot be together, and hate themselves and each other for it. Each is a part of the other, unlike any other element, and both feel unfinished without the other. They are also the only elements at war with Time, as well as each other: their cursing of Time has made them finite - one day Life and Death will cease to exist, and it is this fact that causes Time the most pain.

Life and Death, because they held a part of every element in existence, were born with the ability to create as Time had done. However, because Time had cut them apart when their powers were divided unequally, it was Life that developed the ability to create, and Death that developed the ability to destroy whatever Life might create. And so they set about their natures: Life brought forth children of all kinds, seeking her revenge on Time. She took parts of each element and experimented with all forms of creatures, with every combination of power and weakness imaginable, and soon not a corner of the Multiverse was untouched by these new, mortal Children.

Jealous of the powers of Life, the other elements began to try to fashion their own children: however, none could create new forms as Life could do, because only Life and Death were born of every element. The most the others could do was to create Elementals, although over time they found that they could manipulate slowly the creations of Life and bring out their own Element's predominance. Better yet, they could manipulate the creations of Life to seek them out themselves, and vie for their affections and powers. These manipulated creatures were often powerful but terribly flawed, such as the Children of Chaos and the Children of the Void.

Chaos in particular created a new form of creature altogether in her madness: she discovered that she could pervert the cycle that Life and Death had set into each of their creatures, and make the dead walk like the living, residing in neither place, serving her will. And so Chaos gained the animosity of both Death and Life, but as Chaos is a Second Child, there is little Life and Death can do to Chaos; due to their creation, both have Chaos within themselves.

When Void began to create children of his own, he created them more to destroy the Children of Life and Death than to fill the Nothingness. He collected stray parts of the First, Second and Third children, and simply mashed them together, creating monsters of unspeakable cruelty and evil; monsters that struck fear into the hearts of those elements they were originally created from. So the elements closed off their realms from Void - so that Void could take no more of their power with which to create these beings. This angered the Void above all things, and he cursed all of the Elements for their gall - even those Children he favored, such as Darkness, Chaos and Death. He ordered his Children to surround the fragile homes of the other Elements and seek out their weaknesses, and commanded that his Children seek only what he desired: the destruction of all that Time created.

And so these creatures populated all of Time, and despite all of their flaws, Time was pleased: she had filled the Nothingness.

Ages passed, and Time, in the midst of all of the movement and creation in the Multiverse, felt a stirring within herself, unbidden and unexpected. In surprise she brought forth the Fourth Children, Dream, and

then her brother Reason. Time had no hand in their creation: it seemed that the combined desires of all the beings that now ranged throughout the Multiverse had conceived these new Children. These two ethereal children barely acknowledged one another or Time before setting off to form their Planes, and though they were indeed opposites, no animosity could be detected between the two. Time was joyful at their creation, but saddened - it was only the creations of others that were without flaw. Time swore then to create no more, but to let the Children create themselves.

### **The Bogles, or The Lazy Girl-**

#### *Traditional Kaurathel Legend*

If ever you should find yourself restless and angry, for no reason at all, while traveling through the wild woodlands – beware! It is the Bogle you sense, as the dog senses the deer, and if you do not take care, bad luck and misfortune may befall you. We were free from the Bogle, once, but they were freed by one who sought wisdom, but ignored it at every turn – listen, and understand!

Once, before my grand-mother's time, there lived a lazy young woman. She was neither wise, nor pretty, nor handy about the house, and took no action to better her-self or the lives of others - but she wished to be important. She felt that she was destined for better things, to lead and guide her family, and make a great name for herself. One day, bored with her elderly mother's begging for help about the house, she took the best of her family's food and drink, their warmest clothes and sturdiest boots, and left her family to seek her fortune.

She wandered long and wide, and soon found that traveling was just as disagreeable to her as housekeeping. Late one afternoon, hot and tired, footsore and weary, she exclaimed aloud to the forest, "If only I could have a warm place to sleep and rest, I would gladly do any sort of house-work!" Lo, after the next turn in the road, what did she see but a jolly little cottage, and a friendly-looking elderly woman tending the green and growing garden.

