

The ravaged world we find ourselves living in is vast, stretching some five thousand leagues from east to west, and half that distance from north to south. The migration out of the cradle of life at the beginning of the Age of Steel saw many of these lands populated by the various peoples of Simarra. During this period, travel was a slow, dangerous ordeal.

During the Age of Plenty however, the great distances separating our cities and kingdoms became irrelevant. We used the stone gates to travel across the continent easily, swiftly, as if moving from a kitchen into a dining hall. We used the Taer' las Brennath crisscrossing our lands to send messages back and forth from city to city and even travel on ships designed to make use of the mana-streams.

Our world grew smaller.

We marveled at our understanding of mana shards, our apparent mastery of the mana wells. Never once did we pause to consider that the enrichment of our society would ultimately prove to be our greatest weakness; an Achilles heel that abominations from another world would exploit to gain near- total dominance over Simarra. Our naivety has cost us dearly, darkening our world once again, severely hampering our ability to unite against this common foe.

The Keza-Drak control all major stone gates on Simarra. Despite our most valiant efforts to retake some of the major gates, we have only managed to gain control over lesser gates. These lesser portals facilitate limited travel, usually to remote locations and never covering long distances. Exactly how many of these lesser gates exist is not known, but the more we find and control, the more options we have.

As it is, travel from region to region is a dangerous undertaking, fraught with all manner of perils. As mentioned before, our dependence on the stone gates worked against us in more ways than one. People who have spent most of their lives traveling from one part of the world to another by simply stepping through a portal suddenly need to familiarize themselves with the particulars of overland navigation. They have to deal with the elements, have to learn to hunt and survive, and those are just mundane concerns which surface when traveling in this brave new world.

Our enemies hunt us incessantly. The Keza-Drak and Sundaari are a pestilence upon the people of Simarra. Those of us who aren't slain are taken as prisoners slaves to serve or be sacrificed to dark gods - if their lucky. Some are rumored to be twisted, mutated into something else. Brigands and tyrants are also a plague upon the once-free lands of Simarra, carving new kingdoms out of the ashes of war.

Indeed, these degenerate oppressors use the apocalypse to gain lands and territory, lording over the meek, providing brutal protection in exchange for complete subservience. For those of us who risk the journey from freehold to freehold, having to trespass upon the domains of these petty tyrants is nearly as dangerous as traveling through the regions controlled by the Keza-Drak.

Such is life in the Age of Blood.

—Elohan Salaistrien



A WORLD RAVAGED BY YEARS OF WAR

Welcome to the land of Simarra. The world you are about to discover is filled with great peril. A race of beings from another world have come to subjugate the once-peaceful inhabitants of Simarra, driving them into scattered pockets of civilization who hold onto a tenuous thread of hope that one day they might reclaim their world, throwing back the darkness, bringing the light of peace to those who survive.

Fell beasts roam the lands once again, coming out of the desolate places of the world to prey on the already beleaguered survivors of this war-torn age. Corruption and favoritism plagues the free people of Simarra, driving yet another wedge into efforts of Simarrans to unite against the darkness, which sweeps across the land.

Yet, in spite of all the madness, the horrors and desolation, hope still remains.

A WORLD OF ADVENTURE

The Age of blood plunged Simarra into a darkness lasting nearly a decade. Amidst the backdrop of war, valiant heroes set out to re-discover the world around them. Brave men and women of all goodly races on Simarra come out of the darkness to fight against those who would enslave them. Narmrothan Horse Lords patrol the Trachan Steppes, holding back the advance of the Keza-Drak horde their unparalleled mastery of horsemanship allowing these bold men and women to conduct guerrilla-warfare campaigns against the slower armies of their enemies.

The enigmatic Shodonai plague the Keza-Drak in the southern regions of Simarra, striking at vital supply lines while free companies such as the Skull Hammer Squadron roam the land, taking the fight directly to the Keza-Drak, engaging them wherever they are found.

Many adventurers hazard wild places of the world, seeking new havens for the countless refugees of the war. Others sift through the wreck and ruins, searching for lost ascendant technologies, which may turn the tide against the forces of darkness. Insurgents and spies strike deep into the heart of Agärazôn's empire, mounting terrorist attacks, freeing slaves, their efforts to destabilize the Keza-Drakian chain of command playing a vital role in the war for Simarra.

A WORLD ABUNDANT WITH MANA A WORLD NEARLY CORRUPTED BEYOND REPAIR

Mana is both a vibrant, flowing force of energy, which permeates the world, infusing every living thing with the spark of life, and a corrupting bane on those who seek to master its mysteries.

A residue of the primal forces used to create Simarra remains ingrained upon the world as a dynamic force, capable of being shaped and molded as the shaper desires. This substance is known as Mana. Indeed, even in these dark times, there is mana and those brave souls who wield it, standing as living reminders of how the world was created. To the devout, these people remain the most visible evidence that the Gods have not yet forsaken the world. At the same time however, they are stark examples of what happens when someone attempts to channel too much of Enâra's cursed life force.

- A treatise on Mana, by Elohan Salaistrien

Mana manifests in a number of different forms on Simarra, from mighty powers wielded by the wizards of the Arcanus League, to mana wells of pure energy located at junctions of Taer' las Brennath. Mana shards act as enhancements for magical energy, oftentimes amplifying the ability of adepts who use them while casting spells.

Aviki are versed in the craft of learning to control enigmatic ascendant technology as well as mana shards. Then there are spirit binders and bone shamans who fuel their powers by summoning and binding the dead into fetishes.

Those who wield mana are both respected and feared for their potent ability and the knowledge it takes to manipulate it. The adepts of Simarra are truly brave heroes, exposing themselves to attack from all manner of vile horrors just by casting a single spell, as Enâra's madness has begun to taint the very essence of the world, a final curse on the people of Simarra in a time when all hope is fading.

Sundaari blood magi walk the land once more, ignoring old laws forbidding the use of their treacherous magicks that use blood a source of power. Tainted magi embrace the horrific seepage from the threshold realm, and in so doing, become unholy vessels of Enâra's madness.

A WORLD LITTERED WITH CAST IRON PHANTOMS OF A GOLDEN AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Simarra is a world in which technology and mana share an enigmatic co-existence. Adventurers roam the world seeking to find and master the enigmatic legacy of their predecessors, the Order of the Avikus, who created ascendant technology, the likes of which can be found almost anywhere in the known world.

Privateers sail the treacherous waters of the black coast, raiding Keza-Drak ports and attacking ships at sea with explosive black powder weaponry made from knowledge gained from clan Volagar during the

Age of Steel. Magi also travel the lands of Simarra as the remnants of the Arcanus league seeks to destroy the (they believe) dangerous ascendant technology before its secrets are unleashed upon an already ravaged world.

A WORLD OF MYSTERY

The blood throne setting is a vast, largely unexplored world, the primary continent stretching some five thousand miles from East to West, and another two thousand miles from North to South.

A number of large islands lay off the coastlines though most found predominantly in the southern waters known as the black Sea, a massive chain of islands found to the Southwest of Simarra. Many mysteries surround these islands. Rumors say that the Sundaari built temples there during their banishment from Simarra during the Age of Plenty and still practice their dark rites deep within the jungles of the nameless land.

Planar travel plays a major role in the history of the Blood Throne campaign setting, providing an excellent backdrop for numerous stories. With the Deadlands, the madness-tainted Threshold Realm, and the Great Rift (which leads to the home world of the Keza-Drak) just waiting to for exploration, this book provides narrators with every tool necessary to extend campaigns beyond the comparatively tame boundaries of Simarra.

It is written that during the Age of Steel, there was a bleak period of time when mana was thought to have abandoned the world. During these uncertain times the people of Simarra erected great aqueducts, lavish bathing houses, and other antediluvian constructs. What were these strange amalgamations of metal, gears, cords and wire used for?

Few of us living in these grim days know for sure.

They say that the Trade Lords knew, once upon a time, but where those enigmatic folk might have disappeared to... This is also a mystery. "Find the Trade Lords, and you'll have your answer," people say, but I am not sure I believe them. I think the key to unlocking the secrets of the "ascendant technology" lies hidden within the devices themselves, and, coiled around that mystery, rests the truth of what the future holds for Simarra.

-Elohan Salaistrien

THE CREATION MYTH

The following story has been told and re-told over the ages, and is commonly accepted as what really happened when Simarra was created.

The new world hung there in the void, a featureless mass of primordial ooze and pure, white-hot mana. While the fire of creation raged, Kel-Zedon ("The Shaper," as he is known to mortals) stepped forward and cupped the mass into his hands, molding and forming a globe. He took three smaller orbs and hung them in the void around Simarra, giving those creatures that would inhabit the world two moons to light their way during the night, and a blazing hot sun to warm them during the day. As Simarra began to cool, The Shaper fashioned mountains, valleys, great canyons, vast plains and lofty plateaus onto the face of this newly formed mana-earth.

Gimbureth wept at the sight of the rugged beauty that Kel-Zedon had created, her tears forming rivers, lakes and vast oceans. Her twin Iragreth drew a cut in her breast and poured her heart's blood upon the lands of Simarra. Everywhere her blood fell, trees, grass and all manner of plant life sprang into being. Vathrim looked upon the face of Simarra and whispered softly. The sound of his voice gathered force and became the four winds, blowing across the world.

Uzgora, the daughter of mystery created the mists and secret places of the world, traced her fingers across the face of Simarra, lacing the world with Taer' las Brennath and the potent Sathaen Stones. Torrodoth fashioned the molds of the elder races and all living creatures, and lastly, Enâra took some essence from each of the gods and sprinkled it across the globe. As she did so, the molds that Torrodoth had constructed came to life, and the races of Simarra were born.

LEXICON

The Blood Throne setting has its own unique terminology. The following section lists a number of terms you will encounter when reading this book. Some are place-names, others proper names of individuals or historical periods. Each has a short description to help you familiarize yourself with this world and the people who inhabit it.

Aberrant Gods: (Ascendant gods) Aberrant gods are lesser beings created by some of the elder gods during the Primordial Age. The aberrant gods went on to create their own races, including orcs and gnomes. It is unknown how many aberrant gods exist. Even in the present Age of Blood, there are rumors of new aberrant gods making themselves known to the people of Simarra.

Age of Blood: Present-day. Marked by the betrayal of Agärazôn and the coming of the Keza-Drak, the Age of Blood began when the Betrayer opened the stone gates and plunged the world into darkness.

Age of Plenty: The longest age of Simarra. A time of peace matched only by the bliss, that was the Primordial Age. Many great developments happened during this time.

Age of Steel: The end of innocence and immortality for the elder races.

A great period of strife and war lasting nearly a thousand years, the beginning of the Age of Steel marks the exodus of the people of Simarra from the Cradle of Life. The elder races begin to mingle with aberrant races and for the first time there bloodshed on Simarra.

Agärazôn: (The Great Betrayer) An Othrännän, Agärazôn is directly responsible for the opening of the Stone Gates and the resulting invasion of the Keza-Drak. He has set himself up as the overlord of Simarra, ruling from his seat on the Blood Throne in the wicked city of Thel-Kaza.

Ailindra Ungoril: A Sundaari high priestess of the evil god Thûrak. Ailindra taught Agärazôn blood magic and the ways of the Zôrûn-Ahmîrê (Brethren of The Flesh).

