

TRIUMPH LARP

Elf's

Handbook

4.0

The Elves of Lantai

An elf is a humanoid being in Lantai, and is recognizable by his/her pointed ears. Elves are at home amongst the woodlands and in nature. They are known as the Children of the Stars, and have a long life span. They have a reverence for nature and the balance of life. An elf is typically a graceful being, and often has some ability as an artisan, scholar, woodsman or crafter. Elves have a love of beauty, and often a predisposition for magic. The Elves of Lantai are known also for their archery skills. Whether from Erestar, Myth Celtor, or the elven nation of Adhriddyn, an elf is almost always a forward thinking member of a greater cause: the betterment of the elven nation they belong to. Elves will have an average lifespan of 500-600 yrs. An elf has a long-sighted view that is often mysterious to shorter lived races, such as humans, but is almost always for the greater good.

This handbook, along with the class handbook of your choice, will help you to portray a character that will help drive an epic story which we call Triumph. This game is story-driven, and the more thought given to your character, the better your game experience will be. Welcome to Lantai, welcome to Fairhame, and may you Triumph.

This handbook is not meant to replace reading the manual...in fact, if you've not read the rulebook, you should put this handbook down and go do so now. OK...so you're back. Hope you enjoyed the rulebook. Now, let's talk about elves.

Physical Representation

So, what exactly makes an elf look like an elf? The answer is pointed ears. If you're going to play an elf in Triumph, you are required to wear pointy ears over your own. There are no round-eared elves. If after your 3rd event you do not wear your minimal physrep and costume, you can still play, but will receive no Triumph Points. Note that this is a minimum physical representation...you can go further! You can always improve your look via makeup, to include blending in your ears and even making your features look thinner and more elven. This doesn't mean that only petite people can be elves...our elves are the Children of the Stars, and come in all shapes and sizes! Should your ears leave a very noticeable seam, consider ear cuffs as a method to hide the transition from ear to prosthetic. Costume should look, well, elven! (More information on costume will be found later in this handbook, under the different nations of elves.)

Racial Modifiers

By choosing to play an elf, you receive some advantages and some disadvantages compared to others in the game. These racial modifiers exist to help characterize the race.

Elves are strong of will, and as such are able to resist charm or sleep once each day. If someone attempts to cast a spell or spell affect upon you such as: sleep, confusing befuddlement, chant of charm, etc., then you may call "Resist" once per day and ignore the effect. Note that this resistance does not work against Truth or Fear.

Elves are renowned for their skill with a bow, and as such may purchase Bow at half the normal cost for their class. This represents their natural familiarity with the bow. Note that this does not apply to crossbow, only to the Bow skill.

Elves were the first race to discover the Archer metamagics, and are quite adept in the skills. Should an elven character choose an Archer as their class, they may select two

additional Archer Skills at no additional cost. This does not include skills that require a prerequisite, such as Piercing or Stun Arrow.

Elves are generally not very physically strong. To represent this, an elf may never purchase the Feat of Strength skill.

As elves are not very strong, their ability to wield heavy weaponry effectively is quite reduced. As such, an elf may not purchase 2 hand edged or 2 hand blunt as weapon skills.

Racial Traits

Each race has its defining qualities, or traits. This includes typical costume, common attitudes, traditions and ways of life, and natural tendencies. By playing to these traits, you are portraying a fairly typical member of the race. If you choose to ignore these traits, your character is probably quite uncommon...and might even be frowned upon by members of your own race.

Elves come from four different nations, and each is quite different in manner. There are Mystic Elves, whose nation is centered in Erestar. The Forest elves rule Adhriddyn, and include both Mishtia and Wild Elves. The High Elves are those whose nation lies in and around Myth Celtor. The Dark Elves of Pataoco are one of the four nations, but are so very different as to be considered their own race.

Mystic Elves live in harmony with nature, as will any elf. Their architecture is organic and magical in nature, and the city of Erestar is a beautiful place indeed because of this. The mystic elves prize magic, and have a higher number of spellcasting classes and archers than other elven nations. The Mystic Elves are known for their artisans and craftsmen, true artists who can bring beauty out in even the most utilitarian of objects.

The elves of Erestar are the most outgoing of the elven nations, with trade agreements and diplomatic ties to many other races and nations. Also of note is the alliance Erestar shares with Aettlund, as the Mystic Elves see Aettlund as a visionary land of peaceful co-existence among goodly folk. Erestar is ruled by a council of 7 male and female elves, two of nobility, two from merchant class, and 2 from working class. The final seat changes every 50 years. The seats are passed on through family and the spouse of the inherited seat holder may also have a voice.

In recent history, only fifty years ago, a battle was waged at Erestar. The mystic elves awoke to find a mercenary army laying siege to the city, with no warning of their approach. It was discovered that the army had been transported magically by the rulers of Thornhold, and the elves were surely caught by surprise. Runners were sent to the dwarves of Sunder and to Aettgard, and reinforcements were marched...the enemy army was decimated in a three pronged attack. To this day, anyone claiming to be from the Isle of Thornhold is turned away from Erestar.

