

So saith Ed

*Responses to questions and Realmslore requests
By Ed Greenwood on the Candlekeep Forums*

Part 19

Jul - Sep 2008

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

On July 1, 2008 THO said:- Hello all!

Ed has just returned home from Origins, which he loved (and can't say enough nice things about the GAMA show staff and volunteers!), and after driving for hundreds of miles, has gone straight to bed with his wife.

Ahem. I would rephrase that, but there doesn't seem to be any point. Ed did mention what fun it was to meet with AlorinDawn, talk, and hang out.

As it happens, I can answer dfemling's on-the-table request, from Ed's Menzo notes: House Barrison Del'Armgo is said to have a staff of house wizards "second to none" because they work together as friends, with close personal loyalty, sharing of spells, developing magics together, and so on, AND ARE VALUED FOR DOING SO AND ENCOURAGED TO GO ON DOING SO by the matrons and senior priestesses of the House. They are numerous but of far weaker power than many other houses, yet "punch above their weight" by working tightly and effectively together, communicating constantly by means of spells and rushing to each other's aid. The House benefits from this and so encourages it, not wanting more powerful houses to ever think taking on House Barrison Del'Armgo is remotely "worth it."

There. Potted Realmslore, from Ed.

love to all,
THO

On July 4, 2008 THO:- Hello again, all. I'm currently awaiting Ed's latest lore reply, but can make a start at answering The Red Walker:

PROBABLY Amaretto liqueur, specifically Disaronno Originale.

However, Ed loves a nice semi-dry Riesling (such as some years of Ancient Coast or several of the more "haughty" labels), and the seasonal Cranberry Maple Wheat beer made by Church Key Brewing microbrewery in Petherick's Corners, Ontario (I believe he got Steven Schend to sample it recently, which involves a trip to the brewery [crammed into a tiny old church near Campbellford, Ontario]).

I'll pass this on to Ed for a definitive answer; he may, of course, not have just one "favourite tittle." As for mixed drinks, I have seen him consume Pina Coladas, Tequila Sunrises, and a few more exotic things on a regular basis.

Hmmm; perhaps I'll drop in on him and ask personally.

Yes, he does drink out of feminine navels.

love,
THO

Hello again, all. This time Ed makes swift reply to Ergusch (yes, he remembers he has "soon-promised" tavern drink, fare, and pastime requests outstanding) about these linked queries: "Hello dear Ed and THO! Inspired by another scribe's query here at the Keep I did research on the Crystal Grot and was able to find a few answers by Ed of the Greenwoods in his replies. Now, these answers raised new questions (as is often the case for the unlearned scribe, I guess). So now I turn to the great teacher of Realmslore in hopes of having my newly arisen questions answered.

quote:

Originally posted by The Hooded One on 12 Jul 2006 concerning taxes in Suzail:

There are few surprises for an adventurer in Suzail, because the Crown of Cormyr doesn't have to be greedy for funds; it has the Crystal Grot and many sources of fee-based income.

Question 1: what other fee-based sources we you referring to? And, you mentioned some dragon articles you wrote on Cormyrean taxes in this answer as well that were not published back than.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Any chance that those have been published by now?

And also a minor side note in one of his other replies:

quote:

Originally posted by The Hooded One on 15 Sep 2007:

Thanks to the Crystal Grot and Vangey's canny "buying" of much foreign gold coinage, Cormyr has built up treasury enough over the years.

Question 2: Does this hold true for the time after the Dragon War? Or have the state funds been run low after this crisis?

Question 3: Also, is the Crystal Grot ever going to be played out/exploited?

Thanks in advance, Ergdusch"

Ed replies:

1. No, the articles haven't been published, but are under NDA for possible fiction use reasons. Sorry.

The "other fee-based" sources of income I mentioned include all manner of Crown-issued permits and licenses (e.g. to hunt in an area not your own, to cut timber ditto, to practice alchemy [medicine, scent-making, and the making of "around the house and farm" substances such as soaps, repellents and lubricants]), sales and rentals of Crown land, docking and warehouse fees at Crown wharves in Cormyrean ports, import duties on certain goods (which can be quite high on weapons, dyes, and certain potent drinkables), "gate tolls" per wagon if sheltering over at High Horn or other Crown fortresses, and so on (and on, and on). There are also 1-cp-per-transaction taxes built into the prices of certain services (fees for bardic performances, club dancers, etc.), and fees for Crown-provided services (such as inspections of buildings and fences, letters penned by Royal Court scribes, copies provided of various Crown documents such as land deeds, identity papers, et al). In certain circumstances, individuals can even hire Purple Dragons to repair roads and bridges and guard things, with the fees shared between the the Dragons and the Crown.