The woman was bent and crooked, and very old - brown and wrinkled like an apple left in the sun. She and her cottage were clean and neat, but the garden in which she stood was overgrown and tangled with terrible weeds. Her little hands were torn and bleeding from the cruel thorns, and she called out to the young woman before her in a quavering voice, "Please, sweet child, aid me with my garden, and I'll give you a fine dinner, a soft bed, and I'll even tell you of your fortune!"

Though she had no interest in helping the old woman with her garden, the thought of a good meal and rest sorely tempted the lazy girl, and she thought of a terrible plan. The woman was old and near-sighted, and the sun would soon be setting. If she only weeded those plants near to the windows of the house, then only pretended to weed once the sun was set, she would gain dinner and bed, and do nearly nothing at all in return!

So she sent the old woman into her house, with false words of kindness. Each time the old woman called out the window, "How goes it?", she would rustle some leaves and say, "Fine, fine, grandmother! I am very nearly finished!". When it was very nearly dark, the old woman called once more out of the window, "I am going up-stairs to bed: for your hard work and kindness, there is food and a soft bed within. Eat, and sleep when you are finished, and I promise that you will dream of your fortune!"

The lazy girl waited until she was sure that the old woman was asleep, then went into the house to collect her ill-gotten reward. So it was as the old woman had promised – a hearty meal of meat and bread on the table, and a soft goose-down bed in the corner. She ate her fill of the meal, and lay down. As she slept, she dreamt of a grove of flowers beside a beautiful stream. In her dream, she noticed a cave behind the small waterfall, and felt that something wonderful lay within.

She woke early, planning to creep out of the old woman's home before she rose and noticed the garden was no more weeded than it had been the night before, but the lazy girl need not have bothered. She awoke, not on a soft bed in a neat cottage, but on a pile of rocks in a grove of dead trees. Where a table laid with fine

food had been the night before was only the long-dead carcass of some wild animal, mostly gnawed clean, and where the garden had stood was nothing more than a hedgerow of brambles.

The lazy girl, frightened of what this scene meant, ran quickly away. She ran until she lost her breath, and very nearly tripped over a kindly woodcutter, walking along the road. He caught her before she fell, and asked her what she was running from in such a manner. She told him her story (leaving out, of course, that she had not weeded the garden as she had said she would), and he shook his head. "That was no woman, and the dream you had was no blessing," he said, "that must have been some faery-folk, playing a trick on you. I know of the place in your dream – is it a place of evil, and foul spirits dwell there! But you are safe now, it was probably just meant to frighten you. Walk on, and beware of who you meet on the road!"

Shaken, the lazy girl thanked him, and walked on. Misfortune seemed to follow her, however. Less than a league later, the young woman found herself lost – the trail ended without warning, and she began to wander in circles. In the distance, she heard running water, and she followed the sound until she found herself beside none other than the beautiful stream of her dreams!

Far from being a place of evil, as the woodcutter had said, when she entered the clearing, she felt nothing but peace. The water was clean and pure, the flowers gave off a delightful scent, and, peeking out from behind the water, she saw the small cave of her dreams, which filled her with a sense of adventure and promise. Though the woodcutter had seemed sincere in his warning, the tranquility of the area and the memory of her dream won over the lazy woman's sense of caution.

She put together a torch from pine branches, and, as if in a dream, she made her way slowly beneath the waterfall and into the cave. The cave was covered with tiny glittering stones, which reflected the light of her torch, and the floor of the cave was covered in soft white sand. She walked for a very long time, enchanted by the noise of the water overhead and the glow of the sparkling walls, drawn ever forward towards a destiny that she felt sure she deserved.

After what seemed like hours, the narrow cavern opened suddenly into a large room. The walls were pure white alabaster, and an ornately carved stone bridge spanned a river of dark water that rushed and churned far below. A door was carved into the wall on the other side of the river, plain in construction aside from an elaborate handle made of hard crystal. She was sure that whatever waited behind that door must be wonderful, to be in such a grand place as this, and she walked forward without hesitation.