Anadriendra Udalanarae: (The Crone of the Fell Marshes) Anadriendra Udalanarae is an elven witch of unspeakable power. Nearly as old as Simarra itself, Anadriendra founded the first of the ancient covens and rumored to have been the first person to use mana shards, though history teaches it was Thengrin Tarelion who discovered mana shards. In an act of vengeance, Anadriendra transformed the once-fertile nation of Talmosa into a vast swampland and is rumored to live somewhere in the marshes to this day. Her crones delivered the Talmosan Revelations to the city of Tadar-kesh in the 333rd year of plenty.

Ardrennen Falls: A free hold on the edge of the wild lands. One of the last remaining sanctuaries in Simarra for refugees of the war, Ardrennen falls is a city of roughly 400,000 people. It sits on the eastern side of the Keza-Drak mountain range around a waterfall of the same name, which plunges some 10,000 feet into a mysterious region known only as the "Wild Lands."

Ascendant Technology: Enigmatic technology; a fusion of mana shards and engineering to create weapons and devices capable of a wide range of effects. Some pieces of ascendant technology include water purifiers, flying machines, pulse lances, war gloves and giant battle drones called O'rak-dra. Ascendant technology was born of a need to find a way to combat dragons during the Hunting Times, a period during the Age of Steel when the great serpents were brought to near-extinction.

Asha-Tor: (The Summerland, Heaven, The First Home) According to myth, the Asha-Tor is a dimensional realm created by the elder goddess Enâra at the dawn of time. Her priests (named heretics by the arrogant Arcanus League) preach that Enâra created the Asha-Tor as a place of retreat from the vastness of the void as well as a home for the Elder Gods who were born when she split herself into seven separate entities. Later, Enâra decreed that all souls would come to the Asha-Tor to rest from their toils on Simarra.



Aviki: The pluralization of Avikus (See below).

Avikus: A mana smith; one who uses mana shards and is capable of creating ascendant technology. An Avikus is an adept who is capable of tapping the latent energy of a mana shard in order to fuel powers or create devices powered by mana shards. Most Aviki belong to an organization known as the Order of The Avikus.

Azruun Badlands: A dangerous, blighted region deep within the Vaskraall Wastes reputed to be the ancestral home of the Shodonai.

Blood Throne: The Blood Throne is Agärazôn's seat of power in the wicked city of Thel-Kaza. Forged of blood, steel and bone, many say to have sentience and require daily sacrifice to sate its thirst for blood.

Blood Wars: A period in time during the early years of the Age of Steel when a sect of Volsparan elves were persecuted for wielding vile magicks that corrupted the lands. These renegade elves would later be known as Blight Elves.

Cradle of Life: Devastated by years of war, the cradle of life was once the home of all the elder races of Simarra. All creatures – even the gods themselves – lived in the cradle of life during the primordial age. When the primordial age ended and the Age of Steel began, the elder races began to migrate out of this region, eventually traveling to all areas of the world, forming the myriad cultures that exist today.

Daelians: Daelians are humans who live in the vast Daelian wood, a region of Simarra just south of the Cradle of Life. Most Daelians are scholars who use memory shards (A type of mana shard) to store historical records. The memory vaults of the Daelian scholars are extensive and purported to hold the knowledge of every event in the history of Simarra.

Dassurri Basin: A fertile region of Simarra.

Droghedia: A volcanic peninsula, home to a race of fire-dwarves known as Clan Volagar. The dangerous blasted region is one of the last holdouts for those who still oppose the Keza-Drak.

Drogon Felslayer: An orc warlord who led a revolt against Battlemaster Ghûchok "Seven tongues," the leader of the Saran-Ghori orcs. Drogon Felslayer formed a new orc nation – the Morash-Ghóran – and allied himself with Agärazôn and the Keza-Drak.

Dundran'Kal: An Othrännän advisor to the Saran-Ghori Orcs.

Durrigan Flameheart: Durrigan Flameheart is the ancient thane of Clan Volagar and founder of Gûndûm-Zog, the ancestral homeland of Clan Volagar.

Elder Gods: The first gods; creators of the elder races. Their names are Enâra, Thûrak, Iragreth, Gimbureth, Kel-Zedon, Torrodoth, Vathrim and Uzgora.

Elohan Salaistrien: A Volsparan elf and scholar who has taken it upon himself to chronicle the events of the Age of Blood.

Enâra: (The First Mother, The Fallen Goddess, The Mad Goddess): The first god-form and creator of all others. Enâra is a tortured shell of her former glory, imprisoned in the nefarious Threshold Realm by the elder gods at the end of the Age of Steel in retribution for betraying them. Exposure to the chaos of that plane has driven her insane.

Galburak: An aberrant god of flame. Galburak is the patron deity of Fire-dwarves.

Ghaskrii: Winged reptilian creatures that inhabit the floating landmasses of Simarra. They ride the air currents, attacking land dwellers wherever they find them.

Ghûchok Seven-Tongues: The leader of the Saran-Ghori orcs.

Gimbureth: One of the elder gods. Gimbureth reveres nature in all its forms.

Gûndûm-Zog: The ancestral home of clan Volagar. The city of Gûndûm-Zog lies in a secret location deep in the world.

Hadrannath: Hills that ring the cradle of life. Here the Primordial Age, were built many temples dedicated to the elder gods. The Keza-Drak destroyed most of these temples when they invaded.

Iragreth: Elder Goddess. She reveres both nature and love. Iragreth is the Twin of Gimbureth.

Japira Xutlu: Ancient ruler of Tadar-kesh. Japira rejected the Talmosan Revelations and the serpent goddess Zashtazzra killed her for her blasphemy.

Kapurra Beast: Giant lizards with great leaping power. The Shodonai domesticated them using them as beasts of burden. Shodon warriors ride them in battle.

Kel-Zedon: (The Maker) An elder god, Kel-Zedon is the patron deity of all engineers and artisans. Legend says he molded the world with his hands during the creation of Simarra.

Keza-Drak (The Great Horde): Keza-Drak are hideous beings who come from another dimension. They are towering monstrosities, often measuring over 7 ft. tall and weighing well over 300 lb. Their bodies are covered in tough, chitinous protrusions and they have slightly elongated heads, emphasizing a sloping forehead and their cavernous mouth with razor sharp teeth. Despite their appearance, the Keza-Drak are master tacticians, bred for war and conquest by their god, Urkog-Drall. The dark god created the Keza-Drak to further his own ambitions regarding the utter conquest of all things, mortal and immortal alike.

King Breaad: The ruler of Thelstaad Keep and head of the Storm Brigade. King Breaad is a noble man who commands a force of 5000 men. These valiant men

guard the keep and, by proxy, Spire-Reach pass. They keep it safe from the Keza-Drak and other threats and provide escort to Ardrennen Falls.

Kiv'Larast: A legendary sanctuary for dragons, rumored to exist somewhere deep within the earth. Legend says Kiv'Larast they created it to escape persecution by the elder races during the hunting times. Others claim that Kiv'Larast is also a vast trove of relics including the most powerful pieces of ascendant technology.

Korduc Barrens: The Korduc Barrens is a blasted region north of the cradle of life. Many rebellious factions of Keza-Drak have formed their own Black Kingdoms in this war-ravaged wasteland and constantly war against each other and anyone else they deem as a threat.

Kotarrans: Once self-styled protectors of the cradle of life, these half-giants were originally giants but cursed by the elder god Vathrim for their arrogance. Vathrim reduced the once-conceited giants to half their size, decreeing that, until they learned humility and redeemed themselves, they would remain a shell of their former might.

Mana: Mystical energy often speculated to be the lifeblood of Simarra. Adepts use it when harnessing their powers. Aviki harness it in mana shards.

Mana Shards: Sometimes referred to as mana stones, mana shards are physical manifestations of mana and are primarily found near Taer' las Brennath nexus points and in other areas of high activity such as henges. Mana shards contain latent power that can be harnessed and used as a source of energy that can fuel ascendant technology or even boost adept powers.

Megath-Tor: The first city of the elder races, created during the Primordial Age. Considered the most holy place in the world Megath-Tor, it was the focal point of countless wars throughout the ages. Most recently sacked again by the Keza-Drak at the end of the Age of Plenty, rebuilt and renamed Thel-Kaza, the city of the Blood Throne.

Moran-gûr: Capital city of the Shield Wall Dwarves. With no communication received from Moran-gûr since the Keza-Drak invaded and is it rumored to be under siege.

Morargrim: Demonic servants of the evil god Thûrak. Morargrim are adepts capable of immense power, but their true weapon is the ability to shift into any form, making them supreme spies. The Morargrim have played humanity against each other since their creation during the age of steel. They caused the hunting times and sparked the ascendant wars.

Morash-Ghóran: A tribe of orcs who have aligned with Agärazôn and the Keza-Drak. Drogon Felslayer leads them.

Naeth-Kügraz: A Keza-Drak held seaport on the Gulf of Rana where many slaves change hands. It is the second largest source of Keza-Drakian power on Western Simarra dwarfed only by Thel-Kaza.

Narballa Henge: The Narballa henge is the second largest known nexus of Taer' las Brennath on Simarra. It is the site where Agärazôn betrayed his fellow God Spawn and proclaimed his loyalty to Thûrak. The place is now a ruin supposedly inhabited by vile beasts that have come out of the Threshold Realm.

Narmrothans: Narmrothans are nomadic horse clans who roam the Trachan steppes fighting the Keza-Drak wherever they find them.

Nekarim: The Nekarim are mysterious beings, revered by the Shodonai. Some say they are gods, but none outside the Shodonai have ever actually seen one of the Nekarim, and the Shodonai are not very forthcoming with information regarding this subject.

Numarath: A broken haunted land in eastern Simarra once the homeland of the Narmrothans, said to have been ravaged by spirits and undead from the dead lands. The Keza-Drak avoid it like the plague, and none who have entered that realm have ever been seen again.

O'rak-dra: Great and terrible machines of war that are powered by ascendant technology, used to fight dragons during the hunting times. None exist today, though some claim that there are hidden schematics, secreted away from the general public, even from the order of the Avikus. Using these schematics one could rebuild the dreaded O'rak-dra for use against the Keza-Drak. Agärazôn also seeks them out.

Order of the Avikus: A society founded to teach people how to use mana shards and ascendant technology.

Othránnän: (God Spawn) Othránnän are the children of Enâra, created at the end of the Age of Steel to serve the elder races as advisors. Blessed with uncommonly long life, many of the Othránnän lived to see the end of the Age of Plenty only to fall by Agärazôn's hand.

There are rumors that some escaped the massacre at the Narballa Henge and secretly work to unite the people of Simarra during these dark times.

Primordial Age: Arguably, the longest age in history, but unproven due to lack of records, this was the time when the gods lived on Simarra and the elder races were immortal. The loss of immortality for the people and the diminishing of the gods from Simarra marked the end of the Primordial age.

Sarangak Forest: A wicked place in Eastern Simarra, the Sarangak forest is home to Blight Elves who twist and corrupt all they touch.

Saran-Ghori: A tribe of orcs, who have aligned with Narmrothan horse clans in an effort to fight back the

Keza-Drak, led by Ghûchok Seven Tongues.

Sargolia: A remote nation in Eastern Simarra isolated from the rest of the world by a mountain range known as the Sargolian wall. Rumors tell that the Keza-Drak overran Sargolia within the first chaotic days of the invasion.

Sathaen Stones: Sathaen Stones are massive obelisks that mark the presence of Taer' las Brennath. They comprise the great henges dotting Simarra (such as the Narballa Henge and Sedrin Henge) and used in the construction of the Stone gates.

Sedrin Henge: The largest known Henge on Simarra, the Sedrin Henge is located in Megath-Tor (now known as Thel-Kaza). This gate is where the vast majority of Keza-Drak invaded at the end of the Age of Plenty.