Tips for roleplaying a Mystic Elf: Friendly to other races. Probably possesses some artistic talent. At least one member of your immediate family is probably a spellcaster. Costume is noble-ish, a mystic elf will enjoy greys, blues, whites, and forest colors most of all. Small chance of resenting High Elves (keep reading for more details). Weapons, armor, etc...should be as "pretty" as possible, even the bladesmiths are artists.

(Even a duct tape weapon can be prettified simply...gold marker can be used to create filigree patterns on the tape.)

Forest Elves are quite harmonious with nature, and have a stewardship of the lands of Adhriddyn. The architecture of the Forest Elves tends to seem almost botanical, with cabins amongst the tree branches, edifices seeming to grow out of stone, sweeping structures appearing to worship the forest they exist in. The forest elves are great woodsmen and bowmen, and are quite at home amongst the trees.

Forest elves are insular, and have a very hard border which is patrolled by scout groups, usually consisting of a mage or cleric, a ranger, and several warriors. To attempt to enter the Wood of Sorrows is to meet one of these patrols and be asked to leave. Woe to those who mistake this warning for anything other than the eviction it represents. Only those who have been invited into Adhriddyn may enter. These scout groups also patrol in the wood, protecting their homeland from monsters and goblinoids. To be a goblin in the Wood of Sorrows is to meet death at elven hands.

The forest elves are inclusive of two distinct societies of elf, the Mishtia and the Wild Elves. The Mishtia are those elves that live in Sofril and Qualost, who have a bit of civilization and structure, the rulers of Adhriddyn. The Wild Elves are those who live in small villages and vales within the Wood of Sorrows...small tribes of elves who eschew contact with the outside world, and even a bit with the Mishtia. The Wild and the Mishtia get along well enough, but they are not one big happy family.

The elves of Adhriddyn are the most insular and distrustful of the elven nations, and conduct most of their trade meeting outside of their borders. A visitor to these elven lands is always escorted to their destination, and a visitor that is unwelcome is always escorted out of the Wood.

Tips for roleplaying a Forest Elf: Initially distrustful of other races, especially half orcs and half ogres.. Might not be friendly toward high elves. Should enjoy the woods, maybe even hug a tree. Fighter types will likely wear forest colors. Caster types will likely wear robes, masks, accoutrements that are wearable pieces of art...and might accessorize. Wild elves will look a bit barbaric, lots of leather and fur and exposed skin, with tattoos of spirals, symbols, sometimes even facial tattooing. Mishtia will have pretty gear, wild elves will often use things from nature (bone and wood and leather), in conjunction with steel and such. Might be resentful of High elves.

High Elves call Myth Celtor their homeland. The High Elves prize science and intellect as desired traits, and produce many priests and mages. High elves tend to utilize magic and science in their architecture, as in the ancient floating palaces. Currently, they are still undertaking the monumental task of rebuilding the city-state of Myth Celtor. High elves can be great statesmen, and produce fine warriors. The cavalry of Myth Celtor is legendary, as is their formation warfare. There is no finer shieldwall on the planet than the one made by the Knights of Mystiarra.

High Elves set great store in titles and nobility, tracing family lines and titles as far back as history allows, long before the cataclysm. Most of them tend to have the disdain for others that nobility breeds. While not unfriendly with other races, the

tendency of high elves to look down on the others, even other elves, tends to be quite off-putting.

There are some families and “neighborhoods” of Mystic and Forest elves living still in Myth Celtor, having stayed in the city after the ages long ago inter-elven war. In that long ago time, the High Elves ruled over the elven nations, but this was thousands of years ago. Present day Myth Celtor is also home to some dwarves and members of other races dedicated to rebuilding the city, or to the furtherance of science and magic.

Tips for roleplaying a High Elf: The high elves have a racial arrogance that should be played upon...maybe you ignore the other races, maybe they annoy you, but they are not your equal. There is a small chance you will dislike dwarves, having been taught that they betrayed the high elves once generations ago. Should be very conscious of social status...and will likely pay more attention to someone of noble blood. The elves of Myth Celtor are the most urban of the nations, and therefore are less likely to be the “tree-hugging” sort. Costume of High Elves is very noble, running toward silvers, blues, purples, whites, blacks. Very few earth tones. Fighting classes are likely to be armed and armored, high elves are the nation with elven knights. Caster classes are likely to be robed in bright colors with jewelry and accoutrements not all that great for the trail.

Key Points in Elven History

Many millennia ago, the Dream reshaped the world of Lantai. It created the Gods, who lived upon and discovered Lantai’s secrets. The Gods, in turn, Ascended, seeking a further enlightenment. Some of the Gods gave birth to Children of their own. In these long ago times, Mystiarra, who had become proficient in magic, reached out into the night and plucked one thousand of the brightest and most beautiful stars, causing them to fall upon Lantai. They landed in four distinct areas, and the power of their burning fall was the catalyst that Mystiarra used to shape them into her Children, the Elves.