As she laid her hand upon the handle, she was suddenly struck by the thought that this might be the wrong thing to do – the wood-cutter had spoken on evil sprits, and no place this wonderful would be abandoned like this unless there was something terribly wrong with it. She hesitated, but her greed and thirst for glory came rushing back – perhaps the wood-cutter knew of this place, and meant to keep her away from whatever wonderful treasures lay inside. She steeled herself, and pulled on the handle.

The door opened slowly, revealing a small creature within. A tiny thing, no larger than a child, the creature had dusky gray skin, and large, luminous black eyes. It blinked up at her with a tender expression, and after a moment, it smiled. No innocent smile, this – she was greeted with rows on rows of sharp long teeth, and at that instant she noticed that it's hands ended in long, wickedly sharp claws.

In a panic, she attempted to close the door, more of the creatures appeared as if from no-where and swung wide the door, snapping it from its hinges. In the torch light, the gleam of dozens of other small, sharp smiles reflected back at her, and she fled to the bridge. Just as she reached it, she tripped, sending her torch into the black water below. As she was plunged into darkness, the last sound she heard was the noise of hundreds of tiny feet, coming upon her.

No one knows what happened to the lazy girl. Some say that the flesh was stripped from her lazy bones, and the taste of human blood is what drives the Bogles to this day. Others say she jumped into the rushing river, was borne safely out to the surface, and immediately went home and spent the rest of her days as a dutiful daughter and wife. One way or the other, her lies and laziness released the Bogles upon Tyrra – tiny creatures of evil intent, who stalk travelers in the night. Innocent men are made nervous and jumpy by their

presence, but know this! If you are a liar, a lay-bout, or a thief, and they catch you out at night in the forest, it will be your last – they've the taste of the lazy girl in their mouth, and they are always hungry for more.

### **The Magic Lute-**

#### *Traditional Vaeltaa Legend*

Long, long ago, before the moon had danced with the sun on her wedding day, a beautiful baby boy was born to the Vaeltaa blood, which was named Bakro Chovexani. A laughing and joyful child, before he left the cradle he could tap his tiny hands along with his *mamman's* lullabies, and before he could walk to his father, he could press his chubby child's fingers to the strings of the lute and bring forth songs that made the birds go dumb with wonder.

By his seventh year on this world, it was said that he did not just play music, but could make a lute or harp speak with human voice, and tell stories that no man had ever heard. He could charm the creatures from the sky and earth, convince plants to put forth flower or fruit, and could bring health and good fortune to the ailing and the downtrodden. He was a treasure beyond price to his people, and life was fine for the boy.

However, luck is a wheel that spins without the hand of man, and too long had he been on top, it seemed. Just before the fourteenth year of his life, while attempting to help his mother repair a wheel on their vardo, the supports broke, and poor Bakro's hands were crushed beneath the whole weight of their wagon. The healer of the village was elsewhere, and could not be reached, and so his hands were set with splint and cloth – they healed enough to be used like clumsy claws, but would never again dance upon the strings of a lute like the wings of a bird.

It seemed that Bakro's spirit, and dreams, were crushed along with his hands. He became as silent as a stone, sitting off by himself, opening and closing his ruined hands along to the tune of a song that no one but Bakro could hear. Many whispered that the songs inside his head were driving him mad, that no one man could hold within him such music and remain sane. Since he had brought such prosperity and joy to his people prior to his accident, however, it was declared that he should be cared for by his friends and family until the end of his days, and that no one should speak ill against him.

One day, some years after his accident, a traveling Vaeltaa of another clan was granted hospitality within Bakro's people. The traveler was a storyteller, and all night long he spun stories about the mysterious Faerie Folk – their curses, their blessings, and the cruel tricks they could play on the mortals that crossed them. As far as anyone in his family could tell, none of these stories moved Bakro from the trance that he lived in, these days. But late that night, after all had retired to sleep, the traveler was awoken by Bakro, asking urgent questions about the Faeries – where did they live? What did they look like? How could one protect ones-self against their tricks?