2. The Dragon War smashed a lot of Purple Dragon manpower and necessitated recruiting, training, and equipping new soldiers as well as short-term buying of a lot of food to offset ruined crops. In the longer term, a lot of fortifications in Arabel had to be rebuilt, and a great amount of fencing (and livestock herds) had been destroyed and had to be replaced. Yet the longer-term rebuilding generated prosperity in the ever-bustling realm all by itself . . . so the dint in the treasure was small, and just enabled the Obarskyrs to draw on more of the wealth of the Grot without causing rampant inflation.

In short: the realm (including its government and royal family) is as wealthy as ever.

3. Who knows? In theory, yes, but the "exploited" is covered by NDAs, and the "played out" is not something the few individuals who have actually seen the Grot seem at all worried about. Which should tell you the worth of what meets the eye in that cavern is stupendous - - and "stupendous" covers a lot of spending sprees.

So saith Ed. Who is back at the keyboard and typing hard, trying to catch up on ARCH WIZARD (for Solaris, in his Falconfar series, not the Realms), so he can turn his eye to some juicy Realms ideas. Or so he tells me.

I remain your Lady Herald in ever-willing service,

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

love to all,
THO

P.S. Sage, there's room here for Lady K on the couch beside me, if it's navel-sipping time . .

On July 5, 2008 THO said:- Hi, all.

Yes, Ed did create the Crystal Grot, so far as I can recall, and did so deliberately to have Cormyr's government make financial sense WITHOUT the ruling family or Court having the necessity to levy heavy taxes. (Ed wanted to establish a situation where the nobles hated the Obarskys for their own reasons, but the "common folk" didn't necessarily hate the ruling family, because they weren't suffering under a heavy tax load.) However, as usual, all of your posts will be sent on to him, so he can reply himself, in the fullness of time.

(Please be patient, folks, he does this out of love and is one of the busiest, most overloaded people I know, with declining health starting to gnaw at him and complicate matters.)

love to all,
THO

On July 6, 2008 THO said:- Hi, all.

Ed certainly had catfolk (of some sort; they were seldom-seen, VERY mysterious, sleek adventuring sorts) in the original Realms. I doubt they were close to killoren, but we'll see when Ed's reply comes back.

love,
THO

Hi again, everyone.

Ergdusch, you're very welcome. Fans of Cormyr are automatically special friends of mine. createvmind, this is one of the questions I CAN answer, being as Ed wrote detailed rules for the Lethe, Styx, et al, back when he was detailing the Nine Hells and other planes (he and fellow Canadian Steven Inniss, creator of the lillend, collaborated on a long, detailed overview of Limbo that ultimately wasn't published), and I read and enjoyed them.

This is (or was) "official," BTW, adopted by Jim Ward (then Creative Director of TSR): yes, the Styx affects those immune to magical and psionic mind-effects, because it works chemically on their bodies (brains). However, immunity often dampens/lessens the effects of the Styx, or allows the body to rally, purge itself, and "throw off" any changes the Styx made to the affected being. So contact with the waters of the Styx either affects an "immune" creature fully, or affects them fully but not permanently (or for a markedly shorter duration, in the case of non-permanent effects), or affects them partially for a short time (weak effects). Your call as DM (as, ultimately, with everything, of course).