Civilization was slow to take root in those days, and Lantai was a much more dangerous place. The elves learned to survive, and then to thrive. Mystiarra in those days was an attentive mother, and saw to it her children could prosper. In time, she chose some of her children to carry a bit of her knowledge, and the first clerics came to be. Over the course of centuries, and then millennia, the elves (and indeed the dwarves as well) began to grow away from their parent and continue in their own direction, only the clerics keeping the Gods close to them. The nations grew, and the three nations of the northern lands began to forget their southern brothers the dark elves, their existence becoming story, then legend, then myth.

In time, the elves began to argue about the nature of their lives, of their duties, of their relations to each other. In those dark, long ago days, the High Elves began to believe that their force of arms was a sign of their right and responsibility to rule Lantai under a united banner, the banner of Myth Celtor. Only the High Elven priests of Mystiarra gave argument, and they were hushed, quieted, some even arrested in the night.

A long war darkened the face of Lantai. The dwarves withdrew and watched from afar, lamenting the foolishness of the elves. The High Elves marched and fought,

and over the course of decades put the yoke of slavery on the Forest Elves and the Mystic Elves. Foolishly, the rulers of Myth Celtor believed they were working the will of the Gods. This period of slavery lasted over 1,000 years, in which the dwarves refused to do trade with Myth Celtor directly, working only with their subdued friends in Erestar and Sofril.

In time, the crown of rulership passed to a young elf who was unconvinced of the righteousness of the High Elven cause. He began to seek greater answers, and was granted a vision by Mystiarra herself. The priests and priestesses of her temple were given a vision as well, and it revealed a horrible truth. Garrinos and Stryde, the Gods of Chaos and Deception (now of Thieves), had used the High Elves as pawns to attempt to gain mastery of Mystiarra's power over the Flow of magic. They were defeated, but that is another tale.

Upon seeing this vision, the young king immediately summoned his court and ordered that the nations become three separate nations, as was originally intended. He and the clerics of Mystiarra shared their vision with the elves, and sovereignty was returned to the Mystic Elves of Erestar and the Forest Elves of Sofril.

The Forest elves became quite prosperous, flourishing in the Wood of Sorrows. They founded the nation of Adhriddyn, and declared their borders closed so as to heal the wounds of war and slavery. The Mystic elves expanded their borders as well, prospering in the days of relative peace.

After the war, the existence of the 4th elven nation was truly forgotten. The Gods moved further out of the lives of their children, and the younger races came to be: the goblinoids, the Gre'shal, and the humans. The elves learned of these races, and began their relationships with them. In this time, some 6,000 years past, the beings of Lantai began to shape the world in their own way, with less direct interference from the Gods of Lantai. The elves had friendly relations with most races, but learned that goblinoids had dark hearts indeed. Thus began a long series of battles against the goblins, the orcs, the ogres and others. The elves, and indeed all of the goodly races, prospered in this time.

In these times, civilizations grew, trade took place, empires were built and destroyed. Monsters were eliminated, or pushed back into the Savage Lands on the left continent, and into the vast Ironwall mountains on the right continent.

Then came the Godswar. The Gods strove against each other, some attempting to use the people as pawns. Intrigues took place, and the Great Kingdom, the ancient human kingdom on the right continent, had civil war. It was a dark and bloody time...and it would get worse. The Gods went to war themselves. Lugh and Stryde hurled pure energy from the Flow at each other, and the Cataclysm struck the world of Lantai.

The elves suffered, as did the other races. The Mystic elves had managed to save themselves with a powerful working of sacrifice. The Forest elves weathered the storm in the trees. The High elves lost their beloved city as the magics it was created with turned and twisted, and the floating gardens and palaces plunged from the sky.

After the Cataclysm, the Dark Times came to the world of Lantai. Wars raged, and the elves mostly withdrew from the world, attempting to heal their kingdoms. The wars of men were largely ignored by the elves, though some few times the elves participated to protect their own interests. The Forest elves became highly distrustful and insular, and remain so to this day. The Mystic elves worked to heal their land, undoing what the wild magics had done. The High elves strove to reorder their society, and as the

Dark Times receded, reached out to their neighbors to try and recover the glories of science and complex magics.

All this time, the elves had thought the fourth nation lost to time. As the dark elves reached out after the Cataclysm, the leaders of the three elven nations were quick to establish diplomatic ties in their joy. Over time, however, attitudes have changed. The High Elves have all but withdrawn from contact with the Dark Elves, being distrustful of their fascination with death. The Forest Elves continue contact with the Dark Elves, understanding better than their cousins that the ways of the Dark Elves are resultant of their savage homeland. The Mystic Elves are most accepting of the Dark Elves, and even have trade ties with them, as the Mystic Elves are always accepting of a goodly race.

