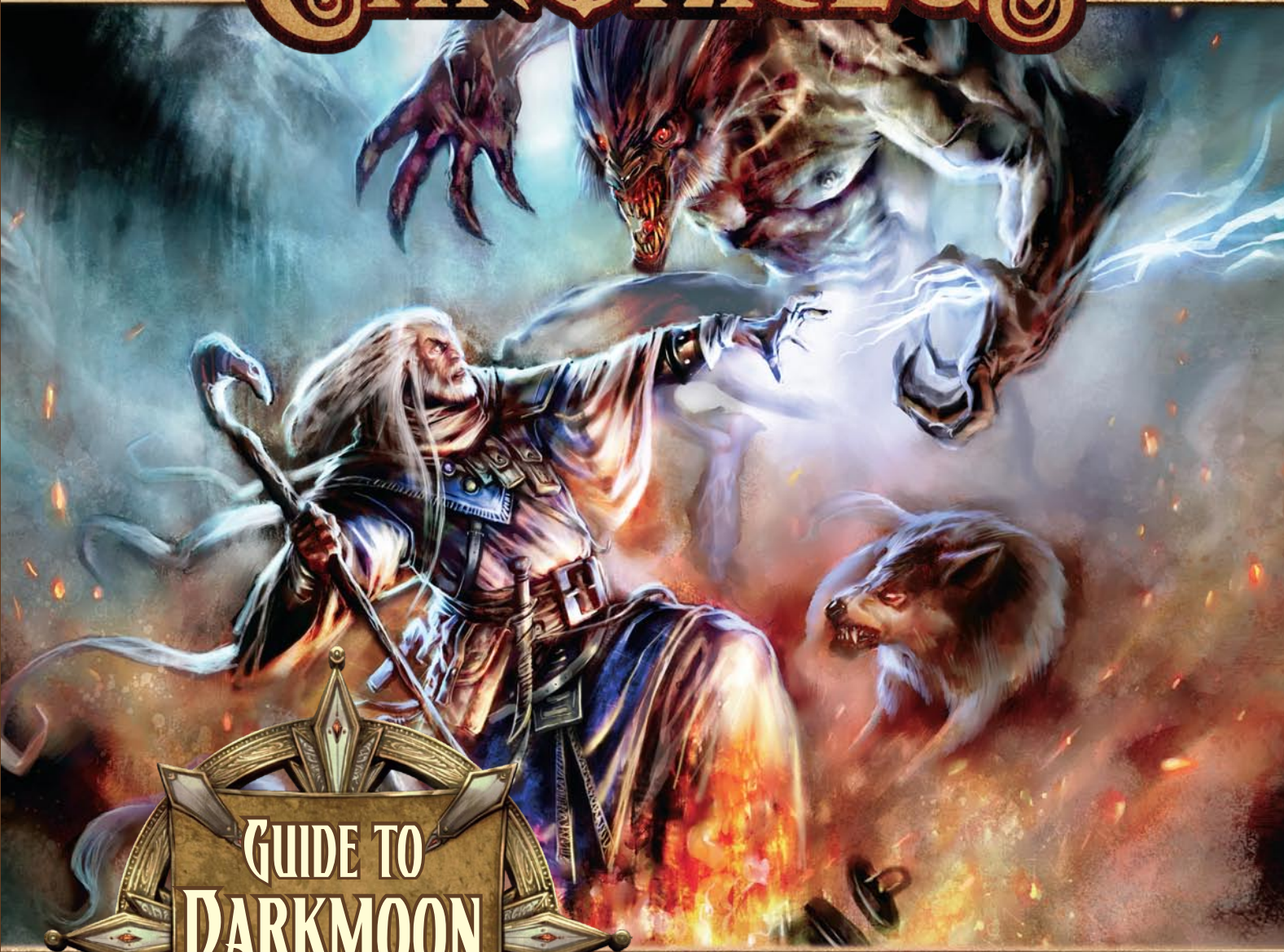


PATHFINDER CHRONICLES™



GUIDE TO DARKMOON VALE

By Mike McArtor

DARKMOON VALE TIMELINE

Year	Event
-5295	Earthfall. The Starstone strikes Golarion, creating the millennia-long Age of Darkness.
-5135	King Taargick founds the Kingdom of Tar Taargadth, uniting dwarves in a common cause to fulfill the Quest for Sky.
-4987	Dwarves complete the Quest for Sky and emerge for the first time onto the surface of Golarion.
-318	Highhelm founded within Emperor's Peak, in what is today known as the Five Kings Mountains.
1551	The Glorious Empire of Tar Taargadth collapses, splintering into dozens of nations and city-states and throwing dwarves into uncharacteristic chaos for several years.
1557	The Mighty Kingdom of Gardadth founded by Highhelm's baron-mayor Gardrick I.
1559	Saggorn the Holy founds the Pious Kingdom of Saggorak.
1560	Doggath, the Impenetrable Kingdom, founded by Doggon Markkedth.
1561	Grak the Younger founds the Laborious Kingdom of Grakodan.
1562	The Everlasting Kingdom of Taggoret founded by Taggrick I.
1571	The First Five Kings Wars erupts between Doggath and Saggorak. The other three kingdoms soon join in.
2352	Druma unites the Decadent Five Kings at Kerse Accord, ending the Nineteenth Five Kings War.
2492	Orcs invade Five Kings Mountains and besiege Highhelm.
2497	Orcs penetrate outer defenses of Highhelm but can advance no further. Kingdom of Gardadth sues for peace and crumbles, leaving Highhelm battered but extant.
2506	Doggath collapses after 19 years of fighting orcs.
2507	Blockade of Saggorak begins. Orcs move past Saggorak and besiege Grakodan.
2509	Grakodan falls after only 2 years of resistance. Orcs advance on Taggoret
2519	Blockade of Saggorak ends when last dwarven defenders starve to death in their fortresses.
2526	After 17 years of fighting, Taggoret falls.
3001	Daralathylx arrives at Torag's Crag.
3197	Khadon the Mighty arrives in Five Kings Mountains and begins long process of clearing the mountains of orcs.
3279	At the Battle of Splitmist Pass, Khadon defeats Tarkdok Manyspears and drives out last of the orc invaders. Khadon establishes Tar Khadurrm.
3300	First reported sighting of Taxthyl.
3312	Jernashall founded.
3450	Crown Prince Sidrik meets with delegates from Isger and Chelixa.
3451	Raseri Kanton founded. King Khadon dies.
3493	King Sidrik moves capital of Tar Khadurrm from Highhelm to Jernashall.
3925	Dwarven volcanologists warn of impending eruption of Torag's Crag. Jernashall engineers assure safety.
3980	The Rending. Immense eruptions and powerful earthquakes ravage Torag's Crag, Darkmoon Vale, and the surrounding countryside. King Sidrik III moves

	Tar Khadurrm capital back to Highhelm. Garshweiss Frengistan investigates the damage.
3985	Almas sends final ill-fated attempt to claim darkwood in Darkmoon Vale.
3997	Rinehardt Morotok discovers Torag's Breath by accident.
4113	Karas "the Falcon" Novotnian enters Darkmoon Vale and begins pacifying region.
4116	The foundations of Adamas laid.
4117	Karas Novotnian named Baron of Darkmoon.
4128	Barenddo Novotnian founds Olfden.
4139	Tarris Rakesclaw forms the Lumber Consortium.
4200	Daralathylx begins three-century reign of terror in Five Kings Mountains, Isger, and Druma.
4213	Las Stoppiddle builds Wolfhead in Wolfrun Hills.
4277	Last great king of Tar Khadurrm, Talhrik the Busy, dies.
4304	Harry Elberwick proves his valor at Battle of Diagle's Heath.
4306	Chelaxian Emperor names Harry Elberwick a count.
4310	Count Harry Elberwick becomes liege of the barons of Darkmoon, Pamiatazova, and Perin.
4369	High Priest Ordrik assassinates King Garbold, launching the Forge War.
4382	Forge War ends. High Priest Ordrik assumes the throne of Tar Khadurrm and converts the kingdom to a Droskarian theocracy. Torag's Crag officially renamed Droskar's Crag.
4389	Falconridge founded.
4402	Last known treant driven from Darkmoon Vale area.
4437	Argus Berekland discovers placer gold in River Foam.
4438	The Druid Kingdom of Narven founded by the high druid Narven Feathereyes.
4452	Northsap formed.
4466	Highhelm declares its independence from Tar Khadurrm, which quickly thereafter self-implodes. Many dwarves flee the Five Kings Mountains for dwarf plugs elsewhere.
4467	Last holdouts in Falconridge abandon town.
4491	Forest King Narven dies and the Druid Kingdom peacefully disintegrates. Kol "Two-Paws" Thornaoalf founds Greenfire Circle.
4573	Falcon's Hollow founded. Northsap abandoned.
4606	Aroden's death rocks the world, creating several weeks of powerful, destructive storms across Golarion.
4609	Ulizmila arrives in Darkmoon Wood.
4645	Stiegger Ericson forms Fangwatch in Arthfell Forest.
4657	Wataxshyl arrives in Olfden.
4669	The People's Revolt drastically changes Andoran, making it the first stable democracy in Avistan in modern history.
4697	The Goblinblood Wars ravage Isger and cause hardship for nearby Druma and Andoran. Elara founds her orphanage on edge of Darkmoon Wood.
4699	Last appearance of Daralathylx.
4707	Night of Silver Blood decimates population of Olfden in major siege of hobgoblins and silver-impervious werewolves.
4708	Current year.



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by Mike McArtor

A *Pathfinder Chronicles*™ Supplement

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CREDITS

Design: Mike McArtor

Additional Design: Stephen S. Greer, James Jacobs, Nicolas Logue, Richard Pett, F. Wesley Schneider

Development and Editing: James Jacobs, Chris Self, Erik Mona, Jeremy Walker

Art Director: Sarah E. Robinson

Managing Art Director: James Davis

Vice President of Operations: Jeff Alvarez

Director of Sales & Marketing: Joshua J. Frost

Cover Artist: John Gravato

Interior Artists: Julie Dillon, Andrew Hou, JZConcepts, Torstein Nordstand, Ben Wootten

Paizo CEO: Lisa Stevens

Corporate Accountant: Dave Erickson

Staff Accountant: Chris Self

Technical Director: Vic Wertz

Publisher: Erik Mona

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Paizo Publishing, LLC
2700 Richards Road, Suite 201
Bellevue, WA 98005

paizo.com



Overview

I've been to better places in this world, safer places. I've been to places with prettier people, more civilized people. But you know? I've never been to a place with such a swing between safety and danger. On the one hand, you can stand within Adamas and feel that not even a second Earthfall could threaten you. On the other, you can peer into the eyes of an angry dragon within the dark tangle of Arthfell Forest and know that not even divine intervention could save you.

—Luna Aldred,
Pathfinder and First Citizen of Olfden

Danger lurks in every corner, every nook and cranny, of Darkmoon Vale. Some threats are obvious—they come in the form of werewolves, kobolds, and dragons. Some threats—and these are by far the more dangerous—are normal humans, from community leaders to streetwise toughs. Hazards are not limited to the area's living inhabitants, either. In fact, compared to the active dangers presented by much of Darkmoon Vale's geology, its living threats might almost seem tame. Vast swaths of the low plain within the wide vale hide superheated mud and broiling hot springs beneath only an inch or two of earth, waiting to boil alive any creature unfortunate enough to make a single misstep. And, of course, standing above the entire area looms the immense volcano, Droskar's Crag, the awakener of the region's active geology and architect of the largest cataclysm to hit Andoran in the past millennium.

NAVIGATING THE REGION GUIDE

Each chapter in this book covers a specific topic. Overlap exists, of course, because within a region all things are connected, but for the most part information on a single



topic exists solely within its main entry. The main exception to that comes in Chapter 5: Secrets, which expands on the information presented in earlier chapters.

In addition, some pages contain sidebars that touch on topics only tangentially related to the surrounding text, if at all. These sidebars give in-depth looks at some aspects of the region that don't really fit in well anywhere else.

Chapter 1: This chapter provides a brief look at the region as well as subjects not covered in detail later in the book.

Chapter 2: This chapter covers the various locations, denizens, and dangers that lurk outside the walls of the settlements of Darkmoon Vale. It looks at everything from the dark depths of the Arthfell Forest to the dizzying heights of the Five Kings Mountains.

Chapter 3: This chapter details Darkmoon Vale's various settlements, from proud Oldfen to rough and tumble Falcon's Hollow.

Chapter 4: A brief history of the region, this chapter gives a look at several defining moments in Darkmoon Vale's history. All years are presented in Absalom Reckoning (AR), the most wide-spread year-tracking system on Golarion.

Chapter 5: This chapter peers into the dark recesses of the vale to reveal its secrets.

Appendix: Further information on some of the most important people of Darkmoon Vale, as well as a few helpful statblocks and a new monster, the dream wolf, are detailed here.

REGION BASICS

Darkmoon Vale stands at the northwestern corner of the democracy of Andoran, which only recently succeeded in breaking away from the infernal empire of Cheliax. Although named Darkmoon Vale, the area is more like a dale or flat dell than a true valley (and is occasionally referred to as such throughout this volume). While the northern border of the area does indeed sweep down from a range of mountains, the southern end of the vale only rises up to a low shelf. The River Foam crosses the vale, but it had no hand in creating the lowland through which it runs.

Semantics aside, Darkmoon Vale is a resource-rich, geologically active wilderness at the edge of civilization. Its borders rest more than a day's ride from any major city. While it does provide an overland trade route to neighboring Isgar, the few merchants who take advantage of the dangerous journey do not hasten Andoran's desire to increase patrols along the road. If not for the dwindling

DESIGNER NOTE: WRITING DARKMOON VALE

As you flip through it, you might notice something peculiar about this game accessory: a lack of game. With the exception of the title page, parts of this page, and the appendix, this entire book is written in character, just as it might appear to your PCs. Think of this as a massive player's handout, although you should probably tell your players to stay away from Chapter 5 (and at least the first page of the appendix). In theory, you can use Darkmoon Vale for any campaign setting in any edition of any game, much as you could use a guidebook to Ireland or Germany for inspiration.

I did not (and could not) write this book in a vacuum. The hard work of many people contributed to the wonders of Darkmoon Vale. I merely stood upon the shoulders of giants to bring this book to life for you. Falcon's Hollow exists thanks to the mind of Nick Logue, while Jason Bulmahn and Wes Schneider brought to life Darkmoon Wood. James Jacobs guided my creation and inspired me to continue even when I felt drained, while I must thank Erik Mona for handing me the project in the first place.

Special thanks this time to Ann, Gigz, Hal, and Troy, for their help in naming and creating the book's NPCs, and to Brian H., for giving me the idea of Torag's Breath, the river in the sky. Thanks also to my parents for encouraging me to take up writing in the first place and for supporting me in that decision. Finally, my thanks again to the UW: Bothell/Cascadia Community College library for providing me a quiet place to write.



supply of darkwood and the few silver mines in the nearby mountains, Andoran would have little reason to show any interest in the region at all.

Symbols

People identify their affiliations symbolically, from the colors of their uniforms to the specific looks of their coat of arms. As a region within Andoran, many of the symbols used in Darkmoon Vale are not specific to the region.

Colors: Black, blue, and gold feature prominently in Andoran and, by extension, within Darkmoon Vale. In Andoran, black signifies honor, blue denotes freedom, and gold symbolizes courage. Red, as seen on the symbol and uniform of the Diamond Regiment, naturally represents blood, which in turn indicates a willingness to sacrifice.

Mascots: The eagle of Andoran denotes courage and freedom. Most eagle representations in Andoran show the mighty animal clutching a sword and branch of holly. The sword shows that Andoran is willing to fight to remain free, while the holly indicates honesty.

In the Darkmoon Vale region itself, images of falcons and wolves are prominent. Wolves play a significant role in the lives of Darkmoon Vale residents, while the falcon is the ancient symbol of an old human family in the area. The Falcon and Wolf sidebar further explains the significance of these animals.

Motto: As indicated on its full coat of arms, Andoran's motto is "Efrir ep Bered," Ancient Taldoran for "Free and Ready."

Residences

Most people who live in Darkmoon Vale own their homes or rent them from the Lumber Consortium. Very few multi-family dwellings exist, and all of them stand in the vale's largest settlement, Olfden. Despite the wealth generated by logging, housing prices in Darkmoon Vale remain relatively low. Most attribute this to a lack of safety in the region. The following descriptions provide a general overview of how people live in Darkmoon Vale, broken down by sociopolitical standing.

Free Farmer: Self-sufficient farms do exist in Darkmoon Vale, and most of them stand north of the River Foam or atop the Elberwick Rise. Those who live on farms tend to produce more food than they can eat, which they then sell for other supplies. Most farms in Darkmoon Vale use hedgerows and natural borders to mark their boundaries, and those far from the region's major settlements use more defensible barriers, such as walls, around their buildings and fields.

Merchants: Most of the people who live in Olfden either work for the Lumber Consortium or are merchants. Common items useful to adventurers and explorers are available in Olfden, thanks to the multitude of merchants in that town. Merchants tend to own the buildings in which they operate and keep their living quarters above their storefronts. The exception to this rule is Falcon's Hollow, where the Lumber Consortium owns every building. The few merchants who scrape by in Falcon's Hollow must pay exorbitant rents.

Skilled Workers: From craftsmen to lumberjacks, skilled workers make up the majority of people in Darkmoon Vale. The largest group of skilled workers, of course, is the lumberjacks. More than 400 loggers live and work in Darkmoon Vale, and most of them belong to the Lumber Consortium. All the other common trades (carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, and the like) exist in Darkmoon Vale. Those who live in Perin's Bluff and Olfden usually own the buildings in which their businesses and connected homes exist, while those in Falcon's Hollow are typically employees of the Lumber Consortium and thus sacrifice much of what they would earn to subsidize their so-called "free rent."

Soldiers: Whether members of the Diamond Regiment or transient mercenaries, hundreds of fighting men and women live in Darkmoon Vale. Those who belong to an organization live for free in barracks, while those who fight for money either rent their homes or have free housing provided to them (usually from the Lumber Consortium). Unlike the skilled workers who work for the consortium, though, the guards are paid very well on top of their free housing.

Wealthy: The lumber baron Thuldryn Kreed is easily the most famous (or rather, infamous) wealthy person in Darkmoon Vale, but he is not the wealthiest. Retired adventurers, cooperative ex-nobles, particularly successful merchants, and the occasional non-logging industry leader from other parts of Andoran all comprise the wealthy elite of Darkmoon Vale. Most of these people live in or near Olfden, although a few maintain their own self-sufficient manors (even castles, in some cases) beyond the walls of the region's settlements.

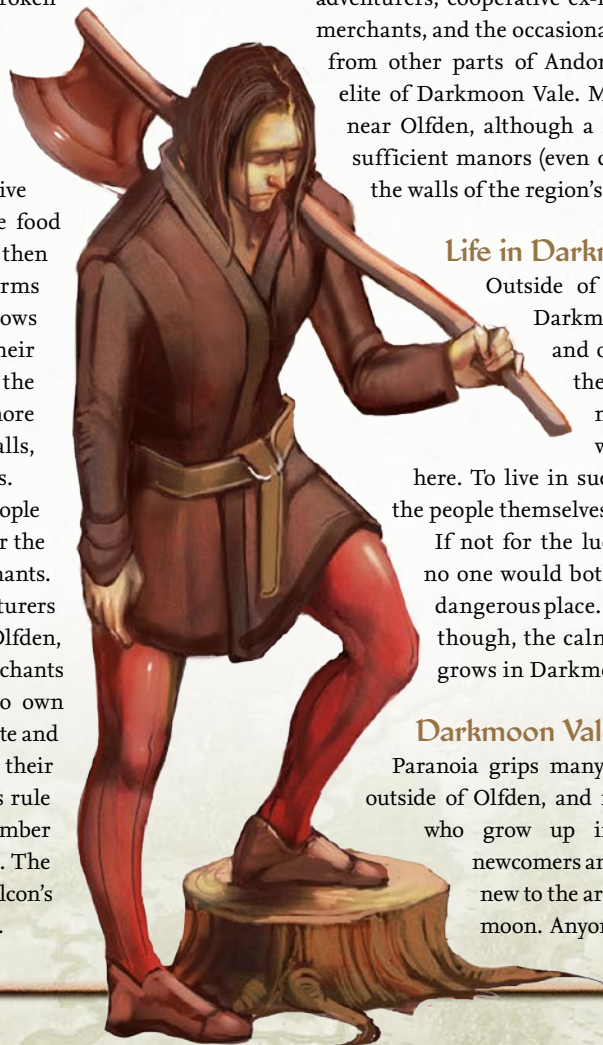
Life in Darkmoon Vale

Outside of Olfden, life in and around Darkmoon Vale is difficult, dirty, and often violently cut short. Only the law of the wild holds sway in most areas of the region. The weak scarcely have a chance here. To live in such a rough and tumble place, the people themselves must remain strong.

If not for the lucrative logging of darkwood, no one would bother living in such a wild and dangerous place. With each passing generation, though, the calming influence of civilization grows in Darkmoon Vale.

Darkmoon Vale Mindset

Paranoia grips many who live in Darkmoon Vale outside of Olfden, and for good reason. Valers (those who grow up in Darkmoon Vale) distrust newcomers and strangers, at least until those new to the area stay through at least one full moon. Anyone who expresses sympathy or





fascination with the area's wolves draws additional suspicion, and those who dare to point out the positive lupine influences in the vale are lucky to avoid lynch squads.

Valers are a distrustful, taciturn lot and tend to keep to themselves. They fear what they know (werewolves and the region's geologic dangers) and what they don't know (strangers and what lurks within the nearby hills and mountains). Unknown bogeymen constantly haunt their dreams and they frequently offer rewards or incentives for adventurers to come to their vale, investigate some rumored horror, and then leave.

As the largest refuge of civilization in the vale, Olfden and its residents buck this trend. Those who live in Olfden actively welcome and encourage newcomers, as visitors tend to bring coin. Thanks partially to the town's openness, most Valers who live outside Olfden don't truly consider it or its residents a part of the vale. Many rural Valers look down on the town's residents as weak cowards afraid to face the region's many dangers. For their part, the urban Valers laugh off these insults and constantly seek to mend the relationship between the two groups.

Business

As if the high tax rate in Falcon's Hollow weren't enough to stifle its people and keep them poor and working, the Lumber Consortium—which owns the small town and provides a living to most of its residents—charges outrageous rents for tiny, dingy houses and boarding house rooms. Despite the unconscionable way in which it treats its employees and their dependants, the Lumber Consortium possesses *carte blanche* north of the Foam River. Thanks to its monopoly hold on the timber trade in Darkmoon Vale (especially the exceedingly valuable darkwood), the consortium can effectively hold Andoran hostage, threatening to cut off the darkwood supply whenever the country's leaders become too interested in its affairs.

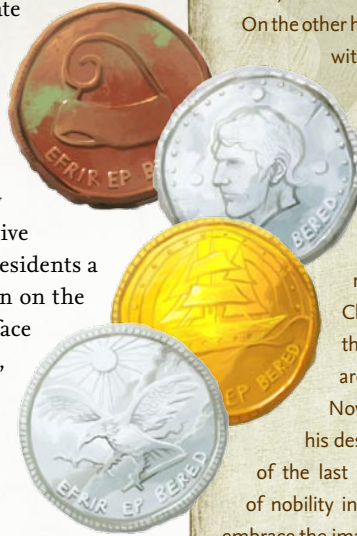
From the River Foam to the foothills of the Five Kings Mountains, nearly every coin of profit made is thanks to the draconian methods of the Lumber Consortium. Beyond Darkmoon Wood, however, other types of business flourish. In the foothills, a handful of heavily guarded dwarven mines have recently reopened, providing both silver and iron. Because these operations remain small and various monsters continue to plague the area, the supplies of metal from the mines barely affect the region's economy. More notably, the town of Olfden provides numerous services and goods to the vale's largest source of outside gold: adventurers and explorers. Nearly any item such groups could need is available for sale in Olfden (including items of magic).

FALCON AND WOLF

Many of the places, organizations, and even people in Darkmoon Vale contain either "Falcon" or "Wolf" (or a related word) in their names.

The wolf aspect of Darkmoon Vale becomes apparent to anyone who stays there—rarely does a night go by without at least one lonesome lupine calling. Wild dogs, wolves, worgs, winter wolves, and werewolves prowl the vale, its forests, and its hills.

On the other hand, few people understand the local obsession with falcons. While the area does contain a couple native species of falcons and the city of Olfden holds an annual falconry tournament, the true origin of "falcon" in so many names comes from the heraldic device of the Novotnian family. The first human to pacify Darkmoon Vale, Baron Karas Novotnian, received a land grant from the emperor of Cheliox in exchange for bringing civilization to the countryside. As more people flocked to the area, they noted the prominent falcon on Baron Novotnian's crest and began to refer to him and his descendants as "the Falcon." Even with the death of the last Falcon-Baron Novotnian and the eradication of nobility in Andoran, the people of the vale continue to embrace the imagery and iconography of the bird.



Speaking Like a Valer

Darkmoon Vale's human residents all speak Taldoran (also called Chelaxian), the most widespread tongue in the areas surrounding the Inner Sea. They do so, however, with an accent that borrows from the speech patterns of both Andoran and nearby Isgar. This distinctive vale accent sounds clipped and sharp, but not to the point of seeming angry. In addition to this unique accent, the people of Darkmoon Vale have their own dialect unique to the area. In order to help you blend in while exploring Darkmoon Vale, make sure to (correctly) use the following phrases.

Cutyard: A tree-felling camp that temporarily houses lumberjacks chopping an area of the woods.

Mudpot: A type of hot spring or fumarole consisting of bubbling mud instead of boiling water. Also called a mud pool or paint pot.

The Store: Lumbering supplies provided by the Lumber Consortium, which often come with additional "taxes," even long after purchase.

Stoutfolk: What dwarves of the Five Kings Mountains call themselves.

Valer: A human born, raised, and living in Darkmoon Vale. Immigrants, transients, and non-humans are not Valers.

The Woods: Darkmoon Wood. Valers don't call any other groups of trees "the woods."



Wilderness

Many places of danger abound in Darkmoon Vale, and some of them even lie outside the walls of Falcon's Hollow. The thing to keep in mind while traveling through the vale is this: you're not safe anywhere you go. Forget the critters who call Darkmoon Vale home, the land itself will frequently try to kill you. And looming over everything, like some great and terrifying reminder of destruction, stands Droskar's Crag. Best to not be in Avistan next time that mountain decides to blow.

—Luna Aldred,
Pathfinder and First Citizen of Olfden

Three distinct geologic areas comprise Darkmoon Vale. In the south climbs the Elberwick Rise, a low shelf of basalt upon which almost all of the Arthfell Forest grows and which eventually rises to a vast plateau covering most of Andoran. Darkmoon Plain forms most of the vale and contains vast swaths of grassland and dotted with geothermal vents small crags of granite and the occasional spruce or fir copse. In the north, the valley rises into a series of foothills, ending on the slopes of the Five Kings Mountains and anchored in the northwest by the imposing volcano, Droskar's Crag. The people of Darkmoon Vale refer to the three zones of the vale as the Uplands in the south, the Lowlands in the middle, and the Highlands in the north. Enclosing the vale further, the Wolfrun Hills rise in the east, while the Aspodell Mountains form the vale's border in the west.

Darkmoon Vale is a geologically active region, producing several major events in recorded history and bearing evidence of even greater activity in the past. Most famous of the vale's geology is Droskar's Crag, an immense volcano that continues to puff out smoke and ash on occasion



even 800 years after its last major eruption (known as the Rending). Lava tubes and other cavern structures wend throughout the lower sections of the volcano, as well as the Five Kings Mountains it anchors. Closer to civilization, the valley floor percolates with mudpots, geysers, and other geothermal phenomena.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Tucked away in the northwestern corner of democratic Andoran, Darkmoon Vale is a fairly isolated region with an insular population. More or less marking the northwestern boundary of the region, imposing Droskar's Crag, the tallest stratovolcano in the world, rises to an incredible height. It casts its impressive shadow across most of the vale, and is easily the region's most iconic symbol.

Aside from the lumber trade and an abundance of well-plundered dwarven ruins, Darkmoon Vale offers little to civilized societies and thus remains sparsely populated and largely unexplored. Most business conducted in the vale centers on the harvesting and transportation of its rich supply of darkwood. The Lumber Consortium owns all of the small logging community of Falcon's Hollow and exerts considerable influence over the larger town of Olfden.

GEOGRAPHY

Many dangers and hazards plague Darkmoon Vale. The following descriptions, broken down by the most general geographic areas in which they appear, feature only a selection (a wide selection, to be sure, but still only a selection) of the places of interest within the region. The region's three settlements are covered in Chapter 3. Many of the entries bear alphanumeric codes that correspond to tags on the Darkmoon Vale map.

Arthfell Forest

Stretching far to the south, most of Arthfell Forest actually stands outside the vague borders of Darkmoon Vale. The primarily pine and fir forest generally avoids the axes of loggers affiliated with the Lumber Consortium, thanks to its lack of darkwood. More than two centuries ago, when both it and Darkmoon Wood were much larger and a part of the same forest, a druid circle leader named Narven united the nature-loving peoples in and near Arthfell Forest under his control. Declaring himself the Forest King, Narven reigned supreme within Arthfell Forest for more than 50 years before old age finally caught him in his sleep. His kingdom quickly disbanded thereafter, leaving behind few indications of its existence.

Etherveil: A mile or so south of the gentle slope marking the edge of Elbewick Rise lies a vast indentation in the forest floor in which only silver-barked paeliel trees grow. No underbrush clutters the Etherveil, but a low, chilled fog forever fills it. Thin at the 4-foot top of the indent, the fog

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Many people who don't live in Darkmoon Vale (and even some who do) mistakenly consider the woods as comprising the entirety of the vale. Although most Andorians have heard of Darkmoon Vale, most of them have only a vague understanding of its location and importance. Because the darkwood that comes out of Darkmoon Wood gives the region its fame, most people who don't live in or near the vale assume, when they visit, that the vale and woods are the same. This confusion has led many to mistakenly refer to "Darkmoon Vale" when they meant to say "Darkmoon Wood."

thickens quickly until it is opaque only a few inches above the lowered forest floor. On nights preceding solstices, the fog turns from a natural white-gray to a lightly sparkling blue-green. Some legends speak of creatures wandering into the Etherveil and never coming out, while others claim that lovers who loudly declare their love while standing within the indentation live happily ever after. Cartographers who map out the indent never agree on its shape, although sages who have seen the maps universally agree they are in the shapes of letters from the Elven script. Whatever its shape, Etherveil covers several acres of land and is even notable from the air. The few histories of Arthfell Forest and Darkmoon Vale that exist all mention the location, but none of them offer clues to the etymology of its name or its purpose.

Moon Silver Pool: This shallow reflecting pool stands in a quiet glade near the northern edge of the forest. Thick plates of pure silver, somehow immune to tarnish, form a narrow lip around the pool and pave most of its bottom. Despite its extreme beauty, the pool is a place of extreme danger (particularly at night). Druids of the Shadow Pack circle consider Moon Silver Pool a holy site and protect it viciously, as do non-druid werewolves in the area. Non-werewolves (and even some werewolves who have not yet proved their loyalties) are torn apart on sight if they come too close to the pool.

