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INTRODUCTION

Points of Light is the default setting of the new fourth edition, a place where civilization exists in isolated outposts scattered throughout a dangerous wilderness. The vision of Points of Light is specific: Civilization does not consist of widespread nations and empires, but small city-states or groups of villages that have banded together for mutual support and protection. Between outposts lies only monster—haunted wilderness dotted with the ruins of a once glorious past and darkened by the ever-present shadow of the unknown. I was inspired when I read about Points of Light, and I found myself thinking: How far can I extend this concept?

One of the most beloved early modules, published by TSR, is *Keep on the Borderlands*. It featured an enclosed wilderness map with a dozen or so encounters that tied together the Keep and the Caves of Chaos, and confined them to a small area that could be dropped into any DM's campaign.

Since *Keep on the Borderlands*, this aspect has seen little development. Hundreds of modules have been published with dungeons and other detailed locales, some so large that an entire campaign from 1st to 20th level can be spent exploring them. Many grand settings were published as well, but there has been precious little in between.

This product occupies the middle ground between the dungeon and the civilized world. It introduces four lands designed to fit into any DM's campaign with little or no work. Using these as a starting point, DMs can expand outward and send their players on new and exciting adventures.

OVERVIEW

Each of the four new lands presented in this product is designed to interpret the Points of Light concept in a different way. The people, monsters, and geographical features of each land provide a distinct flavor, and are designed to facilitate a certain type of campaign.

THE HEX MAP

Each lands contains the following: a numbered hex map, an overview, an alphabetical listing of geography, a rumor chart, a wandering monster chart, and a series of detailed locales keyed by the hex number. The scale of each hex is marked on the map. A grid of hexes, arranged in columns, make up the maps. The hex numbers are given in a four-digit format (1213, 0114, etc). For example, 0211 means that it is in the "02" column (the 2nd column of the map) and is 11 hexes down. Sometimes the hex number will not be clear because of the terrain in the hex. In this case you will need to count hexes.

This system of using hex numbers allows a DM to quickly look at where locales are on the map and what locales are near a location. This helps keep the map uncluttered and easy to read. Geographical features are composed of multiple hexes, and are labeled directly on the map. They are listed alphabetically in that map's chapter.

GAME SYSTEM

Since this product is generic fantasy, the stats are kept brief. Only class, level, or Hit Dice are given. You will need to look up precise stats and any other relevant game information for your game system.

A new type of holy warrior, called a myrmidon is mentioned in several places throughout this product. These champions of lawful evil deities should be treated as paladins with the opposite abilities (cause damage instead of cure damage, etc). They are sworn to the cause of their evil god in much the same manner as paladins are sworn to the cause of good.

ADVENTURING ADVICE

The format in which the four new lands are presented is designed to aid players in their exploration of the world. With a list of locales, it is easy for players to determine what is over the next hill, and what possible challenges they might face once they get there. In addition, since the players can largely be left to their own devices, this format allows the DM more time to focus on the core adventures in his campaign.

Not every hex location has a description, and the provided background information is only meant to be a loose framework. DMs are encouraged to add material and make the setting unique to their campaigns.

CAPSULE DESCRIPTIONS

Wildland

Set shortly after the fall of a large empire where civilization is on the brink, Wildland is the land most similar to the core concept of Points of Light Historically speaking, the social and economic climate of Wildland are not dissimilar to the chaotic Dark Ages of Western Europe. Wildland is designed for beginning characters, giving them ample opportunity to explore the world, defend civilization, and rekindle the light against the monstrous hordes.

Southland

Southland is set on the frontier of a large kingdom. It is a relatively empty land, with only a few scattered outposts of civilization. There is plenty of room here for the players to carve out a realm of their own and push the frontiers of civilization outwards.

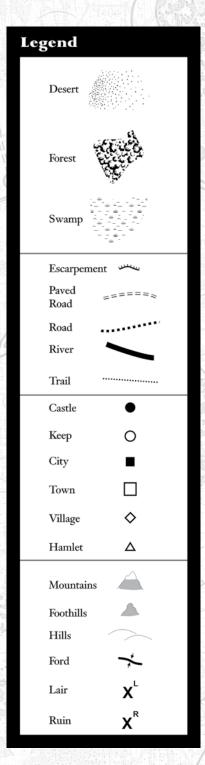
Borderland

Borderland lies on the frontier between two warring factions of an empire. For a decade, they have battled one another, and their continual warfare has devastated the region. Here the monsters are not nightmarish creatures of myth and legend, but man himself.