Now, in the present, elves strive as we all do. The Savage Lands have become more dangerous, if that were possible. Orcs, goblins, trolls, and worse have become more and more common. Monsters long thought to be extinct, or mere fairy tales, have been sighted. The Oracles speak of dark days ahead. May we all triumph.

Elven Tales

Addrir and Tagwyn

Addrir and Tagwyn crept through the undergrowth, their elven feet making no sound. The sunlight dappled their golden hair as it passed gently into the forest from its lofty perch. The two were as mirror images, one of the other, dressed in the woodland colors of scouts. The brothers looked to each other at regular intervals, the sense of danger around them a palpable, almost evil thing...quite out of place in the Forest of Sorrows.

Addrir smiled lightly, his mind reaching back to the many times he and Tagwyn had hunted together; to the many times they had studied swordplay and tactics in their careers as warriors. His smile disappeared as he recalled their need to be here, out in the wilds of the forest.

Addrir and Tagwyn were sparring...again. Their smiles came easily, even as they circled about each other, looking for an opening to strike with their weapons. A burly figure, huge for an elf, approached and watched their play before interrupting.

“Sad I am to call an end to your play, hini, but I have news.”

Tagwyn regarded their commander, Bechuin, in his fine elven armor, the crest of Craban Rochben, the knights of the crow, resplendent on his chest. The brothers were unsettled by the seriousness of the knight’s tone and visage.

“What news, then, Kano,” Tagwyn inquired. “What has transpired?”

The brothers listened intently as the knight told his news, his grim tale seeming a nightmare in the splendor of the city of Sofril.

“One of the wild elves came to me, my young friends. He spoke of his village Beinbrethil, and how it was. The aldamars up in the branches, the hunters, the children at play. The crops and wild plants they relied upon. The peace they have enjoyed, even in the wild.”

“Then he told me of how it is. The aldamars fallen to the ground, the children weeping, the hunters mostly slain. Beinbrethil is a wild elven village under siege, my utinus. Their scouts have found track and sign, a booted pair of feet and many strange tracks they cannot identify. The village is attacked only at night, and according to the wild one who spoke to me, the attacks are fast...a single dwelling is hit and destroyed or ransacked, and then there is silence.”

“Why not post guards?” Addrir asked.

“This wild elf tells me they have, but to no avail. They believe they are besieged by a phantom. But a phantom leaves no tracks, and wears no boots, my utinus.”

The brothers shared a look, each noting the eagerness of the other. Tagwyn spoke.

“Why tell us this, kano?”

Bechuin took a deep breath, fixing the brothers with his gaze. “I tell you this to prepare you. I am sending you to Beinbrethil to track their phantom down. You two are my best, if my youngest, warriors. Make me proud.”

Addrir’s thoughts came back to the present with a sudden snap, and his gaze flew to his brother. Tagwyn shrugged and grinned sheepishly, moving his boot off of the small twig. It was the first sound they had made this hour. They had been on the trail for 2 days now, tracking the sign left in the forest by the mysterious attacker.

Addrir loosened his long sword in its sheath, aware of each movement around him. Four short strides separated him from his brother Tagwyn, and they looked outward into the forest. Their senses screamed at them to be alert and prepared.

The brothers were greeted at spearpoint by the wild looking elves of Beinbrethil. They exchanged a concerned glance...these elves were truly frightened to greet other elves in such a fashion. Introductions were made, and the two explained their mission as given them by their mentor and commander. With great relief, the wild elves welcomed them and let them begin their search.

Addrir looked about, noting the aldamars, or tree houses, that had been crushed as if by a great hand. A full dozen were in such a state. The vale seemed in a state of disarray, and most concerning to the brothers were the haunted faces of the wild elves around them.

Searching the village, the brothers found many such sights...here an aldamar destroyed by fire, there a missing elf, trees scarred by claw, and in some few places, signs of struggle and marks hinting at an elf being dragged away. Their skilled eyes soon found the trail left by the retreat of the attacker, and they prepared themselves to follow.

Tagwyn motioned his brother over to him. Leaning down, he pointed out the tread of the boots they’d been following, and the mark of a beast near it he couldn’t recognize.

“The path continues, but I still can’t make out what beast is with him...”

“If only we had a ranger with us,” Addrir replied, “we’d have a better chance.”

Tagwyn favored his brother with a grin. “Right you are, but it is just us. Let’s continue...I think we’re getting close.” With that, Tagwyn strung his bow, moving forward.

Closer than the brothers could know, a figure in dark robes watched their progress. He looked about him at the Changebeasts that were his to command, and hissed softly to himself. He raised his hands and began to chant softly.

Addrir and Tagwyn moved slowly, their senses telling them that danger stalked. Tagwyn moved now with an arrow nocked, and Addrir had drawn sword and dirk. They stepped with purpose, eyes darting about. Then the forest exploded into motion around them.

Quickly taking stock of the situation, the brothers saw several strange beasts charging them, odd creatures that seemed a blend of wolf and lizard...Changebeasts. As Tagwyn let his first arrow fly, he noticed the figure in the trees, clad in dark robes.