Many believe the Moon Silver Pool is a relic left over from the reign of Forest King Narven.

Taxthyl: Compared to Daralathylx (see Five Kings Mountains), Taxthyl's appearance in the region is a relatively recent event. The first recorded sightings of Taxthyl come from 3300, when reports of a reclusive green dragon came in from Tar Khadurrm. Taxthyl quickly established herself as someone not to be bothered. Never an active threat to the forest's inhabitants, Taxthyl seems only to kill trespassers into her lair or those who annoy her during her long meditations or marathon reading sessions (which can last, uninterrupted, for a year). Only those invited to her lair are truly safe to approach, and then only if they do so quietly and respectfully.



Although their territories overlap somewhat, Taxthyl does not venerate or acquiesce to Daralathylx. Indeed, Taxthyl seems intent on driving out or killing Daralathylx, and their few direct confrontations always result in tremendous draconic battles that begin in the sky but frequently come crashing to the earth—without care or concern for what they land on. For her continued defiance against King Daralathylx, Taxthyl is seen as something of a strange folk hero among both young dragons and humans alike.

Despite her conflict with Daralathylx, Taxthyl is a typical green. She cares less about commanding other creatures than she does improving herself. To that end, she hungers for information and collected knowledge, and her insatiable lust for self-improvement leads her to hire adventurers to explore the dwarven ruins of the area. When she can find no mercenaries up to the task, or when a bit of information is too valuable to trust in the hands of easily killed humans, Taxthyl emerges from her home deep within Arthfell Forest. Most of the time, when Taxthyl deigns to leave her home, she does so for a particular purpose, and never to spread wanton destruction. For that reason, as well as her defiance of Daralathylx, the Fangwatch and the other humans in the vale continue to tolerate—if not openly welcome—her presence.

Aspodell Mountains

These jagged but relatively low mountains rise to heights around 9,000 feet at their peaks. A convoluted line connecting the range's highest peaks forms the official border between Cheliox and Andoran, placing most of the range squarely in the former. Only one pass exists through the dangerous, monster-ridden mountains, and over the pass rises Vendikon Keep.

Only because of the town's location and its keep's strategic importance does Andoran retain its increasingly tentative claim on Perin's Bluff, and only because of this claim does the country consider any of the iron-rich Aspodell Mountains its territory. Unlike the imposing Five Kings Mountains to the north, however, the Aspodells themselves are not considered important by the People's Council in Almas, and thus Andoran grants Cheliox free reign in the range—except for the all-important Aspodell Pass, of course.

Aspodell Rangers: These men and women roam the Aspodell Mountains, looking for giants, trolls, and other fell beasts that lurk in the mountains' shadowy places. The rangers bow to neither Andoran nor Cheliox, but the governments of both nations claim them as honored citizens and frequently petition for their aid or offer them various forms of support.



Darkmoon Plain

Darkmoon Plain comprises all of the Lowlands of Darkmoon Vale and stretches from the short rise of Elberwick Rise to the foothills of the Five Kings Mountains and the Highlands. Most of the plain bears the scars of the area's extensive logging: wide swaths of tree-stump stubble wind among geological hot spots.

Aspodell Crossroads: This is the intersection of the Aspodell Pass road at the eastern foothills of the mountains and the north/south trade road skirting the mountains that intersects it. A small garrison of Andoran regular soldiers posted at the crossroads keeps watch for Chelish incursions. The garrison barracks doubles as a fortified inn where caravans and travelers sometimes stay if they are not heading for Perin's Bluff.

Standing only a few miles east of Piren's Bluff, the crossroads once marked not only the intersection of two roads but also of three baronies. All of the lands east of the Crossroads belonged to Baron Novotnian of Darkmoon. Those to the northwest stood within the Barony of Perin, controlled by the Vendikon family. To the southwest, the noble House Fordyce to this day controls the Barony of Pamiatazova in neighboring Cheliah, which is much reduced in size since the independence of Andoran. When Andoran still belonged to Cheliah, all three barons and their baronies existed within the countship of Count Elberwick, which became the Shire of Elberwick during the revolution in Andoran (see the Elberwick Rise section for more information on Count Elberwick).

Geothermal Activity: Various forms of surface-level geothermal activities exist all throughout the plain, particularly in the areas south of River Foam and between Arthfell Forest and the Aspodell Mountains. Human explorers new to the area faced—in addition to the usual dangers from monsters, wild animals, and savage humanoids—the hidden hazards presented by subsurface mudpots and hot springs. Many early expeditions lost men or pack animals when an unsuspecting victim stepped on a particularly thin bit of ground and fell into the superheated mud or water underneath. Modern guides know of these dangers and lead their patrons around such obstacles, often following game trails. Unfortunately, even the most experienced guides sometimes lead their employers astray, as the geologic activity beneath much of the Darkmoon Plain remains relatively active and constantly shifts.

Most of the geologic features of the plain remain in plain sight, however, and announce themselves regularly or continuously. Many of these exposed geysers and mudpots attract the attention of people and creatures drawn to natural displays of beauty and heat (dwarves and gnomes in particular seem to appreciate the beauty of displays created from within the earth itself). Three major areas of activity take their names from their most prominent above-ground features.

BLASTWATERS

These oft-unsuccessful bandits operate on the trails that wind their ways around geothermal vents. Led by the embittered and hate-filled halfling, Tamris Quickthorn, the Blastwaters suffer from an extremely high turnover rate. Indeed, Tamris is the only long-term member. Most bandits who attack caravans or travelers with Tamris fall victim to the region's geothermal activity, surrender to or are killed by their targets, or wise up after only an attempt or two and run for the hills. From a height of more than 20 thugs and petty criminals in the gang, the Blastwaters now consist of only Tamris and three newly recruited members.

Dragonspring: The wide Dragonspring boils and steams at a skin-blistering temperature. Deposits of iron, cobalt, and copper somewhere below the hot spring bubble up with the water and form colorful bands of reds, blues, and greens at the bottom of the shallow pool. Thanks to the crystal-clear waters, these bright hues can be easily seen, even from a distance.

Once or twice a year, for at least the last 8 years, a young red dragon flies in from the west and splashes around in the water for a few hours before taking off and disappearing into the southeast. Although he has been approached several times, no one has had any luck communicating with him, and his name and purpose remain mysteries.

Painter's Pot: Brightly colored superheated mud boils and pops in this most popular of Darkmoon Vale's mudpots. Sculptors and painters alike travel to Painter's Pot to collect the pigments and clay that constantly ooze up from below. Wise sculptors and painters bring guides and guards (usually members of the Greenfire Circle or Fangwatch), for the path to Painter's Pot travels near the territory claimed by a surly group of magmin (see Chapter 3).

Shelyn's Bow: This irregular geyser blasts boiling water and superheated steam nearly 800 feet into the air, regularly cooking everything within 80 feet of the stream. The ejected water carries all manner of minerals, giving the geyser a colorful spray that augments the normal rainbows forming as a result of the steam and mist. Shelyn's Bow can be seen up to a mile away and serves as an unreliable landmark. It shoots water roughly four times per week, and since its discovery the height of its spray has only increased.

Ruins: Before Falcon's Hollow formed, two other logging towns rose and fell north of Olfden. First rose Falconridge in 4389, founded by the son of a Lumber Consortium director. Once Falconridge exhausted its nearby darkwood supply it turned to the other hardwoods growing in Arthfell Forest and then to the pine and alder softwoods. As Falconridge's profitability declined following the fall of the last darkwood tree, the logging community of

Northsap formed in 4452. Northsap stood close to a much larger section of darkwood and thrived for a little more than a century. As Northsap's darkwood glade played out, lumberjacks broke away from it to form Falcon's Hollow in 4573. As each town ran down and was supplanted by the next, its occupants abandoned the location with little concern paid to its structures. The ruins of these two nearly forgotten logging towns still (mostly) stand, and they occasionally house bizarre or fell creatures.

Ruins of Falconridge: Founded on a low rise overlooking bubbling mudpots on one side and a vast glade of darkwood on the other, Falconridge was the first logging community north of Olfden. The loggers of Falconridge tore into their darkwood glade with glee, depleting their supply in less than half a century. For another decade, the town limped along on the much-lower profits brought in by its hardwoods and softwoods, but the founding of Northsap stole away many of Falconridge's best loggers. The last holdouts in town left in 4467, abandoning it to nature. Nature, in turn, has attacked Falconridge with a vengeance. Today, little more exists of Falconridge than a small graveyard's tombstones, foundation stones of several large buildings, and a low stone wall ringing the base of the rise. Reports occasionally come to the Diamond Regiment of ghostly apparitions near Falconridge's ruins, but to date the Eagle Knights have seen no purpose in investigating a possible haunting so far removed from civilization.

Ruins of Northsap: Standing at the base of a particularly tall lava plug tower, Northsap remains largely intact. Much of the town was built from stone quarried from the lava plug, and most of the buildings still stand (although nearly all of them lack their roofs). Today, Northsap's ruins occasionally house a variety of opportunistic creatures, from cowardly kobolds to hungry ghouls. Despite the distance of Northsap from either Falcon's Hollow or Olfden, the Diamond Regiment occasionally sends a force to the ruins in order to chase out or destroy the squatters. Rarely, this force consists of actual Eagle Knights. More often, Commander Odeber sends mercenaries or adventurers.

Darkmoon Wood

While still the largest collection of darkwood in Andoran, Darkmoon Wood steadily decreases in size with each passing year. The logging community of Falcon's Hollow chops away at the woods, harvesting roughly 7,000,000 board feet of timber per year (about 5% of which is darkwood), almost all of which ends up in Augustana to the south. Formerly a part of Arthfell Forest, centuries of logging separated the two into distinct forests, with much of Avistan's remaining darkwood trees standing among pines and firs within Darkmoon Wood.

At the current rate of logging, the Lumber Consortium estimates the Wood only has about two more decades before it all falls to the lumberjack's axe. Numerous factors are beginning to slow the harvest, though, and Greenfire druids hope to reach an equilibrium of felling and regrowth in time to prevent the wholesale destruction of the forest.

Cold Marrow: Cold Marrow is an accursed place. Parched and withered weeds spring from cracked earth littered with glum, lifeless rock. No sound of nature penetrates the supernatural stillness of Cold Marrow, and no living creature willingly makes its home in this place.

Calendar of the Ancients: This wide, low hill rises within the silence of Cold Marrow. Symbols of unknown origin encrust the mound's entire exterior, although most are eroded by time's careless caress. Ascending the mound is a series of broken stairs framed by two giant menhirs of white marble. At the base of these stairs two enormous stone disks,

each the size of a giant's wagon wheel, rest one atop the other, their edges overlapping slightly. The disks are carved with thousands of runes in wild patterns that defy reason.

Elara's Halfway House: Standing right on the edge of the woods on a small hill roughly 8 miles outside of town, this small orphanage recently fell to a fire, killing everyone inside—child and caregiver alike. Until the tragic fire razed it, the orphanage housed not only the lost children of Darkmoon Vale, but also those of refugees from Iser and Druma. Now, the superstitious people of Falcon's Hollow avoid the sad ruins, calling them haunted. Although no confirmation of actual haunting exists, people who get too close to the ruins occasionally vanish.



DARKWOOD SAPLING



Forest Elder: The dense trees and thick brush of the forest give way, parting seemingly in respect for the titanic darkwood tree that dominates this clearing. Several times taller than a temple minaret, in one direction the obviously ancient tree reaches into the sky with branches like a giant's arms, while in the other it plumbs the earth with roots thicker than a man's waist. Its limbs broad and strong, its bark thick and so richly colored as to almost be black, and its leaves the size of bucklers, the giant thing is less a tree and more a cathedral of boughs and branches. Some of the local druids, in fact, actually consider the Forest Elder and its hanging branches a cathedral of sorts.

This elder darkwood tree is the most ancient of its kind in Andoran (and likely one of the oldest on the continent). Said to have been carried as a sapling from the Hissing Jungle and planted here in the distant past by Deirzir, the Eagle of The First Way, the druids who once guarded the forest claimed this darkwood to be the root from which all Darkmoon Wood grew.

Local tatzlwyrms occasionally make their lairs in the immense branches of this massive darkwood. While Greenfire druids frequently drive out those draconic menaces, others of their kind inevitably return. Why they are drawn to the magnificent tree remains a mystery to local druids and sages.

Lumber Consortium's Main Camp: This efficient and profitable camp stands amid an ugly swath of clear-cutting roughly 15 miles from Falcon's Hollow. Five sturdy log buildings—a bunkhouse, a meal hall, an office, a barn, and a smithy—comprise the camp, which provides for roughly 30 men. Scattered amid the sawdust-covered clearing surrounding the buildings are numerous wide, heavy carts and sleds.

The Lumber Consortium owns this hard-working camp and employs all its residents. Most of the men here work as lumbermen, and all 23 of them sleep in the bunkhouse. The camp's boss, Jarlben Trookshavits, lives in a small room tacked onto the outside of the filthy and taxidermy-filled office (in which he works). Similar small rooms attached to the well-organized barn and the junk-filled smithy house their caretakers as well. Several wanderers and woodsmen who explore Darkmoon Wood for the Lumber Consortium (ever looking for new copses of darkwood and other valuable resources) use the camp as a base of operations, taking warm meals here on occasion and bedding down in the bunkhouse during particularly foul weather. Experienced tracker and hunter Milon Rhoddam is one of these itinerate residents.

Ulfizmila's Cottage: Deep in the forest stands a small cottage owned by the witch Ulfizmila, said to be a daughter

of famed Baba Yaga. The exact location of this cottage remains a mystery, and most people of Darkmoon Vale are happy to keep it that way. Rumors place with Ulizmila the power to kill with a word, turn a man into a goat, and to shoot lightning from her eyes. None dare look for her cottage, and woodsmen who venture into the wood and fail to come out are said to be victims of the witch.

Droskar's Crag

The beautiful and mostly conical stratovolcano known as Droskar's Crag stands at the northwestern corner of Darkmoon Vale and anchors both the wide valley and the Five Kings Mountains. At 28,822 feet, Droskar's Crag is the highest peak in Andoran and the highest known active volcano in the world. Although it continues to emit intermittent puffs of smoke from its two craters, dwarven volcanologists assure concerned Andoren citizens that a major eruption is not imminent.

Basic Statistics: Droskar Crag's South Peak (sometimes called the Hammer) rises to 28,822 feet. Its North Peak (also called the Anvil) stands at 28,305 feet, with a prominence of 404 feet. The South Peak is comprised of the remnants of Droskar Crag's pre-3980 elevation, while the North Peak rises by roughly 1-1/2 feet each year and caps the volcano's main active crater (called Rovagug's Caldera). The low area between the two peaks—Softiron Saddle—forms the high, southern rim of Rovagug's Caldera (the low, northern rim having been subsumed by the growth of the Anvil). In addition to the immense main crater, Droskar's Crag also has a smaller active crater on its southwest face—Torag's Mouth—which still occasionally belches forth puffs of steam and ash and which acts as the “headwater” of Torag's Breath (see Five Kings Mountains).

Geologic History: Droskar's Crag (then known as Torag's Crag) last erupted in any meaningful way in 3980, when a powerful eruption (which either caused or was caused by a powerful earthquake) began a series of blasts and quakes known as the Rending. Since the Rending, the volcano has calmed and begun rebuilding its sloughed-off northern face. The mountain almost constantly belches forth ash and steam, acting as a constant reminder of the continent-affecting power it can unleash.

Prior to the Rending, Droskar's Crag existed in a state of dormancy lasting since the beginning of written history in the area. Some evidence exists that suggests that prior to its eruption, the volcano constantly added to its height by pushing up magma into a reservoir of slowly cooling rock just below its peak (prior to the Rending the volcano had only one true peak). This presence of magma provided additional warmth to the dwarves living beneath it in their city of Jernashall.

Settlement History: Dwarves first settled Droskar's Crag at the height of their racial power during the Age

of Darkness. A small army of spelunkers, miners, and soldiers exploring the Five Kings Mountains came upon the impressive peak and decided to explore its possibilities. As is their way, the dwarves first delved into the side of the mountain to get a feel for its mining value, volcanic stability, and geologic history. After declaring the mountain relatively safe and worth mining, they expanded their initial diggings to establish the dwarven plug of Jernashall. Using Jernashall as a defensive point and cultural hub, the dwarves explored the surrounding area. They established the surface city of Raseri Kanton just down slope from Jernashall as a trading post and outlying strongpoint.

For more than five centuries, the dwarves toiled to expand Jernashall and draw on the rich veins of mithral, gold, iron, and copper deep within the mountain's interior. In 3332, Jernashall engineers became famous among all the dwarven empires when they created the Magmafall in the middle of the city. The Magmafall tapped into the vast underground magma reservoir near the top of Droskar's Crag, allowing the molten rock to drop through the center of the city into a specially formed channel that then sent the magma into deeper reservoirs several miles beneath the city.

As Jernashall engineers predicted, the city survived the massive, continent-shaking eruption that signaled the beginning of the Rending. Most of the visible damage in the city occurred near the drop of the Magmafall, as pressure from the eruption burst open the narrow tubes that carried the molten rock and caused a sudden surge of the stuff to exceed the safety basin around the drainage channel. Unfortunately for the engineers and the dwarves living in Jernashall, either that initial eruption or the earthquake associated with it compromised most of the city's safety structures. When a second eruption nearly as powerful as the first shook the mountain again, magma flooded the city in a matter of seconds, killing every dwarf inside. Since the tragedy of the Rending, no dwarf has lived on or under Droskar's Crag, and almost all other intelligent creatures similarly avoid it.

Caves: Hundreds of miles of natural caves exist beneath the surface of Droskar's Crag. Dwarven spelunkers and mine-scouts occasionally return to the mountain in which so many of their brethren remain sealed. The spelunkers enjoy the natural caves for what they are and contribute the most to mapping out the twisting lava tubes and occasional remnant mineshaft. The mine-scouts explore the caves looking for veins of valuable metals or other excuses for returning to the mountain. To date, the mine-scouts have turned up nothing of interest.

While intelligent humanoids avoid the lava tubes and dwarf-cave remnants on Droskar's Crag, other creatures are



far less picky about where they live or haunt. As such, many of the lava tubes crawl with various menaces, from creatures drawn to the mountain's elemental fury to those simply seeking a quiet place to live and hunt. The many caves of Droshar's Crag house creatures as diverse as delvers and azers, thoqqas and grimlocks, and mephits and fire oozes.

The Crag: This series of stepped cliffs extends roughly 6 miles along the southeastern slope of Droshar's Crag. The Crag drops elevation by roughly 400 feet, with no individual cliff face greater than 200 feet. When the mountain split to form the Crag, it revealed dozens of lava tubes running down the side of Droshar's Crag just below the surface. During the subsequent eruptions that continued to wrack the volcano, some of these lava tubes once again carried molten stone, resulting in impressive lavafalls that dumped large amounts of rock at the base of the Crag. Many of these tubes sealed themselves when the lava they carried congealed within. Others, and those that did not carry lava during the Rending, remain open and act as homes to those creatures that can reach them.

Ruins of Raseri Kanton: At the bottom of the Crag lay the tumbled ruins of a once-massive city. At the height of the dwarven kingdom of Tar Khadurrm, the city of Raseri Kanton acted as a merchant's haven, connecting the wealth and craftsmanship of the dwarves with the

humans who sought them. When the earth collapsed during the Rending, it did so right beneath the center of Raseri Kanton. The doomed city crashed down the side of the mountain, killing almost all of its residents.

A fraction of the city's buildings still stand at the top of the Crag, and those abandoned structures give homes to a variety of creatures. Most of the buildings, however, lay tumbled, cracked, and shattered at the base of the cliffs. For the most part, only undead live among those buildings—the restless spirits and shambling bodies of the residents who perished in the Rending. In the last several centuries, though, the fey of Darkmoon Wood have taken an interest in clearing the ruins of undead, fearful that the horrors therein might spread or—worse still—fall under the command of a truly maleficent being. To that end, bands of fey (especially satyrs) frequently patrol the ruins, looking for mortals to drive off and undead to put to rest. While they are suspicious of outsiders, they occasionally work with mortals that come to the ruins and prove their good intentions (usually by performing a series of tasks for the fey).

Ruins of Jernashall: Most of Jernashall lies entombed within thousands of cubic feet of solid stone. Two exceptions exist, however. The massive Gates of Jernashall, marking the city's only above-ground

entrance, still stand tall upon the mountain. Lava from the eruption that destroyed Jernashall blasted forth from the gateway like beer from a freshly breached keg, and as that eruption wound down, the molten rock cooled and sealed the entrance, leaving the barbican, gatehouse, and open stone doors to guard a flow of jagged volcanic rock. Further up the slope, above and to the south of the gates, the great Casements of Torag open onto lava-filled chambers once rich with plantlife and the tombs of non-dwarves who earned burial within the city. The mechanisms for opening and closing the immense stone slabs that form the casements are forever sealed by tens of thousands of tons of cooled lava, leaving the three barriers opened at varying angles.

Droskar's Crucible: Squatting at the foot of Droskar's Crag, this ruined monastery sits among ancient, gnarled trees. Made of simple stone blocks, worn smooth with the passage of time, the stout building is falling apart. This slow crumbling alone points to the unusually poor construction of dwarves no longer interested in excelling at their toils, but merely toiling.

Just prior to their withdrawal from the region to nearby dwarven holds, the dwarves of the Five Kings Mountains turned to the worship of the Dark Smith: Droskar, god of toil and labor. As the decades passed, fidelity to Droskar no longer inspired great works, only works, and the quality of dwarven craftsmanship plummeted as the stoutfolk attempted to ceaselessly churn out monuments, temples, and armories in his honor. Droskar's Crucible is a hallmark of this decline in imagination and spirit. Its spartan interior is a testament to the joyless final days of the dwarves. Smooth halls, many of which are filled with ironblood mushrooms, stretch between cold-stoned chambers. Crudely hewn tunnels connect the underground monastery directly to dreary mines and the thundering forges that long ago hammered out steel day and night.

In the centuries since its abandonment, predators and worse have taken up residence in the ruined building and the tunnels and mines beneath it. On the surface, within the crumbling building of the monastery itself, lives a powerful worg named Graypelt.

Elberwick Rise

South of the wide, flat plain that dominates Darkmoon Vale climbs a short plateau known as the Elberwick Rise. The large and sparsely populated Shire of Elberwick

fills the rise, which before the Rending ran up against the foothills of the Five Kings Mountains. The resulting collapse of the northern 30 miles of the plateau resulted in an irregular edge to the rise. In some places, the rise and the plain transition smoothly in a shallow slope, while in other areas the break is more sudden and forms 20- to 40-foot-tall cliffs. Very little of the rise officially resides within Darkmoon Vale, but the part of it that does holds two of the region's most civilized locations: the gleaming tower of Adamas and the mercantile town of Olfden.

Many of the names in and near Darkmoon Vale bear the name of the Elberwick family, who once held the largest Chelish county within what is modern-day Andoran. When Andoran became independent, then-count Rochard Elberwick peacefully surrendered his claim to the land (and reputedly half his other assets) and sent his son to Almas to enter democratic politics. Today, People's Councilmember Wellam Elberwick (son of Rochard) represents the Shire of Elberwick and Darkmoon Vale in Almas. Wellam remains popular both among those he represents and with those he works alongside in the capitol.

Adamas: This 65-foot-tall white-marble circular tower rises from the floor of Darkmoon Plain at the base of the Elberwick Rise a few miles east of Olfden. The bottom 25 feet of the tower is built pressed against the cliff wall, with the upper 40 feet rising freely above. Atop the shelf, where the edge of it meets the tower, a circular white-marble wall extends out from the tower and surrounds a few small buildings.

The tower has a small door at its base and another that opens into the circular enclosure—the only way into that walled-in area. Other than these doors, only a few small archery slits cut into the curved walls of the tower and enclosure break up their monolithic exteriors. Atop the tower's flat roof (which is surrounded by a crenellated wall) flies the flag of the Diamond Regiment of the Eagle Knights.

Adamas and its small enclosure house the 400 soldiers of the Diamond Regiment. Due to the small size of both the tower and its connected enclosure, many suspect that Adamas hides some kind of underground facility beneath its gleaming white exterior. The Diamond Regiment neither confirms nor denies these rumors.

Diamond Regiment: Although a backwoods on the edge of civilization, Darkmoon Vale provides a resource vital to the Andoran Navy. Thus, in order to protect the region's inhabitants, the Golden Aerie—headquarters of the Eagle

DIAMOND REGIMENT INSIGNIA





Knights—sent a regiment of 12 Eagle Knights and 388 army regulars to guard the vital trade road out of the vale.

Operating out of Adamas, the Diamond Regiment patrols all of Darkmoon Vale south of the River Foam (although it rarely visits Arthfell Forest, trusting to the Fangwatch to guard that area), with infrequent visits north of the river into Falcon's Hollow. Neither Ingrid Odeber—the regiment's commander—nor the leaders of Falcon's Hollow enjoy these visits, however, so the order only goes there to escort convoys of darkwood to Olfden or when commanded by the Golden Aerie.

Ingrid Odeber leads the Diamond Regiment with an abiding passion tempered by a strict regimen. As a paladin of Iomedae, Commander Odeber tolerates no mischief from her soldiers, and for the most part she must deal with none. Her troops frequently prove their unbending loyalty in the face of terrible dangers birthed from the depths of the Arthfell Forest or the low scrabble of the Wolfrun Hills. Ingrid publicly acknowledges her marriage to the druid Tablic, leader of the Greenfire Circle. This arrangement led to the close collaboration of the Diamond Regiment with the Fangwatch, which in turn spawned Commander Odeber's close friendship with Aurore Kaiseva.

Commander Odeber answers directly to General Traxxus, an ambitious but caring man who leads a small army of both Eagle Knights and regular soldiers headquartered in Carpenden. General Traxxus seems to favor Commander Odeber and keeps the Diamond Regiment well stocked with supplies and soldiers.

Sixteen Steps of Irori: A line of lava plugs extends in a gentle arc from within Arthfell Forest, curving north and slightly west over a distance of 2 miles. These plugs are remarkable for three reasons: they stand unusually close together in a slightly curving line, they have nearly identical heights, and the space between each one is almost identical. Atop each lava plug stands a small wooden platform used as a watchtower, maintained and manned by the Fangwatch and Greenfire Circle.

Dwarven volcanologists remain at a loss to explain the phenomenon. Historians note that, while the name for these natural towers has existed for nearly 3,000 years, no explanation for the unusual name remains in any text that has been found so far.

The Five Kings Mountains

Named for the large carvings of five dwarven kings sculpted into five passes flanking some of the range's highest peaks, the Five Kings Mountains run from the southwest to the northeast and form the northern border of both Darkmoon Vale and Andoran. The Five Kings Mountains boast 17 peaks classified as fourteeners (a mountaineering term meaning mountains above 14,000 feet in elevation), a few of which stand in Andoran.

TEN PEAKS OF THE FIVE KINGS

The ten tallest peaks of the Five Kings Mountains, by elevation, are as follows.

1. Emperor Peak, Druma, 18,365 ft.
2. Mount Langley, Druma, 17,400 ft.
3. Mount Mist, Druma, 16,237 ft.
4. Mount Arugak, Andoran, 15,638 ft.
5. Mount Carissa, Andoran, 15,126 ft.
6. Queen Peak, Druma, 14,831 ft.
7. Mount Gustus, Andoran, 14,806 ft.
8. Mount Onik, Druma, 14,714 ft.
9. Mount Soryu, Druma, 14,603 ft.
10. Mount Kla, Andoran, 14,411 ft.

Only one of the five kingly carvings stands near Darkmoon Vale—that of King Taggun, founder of Taggoret. The massive carving, standing more than 150 feet high and portraying the king from the waist up, looms over Kingtower Pass between Droskar's Crag and Mount Gustus. King Taggun's carving shows the powerful and popular monarch wearing an elaborate crown at least as tall as his own head. His well-groomed beard bears several braids, with numerous bands and trinkets. King Taggun's depiction holds a massive hammer in such a way that its immense head is “resting” on the floor of the mountain pass. The other four kings have larger but equally elaborate representation, and all four stand within strategically important passes on some of the range's highest mountains.

Thousands of miles of caves, caverns, tunnels, and abandoned mines are believed to lie beneath the Five Kings Mountains. Prior to the Rending, dozens of entrances to these underground passageways existed all around Droskar's Crag and Darkmoon Vale. As a result of the Rending, though, many tunnels and caves collapsed or were sealed with magma, making entries more difficult to find in the last 800 years.

Broken Tower: Clearly an engineering marvel when it stood, the broken tower lays strewn in eight pieces across the southwestern flank of Mount Gustus, about 2 miles up the road from Kingtower Pass. Each immense piece of the square tower measures at least 25 feet long, and current estimates put the tower's overall height at around 210 feet, with a base width of 100 feet. Only one piece of the tower remains standing, which rises to around 20 feet at its highest point opposite the buckled side that collapsed and brought down the whole tower. The dwarven architect and sage Garson Felskran identified the architectural style as that of the dwarven empire under the rule of King Sidrik III, who reigned 3919 to 4111. Explorers at the Broken Tower's ruins have uncovered evidence of a tunnel complex beneath the structure, the entrance to which has long since caved in.

Eye of Droskar: This squat, three-story square tower rises only 30 feet from the alpine meadow in which it stands. Clearly built by dwarves during the height of their laborious toils (some call this the low-point of dwarven craftsmanship), the plain, uninspired tower appears on first glance to deserve no mention. Inside, however, the tower's top floor bears a peculiar magical occurrence. Set firmly into the stone floor in the exact center of the tower is a 4-foot-tall jagged green crystal with a triangular base. The roof of the tower directly above the crystal bears a triangular hole of exactly the same dimensions as the crystal.

Within the crystal burns a bright green-white flame that does not react to any mundane or magical stimuli. Known as the *eye of Droskar*, this large crystal, as well as the hole in the roof and the intricately carved runes in the flagstones at its base, all look as though they were added long after the dwarves evacuated the tower. The runes in the floor look like random symbols and do not contain letters or pictographs of any alphabet known in Avistan or Garund.

Hexagonal Tower: Built at the height of Tar Khadurrm's control over the region, the hundred-foot-tall Hexagonal Tower survived the Rending mostly intact. Four of its six sides and two of its three lesser corner towers still fully stand, and even the walls and tower that have partially collapsed are more damaged than destroyed.

Despite the strength of the tower (even in its partially ruined state), no creature resides within it. Beneath it, however, the Dragonclaw Tribe of kobolds calls home the vast network of tunnels and chambers that delve into the ridge on which it stands. The kobolds mostly ignore the strong fortifications above them, although on occasion they try to coerce some kind of dangerous (but not kobold-eating) creature to live in the tower and act as a guard. Three days after these "guards" take up residence, however, the kobolds return to drag their corpses below ground, their intact bodies showing no obvious signs of harm. The Dragonclaw Tribe considers these events as excellent excuses to hold feasts (with the "guard" as the main course).

Torag's Breath: A strange river floats lazily among the many peaks of the Five Kings Mountains. It finds its source at Torag's Mouth—the smaller of Droskar's Crag's two craters—and winds once around that mountain before flowing northeast into the heart of the mountain range. Torag's Breath flows for almost 250 miles before ending at an alpine meadow low on the flank of Mount Mist in Druma.