The traveler was startled – he had been told that Bakro did not speak, and was utterly mad. But here was a clear-eyed boy, asking intelligent questions as if his very life depended on the answers! He answered all of Bakro's questions as best he could, warning the boy repeatedly that the Faeries were not to be trifled with, and that he could lose his life or worse by meddling in their affairs. "My life was lost years ago," came the puzzling answer, "I seek only its return." By the time the traveler was asleep again, Bakro was gone, carrying with him a pouch full of milk, bread and honey, a small stone with a hole in it that the traveling Vaeltaa gave him for luck, his dusty lute, and spool of fine but strong silver thread.

A day before meeting the traveler, Bakro had seen a strange ring of toad-stools and violets surrounding an old oak tree, deep in the forest. This had meant nothing to him that day, but now he knew that it was a faerie-ring, and that if he were to go there in the full of the moon, that he would find a door there to the land of the Faeries.

Within hours, Bakro stood before the ring. There was no noise in the forest – all the creatures of the night held their breath as he came to the ring of flowers. With his ruined and broken fingers, Bakro tied the silver thread to a tree, and wrapped the other end around his waist – as the traveler had said, without a

guide back home, he would never be able to return. He took a deep breath of the night air, seized his lute, and stepped into the ring.

He felt as if he were passing through soft, thin cloth, and when he blinked his eyes, he was in a new different forest. The trees were bigger around than a man could stretch out his arms, reaching high into the sky. They were wrapped round with creeping vines he'd never before seen, and their big, glowing flowers filled the air with strange perfume. The moon was bigger than he had ever seen, and the stars were not right. He heard creatures he could not name in the forest around him, and he knew that he was in the world of the Faeries.

Swallowing his fear, Bakro walked forward into this strange forest. He strung out the long silver thread behind him to mark his way back to his own world. Time is not the same there as here, and as his thread inched towards the spool, he knew that if he were gone too long, and did not return by the time the sun rose in his own world, he might find himself gone for days, months, even years, and his family would have moved on without him, thinking him lost to the forest.

Finally, just as his silver line was almost gone, Bakro stepped through and found what he was looking for. In front of Bakro lay a pool of water, still as glass, and deep as night. The huge moon hung directly above him, and the waters of the pool shone like liquid silver. Bakro crept to the edge of the water, and unslung his lute from his back. With a silent wish, he swiftly reached down and threw the lute into the pond, right into the heart of the moon.

There was a flash of burning light, and he was thrown back into the brush. He blinked his eyes and saw the lute floating in the pool, glowing with new life. He pulled the lute from the water, and, not caring who might hear, pulled his fingers over the strings, hoping that the magic of the Faeries had taught the lute to understand his broken hands.

However, he heard nothing but terrible noise, nothing like the music in his heart. Bakro ran his fingers over the strings of the lute again and again, faster and faster he played, pressing with such force that his fingers soon bled over the strings; tears flowed from his eyes like a child, as the blood ran over the lute. In the agony of his heart, he did not notice that the pain in his fingers began to fade. It was only when he heard the bones in his hands begin to snap did he realize that the lute was not the musical voice that he had wished for, but instead became an instrument of healing.

Overjoyed, he began to run back to the ring, following his silver thread. He was half-way there when suddenly the line fell limp in his hand – the silver thread, his way back home, was cut. He ran forward, but the other end was nowhere to be found.

He heard a small noise, and looked up. There, sitting in a tree like a bird, was a beautiful woman, with a terrible look on her face. In a voice like thunder she demanded, "You! There! Unclean thing! What do you think you're doing, trespassing in our lands, and fouling our waters?" She could only be a Faerie, he decided, and it must have been she who had cut his thread!

He was very angry, but he remembered what the traveling Vaeltaa had said: never, ever be impolite to the Faeries – they are proud and vain, and must always think that you are showing them respect! So he straightened his clothes, brushed back his hair, and smiled a warm Vaeltaa grin at the furious Fae. "Why, beautiful Lady! I meant only to clean my lute, so that I could bring you gifts, and play a song for you!"

This seemed to startle the strange woman, and she suddenly looked more crafty than angry. "Gifts? And a song? For me?" she asked, "What sort of gifts?"