“Mage!” Tagwyn exclaimed. Addrir nodded once, preparing to meet the rush of charging Changebeasts. Tagwyn fired arrow after arrow, bringing two of the beasts down in his volley, as Addrir moved up close to him, only a single stride away.

As Tagwyn dropped his bow and drew steel, the mage raised his arms and released his magic. Two inky bolts of darkness flew forth from his fingers, flying at the brothers as if shot from a ballista. A grunt from Addrir was Tagwyn’s only warning, but he dove headlong, rolling as he landed. The bolts crashed harmlessly into the turf where he had been standing, but his safety was short lived as he came to a roll in between two of the savage Changebeasts. He worked furiously, parrying the vicious swipes of their claws.

In moments, he felt a familiar presence at his back, and knew that Addrir had joined him. Their movements complemented each other, and in the space of three breaths, two more of the beasts had fallen.

Back to back the brothers stood, surrounded by nearly a dozen of the strange beasts. As Addrir watched, the figure in dark robes removed its hood, revealing a hideously deformed face, part human, part insect...a Changeling. Addrir sucked his breath in through his teeth, preparing himself. He could feel Tagwyn tensing behind him.

The Changeling mage opened his mouth to speak. “Foolish elves,” he began, “you do not know what you are facing...”

The brothers never let him finish his sentence. In one smooth motion, Addrir flung his dirk, and it lodged itself in the mage’s belly. The Changebeasts bayed in confusion, and the two forest elves dove into their ranks, never more than a single step from each other.

To an observer, the brothers seemed wild and uncontrolled, but in reality, each step and each swing complemented the other’s. In moments, three more of the beasts had fallen, but Addrir could hear the mage chanting and knew his life was at an end.

The brothers continued their deadly assault, their blades whipping back and forth, parrying the claws of the vicious Changebeasts. Tagwyn bound one beast’s legs high, and Addrir thrust his blade deep into its heart, then whirled to protect his back. The mage’s voice reached a crescendo, and Addrir dove to the ground, directly under one of the beasts. He was surprised when his tactic worked...the beast above him suddenly froze solid, encased in an icy rime. Addrir himself felt the cold keenly, a sharp pain across his back that he knew would take time to heal. But he was alive, and that was enough, he thought as he sprang back to his feet.

The Changebeasts began to attack more cautiously, learning respect for the flashing blades in the hands of these two warriors. More than half their number lay dying on the forest floor, and the eyes of these two Mishtia promised death. Addrir noticed the Changeling mage drawing a hand axe from his belt, but saw that his lips still moved in a chant.

The brothers charged with renewed vigor, slashing and stabbing at the foul Changebeasts, blades hacking deep into their scaly hides. With a cry, Tagwyn felt the pain of jaws on his left leg, and stumbled under the weight of the blow. Without looking, only registering his brother's shout of anguish, Addrir turned and lunged, driving his blade deep into the beast's throat. Tagwyn rolled away, but could feel keenly the pain of the bite.

Only five of the beasts remained, but still the mage approached, an incantation on his malformed lips. The Changeling pointed his finger at Addrir, who was suddenly racked with agony as lightning danced about him, jerking him around like a rag doll.

With a sudden gasp, Addrir found himself released from the magic, and slumped against his brother's back. The two regarded each other over their shoulders, and gave a single short nod.

In a sudden rush, the two broke for the mage. Tagwyn drove back one of the Changebeasts, stabbing it in the maw, while Addrir leapt and used its back as a springboard, jumping out for the black-robed Changeling. Tagwyn, having dispatched the beast, was right behind. They fell on the mage in a flurry of flashing steel, depriving the filthy mage a chance to cast his magic...in moments it was all finished, and the Changebeasts retreated, whimpering, into the trees.

The two brothers limped into the village, blood caked on their faces and pain etched in their eyes. It was Addrir who spoke to the wild elf that greeted him. "The attacks are done, and you are safe. Now might I trouble you for some wine?"

The hearty laughter of the two warriors echoed through the aldamars and the very trees of the wood. Theirs would be a legend long in the telling.

Imralas

It is spoken, here in Erestar, of the legend of Imralas Tiri'pilin...the greatest Archer of our people. The Mystic Elves of Erestar have long been students of the bow, but we remember Imralas with a special fondness, and a desire to be worthy of his memory.

In time long gone, before the Cataclysm brought its change, but after the younger races came to Lantai, Erestar was much as it is now, though smaller. There walked among our beautiful city an elf by the name of Imralas. Imralas was legend even in youth...he could take a bird off the wing with his bow by the age of 12. As his prowess grew, he tied himself to the metamagic of the bow; he was able, as many archers are, to excite the magic within his arrows. Imralas, however, was the best of his kind...where an archer might fire an arrow of flame, the flame arrow of Imralas would burn white-hot and angry.

Imralas lived most of his life here in Erestar, practicing with the bow that was his passion every day. He led the archers of this city in those times as their captain. In time,

he became a teacher as well. But the legend of Imralas is brightest at the time when the Orcs of Sundered Skull made war upon us.