Like normal rivers, Torag's Breath contains eddies and swells (but not "airfalls" or rapids) and comes with the additional navigational danger of being difficult to see. Unlike normal rivers, this one floats 10,000 feet above sea level and is comprised exclusively of magical winds from the Elemental Plane of Air. The magic of these gentle

winds allows the air to hold aloft a ship or boat (or really, anything that can float on water, including tree branches and other flotsam). In 3997, dwarven volcanologist and explorer Rinehardt Morotok accidentally discovered the air river while studying the aftereffects of the Rending and the long-term stability of Droskar's Crag. Since then, experimentation has shown that the air river provides exactly the same amount of buoyancy as a waterway of similar size and depth. Indeed, shortly before the collapse of Imperial Chelixa, the empire managed to build a large sailing ship (largest ever to navigate Torag's Breath) near the river and put it afloat. That ship, the *Chimera's Wing*, rests at anchor within the air river along the flank of Mount Visoka in Druma.

Thanks to its remote location and inhospitable elevation, Torag's Breath never became an important route for trade or military uses, and remains to this day little more than a curiosity. The air river's popularity waxes and wanes among those who live anywhere near it, and as a result dozens of boats and ships of various sizes wait in anchor along its course (or lie smashed to bits on mountain sides). Gnomes in particular seem to enjoy navigating the air river, and most craft still active on it belong to or are crewed by gnomes (who seem none-too-skilled at sailing).

Daralathylx: Somewhere in the foothills between Droskar's Crag and Mount Gustus lives the magnificent red dragon named Daralathylx. This grand terror is sometimes called the Sixth King of the Mountains, and most people who interact with him (and somehow survive) wisely address him as a king, if not "emperor" or "god." Daralathylx is one of the oldest, largest, and most powerful dragons in Avistan, and his influence is felt as far away as Tamran in Nirmathas. At least a dozen other evil dragons are known to live within the area Daralathylx claims, and all but one refer to him as their liege.

In the past century, Daralathylx's appearances have declined, leading some to wrongfully speculate that he has died. Every time such rumors begin circulating, though, Daralathylx reappears to exert his undeniable influence and command over the region. These reappearances lead many to speculate that Daralathylx controls a network of spies in Darkmoon Vale, for his return always seems coincidentally linked to rumors of his demise. When he does deign to appear within the vale, Daralathylx stays only long enough to terrorize his "subjects" and acquire proper tribute, usually in the form of food, treasure, and beautiful young human or elven women. The king's last visit came in 4699.

Although less active in recent memory, Daralathylx proved a far more dynamic menace several centuries ago. At the height of his activity, roughly between 4200 and 4500, Daralathylx appeared in Darkmoon Vale almost every year,



demanding his customary tribute. Reports of Daralathylx go back even further, though, and some stories put him at the mouth of the volcano—swimming through the lava with glee—when Droskar's Crag erupted in 3980. A few surviving dwarven records even speak of a powerful young red dragon who took up residence in the southern end of the Five Kings Mountains around 3000. Some scholars debate as to whether that dragon could be Daralathylx, but references to a distinctive hooked chin horn and dark red stripes along his forelimbs seem like fairly strong evidence that the dwarves encountered Daralathylx some 1700 years ago. Certainly, his size and power lend credence to such tales of his age, and it seems likely that Daralathylx has lived for more than two millennia.

River Foam

A relatively minor river, the River Foam skirts the southern foothills of Drokar's Crag before cutting across the northern basin of Darkmoon Vale. The river punches through the Wolfrun Hills via a narrow gorge filled with rapids and shallows before dumping into the Andossan River.

Despite its proximity to Darkmoon Wood and that Falcon's Hollow sits upon its northern bank, the River Foam makes for a poor highway. Not even riverboats can pass through the Wolfrun Rapids, and the few ferries and

boats on the river (including the Falcon's Hollow ferry) were carried overland or built on the river.

No bridge spans the river, but two fords and one ferry provide ways across the Foam. The only bridge to have spanned the river was destroyed in the Rending of 3980. One of the river's fords lies a few miles upriver from the remains of that bridge, while the other cross just upriver from where the Foam dumps into the Andossan River. The lone ferry crosses at Falcon's Hollow.

Large, silver-flanked salmon fill the river in the spring and autumn, spawning at the base of Gold Falls and filling the river with their easily harvested corpses. Crawdads live all along the river's banks as it widens and slows through most of Darkmoon Vale. Otters, fisks, marles, herons, and various breeds of alligators also live along the river at various places. Aside from all these animals, the occasional reefclaw makes its way to the River Foam, as does the infrequent water naga.

Gold Falls: The River Foam drops over the edge of a tall plateau at the roaring Gold Falls. Gold Falls drops a total of 564 feet in two sections: a 323-foot plunge into a deep, cold pool and a 241-foot cascade fed from the oft-ice-encrusted basin. Gold Falls Inn hangs out over both River Foam and Gold Falls, giving guests of the inn spectacular views of the waterfall.



Gold Falls Inn: This large, well-guarded stone-and-timber lodge stands on the northern shore of the River Foam, right next to plunging Gold Falls. Owned and operated by Mierson Berekland, a friendly middle-aged retired Pathfinder, the inn originated as a small dwarven fortress built to control a wide bridge across the river at the top of the falls. One of the massive earthquakes accompanying Droskar's Crag's eruption during the Rending collapsed the bridge. No longer serving a purpose and heavily damaged from the Rending, the fortress was abandoned and fell quickly into ruin.

For several hundred years, the fortress ruins served as a home to a succession of creatures until, in 4437, an explorer named Argus Berekland discovered placer gold at the base of the falls. In less than a year, Argus and a small group of his friends cleared the fortress ruins and built a sluice above the falls among the ruins of the great bridge. Over time, the group built a heavily defended manor house to guard the sluice and to offer protection to travelers along the riverside trail.

Today, Gold Falls Inn serves as a heavily defended waypoint on the trail from Falcon's Hollow west to Cheliox. The Berekland family now owns the inn outright, and it still operates the nearby sluice as well. Thanks to the revenue from the sluice, the family can afford to offer

very affordable rates on food and lodging, making the Gold Falls Inn a popular destination for bored residents of Olfden and Oregent looking for an excuse to traverse the dangers of Darkmoon Vale.

Wolfrun Rapids: One of the major causes of lost timber when floating logs down the River Foam, this 3-mile stretch of whitewater begins just before the base of the Wolfrun Hills and continues on nearly until the Foam dumps into the Andossan River. Multiple efforts to smooth out the rapids have failed, thanks partially to the frequent landslides that constantly dump in more rocks (changing their shape every few months) and partially to the many logs that have become snared in the rapids over the years.

Wolfrun Hills

Grassy rises capped with small copses of pine and fir drop into rocky grottos that in turn rise again with low basalt cliffs covered on their leeward side with scrub oak and prickly shrubs—these are the Wolfrun Hills. Forming the eastern border of Darkmoon Vale, the high Wolfrun Hills present a dichotomic geology (and to a lesser extent, climate). The gently sloping western hills are covered with plantlife (mostly grasses and low shrubs) and provide homes to numerous kinds of animals (including packs of eponymous wolves). On the eastern side, facing



the Andossan River, the hills are ragged and rugged, giving home to tougher plants and more dangerous animals (including packs of dire wolves). Between these two extremes runs a jagged transition zone showing the wounds of the Rending. There, in the area between lush and rough, hills end or rise suddenly in crumbling cliffs, grottos offer sanctuary to dark druids and heartless bandits, and trickles of water meander for miles before suddenly drying up. Amid these three zones, numerous sites of interest and danger abound.

Grotto of St. Elth: When Karas Novotnian came to Darkmoon Vale, he brought with him a young cleric of Sarenrae named Elth Hammerson. This small grotto houses a carefully maintained shrine to Sarenrae featuring a large statue of St. Elth standing over the injured Ponchus Kaiseva and facing down a chimera. For his courage that day, the high priest of Sarenrae in Almas posthumously granted Elth his sainthood, and the spirit of St. Elth appears in this shrine (which stands over his interred body) every year on the anniversary of his death. The spirit never reacts beyond acknowledging the presence of other Sarenrae clerics, who he smiles to. In the past few years, Sarenrae worshipers have reported that St. Elth's spirit looks increasingly melancholy every time he appears.

Wolfhead: Defiantly standing atop a crumbling hillside, the heavily guarded inn called Wolfhead takes its name from the building's distinctive shape. Designed and built by the eccentric gnome architect Las Stopbiddle in 4213, Wolfhead has since passed through a dozen families and scores of owners. The current owner, a capricious halfling named Dopp, serves anyone who comes through his door, but he seems to possess a sixth sense that lets him identify lycanthropes. A shrewd businessman despite his mercurial ways, Dopp has his guards respectfully escort found lycanthropes from the premises after they imbibe (and pay for) a drink. Those who resist are instead thrown out the Wolfhead's wolf mouth, which overlooks a 50-foot drop to a patch of wolfsbane below. Wolfhead can house up to 17 people in its nine rooms.

ORGANIZATIONS

Despite centuries of inhabitation by those who consider themselves civilized, much of Darkmoon Vale remains wild. This wildness does not preclude the existence of humans and demihumans, of course, but those who do live away from their civilized kin band together in groups of their own for survival and companionship. The most powerful of those groups are described here.

Dark Druids

Whispered and fearful rumors speak of active dark druid circles operating in or near Darkmoon Vale. These

circles, known as the Shadow Pack and Third Veil, prey on the innocent people of the vale and occasionally cast shadows of doubt over the hard-working members of the Greenfire Circle.

Shadow Pack: For the most part, the Shadow Pack remains a reactionary group of lycanthropic druids whose main activity seems to be preventing logging within Arthfell Forest. Organized recruitment drives are extremely rare, and usually only follow sweeps conducted by the Fangwatch from the north and deputies of Elberwick's sheriff from the south. Members of the Shadow Pack almost never conduct raids outside the forest, as they seem content to remain within its boundaries. In general, only those who must venture into or through the Arthfell need fear the Shadow Pack, although residents of Olfden certainly suspect its members were a part of the Night of Silver Blood.

Generally, the Shadow Pack and the Fangwatch maintain a careful cease-fire that keeps an uneasy but balanced peace in the forest. Occasionally, one group or the other initiates a conflict, causing a frequently brief but always blood-soaked war that displaces other residents of the Arthfell. On exceedingly rare occasions, the two enemies put aside their differences and work together, although this only occurs when some greater foe threatens the forest (such as the trampling of Arthfell by the Slohr in 3537). The Shadow Pack and sheriff deputies of Elberwick never work together and tend to attack one another on sight.

Third Veil: Rumors hold that Third Veil members live among their victims and maintain a number of standing stone circles within hard-to-reach grottos in the Wolfrun Hills. These rumors do not report how the Third Veil lures or takes its victims into the hills, however, so the Diamond Regiment pays the stories little heed. Some people in Olfden consider the Third Veil a myth concocted by the Greenfire Circle to keep people from wandering around within the Wolfrun Hills. These conspiracy theorists hypothesize that something exists within the hills that the circle wants to keep secret from normal folk. The Diamond Regiment pays these theories even less heed.

What people in Olfden know for certain, however, is that occasionally someone—almost always the elderly or infirm—disappears from within the town or a nearby farm and then turns up a few months later in the Wolfrun Hills. These victims bear absolutely no indication of the cause of their death, but their faces always look completely relaxed and without any fear or apprehension.

Fangwatch

The shadowy Fangwatch patrols the Arthfell Forest within Darkmoon Vale, and only occasionally leaves the forest or moves into the heart of it south of the vale. Members of this order stand out from other rangers thanks to their

unusual attire and practices. Fangwatch rangers wear form-fitting bodysuits and other tight clothes, frequently covered with more flowing outerwear to break up their silhouettes. When seen by anyone outside the order, a Fangwatch ranger usually wears a half mask covering the nose and mouth. As they rarely look the part of rangers, most people who see members of the Fangwatch, their masks, and their unique garb, assume them to be a group of thieves or other lawbreakers. The rangers long ago gave up trying to convince people otherwise.

Led by charismatic and boisterous Rutho Steiggerson, the Fangwatch consists of roughly three dozen rangers and a handful of barbarians. Rutho grew up in Darkmoon Vale and founded the Fangwatch when he was 19. When young Tablic (see Greenfire Circle below) first came to the vale, the two became fast friends (but only after they engaged in a brief tussle over some argument they've both long-since forgotten). When the young druid became the leader of the Greenfire Circle, Rutho introduced him to Ingrid Odeber, and their famous romance began. Rutho also introduced Commander Odeber to his own lieutenant, Aurore Kaiseva, a talented ranger with a frightening hatred for werewolves. Ingrid and Aurore are fast friends, and their camaraderie has improved people's opinions of the Fangwatch.

The Fangwatch ostensibly exerts control over the north half of the Arthfell Forest, ceding influence over the southern half to the deputies of Elberwick. The Fangwatch patrols not just the part of the forest that stands within Darkmoon Vale, but also all of the wooded area within 10 leagues of the Elberwick Rise. Thanks to Rutho's activities (some say "meddlings"), the Diamond Regiment, Fangwatch, and Greenfire Circle work in

concert to patrol the vale and maintain as much security as possible for its residents.

Greenfire Circle

Plagued by attacks from ignorant lumberjacks, disgruntled Ulfden residents, and their own brethren (in the forms of the various dark druid factions), the Greenfire Circle druids nonetheless continue their efforts to find balance in the region.

Prior to Tablic's leadership, the circle attempted this impossible feat alone, keeping its activities and members protected behind a veil of secrecy. Tablic became head of the circle when he defeated the previous leader in a series of challenges that culminated in a nonlethal battle. Embittered by his loss, the former leader founded the Third Veil druid circle and antagonized the Greenfire Circle for several years before dying in battle with Tablic's apprentice. Since taking charge, Tablic made the circle and its actions open to non-members, showing the people of Darkmoon Vale how his druids strive for balance (not a wholesale cessation of land-altering changes). As part of his drive toward transparency, Tablic enlisted the aid of the Fangwatch and the Diamond Regiment. His close work with those two groups eventually led him to marry Ingrid Odeber, leader of the Diamond Regiment and a woman nearly 10 years his junior.

Greenfire Circle druids act as intermediaries between the region's industrious humans and its fey (and other natural) residents. Most of its druids live within Arthfell Forest, but a handful reside in Darkmoon Wood, the Wolfrun Hills, at the base of the Aspodell Mountains, and near some of the more scenic hot springs. Some members can take the forms of animals (usually falcons or other

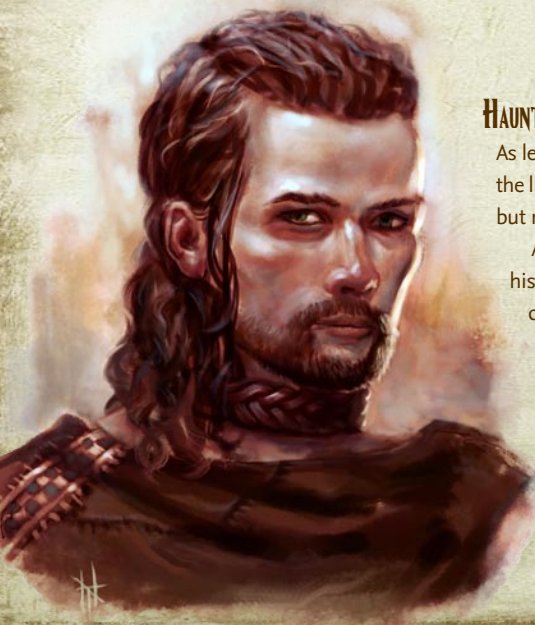
TABLIC

HAUNTED LEADER

As leader of the Greenfire Circle and husband of beautiful Ingrid Odeber, many people consider Tablic the luckiest man in Darkmoon Vale. Indeed, in the last several years, Tablic's fortunes have done nothing but rise. Behind his success, though, Tablic remains haunted by a past riddled with crime.

At one time, Tablic was a pesh addict in Almas. He ran with a rough crowd and committed his first violent crime at the tender age of 9. For his 15th birthday, Tablic's dealer gave the lad a concussion and a broken rib when Tablic tried to pay for a dose with too little coin. When he recovered, Tablic murdered a merchant and bought enough pesh with the stolen coins to kill a horse, much less a distraught and suicidal young human. Fate intervened, however, when the Azure Guard found Tablic and rescued him from his own folly. When the Azure Guard later broke up, in Darkmoon Vale, Tablic sought out another group to join, eventually ending up with the Greenfire Circle (of which he became leader 2 years later).

Guilt still gnaws at Tablic. He knows he cannot forever escape his past, and with each passing year he steels himself a little more for his inevitable return to Almas.



birds of prey, but never wolves) and use this ability to patrol vast swaths of ground or spy on Lumber Consortium bosses and others they consider enemies.

DANGEROUS DENIZENS

Less than half of Darkmoon Vale's residents are counted in any organized census conducted by Andoran. The truth is, most creatures in the region are not humans or demihumans—they are, for lack of a better term, monsters. While the werewolves of Darkmoon Vale are the region's most famous monsters, they are hardly alone. Many living (and some undead) menaces terrorize the areas outside town walls.

Draconic Kin

Although not true dragons, these creatures nonetheless emulate their fearsome draconic kin in some way. From the small but fierce tatzlwyrms of Darkmoon Wood to the dangerous wyverns of the Five Kings Mountains, draconic creatures prey on the unwary and unsuspecting throughout the wild the places of Darkmoon Vale.

Drakes: Three kinds of drakes live near Darkmoon Vale: caustic, flame, and thunder. These degenerate cousins of true dragons typically avoid their more powerful and intelligent kin, although several groups do reportedly bow to Daralathylx and serve his whim.

Caustic drakes, those that spew acid and corrode all that comes near them, live in small clutches throughout the Aspodell Mountains and the southwestern areas of the Darkmoon Plain. These foul, green-scaled beasts attack travelers approaching the Aspodell Crossroad from the south, plundering or befouling whatever their victims might be carrying. Cheliah has tried on multiple occasions to eliminate the nests of caustic drakes in the

mountains, but the creatures always find a way to bounce back. As a result of Chelish efforts, though, caustic drakes attack any person or caravan displaying insignia tying them to the empire.

Although more common to the north, particularly near Varisia and Nirmandas, a number of flame drakes nest on the southwestern flank of Droskar's Crag. These flame-spewing pests occasionally attack Gold Falls Inn, but they have yet to succeed at doing more than burning holes in the roof. Increasingly, the Crag's flame drakes have taken to swooping around to the northern flanks of the mountain in order to terrorize Isger Pass and those who travel through it.

Among the most powerful of drakes, the thunder drakes of the Five Kings Mountains frequently cause avalanches and other environmental hazards for those attempting to travel through the range. As a result, the dwarves of Highhelm offer a bounty of 50 gp per thunder drake head brought to them. This reward has led to a sharp decline in the number of troublesome drakes, but some Highhelm caravan merchants fear continued attacks against Daralathylx's minions might awaken his wrath.

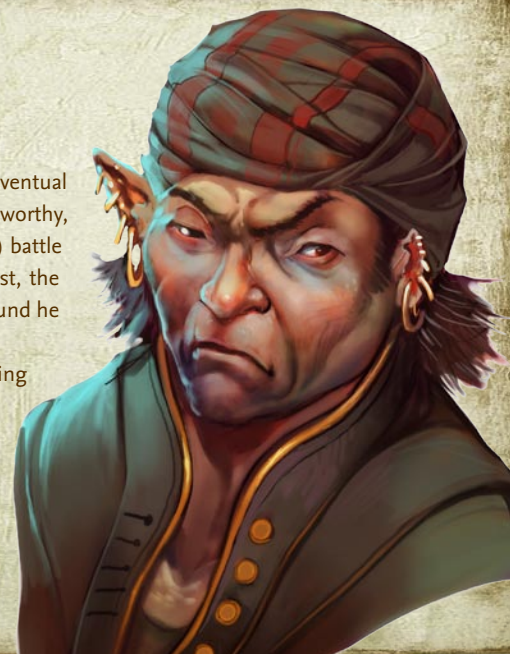
Tatzlwyrms: Innately stealthy and uncomfortable in open areas, tatzlwyrms are rarely seen, and in many regions are thought to be little more than local legends. Residents of Falcon's Hollow frequently attribute the disappearances of woodsmen or lumberjacks to the ravages of tatzlwyrms. Most tatzlwyrms in Darkmoon Wood live near the Forest Elder, deep within the wood, while two other communities are rumored to live on the northeastern slope of Droskar's Crag and within ancient tunnels beneath the Wolfrun Hills. Although seemingly not intelligent enough to discern the historic

TAMRIS QUICKTHORN

FAILED ADVENTURER

Hateful and hated, the foul-tempered halfling Tamris Quickthorn played a vital role in the eventual break-up of the adventuring band known as the Azure Guard. Never one to trust or be trustworthy, Tamris sowed discontent in the group with infrequent theft and selfish (some said cowardly) battle tactics. Thanks to Tamris's not-so-winning personality, the group eventually splintered. At first, the druid Tablic stayed with Tamris, not knowing where else to go. Eventually, though, even Tablic found he could no longer tolerate the angry halfling and departed.

Tamris blames his struggle over the past several years on his one-time companions, claiming (somewhat rightly) that they all turned against him at the end. After the end of the Azure Guard, Tamris's life took a rather steep nosedive, from which he only recently began to recover. Today, Tamris leads the Blastwaters, a small and sometimes successful bandit gang operating along roads in the actively geothermal lowlands of the vale. Thanks to Tamris's unhealthy obsession with meanness and his unconscionable willingness to steal from his own companions, the turnover rate for Blastwaters banditos remains high.



importance of such sites, tatzlwyrms are oddly attracted to natural places of great age and primeval strength. What connection these strange dragons might have to these locations, however, remains a mystery.

One particularly large tatzlwyrms, dubbed Claw-eye by locals, lives in the southern Wolfrun Hills. According to those who claim to have seen him, Claw-eye gets his name from a massive dragon or wyvern claw jammed in his left eye and healed over. This healed-over wound, so go the stories, causes poor Claw-eye constant torment, making him an even surlier and ferocious member of his species.

Wyverns: Found primarily on the flanks of the Five Kings Mountains and the scrub-oak-covered hills of the Wolfrun Hills, wyverns dominate the border regions of Darkmoon Vale. Almost every wyvern in the area bows his neck to King Daralathyl, although a few rebellious members of every generation side with Taxthyl or choose to live under the rule of no true dragon. In the last few years, rumors have even begun that a small number of Wolfrun Hills wyverns seek leadership from Wataxshyl (see the Olfden section in Chapter 3), although he seems both shocked by and uncomfortable with this idea. Massive wyverns spotted near the Five Kings Mountains bear reddish scales and distinctive hooked chin horns.

Although they live in high, rocky places, wyverns frequently patrol the low areas of the vale, where much of their prey dwells. Sightings of wyverns flying fast and low over the valley floor are not uncommon, although most seem to prefer Arthfell Forest and Darkmoon Wood, thanks to the abundance of elk in the former and deer in the latter. Darkmoon Vale wyverns have a taste for horseflesh, and more than one lone rider has lost his mount to a hungry wyvern (of course, more than one lone rider also became

a wyvern's appetizer, but such occurrences are actually relatively rare).

A handful of wyverns live in the Aspodell Mountains to the west of Darkmoon Vale, but they seem to prefer hunting across the border, in Cheliah. Occasionally, though, one of these rock-gray menaces appears over Olfden, drawn, it seems, by curiosity. These visitations lead to tense standoffs, but for the most part the wyverns realize they have little to gain and leave without incident.

Fey

Numerous fey creatures live within Darkmoon Vale, especially in Darkmoon Wood. Most of the fey in the vale bow to the beautiful and beneficent nymph queen Syntira, but enough do not that the people who live near the wood mistrust any creature even resembling fey. An ongoing cold war exists between the fey (even those loyal to Syntira) and the humans, with each side secretly (and not-so-secretly) killing off its opponents. Syntira continues working with the Greenfire Circle in the hopes of making a peace, but as of yet her efforts have proven fruitless. Syntira and her subjects watch in agony as humans cut away at her domain, squeezing the fey into a smaller holding with each swing of the axe.

Numerous kinds of fey live throughout the wood and the vale, and up until very recently all of them were a friendly but ribald bunch. Many nights, particularly those of some celestial significance (such as solstices, equinoxes, full moons, new moons) and many of no significance at all (cloudy nights, starry nights, moonless nights) found the fey of Darkmoon Wood partying into the wee hours of the morning. These loud, boisterous celebrations of life occasionally spooked jittery and superstitious



SYNTIRA

MYSTERIOUS QUEEN

Nymph queen of the Darkmoon Vale fey and direct emissary of the First World, Syntira is one of the Eleven Eternal Monarchs of the fey. As an Eternal Monarch, Syntira and her court lived in Darkmoon Vale long before even the first dwarves looked upon its verdant green.

A peace-loving and fair-minded queen—rare gifts among the Eternal Monarchs—Syntira constantly seeks diplomatic solutions in her dealings with mortals. She speaks softly and quickly, but she never sounds or looks hurried or rushed. As an immortal being, Syntira takes her time to weigh options and seeks multiple solutions for any presented challenge.

Unfortunately, though, mortals prove remarkably adept at rejecting reason when presented with the promise of wealth. As such, Syntira has on more than one occasion led her fey in short guerilla wars. When roused to such anger, Syntira becomes a cold and frighteningly effective warlord, leading her subjects in a series of precise hit-and-run strikes throughout Darkmoon Wood and its surroundings. Even when roused to anger, though, Syntira avoids bloodlust and insists on showing mercy to noncombatants and those warriors who surrender or who are too injured to fight.



lumberjacks, who reported the noise and lights to their Lumber Consortium bosses. In order to ease the minds of his simple employees, Thuldrin Kreed sent a contingent of enforcers into the Wood. The Lumber Consortium mercenaries had little effect, and several of them never re-emerged from among the trees. Thus began the barely tenable situation that exists today.

Although fey and humans still mostly tolerate one another, rumors of strange deer-riding fey entering the northern reaches of the Wood have lumberjacks concerned of a build-up of war-oriented fey. Druids of the Greenfire Circle have also reported that some fey seem on the verge of rebellion against Queen Syntira. Among those listed as agitators include her own sister, who the Greenfire believes could bring many other fey to her side, should she rebel against Syntira's rule.

Humanoids

Although usually not as intelligent as humans, the various giants, humanoids, and monstrous humanoids living in and near Darkmoon Vale pose no little danger to the human and demihuman inhabitants of the vale. The following creatures congregate en masse and threaten what peace and stability exist within Darkmoon Vale. In addition to these, reports of individuals and small groups of bugbears, gnolls, ogres, and orcs occasionally surface in the region.

Harpies: Nests of these foul and loathsome creatures perch on low cliffs throughout the foothills of the Five Kings and Aspodell Mountains and the rough, rolling peaks of the Wolfrun Hills. Fortunately for residents of Darkmoon Vale, most of these creatures spend their time fighting among themselves and can scarcely bother with attacking or harassing others. Every few years, though, a particularly powerful nest matron gains control of a sizeable flock and takes her followers on a series of raids throughout the vale.

For the most part, though, harpies patrol or hunt either solitarily or in very small groups. These patrols tend to attack on sight, whether they spot other harpies or other living creatures.

Hill Giants: Like most of the creatures that terrorize the region, groups of hill giants (as their name implies) live in the hills surrounding Darkmoon Vale. Most live in the foothills of the Five Kings Mountains, traversing the low passes between the imposing range's peaks to harass both Darkmoon Vale and the lands to the north of the range. Traveling in small tribes of no more than two dozen individuals, the hill giants usually descend into the surrounding lowlands to hunt alone or in pairs.

One particularly bizarre exception to the well-deserved stereotype of evil hill giant thuggery is a lovingly married hill giant couple who make their home within

Darkmoon Wood. Most folk believe Kardoblag and his wife Morgsa live in the wood as exiles, although to date no one has dared come close enough to them to verify the hypothesis. For the most part, Kardoblag and Morgsa are content to keep to themselves, although Kardoblag frequently wanders the wood in a drunken stupor.

Hobgoblins: A small hobgoblin settlement stands in the northern reaches of Arthfell Forest. For the most part, these hobgoblins keep to themselves in the forest and continuously scheme, having lost multiple battles against both the Diamond Regiment and Fangwatch. The hobgoblin leader, Thatch Wormtar, longs to conquer Olfden and make it the seat of his power, but every attack made on the town has resulted in failure. Even the combined strength of his hobgoblins allied with the forest's werewolves (to which he lost several hobgoblins) that launched the Night of Silver Blood could not penetrate Olfden's walls. With each attack on Olfden or the farms near it, Thatch's army weakens.

Grung Knifetongue, a gray-skinned hobgoblin with a prodigious cleft palate, lives alone in the northern reaches of Darkmoon Wood, surviving as a hunter and trapper. Long ago, Grung served in Thatch's army as a scout, but after too many years of ridicule because of his disfigurement, Thatch left Arthfell Forest for Darkmoon Wood. His favorite trick is to snare a firefoot fennec (see Fauna sidebar) and use it as bait to lure in larger prey, such as a Darkmoon wolf, giant moorsnake, or other curious passersby. Numerous razorcrows follow Grung, but it is unclear whether they assist him in some way or they merely wait to dine off his scraps.

Kobolds: These diminutive nuisances infest almost the entire length of the Five Kings Mountains and remain among the range's most annoying—if only occasionally dangerous—hazards. When Tar Taargadth ruled the range, the dwarves nearly succeeded in wiping out the kobold population there. Once that empire collapsed, though, it only took a couple decades for the kobolds to once again infiltrate into the mountain range, finding places to live in those nebulous areas between dwarven kingdoms.

For hundreds of years, kobolds lived in the places forgotten or ignored by the dwarves, mostly undisturbed (usually only because the dwarves never noticed them). Like a fungus, they spread across the region, choking out other savage humanoids living on the fringes. Natural kobold fecundity and the relatively few predators who could reach them in their dwarf-abandoned tunnels ensured the constant expansion of the race. This ceaseless growth eventually exceeded a number tolerable to the dwarven kingdoms, and once again the dwarves turned their attentions to eradicating the pests. A series of conflicts led to an overall decline in

the kobold population living in and around the range. Still, the kobolds tenaciously clung to life in the parts of the range ignored by the dwarves, and over time they stripped the mountain sides clean of edible plants (and in some cases, because they are kobolds, even the inedible ones).

Then the Rending rocked southern Avistan, cracking the earth and the dwarven holds dug throughout it. Many of the old natural caverns and dwarven tunnels within 100 miles of Droskar's Crag filled with—or at the very least, offered passage to—molten lava, superheated steam, and poisonous sulfuric gasses. No one can begin to estimate the number of kobolds killed by the Rending (because no one, not even kobolds, knew how many lived in the tunnels before or after the event), but most sages who even nominally care agree that it was “a lot.” The superstitious kobolds took this event as a sign (of what, they didn't know) and abandoned the devastated area.