Sedrin Oracle: A Shodonai priestess who was until recently a slave in Thel-Kaza. She received her visions at the Sedrin Henge, and has since escaped to an undisclosed location. She has sent out a call to heroes, asking them to seek her out and hear the vision.

Seguire Gnomes: Seguire gnomes are craftsmen and gadgeteers without peer. Their cunning and ingenuity have led to the development many strange wondrous devices, expanding on developments the Shield Wall Dwarves have made in steam-powered technology. The Seguire have also made headway in the use of enigmatic Ascendant Technology.

Seguirion: The aberrant god of the Seguire gnomes.

Shek-Tar Gnomes: The Shek-Tar gnomes are domineering cannibals, known to keep slaves for both work and consumption, mostly wyldlings, though sometimes Seguire gnomes or humans. They care little for nature and follow one of the Aberrant Gods, an un-named aberrant god of trickery and domination. They sacrifice to honor their nameless god and build monuments in his glory.

Shodonai: One of the most enigmatic cultures on Simarra, the Shodon warlords rode out of the treacherous Vaskraall Wastes in the latter days of the Age of Plenty.

These people, calling themselves Shodonai, brought with them a number of oracles claiming the world was about to plunge into a terrible darkness, eclipsing all the horrors of the Age of Steel. Shodonai are natural psychics who manifest their powers at puberty. These powers are marked by stones that grow out of their bodies in various places.

Simarra: The continent in which the Blood Throne game is set.

Stone Gates: Stone Gates are portals which, when working normally, are used to travel instantaneously from city to city. Their creation facilitated trade between all nations on the massive continent of Simarra including remote nations such as Sudeja, as

stone gates are found everywhere.

However, at the dawn of the Age of Blood, Agärazôn used vile magicks to twist the function of the most powerful stone gates, fusing them open, keying all of them to facilitate travel to and from the enigmatic Threshold Realm instead of connecting from city to city. This treachery allowed the Keza-Drak to invade all major cities in Simarra simultaneously. Many stone gates exist in the world. Not all of them have been found.

Sudeja: A remote nation in North-Eastern Simarra. Nothing has been heard from Sudeja since the invasion began over 10 years ago.

Sundaari: Vile humans who venerate Thûrak and practice blood magic. The Sundaari are responsible for many atrocities that occurred during the Ascendant wars. They sacked Megath-Tor twice and subjugated Kotarrans to untold horrors including the creation of Urrumäz – mutated half-giants.

Sundanar Peninsula: Homeland of the Sundaari.

Tadar-kesh: The capital city of Talmosa.

Taer' las Brennath (The Blood of the Mother Goddess): Lines of mystical energy which crisscross the world, intermittently connecting at nexus points, often referred to as mana wells.

Talmosa: A swamp-plagued nation in the southern-central region of Simarra. Rumors say that the Talmosans (and their Goddess Zashtazzra) have struck an alliance with Agärazôn.

Tarud Mesa: A rugged region north of the Trachan Steppes.

Tazâri-Chock: Keza-Drakian generals.

Theladrin Order: The secret council of Othrännän, rumored to have disbanded. During the Age of Plenty, the Theladrin Order would meet regularly to discuss the happenings throughout Simarra in order to avert any disasters. The betrayal of Agärazôn was their biggest failure.

Thel-Kaza (The Fallen City, Megath-Tor, The City of the Blood Throne): Located in the now-devastated Cradle of Life, Thel-Kaza is the newest incarnation of Megath-Tor, having been razed and then rebuilt into a byzantine metropolis of degradation and depravity. It is the seat of power for Agärazôn's growing empire and the largest concentration of Keza-Drak in the world.

Thelstaad Keep: A Stronghold on the western side of the Shield Wall Mountains, Thelstaad keep was once a base of operations for King Breaod and the Storm Brigade, sacked recently by the Keza-Drak.

Thengrin Talerion: Founder of the Order of the Avikus. Thengrin discovered Taer' las Brennath and tapped the first mana wells.

Thorongrar: The dwarven name for the Shield Wall Dwarves.

Threshold Realm: A wicked extra-planar dimension said to connect to other dimensions, possibly all known planes of existence. The Keza-Drak came through the Threshold Realm to invade Simarra with the aid of Agärazôn. Enâra is imprisoned in this realm and her madness corrupts it.

Thugash-Tor: (The underworld, Hell, The Abyss) The Thugash-Tor was created by Thûrak when he was cast out of the Asha-Tor by Enâra. It is a place of unending torment

Thûrak: (The Fallen one, Lord of Darkness, Ruler of the World) One of the elder gods, Thûrak was cast out of the Asha-Tor when it became apparent that he strove to undo everything Enâra and the others had created. Thûrak, in turn, created the Thugash-Tor and the dreaded Morargrim. His hand guided the fall of Agärazôn and rewarded his betrayal.

Thusparri: (Wind Lords) The Thusparri are tall, stocky elves who have taken to living high in the mountains where they can be close to the great eagles, hawks and griffons they ride. Thusparri have been driven from many of their lofty mountain aeries by the Keza-Drak, but still fight valiantly against the encroaching darkness.

Togrun Ael-Shodai: Leader of the Shodonai slain during the invasion. Togrun's death sparked a schism in the Shodonai, prompting many people to travel north, seeking vengeance for his death.

Torrodoth: Elder god and patron deity of the Shield Wall Dwarves.

Trachan Steppes: A rugged region in Western Simarra and home to the Narmrothan horse clans.

Ubrathil Keep: A dwarven stronghold 200 miles north of Ardrennen Falls, sacked by the Keza-Drak, and thought to be a base of operations for excursions into the deep earth.

Ungchuk Goblin: Wicked subterranean creatures who feast on the flesh of humanoids. The Ungchuk have a strong hatred for Fire dwarves and hunt clan Volagar incessantly.

Urkog-Drall: (Destroyer of Worlds) The god of the Keza-Drak.

Urrumâz Half-Giant: Mutated half-giants who serve as shock troops in Agärazôn's army.

Uzgora: Elder goddess of Magic and mysteries.

Vaskraall Wastes: A vast desert in Southern Simarra.

Vathrim: Elder God. Vathrim created the Giants of Simarra because he wanted a warrior race to protect all others and cursed the Kotarrans for their arrogance. Vathrim is a noble god who reveres strength and honor.

Volagar: Fire dwarves who were cast out of Moran-gûr for heretical devotion to Galburak. Fire dwarves have a number of fire-related abilities and are the creators of black powder weapons, which are common

in Simarra. They live in volcanic citadels in the Ash Mountains of Droghedia.

Volspär: Volspär are the most common type of elf on Simarra. They tend to live on the ground, deep in forests, or in large cities.

Volugrash: A renegade sect of fire dwarves who broke from clan Volagar over religious differences, claiming intolerance.

Wild Lands: A vast stretch of territory some 2000 miles wide and 10,000 feet below sea level. The wild lands are largely unexplored. Expeditions into the region during the Age of Steel failed driving settlers out of the region. The wild lands are the homeland of the Seguire and Shek-Tar gnomes.

Zashtazzra: An aberrant goddess, the serpent goddess is the patron deity of all Talmosans and is the one credited with the creation of the lizard folk who dominate the region.

Zôrûn-Ahmrê: (The brethren of the Flesh) Zôrûn-Ahmrê are Sundaari interrogators and hunters. These adepts are well versed in torture and interrogation. They use blood magic to hunt down runaway slaves or assassinate enemies of Agärazôn.

Zukuk-Chock: Keza-Drakian battle priests, fragmented due a schism in the sect. Most still follow the god of the Keza-Drak: Urkog-Drall, while others have shifted allegiance to the elder god Thûrak. This infighting has spread throughout the Keza-Drak, precipitating a civil war, which has effectively halted the conquest of Simarra.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE AGE OF BLOOD

The following section takes a brief look at the events and people that have shaped the current situation that dominates the Blood Throne setting.

THE COMING OF THE KEZA DRAK

They came in droves; countless multitudes of Keza-Drakian warriors flooded through the great gate into the dreaded Threshold Realm to swear fealty to Agärazôn. The fires of their camps lit up the region as far as the eye could see, illuminating the black void with an orange glow. The Keza-Drak used the Threshold realm as a staging ground for their armies. Agärazôn ordered massive citadels built within the Threshold Realm to protect not only the great gate, but also all the other portals into Simarra from the tainted horrors that roamed the nether-wastes. Keza-Drakian warlords developed a battle plan while their forces massed. They would maneuver invasion forces to each of the great gates and simultaneously fall upon the unsuspecting people of Simarra.

The Morargrim constructed great magical beacons - waypoints to guide the Keza-Drak through the endless night and swirling mists of the Threshold Realm to the various portals dotting the sub-plane. After what seemed to Agärazôn an eternity, all was ready.



THEL-KAZA: CITY OF THE BLOOD THRONE

Since the beginning, there was Megath-Tor, "The First City", once home of the gods and a bastion of peace and tranquility for all. Megath-Tor had withstood the chaos of the Age of Steel and restored to its former glory during the Age of Plenty. Nevertheless, as the Age of Blood dawned and war exploded in every corner of the known world, Megath-Tor finally fell under the weight of over half a million invaders from another world.

Under the guidance of Lord Agärazôn, the Keza-Drak sacked the city, tearing down the great icons of a fallen people and replacing them with idols of their own making. Megath-Tor was rebuilt into a sprawling, byzantine metropolis of wickedness and degradation, forever hence to be known to the people of the world as Thel-Kaza; the living monument to both Thûrak and the god of the Keza-Drak: Urkog-Drall.

Agärazôn built his palace on the remains of the ancient abbey next to the Sedrin Henge. In the great hall at the center of the immense complex, the Lord of Simarra constructed an altar to Thûrak; an ornate throne composed of steel, bone and flesh. Thûrak himself blessed the Throne, imbuing it with sentience and an insatiable thirst for blood.

In a diabolic weeklong ritual involving the sacrifice of over a thousand innocents, Agärazôn proclaimed himself High Priest of Thûrak and sat on the Blood Throne. As he did, the artifact drained all the blood from Agärazôn's body and bestowed indescribable power upon the fallen Othrännän. Agärazôn, the lord of the world, commander of the Keza-Drakian legions, chief of the Morargrim and the first true Disciple of Thûrak, was reborn an avatar of Thûrak.

All across Simarra, wave after wave of Keza-Drakian legions rushed through the open gates to attack the oblivious people of the world.

City after city fell to the warlords and their battle-hardened armies. The people of Simarra fled into the wilderness to escape the great horde of alien fiends that slaughtered or enslaved all who stood in their way. Agärazôn himself led the attack on Megath-Tor. The city - already in the throes of conflict between the Shodonai and the Arcanus league - fell to Agärazôn's legions within a fortnight, scattering what remained of the Order of the Avikus and the Arcanus league to the winds.

All the Shodonai who had come north from the Vaskraall wastes and survived the conflict with the Arcanus League perished in the fight against the Keza-Drakian horde. The mysterious people had come to Megath-Tor to defend the city of their ancestors in accordance with the Talmosan revelations, believing it to be their destiny to either throw back the horde or die trying. Within six months, nearly every major surface city on the continent had fallen to the invading horde. Agärazôn proclaimed himself Lord of the World and renamed Megath-Tor, calling the city Thel-Kaza.

The Age of Blood had begun.