The Swamps of Acheron

The river Acheron snakes across the Astral Plane like a great, twisting serpent, widening eventually into a colossal swamp. The swamp is home to all manner of planar monstrosities, and is rumored to be the domain of the dark god Sarrath. Those unfortunate enough to be swept up by the mighty Acheron are often deposited here, forced to make what lives they can in the endless, stinking mire.

MASTER MAP KEY



WILDLAND

INTRODUCTION

There are a variety of events and circumstances that could produce a *Points of Light* setting. One example from our own history is the state of Western Europe after the fall of Rome in the 5th century, the oft referenced "Dark Ages." Wildland was designed using this historical era as a foundation.

BACKGROUND

The Bright Empire once dominated Darish De'Cour or "Land of the Great River." When the Empire expanded into Darish De'Cour, two provinces were created - Darish, east of the river, and Tharvengia, west of the river. For centuries the Bright Empire prospered, standing as a pinnacle of learning, commerce, and religion. However, in the last century, two rival factions arose that would eventually tear the Empire asunder. The earthly followers of Delaquain, the Goddess of Honor and Justice, and Sarrath, the God of War and Order, long at odds with one another, eventually forced the Bright Empire into a ruinous civil war. Weakened by the internal struggle, the Empire could no longer defend its sprawling provinces from the predations of marauding barbarian tribes. This was especially true in the Tharvengian Province, and it was quickly lost.

The final downfall of the Bright Empire came when humanoid tribes (orcs, goblins, gnolls, etc.) attacked the barbarians living in the defeated province of Tharvengia, routed them, and drove them en masse across the Great River into Darish. After devastating the Darish, the barbarians moved into the Empire's heartland to the east. In the battle known as The Shattering, the barbarians destroyed the last organized forces of the Bright Empire, ending the civil war not with a final victory but with a final collapse.

Ten years after the civil war, barbarians and humanoids dominate this region, and only a single town and a few villages remain as beacons of civilization. Shortly after the fall of the Bright Empire, the remaining forces of Delaquain helped the survivors, but their efforts were stymied when the followers of Sarrath seized control of Yellzurthi, the last town in Darish. The followers of Sarrath now use Yellzurthi as a base to launch attacks against what remains of Delaquain's followers, striving for complete control of war torn Darish De'Cour.

ADAPTATION NOTES

The Bright Empire can be any ruined empire in your campaign, and Delaquain and Sarrath can be replaced with any two gods that would likely be enemies. The length of time between the fall of the Empire and the "present" can be lengthened or shortened as you see fit. A longer period between the fall of the Bright Empire and the present might allow for more established civilized outposts, while campaigns taking place right after the fall would likely have to contend with an even more chaotic landscape. Lastly, any of the humanoid or barbarian tribes can be replaced with enemies of your choice.

GEOGRAPHY

Lake Bovil

Noted for its rich fishing grounds, this seven-milelong lake lies on the southern edge of the Plains of Hegramoth. A swamp on the eastern edge of the lake presents some danger, as packs of stirges (1 HD) roam the mire in search of fresh blood.



Crandar Moors

This windswept heather moor lies west of the Mish Mires. The primary dangers here are the six war bands of Gouge Eye hobgoblin that routinely hunt the area for game and other humanoids to rob and kill. The hobgoblins are very aggressive, and attack anyone venturing onto the moors without provocation,

In addition to the hobgoblins, the Crandar Moors conceal another danger — deep bogs (1–2 1d10 every hex). The bogs are covered with a thin layer of heather and moss, making them indistinguishable from the surrounding moor (–5 to spot). Stepping into a bog causes a character to sink immediately unless a saving throw (Reflex or Paralyzation at –5) is made. A character is completely submerged (and suffocating) in 1d4 turns unless he can claw his way out (Strength check or appropriate skill check), or he receives aid from a companion.

Eslohen Woods

The once-peaceful Eslohen Woods now serve as a battleground between marauding bands of orcs and ogres and the Elves of Arishai. Unable to stand against the brutal onslaught of their foes, the elves and allied sylvan creatures have fled north to safer regions. Despite the elven retreat, skirmishes between the two groups are still a frequent occurrence. However, the elves have all but abandoned the southern woods to the evil creatures dwelling there.