Eventually, of course, the short memories of the kobolds bested their vague dread of the Five Kings Mountains, and they returned to the mountain range only to find the dwarven nations there in decline. Some historians speculate that the return of kobolds contributed greatly to the final collapse of the five kingdoms. Today, small settlements of kobolds infest the hills and foothills surrounding Droskar's Crag and the Five Kings Mountains. Where they can, the kobolds live within dwarven ruins, such as Droskar's Crucible and the tunnels beneath Hexagonal Tower.

In the foothills between Droskar's Crag and Darkmoon Wood, Merlokrep, first of his name, all-mighty Dragon King of the Truescale Kobolds, commands a relatively large tribe of kobolds. Housed in the tunnels beneath Droskar's Crucible, the Truescale Tribe until recently contented itself with living deep within the earth, far away from the prying eyes and sharp swords of humans. Recent reports, however, speak of an increase in the number of kobolds on the surface near Droskar's Crucible.

Lupines

Wolves and wolflike creatures fill Darkmoon Vale and its surroundings. While most lupine creatures in the vale are normal wolves, plenty of wolflike creatures possessing malevolent intelligence terrorize the region. Despite the understandable bias against wolves in the area, dream wolves nonetheless continue to live in the foothills north of the vale, working thanklessly to stem the tide of evil pouring out of the Five Kings Mountains.

Dire Wolves: While these large cousins of normal wolves look frightful and menacing to humans (mostly thanks to their increased size), they actually pose as little danger to humans as normal wolves. Like their smaller

cousins, though, dire wolves are easily controlled by werewolves, so interactions with humans almost always result in violence.

Dream Wolves: Physically identical to normal wolves, dream wolves nonetheless always carry some kind of marker that indicate the difference (such as a patch of fur with a particular shape or strangely colored eyes). Beyond their physical similarities, dream wolves also tend to behave—on the macro level—as do normal wolves. Their resemblance to their lesser brethren ends there, though, as dream wolves are also highly intelligent (sometimes as intelligent as powerful wizards) and can communicate with humans through dreams and visions.

Compassionate and protective, dream wolves struggle against the prejudices and old hatreds of the area's human population. Whenever they can, dream wolves hunt out and kill winter wolves and worgs. For their parts, winter wolves and worgs more than happily return the favor.

Winter Wolves: Although not a large percentage of the lupine population in and around Darkmoon Vale, the area's winter wolves more than make up for their scant numbers with determined malevolence. Many of the wolf stories passed down from nervous parent to frightened child feature large white wolves possessing human-like intelligence. Because of these stories, winter wolves do what they can to disguise their white fur, from rolling in mud and dust to simply staying hidden until ready to strike.

A winter wolf rarely stays passive for long, and one almost always has some kind of devious plot or strategy in progress.

Wolves: The human of the region always assume the worst of Darkmoon Vale's wolves. In truth, when left alone, the wolves act as they do anywhere else—they avoid humans, hunt prey animals their size or smaller, and live in sociable family units. Not themselves evil, the normal wolves of the area nonetheless frequently commit acts humans consider evil. These raids, assaults, and killings come only when wicked werewolves control the packs, sending normally skittish wolves on murderous sprees of carnage.

Many of the few good druids in the area struggle with the perceptions and prejudices of their fellow humans on behalf of the region's wolf populations. Members of the Greenfire Circle, for example, work hard to educate locals on how wolves normally act, so the area's residents can discern whether a wolf is being compelled or is otherwise acting strangely.

Because of the many scary stories told to children that involve winter wolves, white-furred wolves rarely survive for long when found. As a result, most of the wolves in the area possess gray, brown, or black fur, ironically allowing them to hide more easily in the region. Among other reasons, this leads to the constant presence of wolves, despite repeated efforts to drive them to extinction.

Worgs: Connected as they are to goblinoids, the worg population in Darkmoon Vale and the areas north of it exploded during the Goblinblood Wars a decade ago. Since that time, attrition, hunting, and natural migration has seen a precipitous drop in the number of nearby worgs. Indeed, so few exist now within the dell or hills surrounding it that most people no longer consider them a menace. Those worgs who do still live in Darkmoon Vale have thus gained a bit of notoriety for their resilience. The most famous worgs currently living the vale are Graypelt, dwelling in Droskar's Crucible; Lostfang, residing at the feet of the Aspodell Mountains; and Shadoweye, last seen prowling around Gold Ridge on Droskar's Crag.

Undead

Although by no means common in Darkmoon Vale, undead do infrequently rise to terrorize and haunt the region's inhabitants. The largest known concentration of undead activity (usually only haunts, but occasionally ghosts and wraiths) occurs at the foot of the Crag, within the ruins of Raseri Kanton. Recently, though, a rise in other undead near a particular dwarven ruin has put the citizenry of Falcon's Hollow on edge.

Ghost-like creatures have begun appearing near the foothills of Droskar's Crag and seem to ever be on some kind of mission, as they tend to ignore those they float past. These dark shades follow the roads through the mountains, and many cross over Kingtower Pass. In addition, rumors from travelers in the area speak of undead dwarves climbing out of various ruins. Most of these animated corpses bear chains, say the rumors, which they use to bind the unwary.

A decade ago, lumberjacks working in the northeastern part of Darkmoon Wood reported encounters with what they called dead tree-creatures brought to life. After woodsmen of the Lumber Consortium turned up no evidence of such creatures, the lumberjacks were reprimanded for spreading false and alarmist rumors. Recently, though, such reports have resurfaced among lumberjacks. The Greenfire Circle reluctantly allied (temporarily) with the Lumber Consortium, and with their combined efforts they found and defeated what the druids called an undead treant. Attacks against lumberjacks stopped for a few weeks, but recent sightings of other shambling, leafless tree-creatures has both lumberjacks and druids on edge.

Werewolves

By far the greatest danger posed to the people of Darkmoon Vale is the abundance of werewolves. These dark-hearted lycanthropes menace townsfolk and murder farmers and travelers. Their influence stretches

from Arthfell Forest, where most of them seem to live, north into the Five Kings Mountains.

Many sages speculate that the werewolves once contented themselves with rulership of Arthfell Forest, but with the introduction of human lumberjacks and the subsequent mass-thinning of trees, the lycanthropes found themselves masters of an ever-decreasing domain. In retaliation, the werewolves spread out across Darkmoon Vale, exerting their influence over not only the stump-littered lands that once held their beloved forest, but the surrounding hills and plains as well. The rise of Oregent in the south seems to have pushed the werewolves north, out of Elbewick Shire and into Darkmoon Vale.

Once a month, the lycanthropes' murderous bloodlust empties the forests of their werewolves, who maraud throughout the surrounding countryside. Oldfen prepares for its monthly besieging for the three weeks the moon is not full, and with the exception of the Night of Silver Blood, the town has had little trouble repelling these attacks. Every month, it seems, the number of werewolves knocking at the town's gates (or rising up from within the walls themselves) rises.



DARKMOON VALE FLORA

Many varieties of unique and rare plants live in Darkmoon Vale. The following are those of greatest interest to residents and visitors of the region.

Appleleaf: These low-growing plants have leaves that grow in groups of four and taste of slightly bitter apples when eaten. Appleleaf grows all over within the forests of Darkmoon Vale and southern Isger.

Blackscour: A black-headed fungus that tastes hard, bitter, and sharp. It grows in the water and causes blackscour taint if any part of it, including its spores, are consumed (usually by drinking contaminated water). Blackscour is not native to the region and was only recently introduced to Darkmoon Vale.

Dowmberries: Although the plants that bear them contain massive thorns, dowmberries remain a popular desert treat when in season in late summer and early autumn. Dowmberries grow best in arid climates and grow all over the eastern side of the Aspodell Mountains and Wolfrun Hills.

Elderwood Moss: This semi-magical moss only grows on the oldest tree in a forest. As such, two known patches exist near Darkmoon Vale: one upon the forest elder in Darkmoon Wood and another on the Green Patriarch within Arthfell Forest. Elderwood moss, when prepared correctly, acts as a strong decongestant. Some people claim that, when prepared incorrectly, elderwood moss causes premature aging.

Glowmold: As its name implies, glowmold glows. Rather brightly, in fact. Glowmold grows very slowly on the undersides of igneous rocks, and the largest concentrations of this useful mold live for centuries under stones too large to easily flip or roll over. Smaller finds provide as much light as a torch. Regardless of the size of the moss colony, picked glowmold glows for 3 days once picked.

Ironbloom Mushrooms: These stunty fungi only grow in dark places thick with metal. The diets of Five Kings Mountains dwarves consist heavily of ironbloom mushrooms, mainly because the plants grow naturally in and around dwarven forges. Protein-rich ironbloom mushrooms bear a slight salty taste but otherwise contain no flavor of their own, making them excellent additions to many dwarven meals.

Pesh: This strong stimulant also has mild hallucinogenic properties, which together make its users easily agitated and randomly aggressive (and easily identified, with bloodshot eyes and frequent nosebleeds). Originally imported from Vudra, pesh cacti grow in warm, moist areas, like those around the vale's mudpots and hot springs. Wild pesh cacti threaten to choke out native species near the geothermal vents. Outside of Katapesh, Darkmoon Vale is the largest supplier of pesh to nations of Avistan.

Paeliel Trees: These silver-barked softwoods grow to immense heights, but never spread to more than a few feet in diameter. Lumberjacks claim paeliel trees are somehow connected with elves and give copses of them wide berth when logging.

Rat's Tail: When pickled, this exceedingly salty root acts as a mild analgesic. Used raw, rat's tail gives a strong salty flavor to whatever dish it is added to. Many of the poor residents in Darkmoon Vale use rat's tail to flavor their food, as salt remains out of the price range of most.

Of course, werewolves aren't only dangerous during the full moon, but those born lycanthropes and who this can change their form at will learned long ago to conceal their identities for most of the month. Only when the moon shines bright and full in the sky do the most cautious werewolves give in to their animalistic lusts and join their brethren in three nights of raucous destruction and chaos.

Others

Some living threats in the area do not fit well into any category or are so few in number as to not warrant a category for their type. Still, some of these creatures prove to be more than just nuisances, and unwary travelers in their territories might not return home.

Delvers: A colony of these rare, mysterious creatures lives under Coldforge Ridge, on the north side of Droskar's Crag. These mostly peaceful subterranean aberrations refuse to deal with other creatures that mine into the

mountain. Apparently, these particular delvers consider all of Droskar's Crag their territory, and while they do not begrudge mountain climbers or surface-based explorers, they do not abide spelunkers or miners. Fortunately for those who do wish to explore under the ground, there aren't very many delvers. Most tend to stay below Coldforge Ridge, and even those delvers who do come in contact with miners and explorers seem more interested in politely asking the trespassers to leave.

Gricks: A subspecies of grick with shockingly green flesh makes its home in Darkmoon Vale. This particular subspecies is drawn to warmth and spends much of its time lazing on the banks of hot springs or near mudpots. Not terribly bright, gricks sometimes move too close to the edges of these heat sources and fall in, being simultaneously boiled and drowned. Tobias Thrum, owner of the Thrumming Birch in Olfden, witnessed such a spectacle of stupidity while traveling through the hot areas of Darkmoon Vale. After driving off the



surviving gricks with the help of his guards, he fished out the boiled creature and took a chance on tasting it. Discovering it quite delicious, he took to selling boiled grick at his famed restaurant. Thrum keeps an open bounty for securely captured live gricks he can throw into his immense boiling vat. As a result, the population of these bizarre creatures has begun to decline rapidly.

Magmin: A clan of roughly 20 magmin lives in the geologically active area near a particularly large mudpot known as Feaster's Dint. Their presence further leads credence to the idea that Darkmoon Vale stands atop a wide gate to the Elemental Plane of Fire.

While not particularly violent or aggressive, the cowardly magmin do occasionally attack creatures that come too close to their territory without proper attempts at contacting them. Most groups equipped to handle surviving Darkmoon Vale have little difficulty in fending off the magmin, who tend to flee from anything more than token resistance. Because of these unpredictable and infrequent (and completely random) attacks, the Diamond Regiment considers the magmin of Feaster's Dint a potential threat to Olfden, and groups traveling off the major paths through the vale are advised to give Feaster's Dint a wide berth.

Manticores: By no means a common species, manticores nonetheless make themselves known among the trees of Arthfell Forest and Darkmoon Wood. Relentless and cold-hearted hunters, manticores in the region survive on deer, wolves, and other animals, although they prize the flesh of humans and go out of their way to hunt lumberjacks. Thanks to the efforts of the Greenfire Circle and the Fangwatch, though, the manticore population in both forests continues to plummet. Those few who still live in Darkmoon Wood occasionally flee north, using the lower passes through the Five Kings Mountains.

One particularly powerful manticore named Grazhgaugh claims a copse of paeliel trees near Darkmoon Wood's Forest Elder. From his perch, Grazhgaugh watches over his claim with intolerant passion, chasing away or eating any creature larger than a squirrel that dares approach his domain. Some rumors purport that Grazhgaugh is an immortal protector, a guardian of some elven artifact hidden among the tall silver-barked paeliel trees. To date, no one has bothered to attempt parley with the frightening beast to discern the truth to these whispers.

Shocker Lizards: These sometimes menacing nuisances live all over Darkmoon Vale, but they prefer the marshy shores of the River Foam. Every so often, some farmer or rancher living in the lowlands of the vale tries to domesticate, or at least tame, a few shocker lizards, thinking they might make excellent guard creatures. Sadly, these attempts never turn out well for the would-be lizardherders.

DARKMOON VALE FAUNA

Most creatures in Darkmoon Vale are simply animals or vermin, with no darker agendas than mere survival. The following are some of the most common creatures of the region.

Firefoot Fennec: These red-footed foxes are common throughout northern Andoran and southern Isger. Their pelts are popular in Absalom and Molthune.

Dusk Spider: These foot-diameter spiders inhabit the Arthfell Forest in large communities that weave immense webs covering several acres. Dusk spider venom, when properly milked from a living creature, makes for a potent alcoholic additive.

Giant Mosquito: These pests are as large as small birds, but they tend to (thankfully) travel alone. Female giant mosquitoes (like their normal-sized cousins) drink the blood of warm-blooded animals.

Giant Moorsnake: These ophidian predators are active mostly at night. As constrictors, they prefer to sneak up on their victims while their potential meals are sleeping.

Mereswan: Unique to the Droskmere, mereswans are normal swans who can eat the mildly acidic popcarp within the lake and who only use a certain kind of volcanic rock for their gizzard stones. The combination of these two elements mean regurgitated gizzard stones of mereswans are smoothly polished semiprecious gems popular with dwarves.

Mountain Horses: Indigenous to the Aspodells, these long-haired, massive equines are popular with miners for their easy temperaments and flexible diets.

Popcarp: Mildly acidic flesh makes the popcarp of Droskmere an unpopular meal, except for the beautiful mereswans who live nearby. When threatened, a popcarp can explosively empty its gas bladder out its mouth to move quickly away, making a distinctive popping noise when it does so (hence its name).

Slurks: The slurk is the disgusting result of ill-advised dwarven efforts at breeding underground frogs. Kobolds prize the foul-smelling and slime-covered creatures as pets and mounts. Slurks live underground in damp caverns where the fungi and lichens they prefer to eat grow in abundance.

Zhen Worm: A smaller species of great worms roughly half the size of Qadira's famous alamien worms, the zhen worms of Andoran can survive in environs that would kill their larger cousins. Zhen worms thrive in warm, moist soil, and many of them migrate frequently to the areas around Darkmoon Vale's geysers, mud pots, and other geothermal features.



Civilization

All manner of wondrous and frightening creatures live in Darkmoon Vale, but visitors need not fear such foul beasts while within sight of city walls. Between the brave Eagle Knights of the Diamond Regiment and the dedicated (albeit unconventional) woodsmen of the Fangwatch, there is enough security throughout the vale to keep its most dangerous denizens at bay. Except on nights of the full moon, that is. Those nights, even the Diamond Regiment acquiesces control to the werewolves. Those nights, no one and nothing can keep you safe.

—Luna Aldred,
Pathfinder and First Citizen of Olfden

The town of Olfden perches on a low cliff at the edge of the rise, where the gradual decline of the shelf gives way to a sudden drop. The town of Falcon's Hollow stands at the northern edge of the plain, near the ever-shrinking Darkmoon Wood. In the west, practically on the border with Cheliox high in the Aspodell Mountains, stands Piren's Bluff, a tiny community built around the mining of the nearby mountain peaks.

Most of Darkmoon Vale's dangers remain outside of town walls and city gates. The following descriptions give general information on the three permanent settlements within Darkmoon Vale, as well as other organizations and nearby population centers that thrive in civilized society. Many of the entries bear alphanumeric codes that correspond to tags on their maps.

NEIGHBORS

While civilization seems to actively avoid Darkmoon Vale, it has little problem developing in the areas surrounding the insular vale. The following descriptions offer a brief look at the largest or most influential civilized locations

of interest near Darkmoon Vale. The interaction of these locations with Valers varies greatly.

Highhelm: An ancient and expansive dwarven Sky Citadel within and beneath lofty Emperor's Peak, Highhelm remains the center of dwarven culture on Avistan, as it has for millennia. Northeast of Highhelm, dwarves control the Five Kings Mountains with unquestioned authority, and passage among the many high peaks remains relatively safe from living dangers. Dwarven caravans from Highhelm seldom come to Darkmoon Vale, as most of them head west into Isgar or Molthune. Roughly two or three times a decade, though, a group of Highhelm merchants gathers together and sends a caravan along the treacherous scree-covered trails that wind perilously through the mountains. The dwarves prefer to hire dozens of mercenaries to augment their tough dwarven guards and to act as arrow-fodder and spear-catchers during the inevitable attacks on these wealthy caravans.

Oregent: This large city several miles south of Darkmoon Vale houses the main office of the Lumber Consortium as well as its massive factory-like forges and sawmills. The government and people of Oregent consider themselves friends and allies of Darkmoon Vale, and particularly of Falcon's Hollow. Most newcomers to the vale originate in Oregent, either as citizens of that city or as travelers passing through from points south and east. In addition to company policies and replacement lumberjacks, Oregent also provides Darkmoon Vale with its main connection to the greater world beyond. Information flows into Olfden and Falcon's Hollow through Oregent, and many Valers suspect the news provided to them also flows through a Lumber Consortium filter, painting the company in the best possible light.

Inn of the Wood: Situated a short day's walk south of Olfden, Inn of the Wood is a popular place to relax for those traveling to or from Darkmoon Vale. The inn is the easiest place to find the sheriff of the Shire of Elberwick, Cage Blunnde. It is also the only safe place to spend a night between Olfden and Oregent, so it is frequently crowded. (For more information on the inn, see *TC1: Into the Haunted Forest*.)

FALCON'S HOLLOW

A blunt, sawdust-choked stop on a winding trade route, a festering haven of injustice and cruelty, Falcon's Hollow rests perilously close to the infamous Darkmoon Wood. The long shadow of Droskar's Crag casts a shroud of gloom on the desperate souls who call this place home. Many come here to make their fortune cutting darkwood lumber in the lush wood, while others journey to this remote fringe to start over, piecing together their shattered lives on the edge of an untouched wilderness far from the things of

FALCON'S HOLLOW

The following costs are averages.

RENT PER MONTH

House (employee)	—*
House (non-employee)	20 gp
Boarding Room (employee)	—*
Boarding Room (non-employee)	4 gp

* Employees do not pay for rent out of their pockets. The Lumber Consortium provides living space in Falcon's Hollow as part of the wages it pays.

man. Persecuted zealots and outcasts flock to Falcon's Hollow to practice their strange and often deviant rites unfettered by the mores of civilization. Finally, Falcon's Hollow lures many explorers with the promise of great adventure nearby. The town, its people, and everything in it belong to the corrupt Lumber Consortium, controlled by the de facto leader of the town, the loathsome Thuldrin Kreed. His petty decrees and the consortium's overpriced goods keep the people of the town prisoner as surely as if Kreed and his goons used manacles and chains.

Home to fewer than 1,500 humans and a smattering of other races, most of the townsfolk care only for the paltry coins paid for their backbreaking work and what simple comforts they can buy. A few, however, understand that what's bad for one is bad for all, and they struggle endlessly with the Lumber Consortium to improve the lives of their neighbors—and by extension, themselves. The community thrives on a tenacious mix of greed, debauchery, and stubborn self-reliance. As much property of the Lumber Consortium as the buildings, cut timbers, and other assets in the town, the people of Falcon's Hollow live in abject poverty and unending misery. Those born into Falcon's Hollow (or those foolish enough to move there willingly—or even unwillingly) face lives filled with anguish and devoid of hope or betterment.

F1. Brookman's Well: A small spring on the edge of town that supplies most of Falcon's Hollow's fresh water.

F2. Goose'n'Gander: The local general store in Falcon's Hollow is run by the only gnome resident, Brickasnurd Hildrinsocks, who sells everything from standard amenities such as grain, lamp oil, ink, and mining supplies, to such rare oddities as alchemist's fire, antitoxin, a petrified pseudodragon, and taxidermy nixies.

F3. High Market: With access restricted by Boss Teedum's most loyal "boys," the High Market consistently serves only those with some amount of influence in the town (Thuldrin Kreed and his lackeys, Deldrin Baleson, Vamros Harg, and visiting Lumber Consortium bosses and managers). Kreed holds a lottery once per month to



allow in nine lucky residents for up to 3 days. All residents who work for the Lumber Consortium (which is nearly everyone, but excludes such notables as Laurel, Namdrin Quinn, and Lady Cirthana) are automatically entered, as the drawing is done by employee number. The winning residents can bring along up to three family members.

The High Market sells meats and vegetables without a hint of rot on them; nicely made clothes of materials other than canvas, cotton, and leather; spices (including a popular vendor who sells only salt); and various items that cost more than 10 gold coins.

F4. Hollow Tribunal: This is where the diminutive halfling Magistrate Vamros Harg dispenses merchant licenses, stamps mining and lumber claims, and passes judgment on criminal and civil cases. Harg is an attractive young halfling fond of finery whose romantic interests run toward his own gender. Most Falconers enjoy the irony of the Hollow Tribunal's name, since the justice meted out there is rarely equitable. The fact that Harg is firmly in Gavel Thuldrin's pocket is well known, but it is rarely uttered in public by those who value their lives.

Thuldrin Kreed owns Vamros Harg and the halfling knows and hates it. Harg was a failed barrister in Carpenden before coming to Falcon's Hollow. Kreed supported Harg and put him in power with the understanding that he

could just as easily tear down the magistrate at the first sign of disobedience. Vamros doesn't dare oppose Kreed directly, but every chance he gets he nudges cases away from Kreed's greedy eye and tries to give people a fair shake. The halfling is ashamed of his own cowardice, but if a group of hardy adventurers supported him in opposing Thuldrin Kreed, Harg might just step up to the challenge and start doling out true justice.

F5. Jak'a'Napes: This leaning ramshackle inn located next to the town's stables offers lodgings and food to the many travelers who pass through Falcon's Hollow. The owner, a rotund red-faced human named Jak Crimmy, with a single wisp of bright red hair on his otherwise bald head, is a retired bard who sports an easy smile. Jak's cinnamon-crusted flapjacks are legendary in town, as is his skill at juggling frying pans and his astonishing marksmanship with a heavy crossbow (Jak is a man of many talents).

F6. Low Market: Open to everyone in town, the Low Market sells the High Market's food leftovers (including meats and vegetables just starting to go bad), heavily salted meats, and other foodstuffs that barely survive their trip to the market. Nothing in the Low Market sells for more than a few gold, and almost everything is worth only coppers.

F7. Lumber Consortium Headquarters: Once the most impressive building in Falcon's Hollow, Thuldrin Kreed

has allowed the office to fall into disrepair, for the most part, while his own manor house continues to nearly shine in opulence. Kreed only uses this building to host important consortium guests and other official business he wishes to keep out of his private estate. Otherwise, this once-grand and bustling building usually remains empty.

F8. Quinn's Carnival: Namdrin Quinn and his companions wow crowds with feats of skill and magic by night. Rumor has it that after the tents close Namdrin and his merry band entreat with dark fey, whose anger mounts at the constant lumbering incursions into the wood. Some say Quinn the shadowdancer spies for the vengeful fey, who plan retribution and murder.

Namdrin Quinn: Half-elf shadowdancer Namdrin Quinn led a band of veteran adventurers who used to venture into the vale with frequency. After a particularly dangerous quest claimed the life of Namdrin's wife, Tessa, he ended his career and established his carnival of wonders on the edge of town. Namdrin is a sinewy half-elf of corded muscle and bone, with a long face haunted by loss. His sunken eyes do not fix on any who attempt to speak with him, instead staring off into a distant and fading memory of the happiness that once touched his soul. For more information on Namdrin Quinn and his carnival, see *E1: Carnival of Tears*.

F9. Roots and Remedies: Creeping ivy and full window boxes cover the facade of this rugged-looking, two-story shop bearing the faded sign "Roots and Remedies." Owned by the local herbalist and healer, Laurel, the small, mud-tracked shop smells of burnt earth and spicy incense. Bunches of dried herbs hang from the ceiling, along with dangling pots, presses, alchemical apparatuses, and glassware of more arcane purposes. Pouches of rare plants, jars of colored glass, and all manner of dried, preserved, and jellied animal parts fill high shelves and tables doing

double duty as displays and workspaces. In the shop's rear stand a rack of herbs, a table covered in stray powders and measuring equipment, and a pot that loudly bubbles whenever Laurel has the shop open.

Laurel: The local herbalist, Laurel is a rail-thin half-Garundi woman with severe-looking spectacles and hair pulled back tight. A tough woman, Laurel's income stems as much from her sale of snake oils and aphrodisiacs as from questionable cure-alls and bitter teas. As quick to suggest expensive remedies as she is to remind angry buyers that she is not, in fact, a physician, Laurel does her best to help those who come to her in need, but her tight income, need to survive, and pride prevent her from admitting failure.

F10. The Sitting Duck: Located a little too close to the town palisade for many folks' comfort, the Duck is the local hot spot for adventurers, explorers, and other rapsallions looking for excitement. The tavern serves a potent local brew of fermented darkwood leaf that can floor an ogre in a few tankards. Raucous games of "knivesies" and "lefty-loosy" (two dangerous local recreational activities, both with a high rate of maiming) often rage late into the night. Many adventurers share tales of Darkmoon Vale, Droskar's Crag, and other surrounding locations for the price of a mug of ale.

F11. Temple of Iomedae: Falcon's Hollow has few clerics. Despite little competition from other churches and a demonstrated record of concern for the town's residence, Lady Cirthana, priestess of Iomedae, continues to struggle to win converts in the beleaguered town. Few townsfolk trust Cirthana, and most lay their medical concerns at the feet of Laurel. Most residents of Falcon's Hollow avoid the temple of Iomedae as much as possible, as the Lumber Consortium has made itself clear in denouncing the meddling of the Inheritor in the town's affairs. Many

THALDRIN KREED

TYRANNICAL BULLY

As the gavel (or local leader) of the Lumber Consortium, the cold and cruel Thuldrin Kreed exerts almost absolute control over Falcon's Hollow and its assets. Thus, he exerts almost absolute control over its people as well. Almost universally loathed by the town's residents, Kreed exults in his position and does as he pleases, whenever he pleases. His many cruel whims include murdering those who anger him (even in broad daylight in front of witnesses), public rape (he seems to particularly enjoy consummating marriages on behalf of outraged newlywed grooms), and random whippings on those who don't move aside fast enough (he usually carries a riding whip for just such a purpose). Thuldrin Kreed has actually mellowed somewhat in the past few years, occasionally restraining his mercurial malice. Despite his well-known evil ways, Kreed seems intent on caring for those victimized by bad luck (although those who fall victim to their own stupidity evoke no compassion from him). The sight of Kreed offering food or coin to a lumberjack injured in the line of duty (particularly those attacked by Darkmoon Wood's inhuman denizens) is not a rarity.



other religious sects who fled here from Olfden and larger cities to escape the Church of Light's persecution resent the recent arrival of Iomedae's followers. Tensions run high among congregations, often resulting in less-than-holy brawls on the muddy thoroughfares of Worship Way.

Baleson's Deputies: When he became sheriff, Deldrin Baleson immediately put together a small group of deputies to provide him with backup in dealings with Kreed and Boss Teedum. Traditionally, the town's sheriff could expect support from the Lumber Consortium and its horde of hired goons, but Deldrin does not want to rely on such questionable allies (if even he could).

Sheriff Baleson's posse of deputies includes a Greenfire Circle druid, four burly lumberjacks uncowed by the consortium, and two retired adventurers (former members of the Azure Guard) hoping to clean up Falcon's Hollow.

Boss Payden "Pay Day" Teedum: Payden, the pug-faced, mash-nosed human thug licking at Thuldrin Kreed's boots, has a big bone to pick with Deldrin Baleson. The only reason he hasn't tried to break the sheriff's neck is that Kreed fears turning Deldrin into a martyr for other Falconers to rally around. "Pay Day" gets his name from the way he doles out "dues" to anyone who fails to follow "Mista Kreed's" commands fast enough. Whenever Kreed ventures out onto the streets of Falcon's Hollow, Teedum tags along, interposing his beefy frame between the gavel and those Kreed angers (which is nearly everyone).

Kabran Bloodeye: Kabran is a short-statured half-orc with blood-red eyes. He lost his nose as punishment for numerous criminal activities in Augustana, which led him to flee here. He wears a bronze nosepiece over the ugly crater left in the center of his face. As he breathes, it whistles disturbingly and leaks blood and mucus (which Kabran dabs away with a crimson handkerchief). Kabran is the master of the Redrock Guild, an organized criminal syndicate that poses as a business club and moneylenders' union, but most Falconers know its members constitute some of the vilest flesh-peddlers, sneakthieves, and murderers in town. The Redrock Guild maintains an uneasy truce with the Lumber Consortium, paying the large company a percentage of its take in exchange for a little legitimacy and protection.

Kabran's most notorious establishment is the Rouge Lady, a burlesque and gambling hall whose back parlor doubles as an illicit brothel. Of the half-dozen girls who work at the Rouge Lady, by far the favorite among visitors and residents alike is the unfortunate young beauty named Ralla Hebbbradan, who peddles her charms to earn enough copper for her and her young brother Hollin to survive. Few patrons ever catch a glimpse of the infamous basement of the Rouge Lady, but it is well known that Kabran enjoys flaying his enemies alive beneath the gambling hall, their screams adding somewhat to the Lady's dark atmosphere.

Sharvaros Vade: This odd hermit lives in a small shack just outside of the town proper, only a stone's throw from the local cemetery. Most know Vade is a strange man but few are aware of his knowledge of necromancy. Vade conducts vile experiments on corpses unearthed from the graveyard with the reluctant assistance of his son in the deep gloom of night. Vade is bony and thin, with gray eyes and an unkempt black beard. He seems ever agitated, and frequently mutters to himself under his breath. His son, Savram, lives with Sharvaros and seems destined to follow in the necromancer's footsteps.

Thuldrin Kreed: More than a little sadistic and cowardly, Thuldrin Kreed acts the part of town bully. Unfortunately for Falcon's Hollow, he also runs the town he bullies. Often seen surrounded by thugs and murderers made loyal with coin (on the rare occasions he deigns to leave his palatial house), Thuldrin takes unwholesome pleasure in causing his fellow man to suffer. Strangely, though, Kreed can't stomach pain and misery not caused by himself or his goons—in fact, he expends a great deal of the Lumber Consortium's coins trying to protect lumberjacks and the people of Falcon's Hollow from marauding monsters and other threats within the vale. Once he is sure of his employees' safety, though, he wastes no time in tormenting and torturing them himself.