THE RETURN OF THE BLOOD LORDS

Therefore, after nearly a millennium of peace, the betrayal of Agärazôn plunged the world into a period of war and darkness greater than anything Simarrans had ever known. The self-styled lord of the world issued a call across the lands for all Sundaari to return to Thel-Kaza and rekindle the ancient sacrificial fires in accordance with Thûrak's divine will.

The offspring of the ancient Sundaari flocked to Thel-Kaza and began practicing the ancient rites in accordance with the old ways. The teachings of the vile aberrant goddess Mordureth - antediluvian secrets of dark sorcery and potent blood magic - passed on again to the would-be disciples of the sinister daughter of Thûrak. Sundaari Blood Priests erected temples in every conquered city, proclaiming to the subjugated masses that salvation could be theirs if the people willingly renounced the elder gods and took the blood mark of Thûrak.

It was either that, the priests said, or be thrown into bondage as slaves or sacrificed to the dark gods. While a surprising number of people chose death, a great many people of all races and creeds took the mark, willingly pledging fealty to Thûrak in exchange for a chance at life in the new world.

THE CONQUERING GOD

Agärazôn's treachery was not only a betrayal of the people of Simarra and the Othránnän; It was also open rebellion against the Elder gods themselves, for another divine being - Urkog-Drall; god of the Keza-Drak - crossed into the nether-regions of Simarra.

The God of the Keza-Drak bided his time as the invasion of Simarra began, concentrating the full force of his influence in the world towards his children as they conquered city after city. Of course, Urkog-Drall perceived the Elder gods immediately upon entering the same dimension as they. The elder gods also became aware of his malign presence and knew Agärazôn and Thûrak had thrice betrayed them.

The elder gods massed to challenge Thûrak and this would-be usurper, only to be overthrown in defeat again and again. Each defeat made Urkog-Drall bolder in his pursuit of the elder gods. As his armies conquered in the world below, his power grew. Wholly defeated and concerned only with their survival, the elder gods fled the nether world to hide on war-torn Simarra.

THE DESTRUCTION OF KIV LARAST

As Agärazôn planned the conquest of Simarra, he knew that he would have to deal with the dragons of Kiv'Larast. The draconic tribes who had survived the Hunting times and flourished underground during the Age of Plenty held too much power to be allowed to take on major roles in the war. Moreover, they were the keepers of ascendant technology. If the people of Simarra gained access to the ancient vaults of ascendant technology, the balance could very well shift in favor of the people of Simarra. Agärazôn knew he could not allow that to take place.

Agärazôn gathered the Morargrim together. To this point, Agärazôn's agents had been busy hunting down the remaining Othránnän, gathering magical relics from the shattered Chantries across the world, and obtaining ancient tomes of knowledge. The time had come to deal with the potential threat of Kiv'Larast.

Agärazôn commanded the Morargrim to take a force one hundred thousand strong consisting of elite Keza-Drak warriors and Sundaari blood magi down into the bowels of the earth and destroy or enslave the dragon tribes. He bade them destroy the homeland of the dragons, and bring as much ascendant technology as possible back to Thel-Kaza for use against the forces of light.

Following their dread lord's instructions, the Morargrim led their army through the secret entrance and down into the deep earth. The way was difficult; for draconic seers had received visions of the coming conflict, and had bid their leaders prepare traps for the

invading hordes. In addition, there were other things besides dragons in the bowels of the earth, and they cared nothing for the wars of the surface much less the precious agenda of the Morargrim.

Thousands died before they ever got within sight of the borders of Kiv'Larast. However, the Morargrim kept coming, for Agärazôn would brook no failure. Death would be infinitely more preferable to the Morargrim, were they to return with reports of anything less than complete success. Six months after they left the surface world, a force of forty thousand battle-weary warriors returned to Thel-Kaza with word of the campaign against Kiv'Larast.

The ancient home of the draconic tribes had been destroyed. Those dragons that had not died in the fighting either had fled deeper into the recesses of the underworld or been captured. As for the enigmatic ascendant technology, much of it was feared lost.

The dragons set cunning traps designed to collapse access to the vaults containing the most dangerous of the technology. The Morargrim were able to recover a few relics that might be of use in the war, but thousands of lives had been lost trying to reclaim them, and with only marginal success. The Morargrim remained confident that the forces of light - who by then had overcome their shell shock and had begun to forge an organized resistance - were not going to be able to recover anything else from the tomb that was Kiv'Larast.

The Morargrim and Sundaari had encountered numerous dormant spells and incantations, presumably left by the dragons that fled the destruction of their homeland. Designed to bring doom upon any fool who disturbed them, these dangerous constructs littered the ruins, waiting for unwary fools to come and set them off. The Morargrim remained convinced that, even if they did try, anyone going into that place would meet a gruesome fate.

RECENT EVENTS

The war for Simarra has raged for nearly a decade. Many changes have taken place during this dark period, all of which affect the free peoples of Simarra for good or ill. Indeed some of these events have had a drastic impact the forces of darkness and their ongoing struggle for domination of the continent.

THE SACK OF THELSTAAD KEEP

Once an enduring symbol of strength and stability, Thelstaad Keep was besieged by a force of ten thousand Keza-Drak for five bloody years. The siege ended with an overwhelming assault in which thousands of Keza-Drak died taking the keep. Even

more unsettling were the strange weapons they used to break the backs of the defenders.

Monstrous steel constructs functioning in a manner similar to catapults belched black smoke as they battered the mana shield protecting the keep with projectiles that exploded upon impact with the energy barrier that faithfully protected the keep and its defenders. Shock troopers wielding savage weapons pulsing with energy rushed to the mana shield, cutting through the barrier as if it were mundane steel. The barrage eventually overloaded the mana shields, bringing them down.

In the end, the majority of the ragged defenders pulled back into Spire-reach Pass to prepare for the advance of the Keza-Drak. Two-hundred brave heroes remained, facing their deaths in a valiant effort to stall the horde for as long as they could, buying time for their brethren to retreat into the narrow pass and join up with the Shield Wall dwarves in their mountain holds.

The sack of Thelstaad Keep was an ill omen of things to come for the people of Simarra, marking the beginning of a dark period that would see the Keza-Drak make use of technology stolen from previously conquered worlds in their quest to bring the ragged people of Simarra to heel. Yet, the ever-resourceful heroes of the world have found ways to use the technology of their enemy to their benefit. Brave (and some say, insane) Techno-scavengers and Aviki creep into Keza-Drak encampments, stealing what they can of these new devices so that the forces of light might study them in hopes of finding ways to reverse-engineer the strange designs or develop new machines and ascendant technologies to counter the weapons of the horde.

THE DEFENSE OF SPIRE REACH PASS

The Keza-Drak had established a major strong point with the fall of Thelstaad Keep, but a larger task lay ahead of them; the journey through Spire-reach Pass. The majority of the defenders of Thelstaad Keep pulled back into the pass to link up with the Thorongrar dwarves manning the numerous strongholds and outposts dotting the 250 mile stretch through the Shield Wall Mountains. As the Keza-Drak began their march through Spire-reach pass, they came under attack from all sides of the winding canyon as the defenders began the defense of the pass.

For nearly two thousand years, the great mountain citadels of the Thorongrar dwarves stood in defense of the pass to protect travelers making their way to Ardrennen falls and beyond. The dwarves knew every nook and cranny of these mountains, and they used that knowledge to wage guerrilla warfare against their enemy.

Dwarven sappers wreaked havoc on the horde, planting mines in their path, sending tons of rock down the mountains in treacherous landslides, anything to slow the progress of the hated invaders. Mountaineers rained Türgash bombs down on the Keza-Drak from lofty outcroppings. Thusparri Griffon riders constantly harried the enemy, dropping more bombs and heavy loads of rock upon the heads of the Keza-Drak. Before the Keza-Drak had crossed even a quarter of the distance through the pass, they had lost thousands of lives, victims of the fierce Thorongrar defense.

They just kept coming.

After weeks of enduring relentless attacks, the Keza-Drak slowed their advance and established base camps, using them as staging grounds for concentrated attacks on the formidable Thorongrar defenders. Their advance slowed, true, but rather than blindly rushing through the canyons, the Keza-Drak armies began a focused assault, spending necessary time taking out enemy fortresses one at a time, rooting out insurgents and healing their wounded. In this way, the Keza-Drak advance progressed at a steady rate. By the time Authel yielded to the heat of Valaen, the Keza-Drak had pushed nearly halfway through the pass. Just when the forces of light seemed about to break, something happened that nobody expected.

The Keza-Drak splintered into multiple factions and civil war erupted all across Simarra.

THE FORCES OF LIGHT

The initial invasion of the Keza-Drak, coupled with the wild rumors that Agärazôn had betrayed them all, and the return of the dreaded Morargrim; those combined events very nearly broke the backs of the people of Simarra. Agärazôn and his minions hijacked the Stone Gates right from the very beginning, preventing easy travel away from the major cities of Simarra.

Forced to flee for their lives the people had to use methods that were more mundane. Consequently, the major roads were flooded with dispossessed masses, searching for shelter from the storm of war that raged all around them. During this time of turmoil –called the lost years by many, or simply the Age of Blood- a number of organizations have risen out of the ash and darkness to fight back against the might of the Keza-Drak.

The following factions are just a few of the groups that have come to play major roles in the Age of Blood.

THE SKULL HAMMER SQUADRON

Agärazôn's forces hit the once-noble Half Giants of Kotarra extremely hard. Keza-Drak attacked

THE SURGE

For centuries the fallen goddess Enâra languished in her prison, wandering the corrupted, blighted threshold realm; a prisoner for her betrayal and bound to the very essence of the twisted realm.

As her madness became worse, Enâra subconsciously projected the phantoms of her tortured mind out into the threshold realm, where they became sentient creatures. Exposure to the tainted realm corrupted them further, twisting the maddening horrors into things capable of wreaking havoc upon all life.

When Agärazôn opened the gates, he inadvertently loosed these horrific fiends upon the people of Simarra. The longer the stone gates remained open and keyed to the threshold realm, the more of these creatures came through to plague the world, staining it with their presence. Then, the surge began.

It started with brief instances of exposure to the taint and tainted creatures that originated in the threshold realm. Teleportation spells and other similar means of arcane travel suddenly become risky for some as of yet unknown reason. People who attempted them sometimes became crazed lunatics or developed grisly mutations. Many people died horrible, painful deaths from the attempts, but the ones who lived... Well theirs was a far worse fate.

Arcanus magi everywhere started to become sick with each spell they cast. It was as if the training they had undergone in the days of their youth to remove the curse of being born with the ability to work magic – the headaches and sickness that had killed so many of them before they learned to master it and become full-fledged magi – had never happened. Indeed, adepts everywhere across Simarra, regardless of their level of mastery in the ancient craft or particular specialization, had fallen prey to the surge of taint from the Threshold Realm.

them on multiple fronts, completely overrunning the fearsome warriors and their kin. Thousands of Keza-Drak flooded through three Stone Gates that

connected the largest cities of the Kotarrans – remote mountain holdings accessible only via steep, winding switchbacks leading deep into the highlands and valleys of Kotarra.

Agärazôn recognized the threat of Kotarra, being in such close proximity to Thel-Kaza. He could not afford to risk letting the Half Giants sweep down out of Kotarra to engage the Keza-Drak inside the cradle of life. Indeed, Agärazôn was not satisfied until nearly all of the Half Giants had been slain or enslaved and confined to the slave pits of Thel-Kaza. Females in particular were killed wherever they were found to be hiding. Not that many hid Kotarran women are notorious for their ferocity in battle just like their male counterparts.