Faris Hills

These hills mark the eastern edge of the valley around the Great River. After the civil war and the dissolution of the Bright Empire, much of the surviving human population took refuge in the valleys. There are a few major settlements in this area, such as Curnitha (Hex 1309), Terish De'Carn (Hex 1204), and Dark Guard (Hex 1412). Most live in isolated farming communities.

The central hills between Hex 1308 and 1312 are rugged, but not overly dangerous. Paladins from Curnitha routinely patrol the northern hills, making them fairly safe for travelers. However, those venturing towards the lands controlled by Dark Guard should remain wary and alert, as slavers from the city often hunt for new "merchandise" in the southern hills.

WILDLANDS

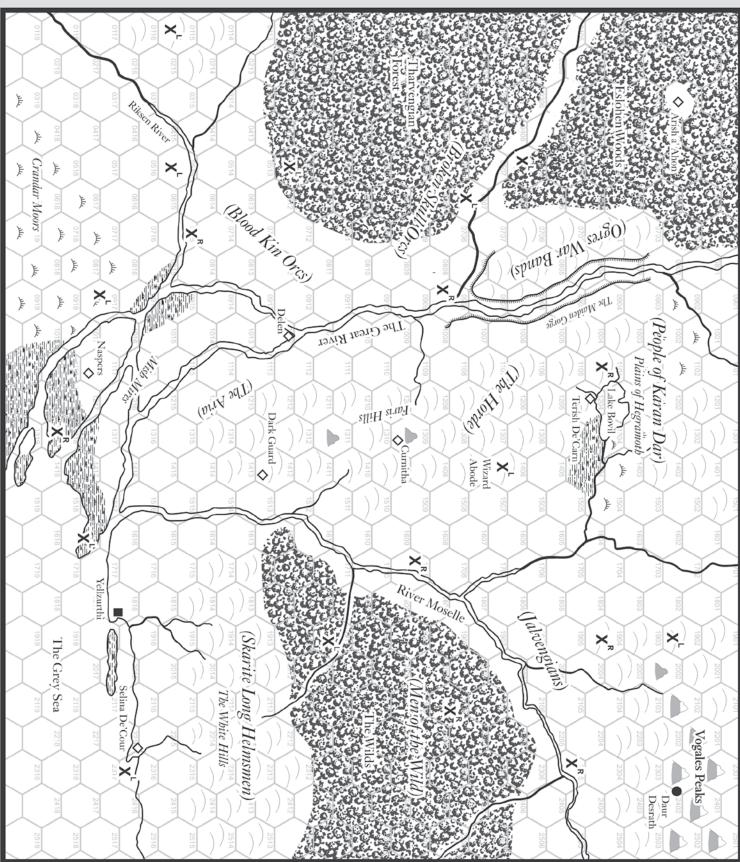
Encounters

- Paladins on patrol from Curnitha (Hex 1309) (Pal6, Id6 Pal2)
- Patrol from Yellzurthi (Hex 1816) (Myr6, 2d6 Ftr3)
- 3 Dark Guard warriors out hunting for slaves (Ftr5, 2d6 Ftr1)
- 4 Id4 Lycanthropes (random type) looking for prey
- 5 Goblins scavenging for food (4d6 I HD)
- 6 Barbarian raiding party (Brb6, 2d6 Brb1)
- 7 2d6 Slaves fleeing(20% chance they are hunted).
- 8 Ogre raiding party (1d6 4 HD)
- 9 I and 2 are found fighting each other
- 10 A priest of Sarrath (Clr6) is travelling to Yellzurthia with 1d6 guards (Ftr2)

Rumors

- I (F) The forces of Delaquain are mustering for a counter attack on Yellzurthi
- 2 (T) The Broken Skull Orcs have suffered a great defeat
- 3 (T) The Men of the Wild perform blood rituals
- 4 (F) The green dragon, Dyre, demands virgin sacrifices
- 5 (F) A priest of Sarrath left an artifact in the temple of Fosnor
- 6 (T) A magical chalice of power is in the ruins of Torra Norith
- 7 (T) The fort built by Baron Wiford sank into the swamp with a great treasure
- 8 (F) High Priest Gargath of the Iron Hand Temple can change into a snake

WILDLAND 1 Hex = 5 miles



Great River

The Great River begins in the distant Altus Mountains far to the north and travels nearly a thousand miles before emptying into the Grey Sea. The river is a mile wide throughout its length in Darish. The current is slow and steady, except in the Maiden Gorge where the narrow walls cause a swift current. Numerous shipwrecked barges and galleys line the river bottom.