Unmistakably foul and cruel-hearted, Kreed uses sometimes petty but always passive-aggressive tactics against those who stand up to him. He frequently vents his frustration with his underperforming underlings or demanding bosses on his oft-neglected son, Jurin. Thuldrin usually forgets he even has a son until he needs someone weaker than himself to punish. When surrounded by his hired goons, though, Thuldrin frequently possesses something resembling a spine, and he has little trouble hiding behind Payden Teedum while calmly leveling insults or challenges. Of course, Thuldrin controls nearly all the power in Falcon's Hollow, so those who truly anger him (with the exception of the wily sheriff) always suffer for their impudence.

FALCON'S HOLLOW

Town nonstandard (lumber consortium); **AL** NE

GP Limit 1,500 gp; **Assets** 40,550 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 1,400

Type isolated (94% human, 3% halfling, 1% half-elf, 1% elf, 1% other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURES

Gavel **Thuldrin Kreed**, leader of the Lumber Consortium;

Magistrate Vamros Harg, town judge and barrister;

Sheriff Deldrin Baleson, sheriff of Darkmoon Vale; **Boss**

Payden "Pay Day" Teedum, overboss of the Lumber Consortium



OLFDEN

Although Oldfen is more than twice the size of Falcon's Hollow, it offers less than half the excitement. The people of Oldfen are not stupid, and they can see the end of logging revenue in the future—not in their lifetimes, perhaps, but likely in the lives of their children or grandchildren. As a result, Oldfen continues to look for new reasons to draw people to the area and for a whole new purpose in existing. With a relatively recent upsurge of interest in Raseri Kanton, Droskar's Crag, and Darkmoon Vale in general, Oldfen has positioned itself as a base of operations for exploratory groups and adventurers.

Where Falcon's Hollow provides plenty of opportunities for adventure, Oldfen provides adventurers with plenty of goods and services they need. Dozens of small shops, inns, and other businesses cater to the needs of the courageous.

Situated not quite halfway between Falcon's Hollow and Oregent and perched on a low cliff along the Elberwick Rise, Oldfen acts as the major civilizing element in the wide dale. With the help of the Diamond Regiment (whose headquarters, Adamas, stands only a few miles away) and the elusive Fangwatch (which only interacts with the town through the Diamond Regiment), Oldfen works constantly to suppress the area's werewolves and to ensure the safe passage of darkwood-laden convoys.

Oldfen provides a relatively safe place to live for its inhabitants, as well as enough diversions—both classy and decidedly not—to make the town a bearable place to live. The following short overview presents the town's most interesting features and citizens and should not at all be considered all-inclusive.

O1. Five Falcon Fountain: Set in front of the impressive town hall, this large fountain depicts (as its name implies) five falcons, their wings spread wide in flight. Water pours gently from the bronze falcons' mouths, coating three of the sculptured birds' wings with a sheen of water. As a landmark, the fountain makes a popular place to meet, and many business deals and lovers' romances occur within earshot of the gentle sound of the cascading water. As the water that comes out of the fountain always bears a slightly sweet and tart taste, and merchants occasionally bottle it to export to other towns.

O2. Hall of Sarenrae: The largest temple in Darkmoon Vale stands in Oldfen and belongs to Sarenrae. Although rather plain-looking on the outside, the temple boasts beautiful decorations within. High Priest Lissel, an aging beauty who never revealed her surname, has led the temple for nearly 20 years. Three lesser priests attend Lissel and the temple, and take turns preaching and tending to assembled worshippers.

OLFDEN

The following costs are averages that vary by size.*

OWNERSHIP

Manor or Mansion	3,000 gp or more
Farm (near town)	2,500 gp or more
Small Building	1,000 gp
Large Building	2,000 gp

RENT PER MONTH

House	2 gp
Boarding Room	4 sp–2 gp

* Employees of the Lumber Consortium receive a housing discount in Olfden and only pay 10% the listed amount per month (although they pay full price for buildings they purchase).

O3. Maestro’s Magic: Although it specializes in the magic inherent in music (and thus appeals greatly to visiting bards), Maestro’s carries a wide selection of magic (items and scrolls detailing spells) dependant on music, speech, and sound. The Maestro himself is Gladven Syl, a retired conductor of the National Orchestra of Andoran in Almas. In addition to his extensive collection of musical magic, Maestro Syl also sells mundane musical instruments and even offers training for 3 silver a lesson.

O4. Silver Bulette: This large inn houses an expansive tavern on its ground floor. Possibly because of its size, and certainly despite its popularity, the Silver Bulette is, above all else, cheap. From its prices to its watered-down dwarven whiskey to its threadbare linens, the establishment provides only the most basic goods and services to its clients. Thanks to its inexpensiveness, the Bulette attracts many of the town’s thugs, cutpurses, and hooligans. Those looking for a break from boredom can join (or initiate) one of the frequent bar brawls that occur here without any real fear of arrest or persecution. As a large inn, the Silver Bulette almost always has at least a few open rooms, each of which can comfortably house two people.

O5. Tepid Transports: Owned by Martevad’Salle, a sultry-voiced widow who inherited the shop from her husband following the Night of Silver Blood, this largest shop in town serves the needs of both adventurers and loggers. Tepid Transports supplies every kind of transportation need, from the simplest tack to elaborate carriages with rudimentary vibration-reducing suspension systems, from the smallest rowboat to wildly expensive magic-fueled conveyances. Although the shop has no horses or other mounts under its roof, it nonetheless does keep numerous suitable animals in a nearby paddock.

O6. Thrumming Birch: Olfden’s most famous restaurant, owned by flamboyant Master Chef Tobias Thrum, serves (among many other bizarre dishes) a wide variety of dishes with the main ingredient of boiled grick. Since his discovery of the grick’s pleasing taste, Master Thrum has further extended his restaurant’s menu, serving a variety of meats and body parts from a wide range of creatures. Every month, Master Thrum posts an ingredient wish list outside the Birch, which identifies the kinds of creatures (sometimes listed with specific body parts) he wishes to purchase. Those who would serve Master Thrum must ensure the freshness of their kill (usually via magic, but sometimes by drying or salting it) or else the picky chef boisterously rejects the offerings.

Wataxshyl: Neither menace nor folk hero, Wataxshyl ostensibly lives in a deep lair within the Wolfrun Hills. In truth, though, the lighthearted copper dragon spends most of his time in Olfden, frequenting the Silver Bulette and happily injecting dwarven gold into the town’s economy. Some say that Wataxshyl alone keeps the town alive, and that without him Olfden would go bankrupt and disappear. Others, including the mayor, deny this rumor, although they admit that Wataxshyl is good for the town’s treasury (even though he occasionally causes extensive property damage when drunk).

Despite being a metallic dragon, Wataxshyl refers to Daralathylx as his king. When pressed about this, Wataxshyl admits that the older, more powerful red frightens and cows him. Wataxshyl hates to be alone and does his best to surround himself with people, especially when drunk. Since Daralathylx’s last visit, almost 9 years ago, Wataxshyl has become slightly more introspective and just a little less frivolous. He has even gone so far as to ask members of the Diamond Regiment to spar with him. His intentions during these uncommon moods remain unknown, but he always seems very eager and determined.

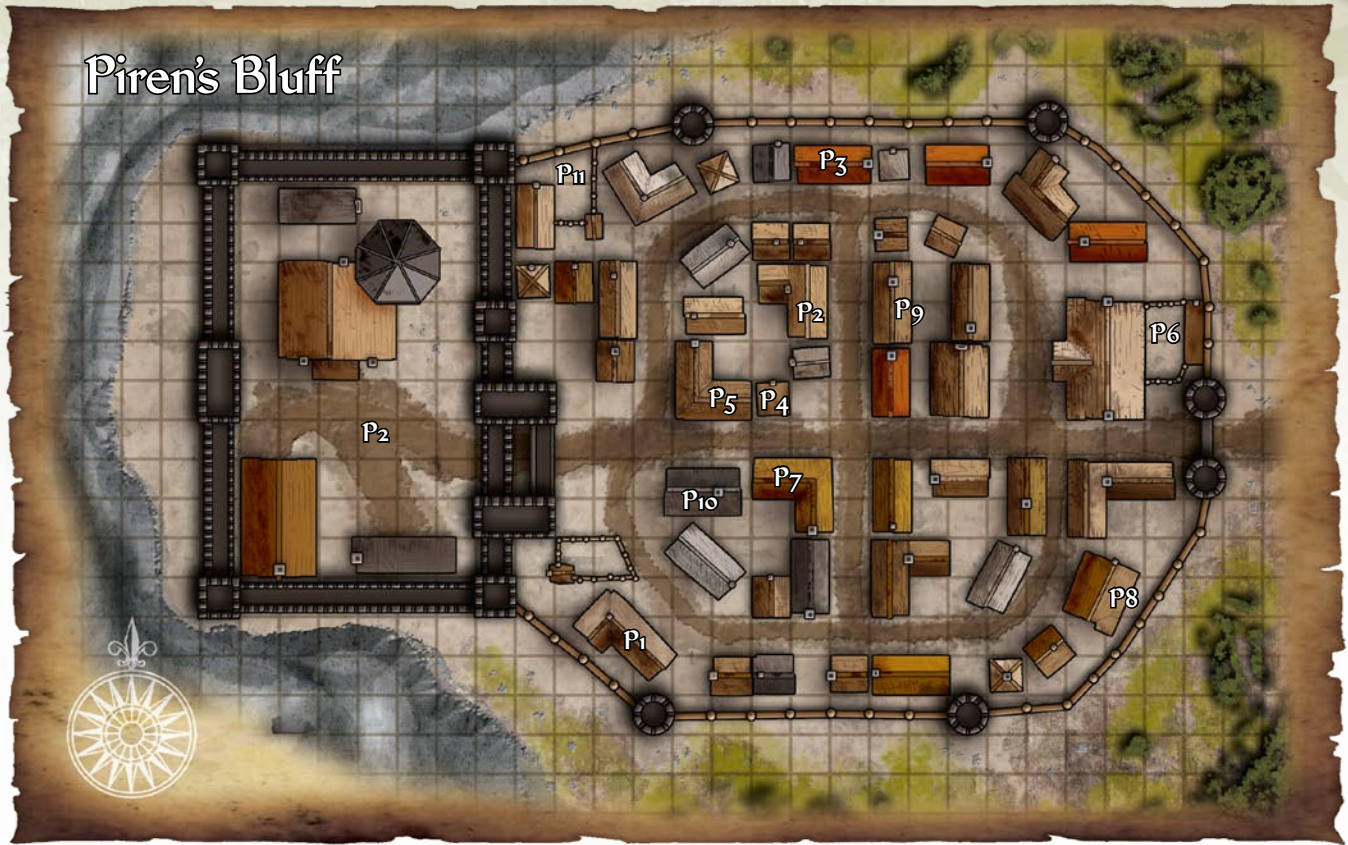
As far as dragons go, Wataxshyl is still in his youth. His first appearance in the area is a well-documented arrival during a werewolf siege of Olfden, in 4657. When the young dragon arrived and aided in the defense of the town, the mayor and other civic leaders thanked him and invited him to visit as often as he liked (an offer he obviously took to heart). Since Wataxshyl’s arrival in Olfden, Daralathylx has only appeared four times, and each time, Wataxshyl contributed treasure to the effort of appeasing the king.

OLFDEN

Large Town conventional (mayor); **AL NG**

GP Limit 3,000 gp; **Assets** 6,638,000 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS



Population 3,319

Type isolated (89% human, 5% dwarf, 2% half-orc, 1% elf, 1% gnome, 2% other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURES

Mayor Gilmore Amring, mayor of Olfden; **Irik VonSet**, chief advisor; **First Citizen Luna Aldred**, local heroine; **Karlæe Siegfrost**, councillor and advisor.

PIREN'S BLUFF

The town of Piren's Bluff looks like a traditional Andoren town, with a walled keep acting as the seat of power and the rest of the town sprawled out around it. The wooden palisade provides adequate protection against most threats. And when it doesn't, the town folk can retreat inside the keep to defend themselves. Piren's Bluff is large enough that strangers can mingle with the town folk without calling attention to themselves. As a border town, standing as it does on the border with Cheliox, Piren's Bluff sees a lot of traffic—merchants, adventurers, hunters, and trappers who ply their trade in the Aspodell Mountains and Arthfell Forest. Smugglers occasionally even bring Darkmoon Vale darkwood through Piren's Bluff, despite the random searches of caravans passing through. Because of darkwood's strategic importance, those caught smuggling it out of Andoran are hauled off to Adamas and are never seen again.

Due to the rocky terrain Piren's Bluff sits on, growing food is difficult and so trade becomes essential for the town's survival. Fortunately for its residents, Piren's Bluff stands only a few miles from the Aspodell Crossroads, so food and other commodities from Andoran and Cheliox constantly flow through the town, which in turn supplies both countries with an abundance of iron ore.

P1. Almir Estate: The ancient estate of the House of Almir, an old family long among the ranks of nobility in Cheliox, is called the House of the Crescent Star. The massive manor house stood at this spot long before Piren's Bluff grew up around it. Several generations of Almirs have occupied the House of the Crescent Star, each one carrying on the tradition of mining-based commerce and growing ever more removed from the affairs of Cheliox. The current owner, Dreyxor Almir, carries on the traditions of his forbears, rarely ever leaving the privacy of his estate and never involving himself with local politics unless it interferes with business. He is attended by a family of live-in servants who tend to the estate so he can study the hundreds of books his family has amassed.

Lord Dreyxor Almir is the last scion of this once-decadent house. The venerable Lord Almir has no loyalty to Andoran or Cheliox. His only concern is commerce and furthering the interests of his numerous mining operations in the Aspodell Mountains. The retention of

PIREN'S BLUFF

The following costs are averages that vary by size.*

OWNERSHIP

Farm (near town)	500 gp or more
Small Building	200 gp
Large Building	500 gp

RENT PER MONTH

House	1 sp
Boarding Room	5–20 cp

* As an exceedingly small town, few vacant buildings are available for sale.

his title suggests that if he needed to choose sides, Lord Almir would likely take his chances with Cheliox, where he can command some amount of respect by luck of birth alone. A shrewd man, Lord Almir also does much to promote and encourage Andoren democracy, most likely out of a desire to antagonize Baron Vendikon.

P2. Baron Vendikon's Keep: Sitting atop a craggy bluff, Vendikon Keep is comprised of a two-story keep proper, with narrow windows designed for defense, and an octagonal tower with a slate shingled roof that rises to a sharp point. Built nearly three centuries ago, Vendikon Keep stands atop the highest point of Piren's Bluff, overlooking a series of cliffs descending 150 feet to a narrow portion of Aspodell Pass. The keep is made of granite blocks carved from the surrounding mountains and encircled by a thick curtain wall with tall parapets and fortified towers.

The undisputed leader of Piren's Bluff, Baron Vendikon has watched his fiefdom shrink considerably with the democratization of Andoran. Where he once commanded vast tracks of land that stretched west into the Aspodell Mountains from the Aspodell Crossroads, as a reluctant citizen of Andoran his control extends only as far as Piren's Bluff's wood stockade.

The baron's loyal soldiers and personal guards ensure his laws are observed and crush any threats to his power. Despite his absolute command, though, Baron Vendikon has been unable to effectively assert his authority over the Chelish house of Almir, which has long been the financial backbone of Piren's Bluff.

P3. The Black Candle: Near the front entrance of this ivy-covered building stands a large iron arm, its skyward-facing palm holding a large black candle burning brightly. The Black Candle specializes in popular herbal remedies for common ailments and injuries. The shop's owner, Viaren Danis, known locally as Viaren the Apothecary, is a raven-haired beauty with black eyes and pale skin.

Her shop is always open, since there's no telling when her remedies may be needed.

Viaren's popularity means she must constantly replenish her supplies of herbs, other plants, and various other minor alchemical substances. This makes her shop the most popular destination for bored adventurers passing through town.

P4. The Bucket & Bellows: This squat brick building echoes with the sound of metal striking metal. Town blacksmith Smaar Janderfut, an old retired adventurer and widower, runs the Bucket & Bellows with the help of his five sons who range in age from 9 to 18.

P5. The Conqueror's Blade: This stone and mortar building looms over the surrounding homes and shops. Fiendish suits of armor propped next to the wide entrance seem to stand guard. The tavern housed here is popular with the Baron's soldiers and other fighting men. The taproom is dominated by a broad hearth near the middle of the room. A retired bard named Rhasper owns this establishment and is served by his greedy barmaids Elka, Mairen, and Treesa.

P6. The Dead Well: A two-story building of stone and timber, this inn bears a sign near its entrance depicting a stone well surrounded by weeds. Built around a dried-up well as an oddity and curiosity, the owner of the Dead Well, an alleged gambler named Ben Willhuff, retired to Piren's Bluff to enjoy his spoils. It didn't take long for Ben to gain a reputation as the luckiest man in town. He claimed his good fortune came from the old well, which led locals to begin tossing coppers into the dry well and making wishes.

P7. Forest Bounty: A sign over the open doors of this building depicts a satyr holding a cornucopia spilling fruits and vegetables. Rows of bins and shelves within are filled with a variety of food items from produce to pickled pork feet and kegs of ale and wine. Forest Bounty is the town's one and only grocer and is owned by the Tuckets, a cheerful family of halflings who sell their goods with a 10% mark-up from the average prices. Forest Bounty is renowned in Piren's Bluff as an excellent place to overhear gossip.

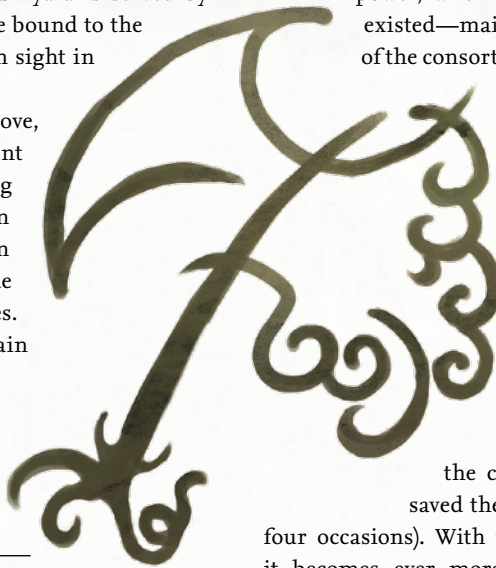
P8. The First Light: Once a temple of the now-dead god Aroden, this tall, angular building of white marble slabs stands atop a lonely spot of ground. A steeple topped by a timeworn statue is the makeshift aerie for pigeons, and their droppings cover the face and shoulders of an effigy that has faded out of importance for the people of Piren's Bluff. An aged elven cleric of Aroden named Tulrin Endessell spends his days scuttling about the nave armed with cleaning rags and a bucket of soapy water, waging a hermit's war against the dirt and grime that constantly threaten the temple interior.

P9. The Lodge: Simply known as The Lodge, this is the Piren's Bluff guildhall of the Aspodell Rangers (see

page 8). It is also a cantina, where miners, hunters, and rangers from the other wild places of Avistan come to share stories or warm themselves by the hearth. New visitors who identify themselves as something other than the kind of men who gather here are bluntly advised to seek what they're looking for at The Conqueror's Blade or The Dead Well.

P10. Pact Hall: This temple to Asmodeus was built in recent years, after the baron converted to the faith. The temple's priestess, Shiyara the High Mediator, is a tiefling with the gentlest features of her parents, showing only pointed ears, a pattern of dark spots along her neck and shoulders, and overly large eyes of burnished gold. Some wrongly assume she has elven ancestry, and Shiyara does little to correct the misconception. Shiyara is served by the imps Barseq and Mesrop, who are bound to the temple and who usually hide in plain sight in the forms of ravens.

P11. Terron's Yard: Terron Redgrove, Jr. is the town's hostler and recipient of his late father's business selling mounts and beasts of burden. Terron specializes in long-haired mountain horses. He also supplies a wide selection of regular horses and ponies. Terron sells his long-haired mountain horses for no less than 15 gp a head.



PIREN'S BLUFF

Size hamlet (conventional); **AL** Lawful

Evil (Lawful Neutral)

GP Limit 100 gp; **Assets** 1,050 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 210

Type isolated (96% human, 2% halfling, 1% elf, 1% other races)

AUTHORITY FIGURES

Baron Galdur Vendikon, leader of the town; **Dreyxor Almir**, scion of the House of Almir; **Guard Captain Blacklock**, head lawman; **Tandifel Sathrun**, master of the Hunter's Guild

LUMBER CONSORTIUM

A holdover from the days when Andoran existed as a province of Chelixa, the Lumber Consortium has watched its fortunes and influence wane with the rise of democracy. Although a mere shadow of what it was at its height, the Lumber Consortium nonetheless continues to exert incredible influence over certain regions and communities, particularly in the wild corners of Andoran. Nowhere is this continued power more obvious than in Darkmoon Vale, where the consortium's major tree-felling operation occurs. The consortium owns the entire town of Falcon's Hollow including, residents say, their very souls.

Management: No one man controls the consortium. A board of directors, all of whom share a controlling interest in the endeavor, oversees the operations of the collective, forming long-term and large-scale strategies and leaving the day-to-day operations to on-site foremen (known as gavels). The powerful and unscrupulous men who sit on the board of directors include lumber barons and timber magnates, all of whom made their fortunes on the backs of lumberjacks and at the expense of the forests. Never a group possessing high moral standards, members of the board have become increasingly sadistic and cruel as their power has eroded. Whispers tie a few of the directors to the mysteriously sinister Aspis Consortium.

Two gavels—down from the heyday of the consortium's power, when more than a dozen of such men existed—maintain absolute control over the last of the consortium's holdings. In Darkmoon Vale,

the gavel is Thuldrin Kreed, a hateful and hate-filled man whose sadistic and cruel ways keep the town pinned under his callused thumb. As a gavel, Thuldrin Kreed has absolute control over the consortium's presence in Darkmoon Vale, including its employees and hard assets. As long as he squeezes out a larger profit each year, Thuldrin Kreed can do no wrong in the eyes of

the consortium (whose barristers have saved the gavel from the gallows on at least four occasions). With the passage of each year, though, it becomes ever more difficult for Kreed to increase his profits, resulting in ever-more horrific displays of exploitation and greed.

As a side-effect of his increasingly desperate need to turn a profit, Thuldrin Kreed keeps only one full-time underling: Payden Teedum. In addition to his loyal lackey, Kreed also keeps on retainer two other professionals who only infrequently work for him. One, a scribe named Weston, travels from Olfden for several days every few months in order to organize and update the operation's books. The other, a young woman named Jillia Apta, appears two or three times a year to clean and organize both the consortium office and Kreed's own house (usually just a few days before an inspection or visit from one of the consortium's directors).

Despite his incorrigibly evil ways, Thuldrin Kreed actually represents an improvement in Falcon's Hollow. His predecessor, a Lumber Consortium gavel named Kaxel Thaulrose, exalted in the town's anguish and took greater pains in squeezing from the town and lumberjacks everything they had—body, soul, and mind. People who

THE RISE OF THE LUMBER CONSORTIUM

Karas Novotnian's nephew Barenddo founded Olfden in 4128 as the first lumber town in the region. From Olfden, Novotnian lumberjacks bundled together heavy loads of darkwood and other types of timber and shipped them all south to Oregent. In Oregent, sawmills owned by Karas's business partner, Lord Rene Rakesclaw, cut the timber into lengths needed by the shipyards in Augustana. Once the timber was converted to lumber, it was loaded onto barges and towed to Almas and distant Augustana. Lord Rakesclaw frequently complained to Karas about the inefficiency of the operation and how many business partners and other companies were involved.

In 4139, Tarris Rakesclaw (Rene's grandson) bought out Baron Novotnian, formed a partnership with allied families, and set up a business enterprise that focused more on efficiency than the care of its employees, vendors, or partners. This merciless efficiency led to outstanding profits, which the enterprise used to buy out competitors and vendors and to generously donate to the Chelaxian Empire and its powerful nobility.

Over the next three centuries, the Lumber Consortium absorbed every privately owned lumber company, sawmill, and barge operation in the Andoran region of Cheliox. The consortium's leadership pushed for (and succeeded at) privatizing state-run operations as well, which in turn the company absorbed. The Lumber Consortium reached its height of power just before the rise of the Thrice-Damned House of Thrune.

House Thrune has no love for powerful private ventures, and the first queen quickly moved to break up the Lumber Consortium and regulate it out of existence. With each passing decade, the consortium saw its monopoly in Cheliox shrink. When Andoran declared its independence, though, the owners of the Lumber Consortium moved quickly to support the fledgling government and to petition it for protection. Despite misgivings, the government approved most of the consortium's requests, creating a contest of wills that continues to this day.

lived in Falcon's Hollow under Thaulrose do not exactly praise Kreed's less evil ways, but they do remind younger residents, "It could be worse."

Business: The Lumber Consortium retains a monopoly over darkwood and other hardwoods feeding into Almas and Augustana, and it is thanks only to this absolute control that it has managed to survive. Every attempt by the Andoran People's Council to shut down, break up, or otherwise compromise the excessive power of the Lumber Consortium has resulted in a cessation of delivery on the part of the collective. Although these refusals to deliver hurt the consortium's profitability in the short term,

they cripple the all-important shipbuilding industry in Andoran's largest port cities. To date, every standoff has seen Andoran blink first, although rumors whisper that the last work stoppage very nearly bankrupted the consortium. The only power Andoran truly holds over the Lumber Consortium is exclusivity.

While the consortium holds a monopoly on hardwoods in the country, it may only sell its commodities in and to Andoran. For this reason, the Eagle Knights frequently perform investigations into Lumber Consortium practices, looking for violations of the trade restrictions and thus an excuse to shut down the operation. To date, the knights have never found any legally admissible evidence pointing at the consortium's wrongdoing.

Within Darkmoon Vale, the Lumber Consortium controls most of the cutyards in and around Darkmoon Wood. Independent cutyards are allowed only to fell alder, pine, and other softwoods, and any darkwood or other hardwood trees they bring down are, by law, to be sold to the consortium for a fraction of the timber's value. Those lumberjacks who refuse to affiliate with the consortium (and agree to its horrendously exploitative labor and pay practices) are often muscled out of business or simply disappear, even if they cooperate with the consortium and only harvest softwoods.

Employees: In Darkmoon Vale alone, the consortium employs 300 lumberjacks and 140 "security guards"—at best mercenaries and at worst hardened criminals given an air of legitimacy. These security guards do actually protect the lumberjacks from wolves and other predators in around Darkmoon Wood, but that is hardly their primary purpose. Mostly, the security guards exist to put pressure on independent lumberjacks (often attempting to "persuade" those who don't work with or for the consortium to change their minds). The guards also ensure that independent lumberjacks only harvest softwoods or turn over any hardwoods they fell. Although the Lumber Consortium vigorously defends its security guards and claims they operate within the bounds of the law, the Fangwatch has, on multiple occasions, uncovered dead independent lumberjacks obviously cut down by human weapons. Neither the rangers nor the Diamond Regiment have thus far found proof that ties the Lumber consortium to these mysterious deaths, but most people in the vale suspect the "security guard" thugs are behind the murders.

Lumberjacks affiliated with the consortium work 12-hour days, 5 days a week, plus a shorter 6-hour day on Starday. They rest on Sunday, and many spend most of that day sleeping. For their labors, lumberjacks receive 2 silvers per week. The consortium does provide bonuses (of up to 5 silver), delivered on each solstice. Lumberjacks injured by accident (when they are at fault) and who

cannot work can expect almost no support from the consortium, and most starve to death when their food runs out. On the other hand, lumberjacks attacked by fey or other local menaces and those harmed by accidents caused by others receive pensions and the best care the consortium can afford. Most employees of the forges in Oregent are lumberjacks recovering from injuries or wounds. For this reason, many lumberjacks secretly hope to be attacked while at work, provoking fey and wild beasts they find. The consortium buries more than two-dozen lumberjacks and transfers another dozen or so to other jobs every year.

Conditions for other consortium laborers, while onerous, are much better than those of lumberjacks. Forge workers, for example, can expect to make 4 silvers per week, with solstice bonuses up to 1 gold.

Suppliers: The Lumber Consortium owns all of Falcon's Hollow and everything within it (many people in Olfden and Almas bitterly remark that it also owns the downtrodden people of that town). The consortium imports all its tools (from the ubiquitous axes and saws of lumbermen to the largest lumber wagons) from its massive forges in Oregent, the raw supplies for which it gets as part of its contract with the government of Andoran. This monopoly of raw-material supplies from the government helps ensure that Andoran can still exert some amount of non-punitive control over the consortium. Evidence occasionally surfaces, however, that the consortium smuggles in pig iron from other nations, but the company's barristers always find ways to quickly suppress such unwholesome facts.

Relations: As might be imagined, the Lumber Consortium's relationship with the government of

Andoran can best be defined as "strained." Neither cares for the other, but they rely on one another in a strangely symbiotic way. The government in Almas supplies the Lumber Consortium with the raw materials it needs to make its tools, the consortium supplies Andoran with nearly all of the nation's hardwoods and much of its softwoods, and government buyers buy up every board-foot of lumber the company churns out. Despite this pat arrangement, both sides constantly look for loopholes in the trade agreements, with Andoran seeking out cheaper supplies of wood and the Lumber Consortium smuggling in iron and smuggling out darkwood to parties who pay more.

Resulting both from its monopoly and also from its treatment of its employees (who are often called slaves by those wishing to break up the company), the Lumber Consortium has few friends outside of the Andoran government (not that it has many within the People's Council). Most citizens who live outside of Darkmoon Vale or the consortium's other heavily controlled area—the Verduran Forest in Andoran—know little about the company or its practices, but many have heard nothing good about it. Occasionally, sympathetic people in Almas, Bellis, and Carpenden organize protests against the Lumber Consortium and its treatment of its employees. These well-meaning protests tend to have no effect (outside of making the protestors feel better about themselves) and are quickly forgotten by those in positions of power. More rarely, organized groups of well-meaning people work within the system in attempts to crack the consortium's monopoly, shut down its suppliers, or otherwise disrupt its business to the point of forcing change. For the most part, those who

DELDRIN BALESON

STRONG-WILLED SHERIFF

Deldrin used to be a poor lumberjack toiling in the cutyards under Gavel Thuldrin Kreed's oppressive thumb. One day he refused to pay an "axe tax" on an axe he had already bought and paid for. Boss Teedum tried to take Deldrin's axe, and the half-elf smashed Teedum's face with the flat of it. As one of the few locals to stand up to Teedum and Kreed, he was elected sheriff the following week. Now he carries the same axe around on his shoulder to remind Kreed and Boss Teedum he is not afraid of them. Deldrin is tall for a half-elf, towering over most humans, and his well-muscled, imposing form is further enhanced by his sharp gold-flecked eyes.