By the time the campaign of genocide had ended in Kotarra, the Keza-Drak were firmly in control of the mountain passes and valleys the half-giants had once called home, and it was estimated that barely ten thousand of the Kotarrans had escaped. These proud warriors and magi turned their grief into rage however. Instead of hiding, they fought back, slaying the invaders wherever they found them.

A people without a homeland, many Kotarrans formed a collective of mercenary companies out of the chaos, selling their services to the highest bidders in order to finance their on-going war against the minions of Agärazôn. Known as the Skull-hammer Squadron, they grew to be legends in their own time.

Renowned for their ferocity against the Keza-Drakian legions, the Skull-hammer mercenary companies were largely responsible for the emergence of a resistance against Agärazôn's hordes. Their example gave people hope in those chaotic, bleak days. When the rest of the world fled before the might of the Keza-Drak, the heroic Skull-hammer Squadron fought on.

THE SKAULD DRAGONS

The rugged volcanic peninsula of Droghedia had long been the ancestral homeland to a race of dwarves known as the Volagar. These mysterious folk had long kept to themselves. For most cultures of Simarra, the Age of Plenty was a time of expansion and trade, when great alliances were forged out of the chaos of the Ascendant War. This was not so with the Volagar.

The Fire Dwarves of Droghedia had played a vital role in the defeat of Thûrak's forces at the end of the Age of Steel. Their mothers and fathers had given the lives of their sons and daughters to the cause of peace on Simarra, just as did many others across the world. Yet, in the aftermath of the war, many people treated these honorable dwarves as if they were practitioners of vile sorceries, for they alone knew the secrets of

making the black powder, called Tûrgash by the sages and smiths of clan Volagar.

Even their own distant kin – The Thorongrar dwarves of the Shield Wall Mountains – distanced themselves from these infidels. Gand Hammerfist, the great king of the Thorongrar, banished the Volagar from the ancient city of Moran-Gûr, naming them traitors to the elder god Torrodoth for choosing to worship a new “Ascendant” god; Galburak – the Lord of Flame. Nevertheless, clan Volagar refused to relent to such open hostility from the other cultures of Simarra.

They knew what cause they served. Their mighty warhammers, rifles and other weapons made with the Tûrgash powder had slain just as many of the minions of Thûrak as did the swords and axes of the other people who fought. If the people of Simarra could not, or would not see that, then so be it. The Volagar would survive on their own, with Galburak's blessings. The Volagar swore oaths of blood and flame to never again deal with those who did not first seek them out. For much of the Age of Plenty, things were thus.

When the Keza-Drak invaded the volcanic Droghedian peninsula, they were not prepared for the stout resistance of the Volagar, who had become masters at the craft of making weapons known as “Gruushkáz”, or firearms in the common tongue. The dwarves harried the Keza-Drak at every turn, rarely



fighting them in open warfare on the jagged obsidian wastes of the peninsula.

The Volagar attacked from outposts overlooking mountain passes. They ambushed the camps of the invaders while they slept, making daring night raids on the backs of Batúk-Gecka – giant lizards the dwarves have domesticated and use as beasts of burden. When open war came, the Keza-Drak broke upon the walls of the dwarven volcanic citadels, victims of the heavy cannon and fiery blasts of magna and steam coming from the heart of the volcano itself. Unfortunately, for all their success against the mighty Keza-Drak, the stubborn chieftains of clan Volagar refused to commit their forces to the war beyond the borders of their homeland.

Centuries of relative seclusion from the rest of the world had hardened the resolve of the Volagar chieftains who had grown into adulthood learning the philosophies and teachings of the elders. The wise ones remembered well the days when their kind were persecuted and reviled by those who did not understand the ways of the Volagar. They had very little compassion for the suffering of the world.

Still, the fire of discovery and adventure burned within the hearts and minds of the younger generation of warriors and would-be heroes of clan Volagar. As the war raged on the mainland, refugees seeking solace from the storms of war braved the harsh, unforgiving lands of Droghedia in hopes that they might be able to survive the holocaust that had devoured their homes. As time passed, the younger members of clan Volagar encountered more and more of these exiles eking out a fragile existence in the wastes.

Those who wanted to help the dispossessed masses began to argue against the teachings of the elders and openly question the laws of the chieftains. A great many hotheaded youths left the volcanic citadels of their ancestors, determined to find their glory on the battlefield and bring respect to the Volagar in the eyes of the people they helped. Thus, the Skauld Dragoons were formed.

Ever since their inception, the Skauld Dragoons have been instrumental in developing and maintaining supply routes through the Ash Mountains of Droghedia. The myriad humanoid settlements cropped up since the war began have benefited greatly from the assistance of the Skauld Dragoons. The army's ranks have swelled to over fifty thousand strong, with a good many of the new recruits coming from the very communities they helped establish.

THE WIND LORDS OF THUSPARR

Often referred to as the Wind Lords of Thusparr, the people living in the rugged, mountainous region

THE ELARIAN CORSAIRS

The vile pirates who once terrorized the waters off the Black Coast of Vaskraall during the Age of Plenty benefited greatly from the use of Tûrgash weapons. At the dawn of the Age of Blood, they repaid the generosity of the Skauld Dragoons by turning from their wicked ways. The corsairs began focusing their efforts on fighting the naval forces of the Keza-Drak instead of plundering honest merchant ships. Their effectiveness when raiding Keza-Drakian outposts with heavy man-of-wars and attacking the sea-vessels of the invaders with their smaller, faster corvettes doubled through use of the explosive weapons of the Volagar.

When not engaged in attacks on Keza-Drakian outposts and sailing vessels, the Elarian Corsairs transport supplies and refugees to various freeholds along the coast and in the many islands on the seas. They also take people who are committed to the resistance to areas where they will be of best use.

of central-western Simarra were forced to flee the Orellegron Aerie; the capital city of their homeland in the face of an all out invasion by the Keza-Drak. The creatures came through the stone gate near the capital and sacked Orellegron in a single night.

The majority of Orellegron's citizens fled the city on the backs of Great Eagles and Dire Hawks. Foot soldiers and mountain guides braved narrow passes as they guided stragglers out of the ancient city. They cut and burned bridges behind them to prevent any Keza-Drak from pursuing them deeper into the mist-shrouded Kaerlon Mountains. Thus, in one night, the mountain campaign against the Thusparri had ground to a halt as the Keza-Drak found themselves cutoff from the rest of the Aeries of the mountain people.

While the force commanders sent messengers back into the Threshold Realm to call for aid from the Sky Reavers, the enraged Thusparri immediately counter-attacked. Multitudes of Thusparri warriors flew in on their avian companions, determined to re-take their beloved city or die trying.

Many died on both sides as the battle for Orellegron raged on through the night. By dawn, thousands of Thusparri warriors lay scattered across the wreck of Orellegron, their bodies mingled with those of their beloved eagles and fallen Keza-Drak. In the end, the horde had been too powerful, too many for the valiant

wind lords to defeat. Those who did survive had flown back to the other mountain aeries to mourn the loss of their comrades and prepare for the long war to come.

Ever since the fall of the Orellegron Aerie, the Thusparri Wind Lords have become a force to be reckoned with. Not content to limit their activities to the war for their homeland, they sent detachments of war hawks and great eagles to bolster remaining pockets of resistance in the Western lands of Simarra. Because of the efforts of the Thusparri, they established additional freeholds on remote peaks throughout the mountains of Simarra in hopes of attracting as many survivors as possible.

THE SHODON WARLORDS

When word reached the Shodonai who had stayed behind in the Azruun badlands that their leader - Togrun Ael-Shodai - had been slain and there was fighting in Megath-Tor, there were many who wanted to march north immediately and exact vengeance upon the vile wizards of the Arcanus League. Others argued that a new leader had to be chosen first in accordance with the ways of their people, or the people were forsaken and no longer whole.

They held a great assembly to determine the fate of the Shodonai. Leaders from each of the tribes came forth and presented the views of the people to the remaining members of the circle of five - the highest order of the Nekarim priesthood. In the end, the circle of five agreed that, until a new leader of the tribes was revealed, the Shodonai were indeed forsaken, shattered like a pieces of a broken glass. First, they must choose a leader. Only this new leader could determine the next course of action for the Shodonai.

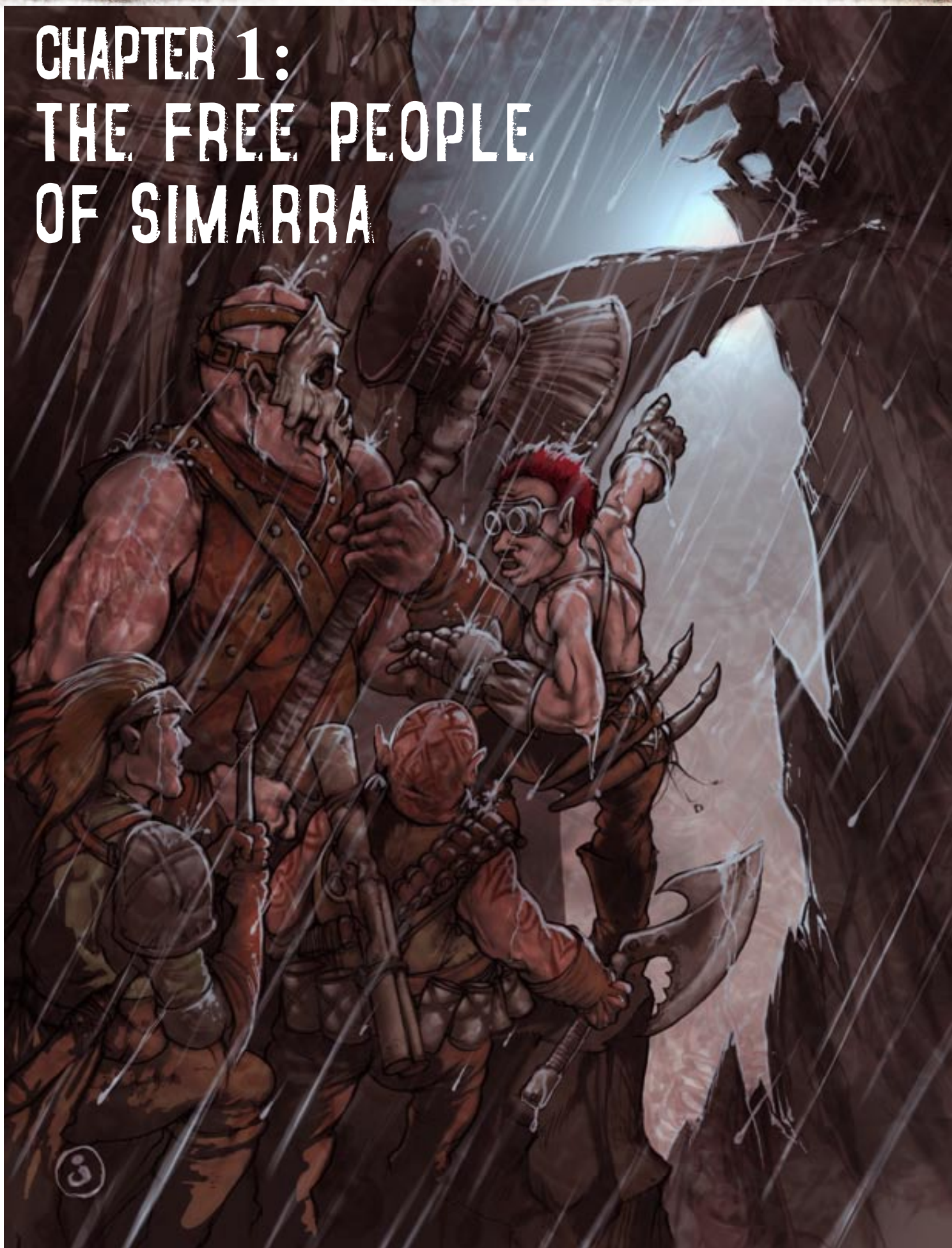
Over half of the tribal leaders stormed out of the council, determined to go north and do what they felt must be done to preserve the honor of their people. They meant to reclaim the ancient city of their ancestors and gain vengeance upon the people of Megath-Tor for killing their brothers and sisters. Twelve different tribes numbering over ten thousand people left their kinsmen in the Azruun badlands and traveled north, only to find that the Keza-Drak had sacked the city and driven off or enslaved its inhabitants.