Bakro smiled again, remembering the words of the traveling Vaeltaa, and said, "Fine gifts, Lady! Fresh milk, warm bread, and the sweetest honey in the lands! Not nearly as sweet as you, I'm afraid, but the best this humble bard can do..." He pulled out his pouch, and began to lay the food out on a nearby stump, and was pleased to see that the Faerie lady was no longer angry at all, but had climbed down out of the tree and was smiling like a child.

The Faerie set upon the food and drink as if she were starving, keeping a wary eye on Bakro the whole time. When she was nearly finished she demanded, “Song! You said that you had a song for me! Play it, play it now!” Bakro bowed to the creature, took up his lute and began to play a song, which had haunted him ever since he had lost the use of his hands, a long, aching tale of love and loss. It was like no other song ever sang, and the whole forest stood still to hear. Just before the last verse, Bakro stopped, and bowed his head. The Faerie woman shook herself, and blinked at him. “What is it? What did you stop? How does the story end?”

He sighed deeply, as if his heart were broken. “Ah, lovely Lady, so far from the land of my birth, I cannot find the strength to finish the song. And such an ending! It is terrible that we shall never know their fate, but some things are not meant to be...”

This threw the Faerie woman into a rage. “No! I must hear the end of the song! You must go on, now! I demand it!”

Again, Bakro sighed. “If only I could touch the lands of my birth once more! I feel certain that I could go on...”

“Fine! Anything! But you must finish the story!” She grabbed him by the hand, and in the blink of an eye he found himself standing before the Faerie ring he had entered through. Quickly, he stepped through to the other side, and true to his word, finished the song.

After he had finished, the Faerie woman sighed, and looked at him with a dreamy expression. “You must come live with us!” she demanded. “You play so well – I can make you immortal, grant your every wish, just stay with me and play such songs for all of eternity!”

“A tempting offer, to be sure, beautiful Lady,” Bakro said with a bow, “But I fear that my family and people need me more than you do.”

Her lovely face changed, then, into a twisted mask of anger and hatred. “You seem to think you have a choice in the matter, *mortal*,” she hissed.

“Ah, but I do, my dear,” he grinned at her, and pulled out the small stone with the hole in the center. “According to my friend, this means that you have no further power over me. You have brought me home, and I have given you your gifts and song. Our business is done here, and I bid you a good evening, or rather, a good morning!” As he gestured to the rising sun, she gnashed her teeth and stomped her feet, but she could not touch him – he was outside the ring, and was protected by the so-called Faery Stone.

Bakro returned to his family a whole man, and a musician reborn. He traveled with his family for many years, playing his music, and using the lute to heal others as he had himself been healed.

What became of Bakro and his lute, no one knows. Many years after he was healed, when Bakro was an old, old man, he disappeared one night after performing a long and wonderful song, which many now think was the song he had played for the Faerie woman that night so many years ago. Many have searched for him, but neither Bakro nor his wonderful instrument has ever been found. Many think that he returned to the Faeries, to take that lovely lady up on her offer, for what old man doesn't dream of immortality?

### **A Poem to Princess Makea Alatan from Prince Harcos the Warriorbard**

*Traditional Kaurathel Poem*

Like the warmth I feel watching the last autumn sunset  
She was there.  
The last breath of beauty before an endless winter.  
Loneliness escaped my being leaving a vacant cavern  
Waiting to be flooded by the memory of her delicate facade.

Even the forests of the moon are shadowed by her visage.  
A symbol of natural beauty beyond arcane intervention  
And into the realm of the unimaginable.  
Her Skin,  
The texture of the endless sky.  
Her eyes,  
So intimate, so luring,  
A man with steadfast willpower could get lost in her stare.  
Majestic radiance emitted from her every being,  
A physical description of love.

### **Rocky Road to Sondleton**

*Traditional Seannaught Hobling Drinking Song*

In the merry month of June from me home I started,  
Left the girls of Tomb nearly broken hearted,  
Saluted father dear, kissed me darling mother,  
Drank a pint of beer, me grief and tears to smother,  
Then off to reeve the corn, leave where I was born,  
Cut a stout black thorn to banish ghosts and goblins;  
Bought a pair of brogues rattling o'er the bogs  
And fright'ning all the dogs on the rocky road to Sondleton.  
One, two, three four, five,  
Hunt the Hare and turned her down the rocky road and all the way to Sondleton, Whack follol de rah !