Strong-willed and tough (both mentally and physically), Sheriff Baleson takes no guff from anyone, whether publicly drunken lumberjack or wrathful Lumber Consortium gavel. Multiple attempts by the consortium and its thugs to end his life have resulted only in numerous arrests and three dead thugs. On multiple occasions, the sheriff has humbly rebuked whispered hopes of him running for mayor, saying he'd rather serve as town sheriff to "a more fair-minded mayor."

Quiet whispers place Deldrin within Roots and Remedies after hours, but both parties flatly refute such claims.



participate in these sorts of actions tend to fade quickly into obscurity—usually due to unfortunate “accidents” that claim their lives.

Despite an entire nation guiltily tolerant of its indecencies and numerous groups bent on its destruction, the Lumber Consortium is not without its supporters. Those whose lives depend on the consortium—aside from the lumberjacks, who are both the most vital and worst-treated employees—are more than willing to look the other way when questions of the company’s ethics come up. For the most part, these affiliated companies and people exist within Augustana (home of Andoran’s massive shipyards and prime benefactor of the consortium’s inexpensive lumber) and Oregent (where the consortium started and still maintains an office, where most of its directors live, and where its immense forges and sawmills stand). In fact, Oregent only exists because of the consortium, and nearly 8 jobs in 10 in the town exist—directly or indirectly—thanks to it.

Syntira and her druidic allies (both the Greenfire Circle and the Third Veil) have attempted on numerous occasions to make contact with Thuldryn Kreed and establish some sort of discussion. Kreed has rejected every attempt, often contemptuously. For obvious reasons, the fey queen and druids hope the Lumber Consortium changes its ways, and to that end they occasionally engage in sabotage and harrying tactics. Lately, dark whispers by lumberjacks speak of fey also employing violent tactics, although, to date, there remains little actual proof of this.

SILVERERS

Despite the hatred of werewolves in Darkmoon Vale, those who live in the region realize that

most lycanthropes are also people. As such, most captured werewolves can expect to face a quick and painless beheading from a silvered axe.

Not all Valers treat their lycanthropic enemies with such reasoning and mercy, though. One movement in particular devised a cruel and excruciating way of both torturing and killing captured werewolves. Calling themselves Silverers, members of this group (all of them common folk with a bit of wealth, such as landed farmers or merchants) concoct a suspension consisting of silver and wolfsbane. When a known (or suspected) werewolf is caught, Silverers infiltrate wherever it is held and force the creature to drink the elixir. If a werewolf is too strong for the Silverers to overpower and force-feed the elixir, the Silverers first throw a dose of the liquid into its face, taking the fight out of all but the most powerful lycanthropes.

A werewolf (or other lycanthrope) subjected to the Silverers’ elixir dies in a most excruciating way. The silver in the elixir attacks the werewolf’s body, causing an intense burning pain wherever it contacts exposed flesh (such as the lycanthrope’s esophagus). Like a mild acid, the silver eats away at the werewolf’s digestive tract, ripping away its stomach lining and causing blood to pool in the creature’s stomach. Through the werewolf’s weakened stomach walls, the silver leaches into its bloodstream, where it quickly spreads throughout the creature’s entire body, causing severe internal hemorrhaging that leads, eventually, to death. The entire process takes roughly 2 minutes, during which time the werewolf is subjected to such intense agony that most pass out after the first 30 seconds or so. Even after death, the uncontrollable spasming caused by the werewolf’s body ripping apart

FINDIT TOBBLEMOUTH

MISUNDERSTOOD GENIUS

Within the walls of Adamas lives one of the Eagle Knights’ most unusual members: a purple-haired gnome of questionable morality and unquestionable lack of sanity (in other words, a typical gnome). Findit Tobblemouth came to the Diamond Regiment in a fit of unusually heroic passion. He witnessed one day the courage exhibited by Ingrid Odeber and her druidic husband in a desperate battle to save a farm from lycanthropic predation. Caught up in the excitement of the moment, Findit immediately rushed forward and offered his services to the surprised couple.

At first, many thought they could wait out Findit’s enthusiasm, that eventually he would grow bored with Adamas and leave. After 5 years, though, Ingrid realized he was there to stay, and she started giving him more important tasks, trying to find a permanent position for him. Eventually, Findit’s skill with alchemy became apparent, and Ingrid set him to work designing new compounds for use against werewolves and other local threats.

Today, Findit spends his time in a small lab inside the Adamas compound. At any hour of the day, passersby might hear him cackling with glee or catch a smell of some repugnant odor. Many Eagle Knights wonder why he remains within Adamas, not realizing that many of the alchemical tools at their disposal came from his bizarre mind (to say nothing of a few flavor-enhancing food additives).



from within continues for hours. The wolfsbane in the elixir serves no real purpose other than as insurance against the creature's survival.

When Silverers first made themselves known to the people of Darkmoon Vale, the commonfolk initially celebrated their arrival. At last, the Valers reasoned, someone was going to stand up to the werewolves and show them how it felt to live in fear. That reaction changed to horror upon the Silverers' first public demonstration of their technique in Falcon's Hollow. When the test subject finally stopped screaming and lay silently dying on the stage, the people of Falcon's Hollow rose up in protest. No one complained about the death of a werewolf, only in the method and gruesomeness of its death. Today, Silverers stay hidden to avoid persecution from those opposed to their practices.

RACES IN DARKMOON VALE

All of the common races live in or very near Darkmoon Vale, although humans and dwarves dominate the region.

Humans: Most humans in Darkmoon Vale come from Chelish stock, although Ulfen blood is readily evident. Nearly every human ethnicity has some representation in the vale, usually within almost-cosmopolitan Olfden.

Dwarves: The dwarven influence around Darkmoon Vale is very strong, particularly in the northern section of the region where the mountains give way to foothills. More influential than even the ubiquitous humans, dwarves reigned supreme in the northern parts of Darkmoon Vale for millennia—far longer than any other race. Although they can no longer muster the numbers they possessed at the height of their civilization, dwarves nonetheless continue to return to

the Five Kings Mountains. As part of that resettlement effort, many end up on the flanks of Droskar's Crag, which leads them into Darkmoon Vale. As a result, the stoutfolk represent a relatively high percentage of the vale's rural population. The dwarves don't frequently live in the human towns, but they do trade a great deal of trade with Olfden (for foodstuffs and other supplies) and Piren's Bluff (for the raw ore mined nearby).

Elves: Never a stronghold for elves, even at the height of their power, Arthfell Forest (and later, Darkmoon Wood) was always seen as the sovereign home of Queen Syntira of the fey. As a result, at most, the elves maintained a small enclave surrounding its embassy. When the elves retreated from the world, though, that enclave disappeared. Only in the past few years, as the elven presence on Golarion has finally grown enough to warrant it, have the elves returned to Darkmoon Vale. What they found here depressed them. As a result, a number of adventurous elves came to the vale to work toward reuniting the forest and supporting the plight of the fey. These goals, of course, make elves in the area unpopular with the human majority, and even those elves who don't know of or support the "elf agenda" in the region face prejudice and anger.

Gnomes: As former members of the First World and still connected somewhat to fey, gnomes find Darkmoon Wood a comforting and welcoming place. Many gnomes serve Syntira as spies, soldiers, alchemists, and diplomats. A fair number belong to the Greenfire Circle and happily (if by no means skillfully) act as ambassadors and go-betweens between the fey and the humans. In the towns of Darkmoon Vale, gnomes do as they do in other civilized locations across Avistan: they try desperately

KARLAE SIEGFROST

PRAGMATIC ADVISOR

The founder and former leader of the adventuring group known as the Azure Guard, Karlae Siegfrost brought a handful of disparate personalities to Darkmoon Vale in search of knowledge both magical and mundane. Unfortunately for her, she had to settle for wealth and fame. When the Azure Guard split up, Karlae followed Luna to Olfden and participated in the defense of the town in the Night of Silver Blood.

Since that night, Karlae has remained in Olfden, acting as advisor to the town on all matters magical. In return for a generous monthly stipend and the freedom to conduct research (infrequently requiring her to travel far afield), Karlae helps guard the town and crafts the occasional magic item for the city watch or for use in governance. Karlae always keeps on hand a supply of curative potions and scrolls containing magical formulae both arcane and divine in origin.

Like her friend Luna Aldred, Karlae is a Pathfinder (albeit a semi-retired one) and frequently seeks out other Pathfinders traveling through the area to hire for minor (and not-so-minor) errands. In her role as Mayor Amring's chief advisor, Karlae



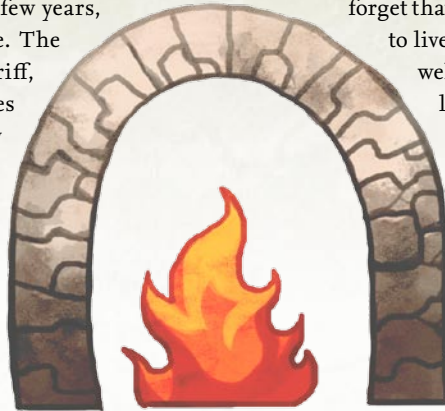
(but fail spectacularly) to fit in. Their racial oddness and uncomfortable connection with fey make gnomes a distrusted lot in the vale, and their overeager attempts to fit in win them few friends and many enemies.

Half-Elves: Despite the tension between humans and elves in the area, humans continue to find elves breathtakingly beautiful and elves still find humans forever intriguing. As a result, every few years, a half-elf is born in Darkmoon Vale. The most famous is Falcon's Hollow's sheriff, Deldrin Baleson. Of course, half-elves born elsewhere also occasionally immigrate into the region, but the race remains relatively rare.

Half-Orcs: As a wild, frontier area with an economy based on a labor-intensive industry, the strength and toughness of half-orcs make them welcome lumberjacks and security guards. For this often disparaged and hated race, Darkmoon Vale is a land of opportunity, where hard work and a natural talent for thuggery makes advancement truly possible. Indeed, one of the most powerful people in Falcon's Hollow is a half-orc, and he employs several other half-orcs as bouncers and heavies (no one, not even the half-orcs, thinks Kabran Bloodeye does this out of racial loyalty, but instead only because half-orcs make excellent bouncers and heavies).

Halflings: Escaped halfling slaves who brave the Aspodell Mountains tend to end up in Olfden. There they work as they did in Cheliaz, as house servants, chimney sweeps, and other light laborers. In general,

halflings are unpopular in Darkmoon Vale, both because they carry the stigma of possibly being ex-slaves of Cheliaz (an area of contention between the nations of Andoran and Cheliaz that continues to cause boil-ups in border regions like Darkmoon Vale) and because valers cling to a long-held belief that halflings don't carry their own weight. Of course, those who subscribe to this "lazy halfling" theory forget that halflings require much less sustenance to live. Regardless, halflings know they aren't welcome in Darkmoon Vale, and many leave as soon as they can, resulting in a relatively low number of them.



RELIGION

While not a particularly religious or spiritual bunch, the people of Darkmoon Vale nonetheless pay lip-service to numerous divine entities. Among the 20 most powerful and common gods of Golarion, only Gozreh, Iomedae,

and Sarenrae have managed to acquire "worshippers" here. They frequently compete with older faiths for the hearts of Valers.

Asmodeus: Although the worship of the archdevil Asmodeus is hardly welcome in Andoran, the accepting tolerance exhibited by Cheliaz makes his reverence along the border almost a surety. Certainly, a number of Perin's Bluff citizens bow to the infernal god, as evidenced by the existence of the Pact Hall in that town.

Droskar: Of course, any discussion of religion within Darkmoon Vale must include the cruel dwarven god of toil. Although the dwarves originally attempted to

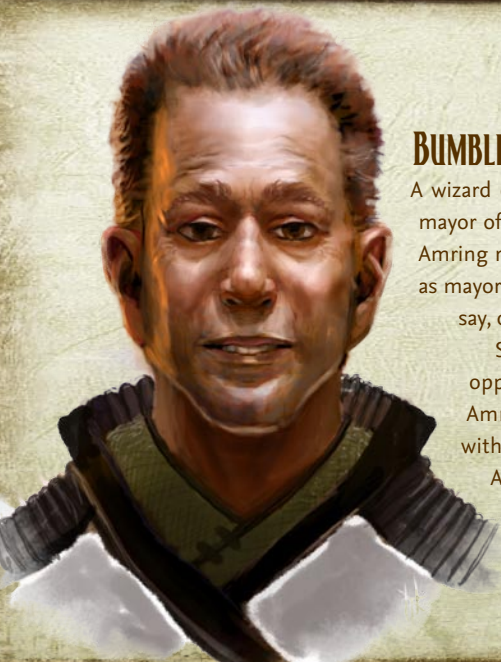
GILMORE AMRING

BUMBLING MAYOR

A wizard of some little talent, Gilmore Amring possesses more power as the well-meaning but foolish mayor of Olfden. Despite his blunders and frequent faux pas (especially when meeting with dignitaries), Amring remains immensely popular in the town. Serving his fifth straight (and sixth overall) 3-year term as mayor, Amring continues to lead Olfden with a *laissez-faire* philosophy (with heavy emphasis, his critics say, on the "laissez").

Some wonder if Amring's antics are a front, meant to relax those around him and let his opponents underestimate him. These speculators point to the Night of Silver Blood, when Amring stood atop the walls of the town himself, leading members of the watch and militia with precision and skill. They also note how prosperous the town has become because of Mayor Amring's economic policies.

Despite the claims of his critics and his well-deserved (and accurate) reputation for his bumbling ways, Gilmore Amring is actually a competent and capable leader. As his supporters guess and his policies show, he can drop the illusion of buffoonery when the situation demands it (for the most part—Gilmore truly possesses all the grace and agility of a falling rock).



hide their conversion to the worship of Droskar, they eventually abandoned their poorly kept secret and went so far as to name a mountain and various structures after the god of toil.

Gozreh: Surprisingly, the very lumberjacks who exploit nature and cause its destruction also frequently bend knees to Gozreh, the god of nature. The loggers pray to Gozreh in his aspect as the god of weather, entreating him for sunny (but not too hot) skies and cool (but not cold) nights.

Iomeda: Thanks to the unpopular temple of Iomeda in Falcon's Hollow and Iomedaen paladins in Adamas, the Inheritor has a disproportionately large presence in Darkmoon Vale. The wide presence of her faith should not, however, be confused with popularity, for her church lags behind those of Gozreh and Sarenrae in numbers.

Sarenrae: The Dawnflower's faith came to Darkmoon Vale with St. Elth, a pious and righteous cleric of Sarenrae who fell during Baron Novatnian's conquest of the region. A relatively large temple of Sarenrae stands in Olfden.

Green Faith: Predating the arrival of even Droskar's church, older faiths have long held sway over Darkmoon Vale. These ancient beliefs, collectively known as the Green Faith, continue on in Darkmoon Vale despite the best efforts of churches of newer deities. The Green Faith focuses on ritualized communing with natural forces, particularly the Five Elements of Green—air, earth, fire, life, water. Most of the druids in Darkmoon Vale (including the evil ones) practice some version of the Green Faith.

Cults: Rumors say that worshipers of Urgathoa and Zon-Kuthon hide among the populations of Olfden and Falcon's Hollow. The church of Iomeda staunchly refutes

these claims, but the whispers predate the Iomedaen temple and persist to this day. On the other hand, these whispers only ever seem to begin when an unexplained murder or disappearance occurs.

NIGHT OF SILVER BLOOD

In the middle of the night, just as 11 Arodus turned into the 12th, 4707, at the height of a full moon on a clear summer night, an army of battle-hungry hobgoblins and hunched-back werewolves swept from Arthfell Forest. In the most coordinated werewolf attack Olfden had ever faced, the army enveloped the town and immediately set to work building up besieging fortifications and rolling in siege weapons. Trebuchet and catapults rained down destruction on the town's walls, while hobgoblin archers arced burning arrows into the settlement, igniting the wood and thatched-roof buildings within. Worse, the silvered weapons that Olfden's defenders relied on seemed to have no effect at all on the werewolves. Strangely, though, whenever silvered weapons struck werewolves, the creatures seemed to bleed silver-colored blood.

During the long night, three waves of werewolves, bolstered by hobgoblin allies and led by Shadow Pack druids, assaulted the town walls, striking from the west, the south, and the east. Olfden's defenders, used to raids from small groups of werewolves and unprepared for the massive and well-organized assault (to say nothing of the strange silver immunity), very nearly lost the walls at several breaches. Fortunately for the town, however, the heroics of several individuals held the attackers at bay long enough for a sortie of Diamond Regiment soldiers and Fangwatch rangers to break the siege.

LUNA ALDRED

PROTECTOR OF OLFDEN

A fiery Pathfinder skilled with both blade and spell, Luna and her adventuring companions (the Azure Guard) came to Darkmoon Vale seeking wealth and fame. Mostly wealth. After spending nearly 3 months scrambling all over the Five Kings Mountains, Luna quit the Azure Guard and returned to Olfden with a bit of gold and a few magic trinkets. Her return coincided with the Night of Silver Blood, however, and in that night she single-handedly held back one whole flank of attacking werewolves just long enough for the town to defeat the rest of the lupine army. Although Luna fell in battle, Lissel, the high priest of Sarenrae, returned her to life the next day. After her death and resurrection, Luna established a Pathfinder Society safehouse in Olfden, which she uses as her base of operations. While Luna continues to support other Pathfinders in the area (often through her close friend Karlae Siefrost's official capacity), she still frequently leaves town to explore the region, particularly the Five Kings Mountains range.

A plaque dedicated to Luna at the site of her heroic stand and unfortunate fall commemorates the event. The town of Olfden has already approved the budget for a statue depicting her in the midst of battle with werewolves.





History

The way it looks now, with that low valley steaming with boiling water and pulsing geysers, is not how Darkmoon Vale has always looked. Dwarven records indicate that before the Rending, the area consisted of a wide plain dotted with low hills. How much more could we have learned from the dwarves living within Droskar's Crag had its cataclysmic eruption not encased their grand city within thousands of cubic feet of stone?

—Luna Aldred,
Pathfinder and First Citizen of Olfden

Habitation by civilized races near Darkmoon Vale stretches back several millennia. Within the vale itself, however, civilization has never remained for long. Modern Andoran's claim to the land, dating back almost 800 years and concerned almost exclusively with logging, marks civilization's longest control of the area.

DWARVEN COLONIZATION

Long before the human occupation of the area, Darkmoon Vale acted as a backwater border region for a succession of dwarven empires and kingdoms.

The Rise and Fall of Tar Taargadth

After Earthfall, darkness engulfed Golarion for a thousand years. In that time, while humans and other surface-dwelling races struggled to survive, those who lived underground boiled up from below. Goblins and orcs swarmed the surface, terrorizing the humans and firmly establishing footholds that exist to this day. Pushing these races up from below were their eternal rivals, the dwarves. Intent on the Quest for Sky, an ancient dwarven prophecy

that drove dwarves ever onward toward the surface, the stoutfolk relentlessly pushed upward. Well-equipped for fighting orcs and surviving in the darkness, dwarves taught their new human friends how to live without the sun. A sudden rise in fecundity among the stoutfolk led to a centuries-long population explosion. Dwarves spread across the surface, establishing fortresses and communities called Sky Citadels (known today as dwarf plugs) in every mountain range on every continent. Regardless of location, all dwarves considered themselves brethren and all paid homage to the dwarven king (who sometimes used the title of “emperor”). Every dwarf considered himself a subject of the grand and expansive dwarven empire known as Tar Taargadth. This impressive empire lasted for nearly seven millennia, before infighting and succession wars ripped it apart from within, fracturing it into dozens of smaller kingdoms and city-states.

In the mountains north of modern-day Darkmoon Vale, in the range known as the Five Kings Mountains, five brothers battled for dominance. Rich veins of gold, silver, mithral, and adamantine, to say nothing of abundant iron and copper ores, fueled the brothers’ conflicts and dragged them into war after costly war. Their descendants carried on the wars for more than seven centuries. Finally, in 2332, the human nation of Druma intervened and worked with the five kings ruling at the time to create a lasting peace with the Kerse Accord. In celebration of the end of war, the kingdoms carved among the mountains large images of the five forward-thinking and peace-loving kings. The smallest of these five graven images stands in Kingtower Pass, marking the northern border of both Darkmoon Vale and Andoran.

The Rise of Tar Khadurrrm

Founded by Khadon the Mighty, the Kingdom of Tar Khadurrrm laid claim to the still-prosperous iron mines of Mount Gustus and Mount Onik, the mithral veins of Mount Kla and Mount Gargan, and the now-depleted vein of adamantine within Mount Arogak. Khadon came to the Five Kings Mountains to establish a new dwarven kingdom in the area and fought for decades to clear the area of orcs, goblinoids, and kobolds. In 3279 he declared his mission a success.

To anchor his claims in the south, Khadon sent 1,500 dwarven spelunkers, miners, and soldiers to Droskar’s Crag, where they founded mighty Jernashall in 3312. In 3450, after making peaceful contact with nearby human kingdoms, Khadon sent his son, Sidrik the Handsome, to the area as a diplomat. Young Sidrik reported that the humans wished to have a surface city in which to trade. In response, Khadon authorized Sidrik to build such a city, which he started on (with human input and aid) the following year. King Khadon made his final journey that year to officially declare the founding of Raseri Kanton.

DWARVEN NATIONS

Various dwarven empires, kingdoms, and theocracies receive mention, and keeping them all straight might seem daunting. The following should help alleviate some of the confusion. Each nation is listed in order of its founding. Only nations and city-states that controlled more than one peak in the Five Kings Mountains is listed.

Tar Taargadth (–5133 to 1551): World-spanning dwarven empire that accomplished the Quest for Sky and brought dwarves to the surface for the first time (in –4987).

Gardadth (1557 to 2497): Northeastern-most kingdom founded by the Five Kings. First nation to form in the range after the end of Tar Taargadth and first to fall to orc invaders. Capital city of Highhelm (in flank of Emperor Peak) did not fall and remains extant to this day.

Saggorak (1559 to 2519): Second nation to form in the range after the fall of Tar Taargadth and the fourth to fall. Occupied five central peaks of the range.

Doggadth (1560 to 2506): Stood between Gardadth in the northeast and Saggorak in southwest. Third nation founded and second destroyed by orcs.

Grakodan (1561 to 2509): Smallest nation and the fourth to form, standing between Saggorak in the northeast and Taggoret in the southwest. Third nation to fall.

Taggoret (1562 to 2526): Southwestern-most kingdom founded by the Five Kings. Last nation to fall to orc invaders.

Tar Khadurrrm (3279 to 4466): Largest kingdom in Five Kings Mountains after the fall of Tar Taargadth. Spread from Droskar’s Crag to Emperor’s Peak.

Note: Dwarven historians refer to the time between the fall of Taggoret and the rise of Tar Khadurrrm as the Wild Era. They refer to the time since the fall of Tar Khadurrrm as the Collapsed Era.

Old age claimed King Khadon on his way home, passing the crown to reluctant Sidrik.

King Sidrik the Handsome moved the kingdom’s capital to Jernashall in 3493, where it remained until the city’s destruction in 3980 (see The Rending). As early as 3925, dwarven volcanologists living in Jernashall warned of an impending eruption of Droskar’s Crag, predicting a destructive blast within the century. Jernashall’s engineers scoffed and insisted their designs could withstand any eruption that didn’t level the mountain. Indeed, Jernashall survived Torag Crag’s first powerful eruption mostly intact, but the massive earthquake compromised its protective infrastructure. When a second eruption followed the next day, lava flooded into the halls of Jernashall.

The Fall of Tar Khadurrrm

With the annihilation of its proud capital, the Kingdom of Tar Khadurrrm began a downward spiral of self-destruction

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE DRUID KING NARVEN

In 4438, Narven Feathereyes, high druid of the ancient religion of the Green Faith, declared himself king of the Arthfell Forest. The Forest King, as he is known, closed the borders of the forest and directly opposed the exploitation of its natural wonders by the Lumber Consortium and other concerns. Against the advice of both the Chelish crown and the trio of barons under him, Aerl, the Count of Elberwick, recognized the Forest King and entered into numerous mutually beneficial treaties with him. Forest King Narven and Count Aerl of Elberwick became fast friends and staunch allies, much to the dismay of the emperor and the wrath of Baron Nyes of Darkmoon.

Forest King Narven recanted his closing of the border after a few months, allowing the Baron of Darkmoon to harvest darkwood and softwoods north of Elberwick Rise (hence the creation of Darkmoon Wood). This did much to appease the Baron of Darkmoon, and thereafter the two worked together to maintain a balance between the needs of industry and the health of the forest.

The Druidic Kingdom only lasted 53 years, and in that time it did little to alter the natural landscape of the Arthfell Forest. Upon King Narven's death, in 4491, his body was given a proper druidic burial (i.e., it was left out for scavengers to consume), and the druids who had lived under him went their separate ways. A few stayed in Darkmoon Vale and founded the Greenfire Circle, which exists to this day.

and unrepentant decadence. For the next four centuries, the dwarves of Tar Khadurrm refused themselves no vice, and they sank into sloth and apathy—two very non-dwarven traits.

The last great Tar Khadurrm king, King Talhrik the Busy, spent much of his reign desperately and futilely attempting to regain the kingdom's lost glory and didn't marry until late in life. His young wife bore him only one legitimate son, named Garbold, who took the throne upon Talhrik's death in 4277. Garbold's ascension did not occur without controversy, though, as older cousins made claims to the throne. At last, in order to establish a peaceful transfer of the crown, Garbold's cousin Ordrik—high priest of the dark god of toil, Droskar—coronated Garbold in front of their enraged family.

Ordrik never strayed far from Garbold's side, even as Garbold sank deeper into addiction, and under Ordrik's advisement the king ceded more and more control of the empire to the priests of Droskar. At last, in 4369, Ordrik made his move, removing the king from the throne (and Garbold's head from his neck) and beginning the bloody Forge War. For 13 terrible years the dwarves battled for the fate of their nation. Finally, in 4382, Ordrik killed the last of

the royalist generals and established the mighty dwarven empire as a theocracy, with himself at its head. Ordrik renamed Torag's Crag to Droskar's Crag, the appellation it still bears to this day. In the following years, the dwarves of Tar Khadurrm took to work as if their very souls depended on it. Which, in fact, they did.

Ordrik died shortly after securing control of the empire, and under his favorite apprentice the empire thrived for several decades. Droskar—through his priests—demanded ever-greater toil and construction from the dwarves, and eventually even the stoic and powerful dwarves buckled under the pressure to create. At first, this racial fatigue expressed itself only with mediocrity. Slowly, though, this mediocrity gave way to poor and faulty workmanship, which quickly led to utter collapse. In 4466, the last great dwarven nation, which had maintained civilization in the Five Kings Mountains for centuries, crumbled.

Many dwarves saw the end approaching and abandoned their homes to joined larger, better-defended dwarf plugs elsewhere in Avistan and beyond. This mass evacuation did not come without a cost, though, as Droskar loyalists battled their kin to prevent them from leaving. Several fast-moving battles (as fast-moving as dwarves can manage, at least) plagued those seeking to flee the region, but in the end the priests could not maintain their hold on their fellows and lost the nation (and in many cases, their lives).

HUMAN SETTLEMENT

Humans in the areas of modern-day Andoran and Isgar for centuries knew Darkmoon Vale as the Plain of Tar Khadurrm, a monster-filled area south of that mighty dwarven kingdom with little of interest to offer. Merchants from Isgar crossed Isgar Pass, circled around Droskar's Crag (then known as Torag's Crag), and made their way to the fabulously wealthy trade city of Raseri Kanton. Then came the Rending, and more than just the landscape changed.

The Rending

On Desnus 18, 3980, Droskar's Crag (known as Torag's Crag then) violently erupted, setting off a chain of events that altered the surrounding landscape. The Rending, as historians later dubbed this event, cataclysmically altered the Darkmoon Vale region and directly affected modern-day Druma, Isgar, and much of northern and western Andoran.

The eruption of Droskar's Crag caused several geologic events to occur almost simultaneously.

The Rending began when Droskar's Crag sloughed off more than 1,000 feet of elevation in a massive eruption that darkened the sky above southern Avistan for nearly a year. More than a cubic mile of mud, lava, and stone slid down the volcano's northern face, creating the wide, flat flow between Silver Ridge and Slagiron Ridge and

coating Isgar Pass with a 3-foot-deep layer of molten stone. Lahars sped down the southern and western faces of the mountain, spilling superheated mud across vast swaths of forested land on the lower flanks, knocking down dozens of square miles of trees. Magma within the mountain, no longer capped by nearly a quarter-mile of stone and glaciers, exploded into the sky, raining down cat-sized lava bombs as far away as Oregent in the south and Macrid in the north.

Droskar Crag's explosive decompression triggered a massive earthquake—felt as far away as Varisia—which in turn caused severe cracks in the surrounding land. Fissures within the mountain itself cracked mighty Jernashall. The next day, a second eruption flooded the city with lava, sealing it for all time and slaughtering every dwarf who remained within. Subterranean cracks also allowed lava to flow into the wide but shallow underground reservoir that once existed beneath Darkmoon Vale, converting much of the reservoir into superheated steam. This steam cracked the surface and vented in geysers, causing the landscape to suddenly and sharply drop by 10 to 50 feet, forming the lowlands of the vale. The southeastern face of Droskar's Crag also collapsed, creating the Craggs and sending most of Raseri Kanton tumbling 400 feet to the base of the newly formed cliffs.

The River Foam formed a shallow lake that buried the lowered vale in a foot of water for several days before aftershocks formed an escape for it through the Wolfrun Hills. Southeastern Andoran, then part of Imperial Cheliox, suffered from the earthquake and the volcano's violent fallout, but neither of these tragedies matched the flooding caused by the River Foam. When that river dried up for a few days, the Andossan River lost a great deal of its own flow. As soon as the River Foam broke free of the vale, however, a wall of water, silt, and debris crashed into the Andossan River, which flooded all of Andoran from the confluence of River Foam to the Inner Sea. Whole districts of mighty Almas were ripped from their foundations and shoved into the ocean as a result.

The Falcon Arrives

In order to understand the cataclysm that rocked them, the people of Almas sent an expedition led by famed mountaineer Garshweiss Frengistan up the Andossan River in Rova of 3980. When Frengistan returned 6 months later, he reported on three important facts: the area just south of the Five Kings Mountains was heavily damaged by the eruption of Droskar's Crag, many of the

foul creatures living in the area seem to have perished in the cataclysm, and a vast forest of darkwood (some of which was knocked down by the volcano) waited for the woodsman's axe.

It wasn't until 4113, though, when Karas "the Falcon" Novotnian led an expedition of Chelish soldiers and several of his adventurous friends into the area that Cheliox could finally claim ownership over the vale. Novotnian and his group found a broken landscape still recovering from disaster. Much of the wide valley's floor blistered up with mudpots and geysers, steam constantly vented from atop Droskar's Crag, and the ground beneath them shook almost hourly. Despite the destruction, though, the darkwood forest reported by Frengistan stood tall.

Novotnian and his men wasted no time in constructing a temporary fort atop a low cliff formed from the eruption (this temporary fort eventually became Adamas). From there, Novotnian worked for several years to pacify the region, with the falcon on his family banner spreading its wings across the entire vale south of the River Foam. In 4117, the emperor of Cheliox recognized his efforts by awarding him the title of Baron of Darkmoon, a title his family held for nearly six centuries.