The leaders of the twelve tribes decided that it would be futile to engage the "demons from beyond the stone gates" in open warfare. They would fight these Keza-Drak, but on their terms. The leaders proclaimed themselves Warlords and divided the tribes into a myriad of groups of warriors capable of traveling fast and light. They would nibble at the heels of the great beast until they had brought it down.

Those who stayed behind in the Azruun badlands remain as mysterious as ever. Most of them live in the winding canyons and in long forgotten caves, guarding the ancient secrets of the Nekarim, the enigmatic gods of the Shodonai. Every now and again, war bands of Shodonai can be seen attacking Keza-Drak supply caravans as they move from oasis to oasis. Immediately after the battle is over, the Shodonai loot the caravans and then disappear back into the shifting sands of the Vaskraall wastes.



CHAPTER 1: THE FREE PEOPLE OF SIMARRA



Simarra's sons and daughters are as culturally diverse and enigmatic as the world they inhabit. Most elves, dwarves, humans, and half giants have lived in Simarra ever since the forging of the world, known collectively as the elder races of Simarra. Other races were born later, when the Ascendant gods stole down into the world to hide from Enâra.

These ascendant (some say aberrant) races – aradi, gnomes, goblins, hags, orcs, ogres, mountain trolls and a multitude of others – were created by the ascendant gods during their time in isolation from the elder gods. The ascendant gods wanted to create beings who would revere them just as the elder races worshipped their creators. Scholars contend the creation of the ascendant races was a ploy to establish some sort of legitimacy on the part of the ascendant gods, who have always been regarded as inferior beings in the eyes of the elder gods who created them.

Some of the ascendant races have found ways to live with their distant cousins - the elder races. Gnomes, orcs and, to a lesser extent, the hags and serpent kin of Talmosa have found a place in the world around them, but the majority of the ascendant races have felt nothing but scorn throughout the history of their existence. Indeed, many would have it no other way. The dreaded Ashoi-Notkah, cannibal Shek-Tar gnomes, wicked Ungchuk goblins, Gretchclaw and Ghaskrii raiders have been a plague upon peace-loving people ever since their creation.

-Elohan Salaistrien

This chapter takes an expanded look at the races of the Blood Throne campaign setting, providing extended information on races introduced in Green Ronin's True20 Worlds of Adventure© book in addition to new races and subraces that inhabit this war-ravaged world.

VIRTUES AND VICES

Every character begins play with at least one virtue and one vice. They may begin with more depending on their background, but never less. Virtue and vice combine together to create the character's Nature. Below are some virtues and vices that are especially suitable for a Blood Throne campaign.

VIRTUES

The following are suitable virtues for Blood Throne heroes.

Calm

A Calm character retains his composure in nearly any situation. He does not become overly excited by anything.

Decisive

A Decisive character does not hesitate in making firm decisions. He does not second-guess himself.

Independent

An Independent character looks out for number one. He does not rely on others and prefers to walk his own path.

Just

A Just character is guided by truth, reason, justice, and

fairness. Rare qualities in the Age of Blood.

Merciful

A Merciful character allows his enemies to live to fight another day; knowing they may return to plague him again. Sometimes though showing mercy is the only way to turn an enemy into a friend.

Optimistic

An Optimistic character sees and expects the best in all situations.

Resourceful

A Resourceful character is able to deal quickly and effectively with new situations using the resources on hand.

Resolute

A Resolute character stands firm despite opposition and criticism.

VICES

The following virtues are suitable for Blood Throne heroes (and villains).

Aggressive

An Aggressive character is inclined to give into his passions especially when aggravated and often reacts with hostility and makes unprovoked attacks.

Deceitful

A Deceitful character is given to misleading others and misrepresenting the truth of any situation.

Immoral

An Immoral Character violates accepted and established principles of right and wrong, good and evil.

Nosy

Often seen as meddlesome, a Nosy character is one that unduly pries into the affairs of others.

Obsessive

Thoughts and feelings of a particular idea, image, or desire dominate an Obsessive character.

Ruthless

A Ruthless character is without compassion or pity.

Sadistic

A Sadistic character gains pleasure by inflicting pain and suffering on others.

Savage

A Savage character is wild and untamed, merciless and often violent.

COMMON FEATS

Sometimes a set of feats are very common amongst the members of a background, but neither universal enough to be bonus feats nor mechanically viable as favored feats. Known as common feats, these feats are common to beings of a given background.



TABLE A: COMMON FEATS

NAME

COMMON FEATS

Aradi	Dedicated, Favored Opponent, Widen Power
Aeurthgrar	Canny Dodge, Dedicated, Weapons Training
Thorongrar	Blind Fight, Skill Focus (Craft [blacksmith]), Weapons Training
Volagar	Endurance, Skill Focus (Knowledge Theology and Philosophy)
Daelian Elves	Dedicated, Eidetic Memory, Master Plan, Set Up
Thusparri	Dedicated, Move By Action, Vehicular Combat, Weapons Training
Volsparran	Dedicated, Favored Opponent, Smite Opponent, Trackless
Seguire	Light Sleeper, Run, Trackless
Shek-Tar	Challenge, Improved Critical, Second Chance (save against poison)
Elarian	Benefit, Firearms Training, Vehicular Combat
Kotarran	Attack Focus, Dedicated, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Smite Opponent
Baldarrans	Contacts, Connected, Trackless
Daelians	Dedicated, Eidetic Memory, Master Plan, Set Up
Dassurri	Dedicated, Endurance, Firearms Training, Tireless
Narballans	Dedicated, Endurance, Taunt, Trailblazer
Narmrothans	Improved Speed, Track, Trailblazer, Vehicular Combat
Horse Lords	Dedicated, Overrun, Track, Trackless, Vehicular Combat
Sargolians	Canny Dodge, Improved Strike, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot
Sudejans	Talented (Diplomacy, Sense Motive), Track, Trailblazer, Trackless
Talmosans	Endurance, Light Sleeper, Night Vision, Tireless, Track, Trailblazer
Saran-Ghori	All-out Attack, Endurance, Light Sleeper, Startle
Shodonai	Dedicated, Iron Will, Vehicular Combat

THE BREAKING OF THE ELDER RACES

Summer faded into autumn, and autumn into winter as darkness came to Simarra for the first time. Above in the Asha-Tor, the Gods battled for the right to be Enâra's consort. In the world below, it was as if a veil had been lifted from the eyes of my ancestors. They did not know it, but the Threshold Realm separated the people of Simarra from their gods who had seemingly abandoned them.

Death and old age came to my people for the first time since the dawn of the world. The wailing of the men, women, and children, who did not, could not understand broke the silence of the night, rending its once-peaceful stillness with mournful wails and howls of anguish that, some say, can still be heard to this day. Then, just as things seemed to be at their worst, Thûrak sent the dreaded Morargrim into their midst.

My ancient kin fell prey to quarreling and bickering amongst themselves as Thûrak's abominations moved in secret amongst them, sowing hate and discord everywhere they went. Races of men, elves, dwarves and all the rest forgot the peaceful times of the past and segregated, forsaking True Speak in favor of sounds and writings of their own making. Each vernacular increased the tension, setting the whole of the world at odds, even as war broke upon Simarra like thunderous waves on rocky shores. The races began to split and move out of the great cities of the cradle of life, which, because of the outbreak of fighting between the various peoples, had become sprawling fields of battle. Into the wilds of the world they went, each race staking claims over various regions of the land. The Age of Steel had begun.

In the beginning of the Age of Steel, a multitude of people began to move away from the great cities of Western Simarra, a large region that historians and scholars in the age of plenty would refer to as "The Cradle of Life."

Many humans and elves began to cross the Shield Wall Mountains into the untamed lands of Eastern Simarra, seeking a simple life. Many would attempt to settle in the lush, primordial wild lands, only to be driven off, killed and in some cases even enslaved by the Shek-Tar gnomes or slaughtered at the hands the monstrous serpent kin called Groa'khan and the fiercely territorial Wyldlings; ferocious humanoid with a love for combat.

Nations such as the Aradi Heartlands, the swamp-infested kingdom of Talmosa, the reclusive nation behind the Sargolian wall and the fabled Dwarven kingdom of Moran-Gûr came into being during this time of upheaval. Others moved into the withering, frigid desolation of the Northern Reaches, forming the foundation of the great northern barbarian tribes. The nomadic Narmrothan horse clans would settle in Numaràth, only to be driven from the land centuries later by undead hordes.

Even more people moved south into the sea of dust, testing their mettle on the burning sands of the Vaskraall Wastes where the race of beings known only as the Nekarim held sway. Overall, it was a time of great danger for the elder races, who contended with bands of renegades, primordial tribal cultures and the villainous Sundaari Blood lords as they moved out of the cradle of life, slowly evolving into the great nations which would come to dominate the Age of Plenty.

-Elohan Salaistrien

ARADI LIONMEN

The lionmen of the Aradi heartland are an ascendant race created by the god Aradon; Lord of the Hunt. Aradon blessed these half lion - half men, proclaiming they were to be masters of the great plains between the Broken Bone Hills to the north and the kingdom of Numaràth to the south. The lord of the hunt warned that, in time, his people would see other strange people migrate into this region.

Not an evil being, the god commanded his progeny to be firm, but fair in all dealings with these newcomers. Fiercely loyal to their creator-god, the Aradi pledged to obey his decree. A few years later, the first humans entered the region as Aradon had predicted.

Calling themselves Narmrothans, these nomadic people were, at first, terrified of the creatures who challenged their entry into the Aradi Heartland. Minor skirmishes broke out resulting in deaths on both sides.