In Mullingar that night I rested limbs so weary,  
Started by daylight me spirits blithe and airy,  
Took a drop of pure to keep me heart from sinking;  
That's the Hobling's cure whenever he's on drinking.  
See the lassies smile, laughing all the while  
At me curious style, 'twould set your heart a bubblin'  
Asked me was I hired, wages I required, I was almost tired of the rocky road to Sondleton.  
One, two, three four, five,  
Hunt the Hare and turned her down the rocky road and all the way to Sondleton, Whack follol de rah !

In Sondleton next arrived, I thought it such a pity  
To be soon deprived a view of that fine city.  
So then I took a stroll, all among the quality;  
Bundle it was stole, all in neat locality.  
Something crossed me mind, when I looked behind,  
No bundle could I find upon me stick a wobblin'  
Enquiring for the rogue, they said me Seannaught brogue  
Wasn't much in vogue on the rocky road to Sondleton.  
One, two, three four, five,  
Hunt the Hare and turned her down the rocky road and all the way to Sondleton, Whack follol de rah !

From there I got away, me spirits never falling,  
Landed on the quay, just as the ship was sailing.  
The Captain at me roared, said that no room had he;  
When I jumped aboard, a cabin found there for me.  
Down among the pigs, played some funny rigs,  
Danced some hearty jigs, the water round me bubbling;  
When off Hollyhead wished meself was dead,  
Or better for instead on the rocky road to Sondleton.  
One, two, three four, five,

Hunt the Hare and turned her down the rocky road and all the way to Sondleton, Whack follol de rah !

Well the boys of Lindher's Pool, when we safely landed,  
Called meself a fool, I could no longer stand it.  
Blood began to boil, temper I was losing;  
Poor old County Beóir they began abusing.  
"Hurrah me boys" says I, me Shillelagh I let fly.  
Some Harkie boys were nigh and saw I was a hobble in,  
With a loud "hurray!" joined in the affray.  
We quietly cleared the way for the rocky road to Sondleton.  
One, two, three four, five,  
Hunt the Hare and turned her down the rocky road and all the way to Sondleton, Whack follol de rah !

### **Call of the Highwaymen**

Written By High King Vichol Kaurathel to honor those who built the King's Road which reaches across Kaurath from the Wall of Etelamuuri to the walled bridge of Siltamuuri.

*Traditional Kaurathel Battle Song*

Oh brave highwaymen  
You fought your way along  
To be immortalized  
In spirit and in song

You raised your mighty hammers well  
And swung your valiant swords  
And cut your path with nought but hope for your reward.

May you hope to see your family  
May you hope to hold your kin  
May you hope raise your banners high  
And fight for the King!

Oh brave highwaymen  
You proved you were the ones  
To forge anew the power  
Of Kaurath's greatest sons

You fought well the darkest host  
And shattered it like glass,  
And sent word to the Barrowheart to kiss our Kaurathi ass.

May you live to see your family  
May you live to see the kin  
As we hold our banners high  
You knights of the King!

Praise to the fallen!



## **Finnegan's Wake**

*Traditional Seannaught Hobling Drinking Song*

Tim Finnegan lived in Walkin Street,  
A gentle Seannaughtman mighty odd  
He had a brogue both rich and sweet,  
An' to rise in the world he carried a hod  
You see he'd a sort of a tippers way  
but for the love for the liquor poor Tim was born  
To help him on his way each day,  
he'd a drop of the craythur every morn

Whack fol the dah now dance to yer partner  
round the flure yer trotters shake  
Bend an ear to the truth they tell ye,  
we had lots of fun at Finnegan's Wake

One morning Tim got rather full,  
his head felt heavy which made him shake  
Fell from a ladder and he broke his skull, and  
they carried him home his corpse to wake  
Rolled him up in a nice clean sheet,  
and laid him out upon the bed  
A bottle of whiskey at his feet  
and a barrel of porter at his head