NOVOTNIAN COAT OF ARMS



Goblinblood Wars

Roughly a decade ago, goblinoids oozed up out of the ground all across Avistan. In a series of wars, stretching from Varisia in the northwest to Taldane in the southeast, the goblinoids spread across the surface world. At first, the human kingdoms could barely weather the onslaught. Over the course of a little less than a year, though, they turned the tide and drove the hordes back beneath the surface. Valers count their blessings that the goblinoids never made it across the passes into Darkmoon Vale.

Eagle Knights from Almas marched through the vale to the Isgar Pass, where they erected earthworks (which still stand) and wooden walls (which do not) across most of the pass. As a result, the Eagle Knights noticed for the first time the harsh conditions under which most Valers lived. In an effort to improve the lives of their fellow Andorens, the Eagle Knights expanded the tiny outpost of Adamas to become a full-fledged fortress. Officially, the Eagle Knights claimed the garrisoning of the Diamond Regiment was meant only a first line of defense in case of renewed goblinoid attacks. In reality, most people recognize it for what it actually is: a means of controlling the Lumber Consortium and attempt to improve the lives of Valers.

SPoilERS ABouND!

This chapter contains spoilers for *Do: Hollow's Last Hope*, *D1: Crown of the Kobold King*, *E1: Carnival of Tears*, *LB1: Tower of the Last Baron*, and *D1: Revenge of the Kobold King*. Do not read this chapter if you have not already read those modules or if you never plan on being a GM in Golarion.



Secrets

The darkness beneath the boughs of Darkmoon Wood and the cold stones of the nearby mountains hide all manner of secrets—some deadly, many dangerous. Secrets abound too in the more civilized areas of the vale, within the grimy recesses of Falcon's Hollow and under the shadows of the tall buildings of Olfden. Even the vast and open plain that dominates Darkmoon Vale contains its secrets, as a wrong step can plunge an unwary traveler through a thin crust of earth into boiling water or superheated mud beneath.

—Luna Aldred,
Pathfinder and First Citizen of Olfden

This chapter contains many (though by no means all) of the secrets kept within Darkmoon Vale. If you wish to uncover these secrets through adventure and exploration, read no further, for they will come to you in due time. On the other hand, if you plan on acting as a master of the vale while others play into your devious hands, read on!

WILDERNESS

Secrets abound throughout Darkmoon Vale's many uncivilized locales. The following only scratch the surface of what unwholesome hidden threats lurk in the vale.

Arthfell Forest

Originally stretching north to the foothills of the Five Kings Mountains, the Arthfell was split in two (the northern section becoming Darkmoon Wood) and has slowly reduced in size ever since. The Arthfell today, while less than half its original size, contains numerous secrets both dangerous and bizarre.

Ethereveil: The indentation at this location does indeed resemble a letter in Elven, and as multiple cartographers

have uncovered when comparing maps, the shape does change over time. Each morning at dawn, over the course of roughly 20 minutes, the letter changes. This shifting occurs under the veil of a powerful illusion that prevents creatures from detecting the movement. The ward uses a wide range of techniques, from simply drawing attention elsewhere with a distracting noise to dominating a subject and forcing him to leave the area. These daily letters very slowly spell out the text from the *Libram of Leaves*, a collection of elven legends concerning Gozreh that predate Earthfall.

Each of the elven letters creates a different effect for those who enter Etherveil. Where the nine Elven vowels generally bring positive results to those who brave the area, the language's 24 consonants typically bode ill. Attempts to contact Gozreh concerning Etherveil always fail. In perhaps a strange coincidence (or perhaps not), on both the day of Earthfall and the day Aroden died, Etherveil portrayed the same exact letter from the same word in the text—the final letter for *nyl*, Elven for “death,” “dying,” or “dead.”

Aurore Kaiseva: Rumors persist that Aurore Kaiseva, a high-ranking member of the Fangwatch, is actually a werewolf in disguise, and it is for that reason that the rangers constantly weaken but never eradicate the lycanthropic threat. While the Fangwatch naturally denies these allegations, the rumors have their basis in fact. Several years ago, during a periodic sweep of the Arthfell, Aurore fought off an attack by a werewolf and its lupine allies. Unfortunately, the werewolf did not go down easily, taking a bite from her shoulder. Her companions took her back to their encampment and worked through the night to salve her wounds, but due to a string of similar injuries suffered recently, they had no more belladonna with which to cure Aurore's affliction. On the next night, when Aurore's lycanthropy took hold, her companions prepared to put her down. They stayed their hands, though, when they saw her struggling against the affliction, and when she proved victorious and retained her personality, they slowly reincorporated her into their ranks.

Today, 4 years later, Aurore Kaiseva serves the Fangwatch with energetic zeal bordering on fanaticism. Every member of the group knows of her secret—a secret they kill to keep—and despite Kaiseva's condition, they trust her absolutely. Rutho Steiggerson, as well Aurore's very close friend Ingrid Odeber, maintain a careful watch over her actions. If ever she shows signs of losing her soul to the evil lycanthropy, they have both agreed to kill her without hesitation. For now, Kaiseva remains Rutho's most trusted and talented lieutenant, leading raids against werewolf encampments all throughout the forest.

Shadow Pack: Unpredictable at best and sadistic at worst, the Shadow Pack druid circle operates out of the Arthfell Forest. Not surprisingly, most—if not all—of its members are werewolves and winter wolves. The Shadow

Pack only tangentially affect Darkmoon Vale, as the focus of its works remains centered in Arthfell. Just as a section of that forest stretches into the vale, though, so too does the Shadow Pack occasionally reach into the region.

Darkmoon Wood

Although it is much smaller than Arthfell Forest, Darkmoon Wood contains at least as many mysteries and hidden dangers. Home to fey and other creatures unfriendly to humans, the Wood remains the most dangerous part of Darkmoon Vale.

Elara's Halfway House: Elara's motives for building the orphanage so far away from the relative safety of town are a matter of some speculation in the village, but the truth is that she was afraid of raising them too close to the evil influence of the seedy town and the greedy lumber barons. Her isolation allowed her to give the children a chance at an education, but the price proved to be her life and the destruction of everything she built. Elara did not



AURORE
KAISERA

die by fire, but rather at the hands of one of her demented charges—a disturbed little girl named Jeva.

Jeva was the quiet, well-mannered young daughter of a well-to-do family of potters living in Falcon's Hollow. A family outing took a bloody turn when a large wolf burst from the brambles and savaged Jeva's parents before her eyes. Jeva's screams drew the attention of some nearby lumberjacks, who drove off the slaving beast, but not before it sank its teeth into her arm. Her parents dead, Jeva ended up at Elara's Halfway House.

No longer a sweet little girl, Jeva was transformed into a hateful monstrous child. The truth behind Jeva's murderous nature became apparent when the full moon rose and she transformed into a hideous werewolf, butchering three of her bedmates before Elara was able to lock her in a storage closet. From then on, Elara kept the little girl shackled to a wall in the basement. Each night, Elara tried to purge the lycanthropy from the girl with silvered knives and whips. Her "treatment" only deepened Jeva's evil rage. Finally, one night, Jeva overpowered her tormenter before dispatching her fellow orphans and setting the place on fire.

Jeva is a rail-thin, green-eyed girl of 14 years, although she is particularly diminutive for her age. Her mouse-brown hair is a tangle of twigs and brambles and her face is smudged with dark stains. Her back, arms, and legs are covered with brutal scars from Elara's "curative treatments."

Third Veil: Members of this group speak of the spirits of natural places and things, from the spirit of Darkmoon Wood to the spirit of the deer that live within it. The Third Veil claims that all beings are truly spirits trapped within flesh, and it is the responsibility of those still within their flesh to release themselves at the proper time.

What these spirits are and how the druids of the Third Veil interact with them remain mysteries to non-members. What these spirits supposedly tell the Third Veil to do is not really a mystery, though, as these foul predators prey upon the elderly and the weak. Unlike the dark druids of the Shadow Pack, the Third Veil finds its victims in the dark night streets of Oldfen as well as the unsecured peripheries outside the walls of those settlements.

Third Veil members view themselves as shepherds and liberators, releasing spirits from the confines of their decrepit fleshy forms. Everyone else views them as murderers and sociopaths.

Fey: Lately, Syntira's control over the fey of Darkmoon Vale has begun to slip. Anger grips the heart of her once-joyful subjects—anger at the logging; anger at their inability to stop the humans; and even anger occasionally at Syntira, who continues to try to work with the humans to strike some sort of balance in the region. The anger and disobedience that have fueled the fey of late has even reached the ears of the icy-hearted Witch Queen far to the north. As a result, she has seen fit to send servants and agitators to spur the fey of Darkmoon Wood into a vengeance-minded frenzy. (For a further discussion of the wrath of the fey, see *E1: Carnival of Tears*.)

Ambrosia: Syntira's younger sister and a newfound thorn in the queen's side, Ambrosia recently put aside her love of beauty and kindness in favor of malice and cruelty. Now a sadistic and cold-hearted fey, Ambrosia takes whatever opportunity she can to harm lumberjacks and other humans she comes across.

Cold Riders: Once princes of the forest, honored knights of the Willow Kings, or otherwise powerful fey in the service of an Eternal Monarch, these pitiable creatures met their deaths at the icicle-nails of the hateful Witch Queen of the far north. With an unholy ritual, the Witch Queen murdered these lofty fey and rebirthed them as her foul servants. Along with their lives, the cold riders lost the songs they once sang in merriment, and their love of green and beauty were replaced with undying love for the Witch Queen and cold hatred of all other living things. Cold riders are the queen's knights gallant and her favored minions in her war on the sun, the green, and all things

**THIRD VEIL
DRUID**



that recoil from her freezing fingers. They delight in perversion, slaughter and the corruption of other fey. It is their solemn duty to bring fresh souls and candidates for transformation into cold riders back to their queen's court, and they relish this charge.

Dark Ice Fey: Under the influence of the Witch Queen's cold riders, the frigid clutch of winter's malice can enter the hearts of even the most beneficent fey and transform their hearts to ice. Empowered by the cold hate of the Witch Queen, these fallen fey seek out the death of all thinking creatures not of the First World. Usually, dark ice fey stay far to the north, within Irrisen, realm of the Witch Queen. Recently, however, members of the Greenfire Circle have issued troubling reports that dark ice fey have appeared in Darkmoon Wood.

Frosty Chisellers: Frosty chisellers were once master craftsmen and artisans of the fey. Either under the perverted sway of the Witch Queen or consigned to prolonged exile from the verdant lands of their people, these artists found themselves changed by a creeping cold that spread from their hearts to envelope their entire beings. Now they are demented perversions who delight only in evil acts. They still pride themselves as artists and craftsmen of unparalleled skill, but now their favorite medium is a blend of ice and mortal flesh rendered in frosty blood and pulped bones. The Greenfire Circle recently spotted a handful of frosty chisellers sneaking into the northern edge of Darkmoon Wood. When alerted to this, Syntira showed the druids three frosty chiseler bodies and warned the humans of an approaching war she might not be able to prevent.

Keld Piskies: These diminutive fey are spirits of the forest. A peaceful and joyous species, keld piskies enjoy the act of living and do what little they can to spread this

joy to others. Legends say that joy, love, and other positive emotions draw these happy little fey like moths to flame, and they in turn both feed on and emit similar feelings, creating an ever-rising spiral of emotion. Sadness, anger, and other dark emotions seem to harm keld piskies, or at least cause them excessive discomfort. Keld piskies unfortunately suffer under dark legends that claim their blood can turn lead to gold, but when killed, keld piskies turn to simple wood that burns blue and green when lit.

Nymphs: Darkmoon Vale once contained a sprawling kingdom of fey creatures, and nymphs were (and remain) one of the most numerous species. These peerless beauties, said to be the creations and servants of Shelyn, sit atop a loose hierarchy of fey in Darkmoon Vale (thanks mostly to the influence of Queen Syntira, herself a nymph). Nymphs act as the local fey's aristocrats and nobility, although they rarely attempt to exert much influence or control over their fellow fey (and even when they do make the attempt, the other fey remain fey—mercurial, chaotic, and contrary).

Quicklings: Amazingly fast and suffering from remarkably short attention spans, quicklings act as effective short-distance messengers for the fey (any assignment that might take longer than a day to complete often goes unfinished, thanks to the quickling's inability to focus on a task that long). Quicklings do everything at an accelerated rate, including moving, speaking, eating, and even breeding. Unfortunately for quickling young, their parents often lose interest in them within a few days, and most starve to death in their first few weeks. Those lucky quicklings who somehow survive into adulthood (which usually takes a few months, with late bloomers maturing as long as a year after birth) maintain few allegiances for very long, making them unreliable servants. Despite all their many flaws, though,

SHARVAROS VADE

BITTER NECROMANCER

In his younger days, Sharvaros Vade served as a teacher and alchemist at the temple of Irori in Almas. Due to an untrue accusation of rape by a student of his, Sharvaros lost his teaching position and was forced to flee north in disgrace, into the frontiers of Andoran. Made bitter by his experience, he nonetheless found love once again in his eventual wife, Amele. Sharvaros's joy was short-lived, however, as Amele died only a year after giving him a son.

Distraught by his loss, Sharvaros threw himself into necromantic research, seeking a way to revive his dead wife without putting trust into a servant of a god. The years passed, and Sharvaros became increasingly desperate, angry, and foul. With the not-so-gentle nudging of Thuldrin Kreed (to say nothing of the particularly foul previous gavel), Sharvaros became a willing member and instigator of several foul schemes. A falling out with Kreed put Sharvaros on edge, and in his paranoia he lives alone with his oft-neglected son in a small shack outside of Falcon's Hollow. Indeed, Sharvaros only pays his son heed when he needs the boy's help in acquiring new research materials (in the form of dead bodies).



quicklings remain popular comrades in gatherings of fey, as they can perform feats of physical, manual, and verbal agility others of their type can only dream of performing with the aid of magic. Indeed, listening to two quicklings debate a matter (or, more often, several matters in quick succession) often serves as the (frequently short-lived) grand finale to an evening's entertainment.

Satyrs: The soldiers and guardians Syntira's fey, satyrs frequently patrol the northern reaches of Darkmoon Vale and the foothills and low passes of the Five Kings Mountains. Like most fey, satyrs are capricious, unpredictable, and more than a little lazy, so it usually takes patrols a month or more to complete a route that dwarves or humans could finish in a matter of days. Despite this penchant for slacking off, satyrs are fierce warriors when roused to anger, called to battle by Syntira, or simply bored and itching for a scrap (in the last case, the fights are more akin to bar brawls than pitched battles).

Ulizmila's Cottage: Years ago, this cottage was home to the witch Ulizmila—wise woman, practitioner of the old ways, and local boogiemán. While some said she was a monstrous hag (and great, great granddaughter of Baba Yaga herself), others knew her as a harsh but wise sage willing to share her wisdom for strange and often morbid prices. Although her cottage still lingers in this glen, Ulizmila is long since gone.

Ulizmila's home stands within a small, almost perfectly circular glade. The nearest stands of pine, eyn, and darkwood twist away from the clearing, as if bent by some impossibly strong wind or seemingly in an attempt to flee despite their paralyzed roots. At the glade's center squats an ugly cottage, little more than a pile of twigs, shoots, and ivy stacked upon mud walls. Bundles of gnarled

roots, old dried beast carcasses, and knucklebone bangles dangle from the thatched roof, all clattering together like gruesome wind chimes. A dozen small straw fetishes—each shaped like a tiny man, imp, or rearing serpent—stand propped in the yard, keeping guard before a rickety plank door that long ago rotted off its hinges.

Inside, the cottage is dank, reeking, and filled with shadows. Haphazardly hung shelves line the walls, covered in all manner of clay jugs, clouded bottles, strangely cut rocks, rotted bunches of herbs, and a museum of other crude curios and remnants of a bone grinder's artifice. A rusted iron cauldron, with a mouth nearly 5 feet wide and a depth of at least 3 feet, dominates the hut's single room, its ash-covered surface shaped with a relief of capering fiends and leering devils. The cauldron is actually animated and protects the cottage from interlopers.

Ulizmila's body does not reside within the cottage, as her final destiny finally caught up to her while away from home. Aside from a scattered bone here and there, none of her corpse remains. The scavengers of the forest took to her corpse with fevered hunger, as if they enjoyed the thought of finally dining on her flesh.

Droskar's Crag

After the Rending in 3980, almost all intelligent living creatures abandoned the slopes of Droskar's Crag, leaving it to foul beasts and undead monstrosities. The recent rise of undead on the flanks of the mountain has caused grave concern among Darkmoon Vale's residents.

Undead: While undead often infest the ruins of Raseri Kanton, other places near the mountain are generally devoid of their presence. Thus, a recent rise in undead activity near the lava-sealed gate of Valenshall and around



LIESE KAHKOSA

FALSE FRIEND

Radiating friendliness and always putting forward a warm and friendly smile, Liese Kahkosa makes friends easily and ingratiates herself into any group. She happily gives her meager possessions to those less fortunate than herself, and she answers every challenge put to her with a determined smile and buoyant fervor. People find themselves drawn to Liese and they seek to become her friend. Because of this, the Greenfire Circle uses Liese as its spokesperson, sending her into Falcon's Hollow, Olfdén, and Piren's Bluff to negotiate with townsfolk and members of the Lumber Consortium.

In truth, however, Liese Kahkosa (which isn't her actual name) cares nothing for anyone, least of all those who call themselves her friends. A wildly successful con artist, Liese travels around Avistan, often posing as a druid (of which she has received some training) and living off the goodwill of others until they discover her secret. More than a mere con, though, Liese is also secretly a doppelgänger in disguise. When someone uncovers the truth (and someone always does), that unfortunate person tends to end up dead, with Liese taking on a new face and name and disappearing into the wilderness.

the Droskar's Crucible is a notable occurrence. Sages (and adventurers) continue to look into the matter, but for now the reason for the sudden rise in undead activity remains a mystery.

Allips: Creatures unheard-of in Darkmoon Vale until very recently, these frightening harbingers of madness and misery never aimlessly wander, but rather always seem intent on some mission or purpose. Almost every allip encountered thus far has been within a few miles of Droskar's Crucible or inside the perimeter of Darkmoon Wood. They are most often encountered at night, giving residents of the vale one more reason to stay inside after dusk.

Forge Spurned: When a dwarven worshiper of Droskar perishes, he is brought before his divine lord and judged. If the Master of the Dark Furnace finds the dwarf unworthy, he is pierced with burning barbs and returned to the world as an undead terror on an accursed errand to gather souls for Droskar's Furnace. The penance varies depending on how displeased the master is with his subject, requiring as few as 10 souls for smiths who grew complacent late in life to hundreds of souls for guild owners who fail to maintain a high output from their underlings. A forge spurned dwells beneath the ruined monastery of Droskar's Crucible, as well as in the blocked tunnels beneath the Broken Tower.

Shadows: More frightening than even the dreaded allips, and fortunately far rarer, undead shadows have recently begun haunting the foothills between Darkmoon Wood and Droskar's Crag. Observers point out that the area's shadows seem controlled by some unknowable mind, as they patrol the hills around the ruined monastery of Droskar's Crucible with perfect precision. In addition to following a set, specific path, the patrols pass by the same point with frightening regularity.

Elberwick Rise

Stretching south for hundreds of miles, the low plateau of Elberwick Rise just barely extends into Darkmoon Vale. Because much of the Arthfell Forest also lives atop the rise, it plays home to many mysteries. Outside of the forest, though, the rise itself keeps many secrets.

Adamas: Also known as the Gleaming Tower, the powerful bastion known as Adamas has stood, frequently besieged but never taken, for hundreds of years. Behind the Gleaming Tower, cut deep into a low cliff of the Uplands by ancient geologic forces, delve long caverns and tunnels known collectively as the Dungeons of Adamas. Besides the dungeons, Adamas hides several other secrets as well.

Diamond Regiment: Although not as mysterious and shadowy as the Fangwatch, the Diamond Regiment nonetheless keeps its own secrets. In addition to its public role as a line of defense against the werewolves and other living threats of the area, the Diamond Regiment was sent to Darkmoon Vale in anticipation of a future raid against

the Lumber Consortium. Commander Odeber relishes the idea of bringing down the powerful company and throwing its unscrupulous leaders into the dank dungeons beneath Adamas. To date, however, she remains only on alert, as her superiors continue to wait for word from the People's Council to move ahead with the plan.

Dungeons of Adamas: The gleaming tower of Adamas acts as the gatehouse to a vast naturally formed underground cave complex. In addition to acting as the Diamond Regiment's prison, the caves also serve as home to a wide number of dangerous underground creatures. These creatures periodically attempt to swarm to the surface, but as part of its duty the Diamond Regiment holds back these threats. Commander Odeber has just enough soldiers at her command to both hold in the cavern's residents and patrol Darkmoon Vale, but occasionally she attempts to push back at the underground dwellers. In those times, bands of adventurers and mercenaries can make a decent profit off the rewards offered by the Diamond Regiment and the treasures and wares found in the massive cave complex below.

Ingrid Odeber: Despite her paladinhood, Commander Odeber must keep a few secrets. As a paladin, though, Ingrid proves particularly bad at this task, and to date she has only truly been able to keep one potentially deadly secret from her subordinates (see Aurore Kaiseva). That she and Aurore Kaiseva are unusually close friends is a poorly guarded secret among the Diamond Regiment and Fangwatch, and even some people outside of those groups know it (rumors occasionally put them in bed together, but there is no truth to this). The two women have more in common than friendship and military service, and their greatest commonality is the one they can least afford to become known.

The Diamond Regiment's commander keeps an important personal secret, known only to a few of her highest-ranking subordinates and her husband. Like Aurore, Ingrid Odeber is a lycanthrope. Unlike her friend, though, Ingrid is not a werewolf—she is a werebear. In a region plagued by lycanthropes of the worst kind, though, Ingrid rightfully fears that the common folk of Darkmoon Vale might not understand the difference. As a werebear from birth (indeed, her family's name derives from a long lineage of ursine lycanthropy), Ingrid has no problem controlling her transformations and only gives in to her animalistic urges out of desperation, such as when Aurore cannot keep herself from her lupine form; at the height of passion; or sometimes when she and Tablic (whose druidic abilities allow him to adopt bear form as well) spend intimate time together.

Jillia Apta: Playing a dangerous game of cloak and dagger with the Lumber Consortium, this brave—and foolhardy—sorceress portrays three different young

women to various members of the corrupt corporation. To Thuldryn Kreed in Falcon's Hollow she plays innocent and innocuous cleaning girl Jillia Apta. The mayor of Oregent (a well-known consortium sympathizer) knows her as the young and willing socialite Fiona Dosatora. Finally, elder consortium director Gol Ephialtes flirts with her guise as Bora Zastava, daughter of a wealthy shipbuilder in Almas. Her portrayal of three young women who only occasionally interact with consortium members or supporters allows the young spy to maintain all three covers with relatively ease. More importantly, though, it gives her access to several levels of involvement and power within the consortium, further improving the quality of intelligence provided to her true employer: the Eagle Knights of Andoran.

This orphaned woman, trained from an early age by a secret branch of the Eagle Knights, serves as the order's main source of Lumber Consortium information. She plays a dangerous game and knows it, but that only adds to her feeling of accomplishment when she supplies key pieces of intelligence. Because she can no longer remember her real name, by default this valuable spy goes by the name Jillia Apta, although she answers comfortably to her other two cover names as well. Jillia answers indirectly to Ingrid Odeber via a number of mutual contacts within Olfden (which she must travel through when moving between Falcon's Hollow and Oregent) and Almas.

Zon-Kuthon Cultists: The murderous League of Souls operates out of a secret hideout along Elberwick Rise between Olfden and Piren's Bluff. The League of Souls watches both of those towns for murders, then moves in to uncover the killer before the authorities. Once it knows who a murderer is, the League uses its many resources to recruit the killer into the cult. Those who refuse this offer of recruitment are themselves executed and dumped in the Arthfell Forest. When it isn't recruiting, the League of Souls is busy planning the next perfect murder. Once per year, the cult assembles in absolute secrecy to plan carry out this perfectly planned murder dedicated to Zon-Kuthon.

Five Kings Mountains

Places where civilization once dominated but which are now given over to wilderness breed the greatest number of secrets. Lost places once filled with the chaos of civilized life attract all manners of creatures and strange, eldritch magics. Although its civilizing influences dwelt mostly underground, the Five Kings Mountains range nonetheless possesses the weird secrets and mysteries of a place returned to savagery.

Eye of Droskar: While the nondescript gray tower was certainly built by dwarves in the waning years of Droskar's theocracy, the crystal, roof hole, and runes all came centuries later. Despite its given name, the crystal has nothing at all to do with Droskar or dwarves. Instead, it is a powerful artifact that enhances certain forms of psionic powers, namely those that deal with telepathy and psychoporation (psionic teleportation), and that contains the consciousness of a powerful martial artist and psion. Activating the crystal and awaking the mind trapped within requires incredible mental powers that cannot be duplicated with magical or mundane means.

The crystal and the runes appeared here as a result of experimentation conducted by a Vudrani man named Kalyan Antastha, who came to the area mostly by mistake in 4676. Although an accomplished mentalist and a master in a mystical martial art that promotes mobility (and a student of teleportation on a limited scale), Master Antastha made a miscalculation when attempting to teleport a great distance and found himself suddenly whisked away to northern Andoran. Many attribute this error to Master Antastha's extreme old age (he approached his 103rd birthday when his experiment went awry). Kalyan Antastha spent 3 years living in the Eye of Droskar, attempting to construct a device similar to the one that brought him there, but with no success. Possibly sensing his impending death, Master Antastha reconfigured his device and projected into it his consciousness and memories, letting his ancient body to slump over, lifeless.

Despite his death, Master Antastha continues to contemplate psychoporation, although he long ago gave up the idea of somehow returning home. He awaits a worthy



INGRID ODEBER

apprentice (one strong in both mind and body) to whom he may teach his many secrets and thus finally go on to his eternal rest. Due to the extreme rarity of psionic power in Avistan, however, no one has yet uncovered the secret to the crystal's activation.

Hexagonal Tower: Both haunts (see *Pathfinder* #2 and #6) and ghosts of the tower's dwarven owners plague the tower aboveground (but do not bother with the cellars and other tunnels beneath it, and hence the kobolds). These restless dwarven spirits are angry and vengeful. They kill any creature that stays for more than a single night in the tower.

Wolfrun Hills

Always one of the places most resistant to the calming influences of civilization, the Wolfrun Hills bare their wild nature to those who wish to see it.

Grotto of St. Elth: As part of his efforts to pacify the region, Karas Novotnian led his expedition into the rugged and unforgiving badlands that divide Wolfrun Hills. For several days, Karas's expedition fended off numerous attacks from dire wolves, chimera, and worse. At one point, Novotnian and his men bivouacked in a large, easily defended grotto. While there, a particularly powerful chimera appeared and attacked the group. When the chimera pinned a young footsoldier named Ponchus Kaiseva to the ground and tore at his armor, the equally young cleric Elth Hammerson stepped forward and fended off the creature. Ponchus's fellow soldiers pulled him to safety, and Elth covered their retreat. Sadly, while distracted with guiding the men, Elth fell to the great beast. For Elth's courage, Karas established a small temple to Sarenrae within the grotto, which remains to this day, and buried the young cleric within it. Several years later, Karas returned and erected the large statue there.

In life, Elth and Ponchus had barely known one another. In death, the young cleric became an inspiration to Ponchus, leading the soldier to take up the worship of Sarenrae. Later in life, Ponchus became a paladin, and his family has long-since served as soldiers within the Vale. Aurore Kaiseva is only the latest in the long line.

The spirit of St. Elth does indeed appear each year on the anniversary of his death. His expression turned gloomy once young Aurore Kaiseva contracted lycanthropy, which he hopes she never succumbs to fully. When St. Elth sacrificed his life to save the young soldier so long ago, a part of his spirit became connected not only the place of his death, but also to the man he guarded and inspired. As a result, St. Elth feels compelled to return each year in the hopes of finding a living Kaiseva at his shrine, so he may bless the family and finally go on to his eternal rest. Sadly for him, Aurore is the last of Ponchus's line, and St. Elth is unsure what might happen if she does not bear young or visit him at his grotto before she dies.

Werewolves

One of the greatest threats facing Darkmoon Vale and Arthfell Forest is the presence of werewolves in the area. Werewolves have weathered frequent eradication efforts for hundreds of years. They survive thanks to their animalistic cunning and their all-too-human ability to deceive.

Survival: The prominence of werewolves in the area continues to defy all attempts to eradicate them. Despite frequent campaigns of slaughter conducted within Arthfell forest by Fangwatch (often supplemented with members of the Diamond Regiment), the werewolf threat persists. Despite rumors to the contrary, the Fangwatch do not look the other way for any werewolf (other than their leader), nor do they warn the lycanthropes of their sweeps.

IRIK VONSET

QUIET THREAT

Those who knew the man before his fall still find it difficult to believe. Born into a powerful Taldoran family and blessed from an early age with the grace of Iomedae, Irik VonSet rose quickly to prominence and power as one of the Inheritor's most respected paladins. A holy warrior of no little skill and an abundance of piety, Irik betrayed his order and his goddess a dozen years ago. Fallen and disgraced, the proud blackguard went into hiding for nearly decade. Many assumed he died. Many more hoped. All were wrong.

Irik appeared recently in Olfden, having spent his hidden years scheming for his return. In Olfden, Irik has established himself as the commander of the town watch, a position from which he slowly and quietly enacts his unholy plans. On the surface, pride seems Irik's greatest sin, as even in his role as traitor and murderer, Irik never once lost his dignity or conceit. Beneath his arrogance lie darker evils, though, and the people of Olfden unknowingly harbor a cold-hearted assassin who holds little regard for human life.



ODEBER FAMILY

Spread throughout Avistan, the ancient Odeber family's origins lay hidden in the uncertain mists of ancient history. The Odeber family tree traces back hundreds of generations, to a man named Arn Odeber, father of the first recorded paladin of Shelyn, Saint Marcus Odeber. In the many years since, the family name has shifted in some areas to blend in with local naming conventions. The family's original form, Odeber remains the most prevalent on the continent, particularly in Andoran, Cheliah, and Taldor. To the north, particularly in the Holds of the Mammoth Lords, the name has morphed over time into Debarr and Otarr. In Galt, the family goes by Deboir, while Osirions knows it as Andabar.

A recently formed schism in the family deals with the long and storied connection between Odebers and faith. Traditionally, Odebers have served as clerics and paladins, as well as the occasional ranger or druid. Even among those who did not pledge their lives to their faiths, religion played an important role in their lives. This tradition of holy servitude has been called into question since the death of Aroden. Some lines of the family have turned increasingly to secular and arcane paths.

Worse—in the eyes of family elders—many have turned to the darker gods. Most prominently of these is Sarkarus Odeber, a mid-ranking cleric of Asmodeus in Cheliah's former capital of Westcrown.

No longer can those outside the family assume that someone with the name serves a higher power of good (or even benign neutrality). Traditionalists within the family lament this loss of reputation.

Persistent werewolf survival comes not from the mercy or treachery of humans, but from the perseverance and survival instincts of the lycanthropes.