The Grey Sea

The Grey Sea is noted for its storms, strong currents, treacherous reefs, and superb fishing grounds. Since the collapse of the Bright Empire, many fishermen, deprived of their livelihood, have turned to piracy.

Plains of Hegramoth

This grassy plain is the easiest way to pass through the Faris Hills. The tribesmen of Karan Dar patrol the pass and surrounding heights, making the Plains of Hegramoth relatively safe for travelers.

The Maiden Gorge

The Great River flows through this gorge, shadowed by soaring, one-hundred-foot cliffs on either side. It is here where Lareise, a maiden sworn to Delaquain, sang her song of power and stopped the barbarians from crossing the Great River during the early days of the Bright Empire. The power of the song shattered her mortal body, and it fell into the river while Delaquain took her spirit to Arcadia. Empowered by Lareise's sacrifice, and bolstered by the will of Delaquain, the great river became an impassable barrier that no barbarian could cross.

A shrine to Lareise was built in a cave at the base of the cliff where she fell, reachable only by a narrow footpath. During the civil war, a Sarrath raiding party destroyed the shrine, disrupting the ancient magic, and allowing the barbarians to cross the river.

Mish Mires

The Mish Mires form where the Great River widens before reaching the Grey Sea. Numerous islands, large and small, rise out of the swamp, each one infested with giant frogs, fire beetles, and other dangerous vermin. The Mish Mires was once a fertile farming area, but the encroaching swamp has all but obliterated any trace of agriculture in the region. Most of the Mish Mires' original inhabitants have long since moved on; now only the village of Naspers remains.

River Moselle

The Moselle was once a highway for trade eastward into the heartland of the Bright Empire. Its banks were crowded with those that made their living from the river and the trade that rode upon it. Now the Moselle's banks are littered with the ruins of villas, latifundia, and towns — a grim reminder of better, more prosperous times.

Riksen River

Once the heart of the Tharvengian Province, the Riksen forms the boundary between the Crandar Moors and the Tharvengian Forest. The river valley is dotted with the numerous ruins of villas, farms, and villages. Several of these ruins hold heaps of gnawed bones, both animal and human, and the sign of the Blood Kin orcs has been drawn in blood on the shattered walls.

Tharvengian Forest

The Tharvengian Forest serves as the eastern tip of a vast forest. Much of the forest is untouched, and game of all sizes can be found here, from deer to mammoths, along with the saber-tooth cats, cave lions, and dire wolves that hunt them. Currently, two orc tribes, the Broken Skulls and the Blood Kins, dominate this area. However, rumors from the west insist that there are still free barbarian tribes fighting the vast humanoid hordes.

The Wilds

Before the civil war, these woods only existed as scattered groves. Numerous villas once farmed the region, and several small towns relied on the agriculture in this area to feed their citizens. As the civil war continued, however, farms were abandoned, and the towns they supported soon emptied as well. The woods steadily grew over the abandoned settlements, covering them in a thick mass of forest, brambles, and vines. The Wilds is infested with lycanthropes of all types, and the other inhabitants of Darish rightly fear the woods. Only the Men of the Wilds know the few safe paths through the tangled forest, but how they avoid the evil lycanthropes in the area is unknown.

Vogales Peaks

The Vogales Peaks are several thousand feet high and snowcapped year around. This mountain range was once extensively mined, but most of the mines have been abandoned or were destroyed during the civil war. There are still rich deposits of iron and silver ore in the Vogales, but only the dwarves of Daur Desrath continue to mine the soaring peaks.

The White Hills

These hills run parallel to the coastline, and are known for their extensive deposits of chalk. Currently, the fierce Skarite Long Helmsmen dwell here, although their numbers dwindle as starvation, enemies, and the elements take their toll.

TRIBES

The fact that the tribes cover multi-hex territories means they are marked on the map and given separate entries. Nearly all of the various humanoid and barbarian tribes are herders of sheep and goats. However, some do possess cattle, which are considered a sign of high status. Most of the tribes are semi-nomadic and tend to move about their territory quite frequently. Permanent settlements do exist, but they are rarely larger than small steadings of two to five families.