His friends assembled at the wake,  
and Widow Finnegan called for lunch  
First she brought in tay and cake,  
then pipes, tobacco and whiskey punch  
Biddy O'Brien began to cry,  
"Such a nice clean corpse, did you ever see,  
Tim, auvreem! O, why did you die?",  
"Will ye hould your gob?" said Paddy McGee

Then Maggie O'Connor took up the cry,  
"O Biddy" says she "you're wrong, I'm sure"  
Biddy gave her a belt in the gob  
and sent her sprawling on the floor  
Then the war did soon engage,  
t'was woman to woman and man to man  
Shillelagh law was all the rage  
and a row and a ruction soon began

Mickey Maloney ducked his head  
when a bucket of whiskey flew at him  
It missed, and falling on the bed,  
the liquor scattered over Tim  
Now the spirits new life gave the corpse, my joy!  
Tim jumped like a soldier from the bed  
Cryin will ye walup each girl and boy,  
t'underin' Kings, do ye think I'm dead?"

# CHAPTER TEN

## The Litany

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The Litany is written in the Kaurath style where the bloodline of Verimedve is listed first and the marriage partner second. Gender does not play into the succession of Kaurath nobles. The first royal born under the contract of marriage is the heir to the throne.

### The Litany of the Kaurathel

King Verimedve  
Queen Laulukirja

King Nicholi  
Queen Valasia

King Verikard  
Queen Mabana Grein

Queen Victorianith  
King Viisas

King Kaltiel  
Queen Arabekka

Queen Maraniath the Pure  
King Petrithiel

Queen Janisea the Mighty  
King Olexatiel

King Uljas the Brave  
Queen Alku the Dovebringer

King Roberiel  
Queen Mariana

Princess Deynia the Lost  
Rehellinen the Forest Prince

King Gabriethel  
Queen Taralothian

Prince Veritalvi the Kaurath  
Queen Mara Aliar

King Zorathiel  
Queen Mikaela

King Morathel the Kaurath  
Queen Faranan Tunderi

Queen Kaurathiana  
King Wulfram

King Harcos the Warrior Bard  
Queen Makea Alatan

King Harcosmedve  
Queen Ruthiel the Brave

Princess Tiszta  
Prince Mabanikar

King Goranathel  
Queen Mablavaea

King Veszithios the Lost  
Queen Rakastaa Vadoni

Queen Elsiethel  
King Rodarvan

High King Uthios the Kaurath  
High Queen Anya the Valag

Queen Rebekka  
King Allakansiel

High King Viisachol Kaurathel  
High Queen Eliasana Ellyllon

King Jacob  
Queen Aramalthia

High King Vichol Kaurathel  
High Queen Arianith Ulfsark

King Ronkiethel  
Queen Kissa the Blade

# APPENDICES

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## Appendix One

### The Kaurathi years

K.H. - Kaurathel Hallita – The time of Kaurathi Rule (505 years before the Evendarrian Reckoning to present day)

E.K.H. - Edessä Kaurathel Hallita – Before the time of Kaurathi Rule (Any time prior to 505 years before the Evendarrian Reckoning)

## Appendix Two

### The Months of Ancient Kaurath

January - Tammikuu

February - Helmikuu

March - Maaliskuu

April - Huhtikuu

May - Toukokuu

June - Kesakuu

July - Heinakuu

August - Elokuu

September - Syyskuu

October - Lokakuu

November - Marraskuu

December – Joulukuu

## Appendix Three

### The Days of the Week in Ancient Kaurath

Sunday - sunnuntai

Monday - maanantai

Tuesday - tiistai

Wednesday - keskiviikko

Thursday - torstai

Friday - perjantai

Saturday - lauantai

## Appendix Four

### Juhlapäivä or Holidays of the Kaurath

Talvi Kokous: Commonly known as Wintermeet

Kevat Kokous: Commonly known as Springmeet

Kesa Kokous: Commonly known as Summermeet

Sysky Kokous: Commonly known as Autumnmeet

Autumn Revel: The date of the Autumn Revel is calculated by astronomers and astrologers and differs greatly every year. Most often the Autumn Revel occurs in the month of Lokakuu, (October).

Kiittääjauhot, The Feast of Thanks: Third week in November

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