Natural werewolves—those born with the incurable disease—long ago learned ways of hiding among normal humanoids, taking on jobs where they spend most of their time in small groups or outdoors (or, preferably, both). As such, many natural werewolves in Darkmoon Vale work as loggers, fishermen, guides, and even sheriff deputies. Most try to avoid leadership positions, as such people often come under intense scrutiny. Bolder werewolves make themselves into prominent members of society, working hard to become wealthy merchants, traders, or even diplomats. These kinds of positions seldom last for long, however, as the wolfish hunger of such people eventually gets the better of them and they give in to their destructive instincts. The right job is doubly important for afflicted werewolves—those who became lycanthropes after birth, often as the result of a bite. Because they often have little control over their transformations, these werewolves must take on jobs where they can disappear for several days at a time without arousing suspicion.

Not every werewolf attempts to blend in, of course. Many born as werewolves live their entire lives in the wilderness—frequently within Arthfell Forest. These lycanthropes often become dark druids, rangers, or even barbarians, using their natural survival skills to disappear into the trees whenever danger (often in the form of Fangwatch) threatens. They strive to remain hidden and away from the normal humans, choosing instead to live their lives in relative peace and safety far from the haunts of men. The afflicted lycanthropes these hermits and savages create are made from random opportunity—most of the time, werewolves born in the wilds do not seek out prey to convert.

Lycanthrope Druids: Unlike almost all other werewolves in the world, those of Darkmoon Vale are not necessarily sociopaths. Many possess some amount of a pack mentality, like that of the wolves they so closely resemble. These werewolves do not actively seek to cause unwarranted carnage or perform unpredictable acts of evil. Instead, those who take up the call of druidism protect the forests they call home with an unbridled, fanatic, and bloodthirsty passion. Werewolf druids (almost all of whom belong to the Shadow Pack) do not content themselves with merely defending Arthfell Forest; they actively attack those who bring axes against it. While it's true that the Shadow Pack rarely emerges from the forest, its influence over werewolves in the area cannot be ignored. Many of the coordinated werewolf attacks in the area come as a result of Shadow Pack druids whipping their more chaotic, destructive kin into animalistic and murderous frenzies.

Night of Silver Blood: In the summer of 4707, werewolves attacked Olfden in such overwhelming numbers that they very nearly broke through the town's defenses. Bolstered by hobgoblins and Shadow Pack druids, the lycanthropes utilized siege weapons and destructive magic in their bid to destroy the town once and for all. More frightening still, the werewolves were immune to the silver that normally proved so lethal against them. Indeed, when harmed the lycanthropes seemed to bleed silver (hence the name given to the night). Strangely, though, since that night no further incident of silver-immune werewolves has surfaced, leading to numerous bizarre speculations and wild rumors. None of which, of course, are anywhere near the truth.

Fully a year before the attack on Olfden, an afflicted werewolf named Garrick Argentum (a jeweler by trade) took a silver-tipped arrow to the abdomen in a reluctant night of rapine terror. Garrick only barely survived the attack and fled deep into the northern reaches of Arthfell

Forest. There, a Shadow Pack druid tended him back to health. When Garrick tried to return to Olfden to live his life as a simple jeweler, he found his shop boarded up, with a large sign in front proclaiming it a den of werewolves. Although he tried, Garrick was unable to find any information about his family (only two of whom—his young sons—shared his lycanthropy), and his clumsy attempts to uncover their whereabouts revealed him to the town guards. Once again, Garrick only barely escaped death. He swore off all attempts at a normal life and embraced his lycanthropic existence.

Finding the Shadow Pack circle within Arthfell Forest, Garrick shared with them an impossible idea: to make werewolves immune to the lethal effects of silver and remove the single advantage the pathetic humans had over them. At first, the Shadow Pack druids dismissed his idea as lunacy, but over time, Garrick's natural charm and well-honed salesmanship won over the hesitant circle. While the druids threw themselves into experimentation and prayer, Garrick spent several months building a rapport with General Ragnak, leader of Arthfell Forest's hobgoblin settlement. Garrick told Ragnak to have his people ready to attack Olfden on a night of the full moon. He did not specify a particular month, because he had no idea when (or if) his druidic allies might uncover the secret they sought, but he promised the wealthy town of Olfden as spoils.

At last, after nearly a year of research and wasted lycanthropic volunteers (and non-volunteer victims), the Shadow Pack Circle found the answer. Using silver Garrick secured from his jewelry contacts in Oregent, the werewolves conducted a week-long ritual. During this ritual, the werewolves bathed in a shallow pool reflecting the waxing moon's reflection on its surface. Bars of silver partially paved the base of the pool and silver cups were used to scoop up the moonlit water and drink it down. As all this moon-bathed frolicking occurred, several Shadow Pack druids stood nearby, chanting dark prayers to Gozreh, beseeching her to grant the bathers immunity to the death-dealing metal. Although the bathing druids experienced excruciating pain on the first few nights, by the midpoint of the ritual they found it all only mildly discomfiting. By the end of the ritual, the werewolves found the silver-tinged waters refreshing and soothing.

Wasting no time, Garrick contacted General Ragnak, who led the combined hobgoblin and werewolf army against Olfden a few nights later. Although ultimately a military defeat, Garrick and his lycanthropic kith considered the night a triumph for their kind. Unfortunately for them, their triumphant feelings quickly faded, as all those werewolves who partook of the ritual grew steadily weaker as the moon waned. On the second night of the new moon following the Night of Silver Blood, while the night sky was at its darkest and the bright glow of the full moon farthest

away, hundreds of werewolves all across Darkmoon Vale quietly died in their sleep.

The next day, the Shadow Pack discovered Garrick Argentum's body. Dozens of other werewolves lay dead and scattered throughout the forest. After studying their dead comrades, the druids ultimately decided that the ritual they performed inexorably tied the werewolves even more powerfully to the phases of the moon. A full moon gave those werewolves even greater power, while the new moon weakened them to the point of death.

Unfortunately for the residents of Darkmoon Vale, though, a handful of lycanthropes who partook of the ritual survived the new moon. These exceedingly powerful lycanthropes have slowly moved into positions of leadership within Arthfell Forest, where they prepare for another assault.

Pariahs: Sometimes, a person afflicted with lycanthropy possesses enough inner force of will to retain the basics of her personality, despite the powerful urges of her disease. These pariahs remain the people they have always been, albeit with unnaturally strong urges 3 nights a month. Despite their strength of character and will, these werewolves know better than to try to convince other Valers of their harmlessness. Indeed, those few good-natured werewolves who came forward in the past met with grisly deaths at the hands of Silverers. Aurore Kaiseva remains the area's most famously hidden werewolf pariah—a fact that would end her life if it became known.

CIVILIZATION

The wild places of Darkmoon Vale hold their secrets, but the vale's towns conceal an even greatest number of mysteries.

Falcon's Hollow

The people of Falcon's Hollow must be secretive, lest they wish to gain the ire of Thuldrin Kreed, whose penchant for cruelty and malice is no mystery.

Laurel: As only the latest in a long line of wise women, Laurel gains much of her herbalist knowledge from an ancient book passed down to her from her grandmother. Her grandmother's tome contains dozens of recipes, cures, and spells for aid. Although the book contains no actual magic, it holds the rooted wisdom of generations of Laurel's family. In addition to a family's long tradition of knowledge, the tome also contains the teachings of the Witch of Darkmoon Vale, Ulizmila. Laurel's grandmother gained this knowledge when she met Ulizmila, who had gone blind, and restored the witch's sight. In exchange, Ulizmila scribed two-score pages of her own family's deepest secrets.

Namdrin Quinn: Namdrin Quinn overcame a hard youth when love intervened. A young constable named Tessa Kelrand tamed Namdrin, and their scandalous affair blossomed into romance. Tessa turned in her badge,

Namdrin abandoned his larcenous ways, and the two lovers turned adventurers set out to make their own fortunes.

The pair's travels soon brought them to the peril-fraught environs of Darkmoon Vale, where they wagered their lives on one harrowing but profitable adventure after another. Namdrin's excellent luck came to a tragic end on a return journey back to Falcon's Hollow. One cold morning in early spring, the dark fey of Darkmoon Wood waylaid the young adventurers and captured Tessa's soul.

His heart utterly broken, Quinn's returned to Falcon's Hollow a grim shadow of his former self. Not long thereafter, though, a traveling carnival came to town. For reasons unclear even to himself, Namdrin joined up and, after only a few short months, was running the whole show. Over the following summer, the carnival grew from a mere sideshow into a dizzying array of color and sound, just as its unseen benefactor—a foul cold rider—had all along hoped.

Urgathoa Cultists: The Fiendblood Covenant, a secretive congregation of Falcon Hollow residents, bows to Urgathoa, the Pallid Princess. The Fiendblood Covenant gathers to worship under a cabal of disease-ridden priests. Many of the most high-ranking clergy members hide in plain sight as leprous beggars by day. By night, these clerics lead dark rites to the Pale Princess of Pestilence in remote groves outside of town. The covenant's ultimate motive and plans remain shrouded in mystery, but they don't bode well for the people of Falcon's Hollow.

Lumber Consortium

The powerful Lumber Consortium, as with all business ventures of any respectable size, must keep secrets from regulators, customers, and even its employees.

Government Dealings: For the past 37 years, the Lumber Consortium has maintained a monopoly in darkwood timber coming out of Darkmoon Vale. The unscrupulous company abuses this monopoly, occasionally threatening to cut off darkwood supplies to Almas and Augustana if its unreasonable demands are not met. Whenever the central government has attempted to intervene on behalf of the company's employees or otherwise meddle in its affairs, the Lumber Consortium has retaliated. For this reason, most politicians in Augustana remain hesitant about interfering with the company or making legislative changes its leaders might find unacceptable.

Now that the founders and their immediate replacements have begun to retire from Andoran's assemblies, a fresh new crop of young politicians seek to continue the legacy of change and betterment of their forebears. On the agenda of some up-and-coming legislators is the destruction (or breakup) of the Lumber Consortium. These assemblymen see the power of the consortium over the central government as embarrassing and inexcusable. As such, many have worked to quietly bolster the government's

presence in Darkmoon Vale in preparation for future clashes. The first step in this process was the deployment of an entire regiment of Eagle Knights to the region.

Illicit Dealings: The founders of the Lumber Consortium represented both honest businessmen and unrepentant criminals. When Andoran gained its independence under the control of a relatively liberal democratic government, the consortium acted swiftly to expunge its illicit activities and those who operated or were otherwise involved with them. The company acted just in time, as a week later the newly formed Eagle Knights of Andoran swept through the consortium's offices in Almas, Augustana, Oreteng, and even tiny Falcon's Hollow. Much to the knights' (and thus, the government's) frustration, they found no evidence of current criminal activities. Since then, the Lumber Consortium has slowly backslid, returning to its illicit and corrupt ways but always careful to build in layers of deception to keep the government from shutting down the company.

Not all of the Lumber Consortium's criminals remain hidden, however, and the company's powerful gavels are known lawbreakers—the more egregious of the two being Thuldrin Kreed. Up until recently—as his growing web of contacts and his own experiences made him better at hiding his crimes—Kreed frequently forced the company's barristers to work overtime in his defense. Although Thuldrin Kreed doesn't know it, though, he is not quite as safe as he assumes. Despite Kreed's increased skill at hiding his crimes and his ability to surpass expectations, some leaders within the Lumber Consortium grow weary of his excesses and look for reasons to cut their ties with him.

Thuldrin Kreed: As one of the most hated men in Darkmoon Vale, the Lumber Consortium's gavel does little to win over townsfolk, the Eagle Knights, or people in general. Many who pass through Falcon's Hollow wonder how such a despicable man has remained in power for so long and why no one has dethroned him. While it is true that Kreed could not survive an assassin's blade, a doughty warrior's sword, or even a wizard's weakest ball of flame, he nonetheless commands enough power to keep retain his command of Falcon's Hollow and the darkwood it exports. The following tricks Kreed uses represent only a portion of his portfolio, and he has contingencies and wards to deal with nearly any threat posed to him.

Against obvious physical violence Kreed maintains an important defense: Payden Teedum and his enforcers. Teedum's contribution to Kreed's safety is direct and straightforward—the burly cutyard boss acts as Thuldrin's bodyguard, putting himself between the gavel and attackers. But Thuldrin knows that Payden presents no real obstacle to a determined and skilled assassin, and over the years Kreed has made a lot of enemies. Thus, Kreed keeps the region's top assassins at bay by working with them. Much of the generous salary paid to him by

the Lumber Consortium goes to various assassin guilds, murder cults (Thuldrin is a generous benefactor of the local church of Zon-Kuthon), morally ambiguous or corrupt adventuring groups, and other such organizations of evil repute. The most powerful of these organizations, the Red Mantis, considers Kreed an honorary member, and occasionally performs a job for him *gratis*, in repayment for his frequent and generous donations. Of course, some of Kreed's donations in this area are actually investments, and he maintains and grows his personal fortune almost entirely through illicit means.

As a powerful member of a ruthless business enterprise, Kreed expects (and receives) some amount of protection (implied or actual) from the Lumber Consortium. In order to stay on the good side of the consortium, Kreed must expend a portion of his own wealth to sustain the illusion of ever-increasing profits. Kreed frequently uses his own money to hire additional temporary lumberjacks to make sure he reaches or exceeds his monthly quota. When he first began this practice, he only needed to put out extra coin once or twice a year. In the last few years, however, Kreed simply considers the extra labor a monthly expense covered by his additional revenue sources (i.e., his contacts with the underworld).

Piren's Bluff

Despite its small size, Piren's Bluff contains numerous secrets waiting for adventurers to uncover.

Bumbo: Bumbo is shamming his mental deficiency and familial relation with the Baron. His real name is Dindler Magrak, and he has served as the Baron's spy for several years, donning various disguises maintained for as long as they serve his needs. He wanders the town grinning like a fool and babbling nonsense to anyone who'll listen or even look at him. Dindler uses the town fool façade to listen in on conversations and watch new visitors. He gives a daily report to Baron Vendikon by sneaking into the keep via a secret passage under one of the doghouses, which leads up into an empty stall in the Baron's stables.

Ben Willhuff: Lucky Ben made a fortune running one of the most powerful thieves' guilds in Absalom's long history some 50 years ago, when he was known as The Black Rose. When a coup threatened to destroy the organization and end his life, he disappeared from Absalom forever. Now in his 70's, he isn't nearly the quick-footed rogue with lightning reflexes he once was, but is still dangerous.

House Almir: House Almir has sorcerous roots it traces to a red dragon named Argrizshar who lived in the Aspodell Mountains centuries ago. The dragon's lair was deep beneath the mountains near present day Piren's Bluff. When the wyrm left its lair to make the journey to Dragonfall, it left behind a vast hoard of magically hidden treasure. House Almir has been obsessed with locating the

LUMBER CONSORTIUM PERSONNEL

The Lumber Consortium employs nearly 2,000 people throughout Andoran. Its executives and employees break down as follows.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jemi Arkona, Augustana
 Gol Ephialtes, Almas
 Garland Rakesclaw, Oregent
 Miastrano Festulian, Oregent
 Bocha Wade, Oregent
 Marson Trabe, Oregent
 Chozan Korpuls, Oregent
 Maxinarius Kollepolis, Almas

GAVELS

Thuldrin Kreed, Falcon's Hollow
 Deegs Agraive, Bellis

OVERBOSSSES

Payden "Payday" Teedum, Falcon's Hollow (lumberjacks)
 Choms "Chomper" Snikt, Bellis (lumberjacks)
 Melson Dents, Oregent (blacksmiths)
 Terrik Sams, Oregent (millwrights)
 Lucius Finch, Oregent (clerks)

WORKERS

600 lumberjacks
 400 security guards
 300 millwrights
 200 laborers
 150 clerks
 100 blacksmiths
 100 other

lost lair of its draconic ancestor for generations, building an estate within Piren's Bluff, near the rumored location of its lair. The house's mining operations are a cover for its efforts to locate the dragon's hidden hoard.

The library in Almir Estate contains hundreds of travel journals, explorer's diaries, and geographical treatises, all focused on the subterranean strata of the Aspodells. While the mines have yielded a fortune in gems, gold, and iron ore, they have yet to produce the Almir's true object of desire.

Gendji Goldfleck: This feisty dwarf woman is Lord Almir's most trusted employee. A veteran miner whose family has worked for the Almir's for the past 80 years, Gendji was entrusted with the knowledge of the true purpose of Almir mining. Lord Almir promised her a share of the dragon's treasure if it is ever located. She operates publicly as overseer of Almir mining operations and the Speaker of the Union of Miners.

IMPORTANT NPCs

- Ambrosia (NE female nymph), fey separatist leader
- Argith (LE Male human expert 3), alchemist in Piren's Bluff
- Aurore Kaiseva (N female half-elf werewolf ranger 7), Fangwatch lieutenant
- Baron Galdur Vendikon (LE male human aristocrat 2/wizard 5), rebellious leader of Piren's Bluff
- Ben Willhuff (CN male human rogue 10), Dead Well owner
- Brickasnurd Hildrinsocks (CG male gnome expert 2), Goose'n'Gander owner
- Boss Payden "Pay Day" Teedum (LE male human monk 2/fighter 3), overboss of the Lumber Consortium
- Daralathyl (CE male great wyrm red dragon), dragon king
- Dopp (CN male halfling expert 6), Wolfhead owner
- Dreyxor Almir (CN male human sorcerer 6), scion of House Almir in Cheliox
- Findit Tobblemouth (CG male gnome wizard 2/expert 4), Diamond Regiment alchemist
- Gavel Thuldrin Kreed (LE male human expert 3/rogue 4), leader of the Lumber Consortium
- Gendji Goldfleck (N female dwarf expert 5), speaker for the Union of Miners
- General Traxxus (LG male human fighter 15), local Andoran army leader
- Gilmore Amring (NG male human bard 5), Olfden mayor
- Graypelt (CE male worg warrior 2), resident of Droskar's Crucible
- Grung Knifetongue (LE male hobgoblin warrior 1), trapper
- Ingrid Odeber (LG female human paladin 11), Diamond Regiment commander and wife of Tablic
- Irik VonSet (LE male human ex-paladin 7/blackguard 5), Olfden council chief advisor
- Jak Crimmy (N male human expert 3), Jak'a'Naples owner
- Jarlben Trookshavits (NE male human expert 2/warrior 1), Lumber Consortium main camp boss
- Jillia Apta (NG female human bard 10), Diamond Regiment spy
- Kabran Bloodeye (CE male half-orc rogue 5/fighter 2), Rouge Lady owner, leader of Redrock Guild
- Kardoblag (N male hill giant), hill giant outcast, husband of Morgsa
- Karlae Siegfrost (N female human cleric 3 of Nethys/wizard 3/mystic theurge 7), retired adventurer
- Lady Cirthana (LG female human cleric 2 of Iomedae), priestess of Iomedae
- Laurel (LG female human cleric 2), Roots and Remedies owner
- Liese Kahkosa (NE female doppelganger druid 1/rogue 4), member of Greenfire Circle
- Lissel (NG female human cleric of Sarenrae 4), Hall of Sarenrae leader
- Luna Aldred (NG female human fighter 4/wizard 5/eldritch knight 4), First Citizen of Olfden
- Magistrate Vamros Harg (NE male halfling aristocrat 2/sorcerer 5), magistrate-elect of Falcon's Hollow
- Marteva d'Salle (N female human expert 5), Tepid Transports owner
- Merlokrep I (LE male kobold fighter 2/sorcerer 4), Dragon King of the Truescale Tribe
- Mierson Berekland (NG male human bard 7), Gold Falls Inn owner
- Milon Rhoddam (N male human expert 2/ranger 2), Lumber Consortium hunter
- Morgsa (N female hill giant), hill giant outcast, wife of Kardoblag
- Namdryn Quinn (CN male half-elf bard 7/shadowdancer 2), Quinn's Carnival owner
- Ragnak (LE male hobgoblin fighter 7), Arthfell forest hobgoblin leader
- Rhasper (NE male human bard 4), owner of the Conqueror's Blade
- Rutho Steiggerson (NG male human ranger 9/rogue 2), Fangwatch leader
- Sharvaros Vade (NE male human expert 1/necromancer 10)
- Sheriff Deldrin Baleson (LN male half-elf expert 3/fighter 3), sheriff of Darkmoon Vale
- Sheriff Rankin (LN male human warrior 5), head lawman of Piren's Bluff
- Shiyara the High Mediator (LE female tiefling cleric 5), Pact Hall high cleric
- Syntira (N female nymph), Eternal Queen of Darkmoon Vale
- Tablic (NG male human druid 8, fighter 2), leader of Greenfire Circle and husband of Ingrid Odeber
- Tamris Quickthorn (NE male halfling rogue 7), Blastwaters leader
- Taxthyl (LE female old green dragon), Arthfell forest scholar
- Tandifel Sathrun (NG male elf ranger 4), master of the Hunter's Guild
- Tobias Thrum (CN male human bard 1/expert 6), Thrumming Birch owner
- Tulrin Endessell (LG male elf cleric 5), First Light caretaker
- Vamros Harg (LN male halfling expert 3), Falcon's Hollow magistrate
- Viaren the Apothecary (CN Female elf expert 3), Black Candle owner
- Wataxshyl (NG male juvenile copper dragon), drunkard and part-time Olfden defender
- Wellam Elberwick (LN male human aristocrat 1/expert 14), Shire of Elberwick representative



EXTREME ALTITUDE ZONES

Droskar's Crag competes with even the might Kodars in the far north as one of the highest mountains in all Golarion. Like the Kodars, Droskar's Crag rises to deadly new heights. Presented here are two new altitude extremes (to add to those on page 90 of the DMG) and the effects associated with each. This information originally appeared in *Pathfinder* #6.

Extreme Altitude (20,001 to 26,000 feet)

At extreme altitude, creatures are subject to the altitude fatigue and altitude sickness of lower altitudes. Mundane acclimation to high altitudes no longer benefits climbers at this height. When an individual takes any ability damage from altitude sickness while at extreme altitude, he develops a hacking cough within 2d4 hours. This results in a persistent cough as the cold, arid air dries out the individual's throat and lungs. The coughing spasms are frequent and cause a -4 penalty on all Balance, Climb, Concentration, Hide, Listen, and Move Silently checks. In addition, any spell with verbal components requires a Concentration check (DC 14 + spell level) to successfully cast. If this Concentration check is failed, the spell is not lost, but the caster must start over again in the next round if he wishes to cast it.

These coughing spasms can be so violent that they can even break ribs. Each day an individual suffers the cough, he takes 1d6 points of damage. Moving back to a lower altitude zone relieves the cough, as does 2 hours per day spent in an extremely humid environment (such as a fog cloud). Spells such as heal and restoration can remove this effect but do not prevent it from returning normally. The cough is not a disease, and cannot be cured by remove disease.

Death Zone (More than 26,000 feet)

Normal life is not possible above an altitude of 26,000 feet; there simply is not sufficient atmospheric pressure to allow enough oxygen to be inhaled by breathing creatures. When a creature that does not possess the Altitude Affinity feat, or does not fall into one of the types or subtypes immune to high altitude effects, climbs to 26,000 feet of elevation, it immediately begins to suffocate (DMG 304). Acclimation to high altitudes does not prevent this effect.

NPCS

The Diamond Regiment and Greenfire Circle are the most helpful and friendly groups in Darkmoon Vale.

DIAMOND REGIMENT SOLDIER

Male human fighter 3
LG Medium humanoid

Init +1; Senses Listen +1, Spot +1

CR 3

CONTINUITY

The Guide to Darkmoon Vale describes the region before the events of *Do: Hollow's Last Hope*, *D1: Crown of the Kobold King*, *D1.5: Return of the Kobold King*, *E1: Carnival of Tears*, and *LB1: Tower of the Last Baron*. As written, the first three modules assume they take place in 4707, but this guide assumes the year is 4708. Ultimately, the difference is not significant, for the most part, and most players won't notice or care if you tweak the timeline of the adventures to bring them in line with the guide (or vice versa).]

STRENGTH OF THE DIAMOND

Your extensive training with fellow Diamond Regiment soldiers has bolstered you against fear.

Prerequisite: Con 13, Wis 13, character level 3rd, member of the Diamond Regiment.

Benefit: Any effect that would normally make you panicked instead makes you frightened. Any effect that would make you frightened instead makes you shaken. Any effect that would make you shaken has no effect on you. Note that you can still become increasingly frightened by multiple fear effects from different sources, but that each source is modified before it is applied to you. In addition, you gain a +2 bonus on any saving throw versus fear effects.

GREEN FAITH ACOLYTE

As your powers come from Green itself, your spells are ineffectual against it.

Prerequisite: Druid level 3rd or cleric of the Green Faith level 3rd.

Benefit: Spells you cast that deal damage, channel negative energy, or otherwise harm life do not hurt normal or magical plants. Plant creatures are not protected by this feat, but plants that grow or are created as a result of magic are.

In addition, whenever you cast a spell that utilizes, heals, or enhances normal or magical plants (such as *entangle* or *plant growth*), you cast the spell at +1 caster level. This benefit does not extend to plant creatures, nor does it extend to spells with an area effect that you use to affect some plants and some creatures (such as using *mass cure light wounds* to cure both plants and allies).

Finally, you gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks made when interacting with nonevil elves, fey, and plant creatures.

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18
(+8 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 27 (3d10+6)

Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2

A NOTE ON DARKMOON WEREWOLVES

Many of the werewolves in Darkmoon Vale—especially those from Arthfell Forest and all members of the Shadow Pack—are neutral evil instead of chaotic evil. Darkmoon werewolves tend to rove together in packs and, outside of their monthly murder sprees, function quite well in society. A few werewolves of the Vale embrace their unpredictable nature but are not consumed by passionate hate and are chaotic neutral.

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.

Melee mwk greatsword +7 (2d6+3/19–20) or

Melee lance +5 (1d8+2/x3)

Ranged mwk composite shortbow +4 (1d6+2/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat Diamond Regiment soldiers work together to set up flanks and protect one another from being flanked. They tend to concentrate on one foe at a time.

Morale Diamond Regiment soldiers fight to the death as long as other living (even if unconscious or incapacitated) Diamond Regiment soldiers are nearby. If alone, a Diamond Regiment soldier attempts to withdraw if reduced to 5 hp.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Feats Cleave, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Strength of the Diamond, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Handle Animal +5, Ride +4

Language Common

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear** lance, masterwork full plate armor, masterwork greatsword, masterwork composite shortbow (+2 Str), 20 arrows

GREENFIRE DRUID

CR 5

Male human druid 5

NG Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14
(+4 armor, +1 shield)

hp 31 (5d8+5)

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.

Melee +1 scimitar +6 (1d6+2/19–20/x2) or

Melee spear +5 (1d8+2/x3)

Ranged spear +3 (1d8+1/x3)

Special Attacks wild shape (1/day)

Spells Prepared (CL 5th [+7 to overcome SR])

3rd—*call lightning* (DC 16), *speak with plants*

2nd—*barkskin*, *flaming sphere* (DC 15), *heat metal* (DC 15)

1st—*entangle* (DC 14, 2), *goodberry*, *magic fang*

0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *purify food and drink*

TACTICS

Before Combat If possible, a Greenfire druid tries to position himself in or near undergrowth and casts *call lightning*.

During Combat If plants are nearby, the Greenfire druid begins by casting *entangle* and then calls down lightning bolts. He targets fire-using characters above all others.

Morale A Greenfire druid retreats if he is reduced to 10 hit points or less or his hawk is badly wounded. If his hawk is alive but endangered, the Greenfire druid fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Feats Green Faith Acolyte, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Penetration

Skills Diplomacy +9 (+11 against nonevil elves, fey, plants), Handle Animal +9, Knowledge (nature) +11, Ride +2, Survival +13 (+15 above ground)

Language Common, Druidic

SQ animal companion (hawk), nature sense, resist nature's lure, trackless step, wild empathy +8, woodland stride

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (4); **Other Gear** +1 *hide armor*, +1 *scimitar*, light wooden shield, 5 spears

GREENFIRE DRUID HAWK COMPANION

N Tiny animal (augmented)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +18

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 16
(+4 Dex, +4 natural, +2 size)

hp 16 (3d8+3)

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee talons +8 (1d4–2)

Space 2–1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat The hawk protects its druid to the best of its ability. It knows well enough to attack entangled creatures.

Morale As long as its druid is up, the hawk fights to the death. If its druid falls, the hawk flees to the nearest tree or high point if reduced to 5 hit points or less.

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 18, **Con** 10, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +2; **Grp** –8

Feats Alertness, Toughness, Weapon Finesse^B

Skills Listen +4, Spot +18

SQ evasion, link, share spells

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Skills Hawks gain a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks.

Tricks The hawk companion knows the attack, come, defend, down, guard, seek, stay, and track tricks.



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The following charts give a rough idea of what sort of random encounters a party might encounter in various parts of Darkmoon Vale.

ARTHFELL FOREST

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–10	1d3 ettercaps	4
11–20	1d3 owlbears	4
21–30	1 green hag	5
31–50	3d4 hobgoblins	5
51–54	1 manticore	5
55–70	2d6 werewolves	5
71–74	1 caustic drake ¹	6
75	Covey (3 green hags)	6
76	1 treant	8
77–97	Wolf pack ²	8
98–00	2d4 corpses	—

1 Use wyvern stats; replace tail stingers with ability to spew a 30-foot line of acid every 1d4 rounds (5d6 points of acid damage; DC 15 Reflex for half).

2 2d6 wolves, 1d2 dire wolves, and 1 winter wolf.

WOLFRIN HILLS

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–10	2d4 gricks	5
11–30	2d6 werewolves	5
31–35	1d3 spectres	7
36–45	3d6 thoqqua	7
46–55	1 gray render	8
56–65	1d4 hill giants	8
66–75	Diamond Regiment patrol ¹	— or 9
76–93	Wolf pack ²	10
94–95	1 roper	12
96–00	1d4 corpses	—

1 3d6 fighter 1, 1d4 fighter 2, and 1 fighter 4.

2 4d4 wolves, 1d2 dire wolves, 1d2 worgs, and 1 winter wolf.

DARKMOON WOOD

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–10	1d3 tatzlwyrms ¹	2
11–25	2d3 grigs	3
26–30	1 dryad	3
31–35	1d2 gricks	3
36–40	1d4 allips	4
41–50	2d6 kobolds	4
51–55	1d3 owlbears	4
56–70	1d2 pixies (no dance)	4
71–72	2d4 shadows	5
73–80	1d4 pixies (w/ dance)	6
81	1 hill giant	7
82–84	1 nymph	7
85	1 greater shadow	8
86–00	Wolf pack ²	8

1 See *Do: Hollow's Last Hope*, available as a free download at paizo.com.

2 2d6 wolves, 1d2 dire wolves, and 1 winter wolf.

FIVE KINGS MOUNTAINS

d%	Encounter	Avg EL
01–15	1d2 gricks	3
16–20	1d4 allips	4
21–40	2d6 kobolds	4
41–45	1d4 wights	4
46–50	2d4 shadows	5
51–60	2d6 werewolves	5
61–70	2d4 harpies	6
71–75	1d3 wyverns	7
76–99	Wolf pack ¹	8
00	4d8 dwarf traders ²	—

1 2d6 wolves, 1d2 dire wolves, and 1 winter wolf.

2 These traders (expert 2) sell goods from PHB at +10% over the listed price.

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