The Aria

The Aria are human barbarians that invaded with over 1,500 warriors a decade ago and participated in the Shattering. However, since the Shattering, constant infighting and heavy losses to humanoid enemies has diminished their numbers. Several years ago, the Aria, finding little but misfortune in Darish De'Cour, decided to return west to their old homeland. However, during the exodus, they were ambushed by orcs near the Tharvengian forest, resulting in a fierce battle that devastated the tribe. Only 200 Aria survived the orc ambush, and this tattered remnant fled back across the Great River and settled on the east bank. Currently, Chief Ardar (Brb6) fights to keep 120 warriors (Brb1) and 80 woman and children alive against fierce odds. Compounding the Aria's recent troubles is the loss of all its shamans.

Blood Kin Orcs

The 200 orcs of the Blood Kin often paint their bodies with the blood of their enemies, eat the flesh of their foes, and decorate their huts with the bones. They were converted eight years ago to the worship of the blood god, Azeel, by a figure they know as the Red Man (Haran the Red, see Men of the Wild). They are feared throughout the region for their brutality and ferocity.

Broken Skull Orcs

The Broken Skull orcs were once the largest orc tribe in the region until they failed, quite disastrously, to tame a pack of dire wolves (Hex 0612). The dire wolves have developed a taste for orc flesh and the tribe has shrunk by half, now numbering just over 60. The survivors now consider crossing the Great River to escape the wolves.

The Horde

Clak and Frull, hill giant (9 HD) brothers, moved their families and slaves across the Great River five years ago. They live in one steading (Hex 1207), with another under construction nearby. The Horde consists of the brothers, 2 giantesses (4 HD), 2 male young adults (7 HD), and 2 female young adults (3 HD). In addition, Clak and Frull can call upon 20 ogre allies (8 adults, 12 children) and 200 gnoll warrior slaves (80 adults, 120 children). Because of their close proximity to Curnitha [Hex 1309), the Horde has frequent run-ins with patrolling paladins, and skirmishes are quite common.

Jalvengians

Jalvengians originate from a frozen land in the north. During their migration south, they were attacked by humanoid tribes, and were forced to cross the Great River, joining the attack against the Bright Empire. After the Shattering, the Jalvengians migrated north again to the Vogales Peaks. They surprised and destroyed the mining communities there, taking much wealth in silver and iron from their defeated foes. Only the dwarves of Daur Desrath offered any real resistance. After several pitched battles, an uneasy peace was reached last year.

The Jalvengians are divided into ten clans of roughly 300 individuals, each consisting of 1 clan leader (Bar5), 100 warriors, 150 women, and 50 children. The clans have a head shaman (Drd5) and 4 lesser shamans (Drd3). The tenth clan is the royal clan, and contains the same

number of warriors and noncombatants as listed above, with the addition of the chief (Bar10), his 10 housecarls (Bar8), the high shaman (Drd10), and 7 members of the Tribal Circle (Drd8).

Men of the Wild

After the Shattering, several barbarian tribes were nearly destroyed. Wandering the devastated lands, they encountered Haran the Red, a self proclaimed prophet of the blood god Azeel. His personal charisma caused many to flock to his banner, and he foretold that the Empire would suffer a thousand years of darkness. Haran led any that would follow into the Wild, and once there, he taught them the secret of lycanthropy.

After a few years in the Wilds, Haran's followers divided themselves into tribes, each tribe taking an animal as their totem — Bear, Boar, Rat, Tiger, and Wolf. These totems represent the lycanthropy each tribe is infected with, and all members carry the shapechanger taint in their blood. The prophet Haran (Clr12) is still alive, wandering tribe to tribe, leading them in wild rituals. Each tribe consists of 200 individuals (150 lycanthropes of the tribe's totem, and 50 children). In addition, each tribe has a priest of Azeel (Clr5) and 6 acolytes (Clr1). Haran keeps a small retinue consisting of a lycanthrope from each tribe trained as a high priest of Azeel (Clr9).

Ogre War Bands

Between the western edge of the Eslohen Woods and the Maiden Gorge three ogre war bands make their home. The war bands are the Bonecrushers, led by Drux, the Bloody Fist, led by Jugular, and the Black Dearth, led by Kiru. Curdon (Wiz9, 5 HD), an ogre mage, is the chief of all the ogres, and lives in a hut (Hex 0805) near the Maiden Gorge. Each war band consists of 6 ogres, along with a dozen goblin warrior-slaves. The ogres frequently raid the Esolan Woods to the west.