TABLE B: BACKGROUNDS

NAME	ABILITIES	BONUS FEATS	FAVORED FEATS / POWERS
DWARVES			
Aeurthgrar	+1 Con, +1 Wis, -1 Dex, -1 Cha	Talented, Trailblazer	Diehard, Tough
Thorongrar	+1 Con, -1 Cha	Great Fortitude, Nightvision	Diehard, Favored Opponent
Volagar	+1 Str, +1 Con, -1 dex, -1 Cha	Firearms Trianing, Nightvision	Elemental resistance(fire), Tough
ELVES			
Daelian Elves	+1 Int, -1 Str	Night Vision, Talented	Jack of All Trades, Suggestion
Thusparri Elves	+1 Dex, -1 Con	Animal Empathy, Nightvision	Any One Adept Feat or Power
Volsparran Elves	+1 Dex, -1 Con	Night Vision, Talented	Any one Adept Feat or Power
GNOMES			
Seguire Gnomes	+1 Con, -1 Str	Night Vision, Trail Blazer	Use Mana Shard and Use Ascendant Technology or Nature Reading Power
Shek-tar Gnomes	+1 Dex, +1 Con, -1 Wis, -1 Cha	Night Vision, Trailblazer	Fascinate and Favored Opponent or Summon Spirit
HALF ELVES			
Elarians	+1 Cha, -1 Int	Light Sleeper, Weapon Training	Favored Opponent (Keza-Drak), Smite Opponent
HALF GIANTS			
Kotarrans	+2 Str, +1 Con, -1 Int, -1 Wis, -1 Cha	All-out Attack, Weapon Training	Favored Opponent, Rage
HUMANS			
Baldarrans	None	Any One	Jack of all Trades, Sneak Attack
Daelians	None	Any One	Jack of all Trades, Suggestion
Dassuri	None	Any One	Inspire, Jack of all Trades
Korduc	None	Any One	Favored Opponent (Keza-Drak), Sneak Attack
Narballans	None	Any One	Diehard, Elusive Target
Grey Men	None	Any One	Two of: Favored Opponent (Undead), Critical Strike, Smite Opponent
Horse Lords	None	Any One	Hide In Plain Sight, Spirited Charge
Sargolians	None	Any One	Supernatural Strike or Supernatural Weapon
Sudejans	None	Any One	Favored Opponent, Rage
Talmosians	None	Any One	Two of: Evasion, Seize Initiative, Sneak Attack
Tharans	None	Any One	Two of: Hide in Plain Sight, Sneak Attack, Well Informed or Crippling strike.
LION MEN			
Aradi	+1 Str, +1 Dex, -1 Wis, -1 Cha	Night Vision, Talented	Choose two of Attack Specialization, Dedicated, Spirited Charge or Widen Power
ORCS			
Saran-Ghori	+2 Str, +1 Con, -1 Int, -2 Cha	Night Vision, Weapon Training	Two of: Cleave, Favored Opponent, Rage
OTHER			
Shodonai	+1 Con, +1 Wis, -1 Str, -1 Cha	Lightning Reflexes, Night Vision	Resonance Crystal

Yet, in spite of the violence, the people struggled to understand each other and in time, made progress. The Narmrothans eventually moved south through the vast savannah and tribal villages of the Aradi to settle in the rugged lowlands of Numaràth. Both peoples maintained solid relationships, trading with each other often and celebrating holidays. Later years would see other races and cultures (primarily elves, Sargolians and Sudejans) pass through their domains as well.

The first times of trouble for the Aradi began centuries later, midway during the Age of Steel, when the embattled Narmrothans were forced to flee Numaràth. The dead lands spat out hordes of unliving fiends into the lands to plague the mortal races. The kingdom of Numaràth fell to a trio of Death Lords, as mortals know them. The armies of these hideous undead fiends ravaged Numaràth, forcing all to flee or die and be raised as undead slaves of the death lords.

Led by Temak Proudmane, the noble Aradi lion men joined forces with Narmrothan refugees to combat the invading horde, constructing a great bulwark along the width of the Numaràn Gap, the valley leading into Numaràth. It was there that the fiercest fighting happened as the horselords and lion men fought the savage horde in defense of the Aradi heartlands. After months of hard fighting, the undead horde began to recede south into the gloom of fallen Numaràth, apparently giving up their fight against the Aradi and roughly two thousand brave Narmrothans who chose to stay and fight rather than journey westward with the rest of their defeated kin.

The Age of Plenty brought with it many people who wanted to try to settle in the Aradi Heartlands to farm and hunt. The Aradi held a great moot to determine the course of the future for their people. Also included were the lords of the remaining Narmrothans who stayed behind to help defend the lionmen from the undead during the Age of Steel. Now considered part of the tribe, they had earned the never-ending trust and respect of the Aradi peoples. They would also have a say in the course of the future.

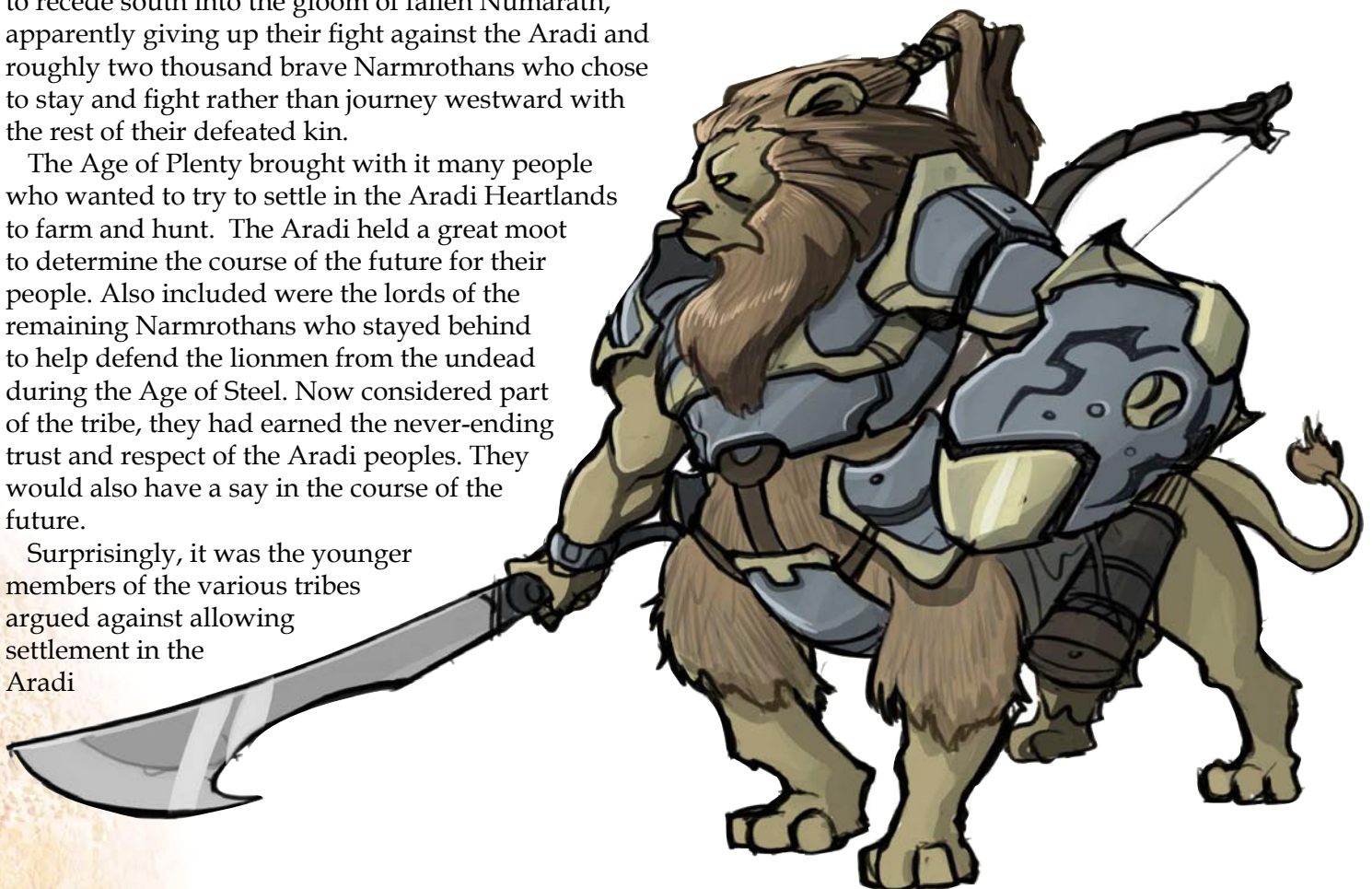
Surprisingly, it was the younger members of the various tribes argued against allowing settlement in the Aradi

Heartland. They warned that overpopulation and development of farms and cities would eat up the savannah, severely diminishing their lands, lands protected furiously in the past for new generations of Aradi so that they might preserve the cultural identity of the people.

How would this affect the yearly migration to perform the rites of passage at the Raven Bluff stone gate if the Aradi had to ask for permission first to cross each farm and town in their path? Moreover, what of the great hunt? Could the Aradi trust newcomers to be frugal and respectful when hunting, or would these humans and dwarves and all the rest mindlessly slaughter every beast they encountered? Lastly and perhaps most importantly, what of their god Aradon, would he continue to bless his children if they violated the ancient edicts proclaiming the heartland their domain and no others?

The elders countered that Aradon had not decreed the Aradi should isolate themselves from settlers, but rather they should tolerate outsiders, being firm, but fair in their dealings with other races. The elders acknowledged the wisdom in the youngling's concerns.

These fears had merit, and they knew they must make any settlers in the heartland accept the existing



cultures. They must learn to live in balance with the savannah, not destroy it with their technologies, and not mindlessly hunt the wildlife until there was nothing left. In the end, they decided that they would allow settlers in the boundaries of the Aradi heartlands. They would make treaties to establish laws, trade agreements, and the protection of natural resources. They made it clear that they would not tolerate the rape of their nation. They would purge those people who could not live in harmony with the savannah and its inhabitants the heartlands as one would cut a tumor from the body.

Aradan, the first major city in the Aradi heartlands was built on the shores of Faran Bay, named for Faran Thealdron, the first mariner to sail around the horn of swamp-infested Talmosa into its clear blue waters. The people (a mixture of humans and Half-Elves of Dassurri and Volsparan stock), wanting nothing more than to live in peace, agreed to the demands of the Aradi lion men. They signed treaties pledging to protect the Aradi heartlands, not to despoil the savannah or hunt its wild life to extinction. They would honor the existing cultures and not attempt to subvert the rites and ceremonies of the Aradi people. In return, the Aradi pledged to ensure all people living in the region dwelled in peace and harmony. These alliances held strong for the majority of the Age of Plenty.

Then the Baldarrans migrated south out of the Baldarak Highlands.

These shifty, gruff northerners petitioned to sign agreements with the Aradi, allowing them to settle the frontier towns of South Fork and Millhaven. The Aradi found these Baldarrans to be an unsavory lot, given to drinking and raucous behavior. Against their better judgment, the Aradi consented to the treaties that had worked out so well with previous settlers. For a short while, things seemed as though they would work out. Then the Baldarrans found gold in the Broken Bone Hills and Raven Bluff.

Consumed by greed, the Baldarrans ignored the fact that the hills were sacred grounds for the Aradi and began strip-mining the entire region, uprooting the graves of the Aradi's ancestors in their quest to find gold. They slaughtered thousands of spike-nosed bison, leathery-skinned horned baboons and majestic savannah lions for their pelts and bones, selling them back west to furriers and the Shek-Tar bone shamans of the wild lands in order to finance their mining operations. These desecrations sent the Aradi into a rage.

War ignited across the northern savannah as the Aradi tribes united against the despoilment of their sacred lands and slaughter of the wild life. The Baldarrans fought fiercely to protect their operations,

going so far as to mount their own offensive against the closest Aradi villages, burning and looting everywhere they went. They used explosives and firearms purchased (or stolen) from the Shield Wall dwarves to tip the balance in their favor. The people of Aradan and the remnants of the Narmrothan horse clans honored centuries-old vows and joined forces with the Aradi people, driving the wicked Baldarrans out of the region, restoring peace to the Aradi Heartlands. Sadly, this would not last. Even as the last of the Baldarran people fled to the north, promising vengeance, Agārazōn betrayed the world and the Age of Blood began.