The orcs and goblins of this world are often no more than a nuisance, for it is the nature of evil that it will turn upon itself. But every now and then comes a cunning and strong leader of the greenskinned foe, and that is when they become a true menace. Such it was when Kuugek Bonecrusher took control of the Sundered Skull tribe of orcs. We suffered their war for a year and more, and it was Imralas who brought the war to a close.

Erestar had suffered the incursion of the orcs for long enough, and we made war upon them. Long, bloody, sad war. We gave our sons and daughters to Bellumas, our children who belonged with us.

Imralas was part of the final battle. His archers took to the wood, as did the rest of our army. The final battle was not a field battle, with lines and tactics...no, it was a massive skirmish amongst the trees. Imralas left his protégé in charge of the archers, and separated himself from our armies. He went on the hunt.

Imralas stalked the wood, keeping to the edge of the battle. He was loaded with arrows, having not one, but three quivers on his person. Our own warriors did not know he was there, though many found their skirmishes suddenly easier as one of his arrows came soaring in, seemingly from nowhere, wreaking havoc on the cowardly orcs.

Imralas himself moved with purpose, seeking the head of the snake. Early in the day, he found one of the orc shamans driving a group of over fifty orcs to overtake a small group of the sons of Erestar. He took aim, touching the magic within the shaft, and released the arrow. His aim was true, and his sparking arrow struck the orc shaman in the throat, releasing its power. Lightning danced upon the shaman, and most remarkably upon the orcs nearest him as well! Such was unheard of among our archers, and is a feat unrepeated by anyone other than Imralas. His one shot had slain a half dozen orcs...truly was Imralas blessed by Mystiarra!

Imralas spent the day moving with stealth, seeking the command of the orcs. He moved from tree to tree, blinking away tears when he found the clearings of fresh hewn stumps where orc axes had taken down the oak and ash. Hours later, he finally came to the encampment he sought, approaching in silence. He saw Kuugek with his guards and advisors, his massive great sword slung over one shoulder.

Imagine the sight...the greatest archer of our race, gazing upon this old orc chieftain and at least a dozen green men-at-arms. Seeing his foe, Imralas prayed to Mystiarra, and began his slaughter. Arrows fell like rain among the orcs, balls of flame erupting within seconds of miniature lightning storms, and the undergrowth itself assisted him by twining around the feet of the orcs.

Old Kuugek was the last to fall. Imralas had attacked without being seen, but he calmly strode into the encampment at last to face the wily orc, the head of the snake. The massive orc held his greatsword in both hands, and Imralas stood staring at him until the vines released him. They stared at each other for many seconds, Imralas daring him to move.

The orc did charge, and Imralas nocked an arrow and fired it in the blink of an eye. The arrow pierced Kuugek's shoulder, a minor wound. But the enchantment! Kuugek found himself unable to move, held fast by the magic of Imralas' shot.

Slowly, deliberately, Imralas put another arrow to the bowstring. He drew carefully, whispering a prayer to Mystiarra as the feather of the fletching touched his

cheek. Imralas let fly, and the arrow became a streak of flame, striking the old orc with such ferocity and heat that it obliterated him.

Imralas made his way back to the force of elven archers, his grim work completed. He led those archers on a wide circuit, spiraling around the orcs, constantly picking them off from new directions. A war that had lasted a year was ended in a single day by the greatest archer ever to live in Erestar. As for Imralas, he lived long, and taught another generation of elven youth the ways of the bow. His bow still resides in the city, in a place of honor amongst our few treasures.

Anuar's Tale

I am Anuar, and here I write my tale, as Eagle bids me. May Mystiarra guide my thoughts as I give my tale. Hear my words, and may Eagle's eyes show you my heart.

Now is the time of change, a time when a beacon is made upon our world for the young humans. It is a time for the Children of Stars to see a new example. It is time for us to follow for a time, rather than lead. It has been 750 years since the Cataclysm, and I am now seeing the birth of a new kingdom...one of great vision. It shall be called Aettlund.

Where shall I begin...

For weeks I had seen the signs, and tried to ignore them. My lot in life was to be an artisan, to sing the songs of creation and sculpture. I loved to work the wood and stone, to sing it to life and growth in lovely Erestar. But in the past weeks, I had seen everywhere the eyes of the eagle. In my carvings, in my songs of creation, the eyes would peer back at me from the center of my vision.

I now know I was in the throes of a Calling. As the weeks went on, the visions grew stronger. Then came the day I saw the Eagle. I could not look away from it, and it bid me to follow it. Into the forest it led me, there to become a son of the Eagle.

My time in the forest grew long, and I came back to Erestar frequently to visit with friends and family, that they not worry. Most were supportive of my calling, some not. We Mystic Elves are ever respectful of one's coia-men, one's life path.