People of the Karan Dar

After The Shattering and the collapse of the Bright Empire, commerce and agriculture was all but obliterated in Darish De'Cour, and many faced starvation. The Shaman Delvanus (Drd12) rallied many of the surviving groups, both imperials and barbarians, and made them swear the oath of the Karan Dar, the holy tree of the druidic faith, to keep the peace.

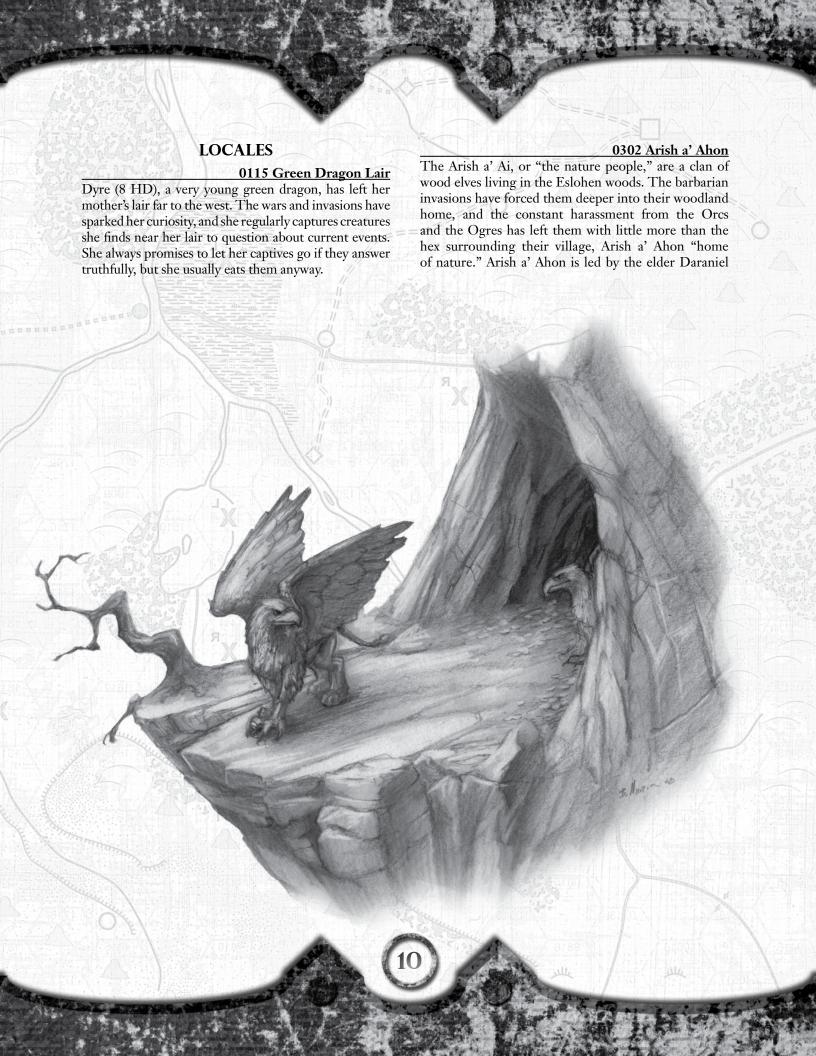
After years of wandering, Delvanus and his people encountered a group of Curnitha paladins fighting the Men of the Wild. They aided the paladins, and the two people became allies. For their aid, the paladins led Delvanus and his followers to the empty Plains of Hegramoth, where they settled and began calling themselves the People of the Karan Dar. Since then, they have prospered, and with the aid of the paladins of Curnitha, have been able to hold the plains against the humanoids to the west.

The People of the Karan Dar number 500 tribesmen. There are 10 clan chiefs (Rgr5), 150 warriors, 150 women, and 100 children. Delvanus is the leader of a circle of 8 druids (Drd9) and 10 acolytes (Drd3). Martial matters and tribal defense are handled by Captain Kaun (Rgr5), who leads a stalwart force of 20 rangers (Rgr2). Patrols consisting of 5 rangers and an acolyte are common, and they can be relied upon to help travelers in need.

Skarite Long Helmsmen

The Skarites are known for their distinctive long helms and horsehair plumes. During the barbarian invasion of Darish De'Cour, they crossed the Mish Mires and traveled east, eventually encountering the forces of Sarrath in the town of Yellzurthi. The Skarites laid siege to Yellzurthi, and their ferocity and martial prowess enabled them to quickly sack the city. Instead of simply looting Yellzurthi, the Skarites decided to stay and enslave the populace. Satisfied with their conquest, they did not join the other tribes in The Shattering.