THE ARADI IN THE AGE OF BLOOD

The Aradi heartland is one of those places where, if anything at all could go wrong, it did. The invasion of the Keza-Drak took place at their most spiritual site; the stone gate at Raven Bluff. Thousands of Keza-Drak flooded into the region, attacking the already war-weary Aradi people who fled the fiendish invaders, believing them to be sent from their god Aradon as punishment for allowing the Baldarrans to ravage and despoil their homeland. The Keza-Drak established the city of Charr in the Broken Bone Hills. From there, they began campaigns both north and south to root out all potential resistance. To make matters worse, Numarāth exploded with activity as hordes of undead overran the bulwark and invaded the lower-Aradi Heartland, fighting both Keza-Drak and Aradi alike in their quest to slay all life.

The few Aradi who have survived eek out a miserable existence in the freehold of Aradan, roam the plains as insurgents, or fight alongside the Volsparan Elves. The majority of the Narmrothan remnants have focused on the fight against the horde from the Deadlands, living in remote camps high in the lower arm of the Sargolian Wall.

BACKGROUND

Aradi are a proud race of centaur-like beings, standing roughly 6 ft. tall and have the body of a lion and upper torso of a human. Their skin is a golden brown in hue, and most have thick manes of hare which their either braid or grow shaggy.

The Aradi have grace which belies their primal form, and are masters of the use of weapons such as the lance, long bow, sword and axe. Their allegiance with the Narmrothans has proven beneficial in that the blacksmiths have crafted steel armor resembling that the Aradi wear into battle.

They have keen night vision, excellent climbing skills, and can perform great leaps.

They can also call on the fury of their god in combat, blessing all around them. The Aradi believe the Age of Blood is a curse upon their people. If they are to survive, they must prove themselves worthy of survival in the eyes of their god.

Traits: Aradi have the following traits:

Abilities: +1 Str, +1 Dex, -1 Wis, -1 Cha

Size: Medium

Bonus Feats: Night Vision, Talented (Climb and Jump)

Aradon's Blessing: Once per day an Aradi Adept may bless those around her, providing a +1 to all attack and toughness checks.

Favored Feats: Choose two of Attack Specialization, Dedicated Spirited Charge, or Widen Power.

DWARVES

The dwarves of Simarra are a proud people who have taken to living in the hills, mountains and deep places of the world. It was not always this way, however. During the primordial age, all of the elder races lived together in the cradle of life, basking in their immortality, blissfully ignorant of concepts such as death or sorrow. This period would eventually end with the creation of the Threshold Realm and the loss of immortality for all the elder races.

Called the "Great Breaking," this chaotic period of time saw a multitude of people from all races leave the cradle of life in search of lands to claim as their own. With the exception of a few clans who remained in the Hadrannath hills and others who ventured south, the vast majority of dwarves left the cradle of life, the largest of the fledgling clans that formed in the chaotic years - the Thorongrar dwarves - following a young dwarf by the name of Gand Hammerfist. The elder god Torrodoth is said to have come to Gand, showing him a vision of the splendors awaiting all dwarves with the courage to seek out the deep places of the world.

As the legend goes, Torrodoth appeared in physical form before Gand one last time before going into the Threshold Realm with the rest of the elder gods. As Gand knelt before his beloved deity, the elder god burned a map into a stone tablet, directions to a place deep in the bowels of the earth: the location of Moran-gûr. Gand led thousands upon thousands of dwarves (the bulk of which would comprise the mighty Thorongrar nation) north into the Shield Wall Mountains to a great, gaping cavern leading down into the earth. It was at this cave that the Thorongrar met the first test of their unity as a clan.

The journey north had been arduous. Numerous aberrant races had staked their own territory in the rugged lands north of the cradle of life and brooked no trespassers upon their domains. Many dwarves

were wounded and some died on the journey. A surprising number of dwarves balked at the prospect of abandoning the sunlit world to venture deep into a realm of perpetual night and unnamed horrors, despite the fact that this journey appeared to be a holy quest set forth by Torrodoth. Tempers flared. Sides were chosen. Fighting erupted in the camps at the base of the cave. When all was said and done, four thousand dwarves had died and many thousands more were wounded in the first real conflict of the Age of steel.

A new clan emerged from the fighting - the Aeurthgrar, or Frostwind Dwarves as they are known in the common tongue. The Aeurthgrar broke from the Thorongrar dwarves that day, leaving Gand Hammerfist and those who remained loyal to him to seek out Moran-gûr on their own. The Frostwind dwarves headed north to seek out their own destiny in the wilds of Simarra.

The following section explores each of the dwarven nations, as they exist in the Age of Blo0d providing background information and game statistics where relevant.

AEURTHGRAR: FROSTWIND DWARVES

Brief History:

After leaving the Thorongrar, the Frostwind dwarves moved north into the rugged wilderness of Simarra; a place untamed and populated by numerous creatures created during the primordial age at the whim of ascendant gods. Repeatedly, the Aeurthgrar would establish footholds in the northern arm of the Shield Wall Mountains, only to be supplanted by aberrant races that lived in the treacherous region.

Nearly broken from years of struggle and harassment from various aberrant races, the Aeurthgrar finally came to a fertile hinterland at the northern tip of the continent; a three hundred mile stretch of deep-forested lands nestled between the mountains and the Whitecap Sea. It was in this untamed region that the Frostwind dwarves made their home, building strongholds of timber and stone to guard against the myriad creatures that inevitably came to contest their place in this land.

After enduring more years of hardship and the loss of friends and loved ones, the Frostwind dwarves finally established their dominion of the region in the early part of the Age of Steel, naming the area Aeurthgran, which roughly translates to the Frost lands in the common tongue. The Aeurthgrar named the venerable Delg Hearthforge as their first king. Delg named the coastal settlement of Frostwind hold as the capital of his realm.

It was around this time when three ascendant goddesses chose to reveal themselves to the Aeurthgrar. Calling themselves Sirens, they began appearing to Aeurthgrar females throughout the frost lands, imparting blessings of wisdom and power upon the dwarf maidens. In return, the maidens –now considered oracles of the sirens- began to cultivate groves across Aeurthgran and commenced teaching the rites of the Sirens to take an interest in the burgeoning faith. Male Aeurthgrar showing the requisite strength, wisdom and desire became protectors of the oracles.

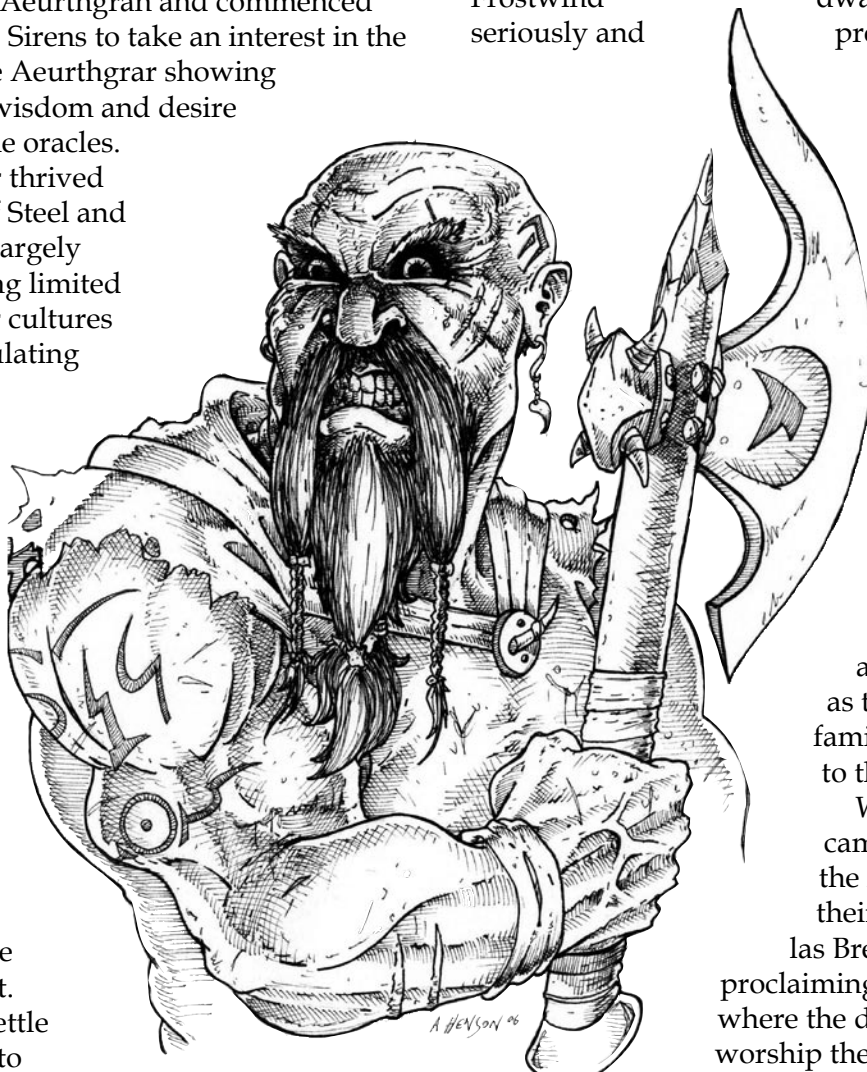
While the Aeurthgrar thrived throughout the Ages of Steel and Plenty, they remained largely xenophobic, maintaining limited relations with the other cultures of Simarra, strictly regulating trade with other nations. The Aeurthgrar took great pride in living off the land, using only natural resources to maintain their way of life. The Aeurthgrar shunned technology. Their oracles taught that the technologies of the southern kingdoms defiled the land, making people weak in body and spirit. Outsiders wanting to settle in the Frost Lands had to prove themselves worthy of living among the Aeurthgrar with their holistic way of life.

Few people, having tasted the luxuries of the more “civilized” lands of the south, could adapt to the rough lifestyle of the Aeurthgrar. Even fewer would abandon their reverence of other deities in favor of the Sirens – another mandate that potential settlers must abide by, should they wish to settle in Aeurthgran. The Frostwind dwarves believed that the Sirens blessed their and people in return for steadfast faith and these blessings would only continue so long as the people remained unified in their beliefs.

FROSTWIND DWARVES IN THE AGE OF BLOOD

Unlike the majority of the people of Simarra, the invasion of the Keza-Drak did not come as a surprise

to the Aeurthgrar. The oracles of the Sirens began receiving visions in the weeks preceding the opening of the stone gates foretelling of an impending doom that would befall the people of the world. While other nations rejected the words of their prophets (Some people even going so far as to persecute them as was the case with the Shodonai), the Frostwind dwarves took these omens seriously and prepared for them.



The Frost lands had always been rich in Taer' las Brennath activity, having a myriad of lesser nexus points and one massive nexus at the southern edge of Aeurthgran. This was the site of Aeurthalgraras: the main grove of the oracles and the spiritual capital in the Frost lands. Cities grew around these groves as the oracles and their families moved to be closer to their places of worship.

When the Sirens first came to the oracles during the Age of Steel they taught their priestesses about Taer' las Brennath and nexuses, proclaiming them holy places where the devout should come to worship the Sirens and draw power from the world around them. The oracles acted accordingly, building their groves around nexus points. They

learned to tap mana wells – not to harness the energy of the world as a resource like the Aviki - but rather to become one with its energy so they might commune with their goddesses and nurture the world around them.

When the Keza-Drak attempted to invade Aeurthgran through the gate at Aeurthalgraras, the alien horde found an army of Frost wind warriors and adepts waiting for them. The initial battle for the city Aeurthalgraras (known in the common tongue as the Frostwind Grove) was a bloody contest, lasting for three days and nights. Countless Aeurthgrar gave their lives in the battle, but eventually threw back the invaders.