The Eagle was kind to me, as she still is. A great spirit that leads me, she augmented my already sharp sight. She also granted me the occasional vision of distant places. I came to know that I was to have a destiny. Even though I lamented not being able to shape and sculpt in my beautiful Erestar, I knew that I would be given a greater medium in which to work...the future.

Almost four years ago came what I believe was my most important vision. And it did so at such an inopportune time! I had been courting a young lady, an artist, in Erestar. She lived in the most beautiful aldamar, polished white among the leaves, with stained glass creations of her own in the place of windows and door. And she was beautiful...breathtakingly so. I think a piece of her beauty lived in each of her creations.

One lovely day, we walked by the Tower of Ages, strolling along the avenue, when suddenly my vision clouded. I saw a temple library, with the symbol of the scrolls upon it, being ransacked by a mercenary army. I fell to my knees, unable to see the ground before me, my sight only showing the scene of the slaughter. I wept with the

sorrow of it, but saw my totem spirit in the vision, leading me to that library and then beyond, into the future. I knew there would be a great journey in store soon, but this was not the day.

That day that dreaded but blessed day came a month later on the wings of another vision. I was relaxing at a café, drinking chava and watching the children playing. My vision clouded, and I saw a man...a human. He led a group of priests, and he was on a great quest. I could see in my vision a pair of hands holding him, the soft glow of the divine surrounding him. A name came into my mind, whispered by Eagle. Denulas. I knew where I must travel to...this man was on his way to Kendros, and that very afternoon, I was as well.

My journey was long, and not easy. I lived on trail rations, and on the game I hunted. Long I ran, through lands that were untamed. Glad I was to reach the roads of Denulas. Many days later, I reached Kendros. I waited outside the gates, making camp near the road. I set a vigil, and went into my meditations to ask for Eagle's guidance. I could not know it at the time, but the man himself had a vigil at his own altar, seeking guidance from his god.

The Eagle showed me the way, and my next action was simple. I was to wait. Simply that...and one of the more difficult tasks any being can be given! To wait, and this man and his brothers would come to me, past me, and I should meet them on the road. Waiting, even for one as patient as an elf, can make time do strange things. I waited only a single day to meet this man, but it seemed as if a month passed in that single rising and setting of our sun.

I knew, the moment I met the man, that this was a man who would change the world. It was his eyes. I saw their approach, priests of Arum, one with head high, the others plodding along with half hope, half resignation etched on their faces. His was the head held high, looking forward, as he would for the rest of his life.

I greeted them, approaching him directly. I offered my hand in the human custom, and he took it. "I am Anuar, of Erestar, shaman of the Eagle." I said.

"Well met, my friend. I am Lucius Solon, and you look upon my brothers here."

I will never forget those first words. I could see that this was a man who would not be as other humans...here was one who could hear the truth. I told him of my vision, and of my calling to travel. He fell to his knees and prayed to his god Arum on the spot, and I noticed that a few of the other priests gave prayers of thanks as well, looking as if some burden had been lifted from their shoulders.

We clasped hands again, and he welcomed me to walk with him. He told me of his vision, and I understood why Eagle had led me here. I also understood that we would be meeting others soon. Our journey began with that next step.

Many nights have I laid beneath the stars, gazing upwards, reveling in the life around me. Many nights did I give thanks to Mystiarra and to Eagle that my steps were taken with this vibrant human, so full of life, and so forward thinking. Many times did I call him sha-edhel, almost elf, for his vision. It is our joke.

Many times has danger stalked us on our path. We have defeated orcs and goblins, we have dealt with treachery from within. I have lent my bow and my magic to Lucius' cause quite a few times, now.

Over time, our numbers swelled. Lucius made many friends in these years, and persuaded many to see his vision. The elves of my own precious Erestar agree with his vision whole-heartedly. Even the Children of Stone in Sunder agreed with his plan, his vision of a land for the goodly races to live in harmony.

Our greatest challenge was faced just days ago, however. There are many hundreds of us on the path with Lucius. We were most unprepared when we encountered a great lizard, with a gaze that mesmerized and held foes fast in their footsteps. A basilisk, it is called. I knew that I must act quickly, and in conjunction with my fellows. I called upon the magic of the Eagle, drawing my totem to me, becoming the tool of the Eagle, the vessel for its might. The light of Eagle's power shone from me, and those of my fellows affected by its power became free to move, except when the beast gazed directly at them.

Arrow after arrow did I send into the beast, and spells rained down upon it from the priests and mages along with us. The warriors knew better than to approach. Thirty of us were required to fell the beast, and glad we were that it was a bachelor, not mated or worse a family head. One was challenge enough!

And now we have come to a perfect site, on a hill at the shores of Lake Palamonde, and this is where Lucius has begun his work, and where we shall assist. The time for building is here. One day, there will be a city here. It shall be the heart of a new kingdom, and it shall be called Aettgard.

Erestar's Cataclysm

Tymyr walked slowly past the Tower of Ages, his mind wandering as he listened to the songbirds chattering about their day. He felt a strange tension in the air, and it agitated him. Today he would meet with Rhibryn, Cyrel, and Anodwar, the other elder mages of Erestar. They would discuss the strange portents that had been seen this week.