Eight years after the sack of Yellzurthi, the forces of Sarrath returned and attacked the Skarite-held city by sea. Weakened from a recent campaign, the Skarites could not stand against Sarrath, and were forced to abandon the town. Scattered and defeated, they fled into the White Hills to the north. Now the Skarites have been reduced to only 150 ragged and starving survivors. A few dozen scattered longhouses in the White Hills hold the remnants of their tribe, including their chief (Brb6), 95 warriors, 40 women, and 10 children. Deadly fights often break out among the warriors due to the small population of women and the stresses of their peoples' desperate situation.



(Ftr6/Wiz2) who defends the village with 100 elven warriors and 4 treant (7 HD) allies. Arish a' Ahon is surrounded by a 200-yard zone of brambles and briars that act as an *entangle* spell.

0506 Griffon Nest

Several decades ago, the elves of Arish a' Ahon helped three griffons (7 HD) build a nesting ground here. The griffons are very aggressive, and attack anyone approaching their nests.

0512 Wolf Pack

The Blood Kin Orcs have devastated the game in this region, leaving a pack of 12 starving wolves (2 HD) to try their luck against a different type of game. Driven by hunger, these wolves do not hesitate to attack humanoid prey.

0515 Wyvern Nest

In a bluff above the Riksen River, a wyvern (7 HD) has made its nest and laid three eggs. The wyvern is very aggressive, and fights to the death to defend the nest. The nest contains a substantial amount of treasure from the orcs the wyvern has killed.

0607 Dire Wolf Pack

The Broken Skull Orcs attempted to tame this pack of dire wolves (4 HD)... and failed miserably. The dire wolves killed a quarter of the Broken Skull tribe, and in doing so have developed a taste for orc flesh. The pack is led by a large black dire wolf named Shadow (6 HD).

0715 Ruins of Novus Tydaris

This was once the capital of the Tharvengian Province before barbarians sacked it 25 years ago. Most of the barbarians abandoned it during the humanoid invasions, and those who stayed became food for the Blood Kin Orcs. Beneath the ruins of Novus Tydaris there is an extensive catacomb and sewer system.

0908 Ruined Temple of Fosnor

This temple and village were once dedicated to the worship of Sarrath. Thirty years ago, the paladins of Delaquain attacked and destroyed the temple, killing most of the villagers of Fosnor. Soon after, a group of 10 harpies (3 HD) moved into the ruined bell tower.

The harpies have captured a merchant adventurer named Oritus (Rog4), and plan to eat him. If rescued, he tries to enlist the party's help in recovering a lost fortune in the ruins of Novus Tydaris.

0917 The Mysterious Statues

Along the bluffs that line the Mish Mires are a series of lifelike statues that seem to change in appearance at random intervals. Several villagers from Naspers swear they have seen statues depicting missing relatives. The truth behind the mysterious statues can be traced to a reclusive pair of cockatrices that have established a lair here. When the cockatrices petrify a victim, they leave the statue standing until it is inadvertently pushed over and shattered.

1012 Delen

Before the civil war, the village of Delen was primarily a marketplace for fishermen shipping their wares to Novus Tydarius (Hex 0715). During the civil war, Delen was looted several times by both sides for men and supplies, but after the fall of the Tharvengian Province, Elder Polt (Ftr5) called in a favor from an old friend, the wizard Bolothous. Bolothous erected a stone wall around Delen, and constructed six stone golems (12 HD) to help defend the village. Six amulets were given to the elders to command the golems.

With its new defenses, Delen has become a meeting ground where all can trade, including barbarians, civilized folk, and even humanoids. The village has doubled in size and filled the space within the walls. Outside of the gates are encampments where visitors can stay. Once a month, Delen holds a trade fair that includes a slave market. Despite the many disparate groups that are frequently thrown together during the trade fair, violence is rare. This is likely due to the fact that violators of the market peace are punished by drowning in the Great River, held underwater by a stone golem until they expire.

Nearly 1,000 people live within the walls of Delen, with another 500 or so living outside in the visitor's encampment. The citizens rely upon the city's stout wall, a 100-man guard, and the 6 stone golems to protect them from bandits, monsters, and raiding barbarian tribes.