Tymyr looked about, noting the beauty of Erestar as if he viewed it for the first time. The mighty oak trees stood tall, sheltering aldamars in their boughs. The marble columns of the temple of Mystiarra seemed especially lovely to him today. As he came to the council hall of his order, he marveled at the way it appeared to resemble a massive scallop shell, even as his mind mulled over the portents.

Falling stars, earthquakes in the south...these would not be worrisome on their own. But coupled with the reports of beached behemoths to the north, and the sight of several dragons flying with all speed out of the south and continuing on toward the lands to the west, these things seemed to carry a greater meaning. And this day, Gollairon, priest of Mystiarra, had asked to meet the eldest mages in the council hall of mystics.

Tymyr realized as he entered the Working Chamber, with its altars and mosaic floor inscribed with sigils, that for the first time in his memory, he was afraid. He paused in his steps to consider the feeling, then continued in. His eyes met each of the other mages in turn: Rhibryn, his long black hair spilling over broad shoulders, Cyrel, his silver locks making him look severe in his blue robes, and Anodwar, in her blond tresses and supple leather robes. Tymyr could not help but reflect on her beauty yet again, but quickly dismissed those thoughts...the path to her heart had been forsaken long ago for the path of duty.

Tymyr took his place amongst the other four, exchanging their ritual greetings. Gollairon was not long in attending, entering the chamber in a rush. He took a place among the mages, each of the five standing in a circle of tile on the patterned floor.

“I have been given a vision, my friends,” Gollairon began, “and it is not a joyous vision. Our lady Mystiarra warns me of a time of great strife to come. It will be a challenge to our very being, especially those of us who work in her domain, the Flow.”

“Tell us more,” Tymyr said. “Tell us of how we shall prepare.”

“A storm comes, Tymyr. A storm such as Lantai has never seen. And the waves of this storm shall crash upon the beach...and our lady tells me you shall be the breakwater.”

Tymyr lowered his eyes, absorbing the gravity of the statement, as yet unsure of its meaning. He looked to his companions, seeing similar clouds behind their eyes, and then returned his gaze to Gollairon.

“We thank you for this warning, Gollairon. We shall begin research immediately, and try to create a plan of action for this storm you warn us of.”

Gollairon bowed, turning to leave, and began to walk out of the chamber. His first step fell upon the tile, and Tymyr watched in horror as he fell, writhing, to the ground. Gollairon screamed, an inhuman sound as if too large a voice was attempting to issue from the throat. In that same damned voice, Gollairon screeched “Now! Now! There is no more time! It comes now!”

Tymyr felt dread, and looked to his companions. He knew there was precious little time, hearing Gollairon’s voice in his thoughts even as the priest’s voice fell silent. Tymyr could feel the thoughts forming, could see what needed to be done, and looking into the eyes of his compatriots he saw that they did as well.

An image came to his mind, an amalgam of a forcewall, a spellshield, a mirror shield...and its size! It encompassed all of Erestar! The mages with him nodded, all receiving this gift from Mystiarra.

Tymyr then felt the hammer blow. It was happening now. The Flow screamed in his mind. Time was out.

Tymyr joined hands with the other mages, looking lovingly into Anodwar's eyes for the space of a single breath. Then they began to work. Words of magic spilled out of their mouths, and they ignored the anguish within themselves. Energies were amplified in the chamber, and the magic began to take shape. Tymyr could feel the sand slipping through the hourglass, felt the impending wave coming from the south through the Flow.

Four spells became eight, then twelve, then sixteen as the mages cast quickly and accurately, each knowing that this would be their greatest working...and their last.

In the streets of Erestar, life came to a standstill. Birds fell silent, squirrels took shelter. Craftsmen dropped their tools and ceased their singing. Spellcasters screamed, or fell unconscious. All stood breathless as the council building, its beautiful scalloped design, shattered and a wave of magic pulsed over the citizens to become a massive dome.

Then the storm broke.

Outside the dome, the Hells came to Lantai. Inside, all was eerily silent as those within watched in horror the changes being wrought outside. The sky turned black, and fire boiled within the clouds.

Inside the shattered chamber, Tymyr held on to the magic with every fiber of his being. He kept his eyes on Anodwar, knowing the image he wanted to take with him to the Summerland. Thus he did not notice when Gollairon was consumed from within by blue eldritch flames. The four mages held the magic, even as it consumed them from within. The pain was unbearable, and it seemed they stood in the circle for days before they were released from their torment, consumed by the flames of their own magic.

Beiriwyn, a very young elf boy, sat weeping in the middle of the street, staring at the ruined scallop shell that had been the council of mystics. He watched in amazement as the storm moved on into the distance, and the dome faded out of existence. He knew not how or why, only that he and his kind had been spared a horrid fate. Then came the first howls from outside the city, and he knew he might never be safe again. The Dark Times had begun.