I'm paraphrasing Ed's notes here, not giving them verbatim, because they ARE Wizards-owned lore.

love,
THO

On July 7, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. This time I bring Ed of the Greenwood's Realmslore response to this, from scribe Charles Phipps: "Hey Ed, I'm back. Our current campaign has changed a bit since A Study in Perversity which I hoped you enjoyed. Today, one of the players had a fun idea for our latest attempt at 4Eing the Realms. In this case, they have the unusual desire to become Evil Overlords. Yes, our little Saurons and Voldemorts in training love the

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Forgotten Realms so much they want to carve themselves a piece of it. So for the sake of humor, any places in the Realms you'd argue are ripe for conquest and advice for groups to ally with in conquering such (and hopefully maintaining your prize) if you have absolutely no scruples?" Ed replies:

Hi, Charles. Yes, I enjoyed Study In Perversity very much. The current PC direction of your campaign doesn't surprise me overmuch, either. :}
There are some prize "targets" in the Realms right now (I'm speaking pre-Spellplague, of course, being as NDAs remain waiting and watchful until August), aside from the obvious one (the border Kingdoms). They include: many of the cities of the Vilhon, much of the Wizards Reach if one wants to build rather than conquer, a few of the cities of the Tashalar and in Dambrath and on the trade routes between, and select places around the Golden Gulf.
If one doesn't mind facing nascent but obvious threats (future orc hordes), one can add Luskan and various Sword Coast north communities to that list, too.
Heh. Have fun. :}

So saith Ed. Creator of the Realms and many of its threats. Toppler of thrones he created, as one of my fellow players once put it.
love to all,
THO
P.S. createvmind, you're very welcome. Keep those questions coming; Ed is always happy to entertain your queries.

On July 8, 2008 THO said:- Hello, all! Speak of Realmslore from the Master, and ye shall receive . . .

Back in May, scribe Landro posed this question to Ed: "I'm new to this forum, but one has to start somewhere. I was wondering if there was much in the way of established lore on the topic of ArchLiches in the realms? How does one become an archlich? Are the rituals any different than those used by regular liches, or does the future lich just suck up the evil and hope they don't get tainted too badly in the process? Are there any archliches of note outside the one already mentioned in Waterdeep: City of Splendors? How are they viewed by Faerun at large, or at least in the main centres?"
Ed now replies:

The Sage has ably directed you to all of the official lore coverage that's of use (with one old, 1st Edition exception: the Bazaar of the Bizarre DRAGON article in which Len Lakofka described one process of achieving lichdom).
In REF5 LORDS OF DARKNESS, I described another process, and a DM can readily combine that and the "use this spell and then this one" approach I described in VOLO'S GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MAGICAL to derive other roads by which living humans become lichnee.
An archlich must almost always create their own ritual, and get it right (yes, it's difficult; the analogy of the human with a kitchen knife trying to do surgery on himself unaided at his kitchen table is a good one). This is due to the fact that "good" liches are very rare, seldom preserve their processes in detailed notes for others to find, and such records, when they do exist, are apt to be stolen and kept hidden (or destroyed) by mages seeking their own road to lichdom or priests of death, undeath, or similar portfolios who have their own reasons for trying to control access to lichdom.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.
Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.
Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.
This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

There are a few archliches who are willing to instruct others in how to achieve their state, but there are also some who are decidedly unwilling, deeming archlichdom "not for everyone" and so on.

So, yes, the rituals are different, and trying to stay "good" whilst following an evil ritual is not an option (being as most of the rituals used by evil liches involve murder, desecration of the dead, and other decidedly non-good acts or ingredients only obtainable through such acts).

Yes, there are about a dozen archliches of note (as in: they have done things publicly that have brought them to the attention of rulers, the Harpers, the Heralds, and other power groups), and probably as many more who cleave to lower public profiles, but who may be provoked into dramatic deeds at some future time.

And finally, most of Faerûn knows archliches only through bardic ballads, tavern talk, fireside ghost tales, and other legends. Which means "the average commoner in the Realms" certainly believes good liches exist, but has never seen one, and remains to be convinced of their precise powers, nature, and "how good they'll be if I meet one!"

So saith Ed, creator of the archlich (upon editorial direction, by Jeff Grubb I believe, to add "good liches" to the game rules).

love to all,
THO

Hello again, all. Neriandal Freit recently asked (in response to my mentioning Ed's lore regarding the River Styx): "THO - do you know if any of that detailed information is available? that would certainly be wonderful stuff to have for my Redeemers of Dawn (that I'll need to do something with kudos of 4.0)

Edit: Lady, do you know if Ed (or even your self?) ever had the chance to look over the Redeemers in the Compendiums latest edition?"

Neriandal, I can't post any of that lore verbatim without the permission of Wizards of the Coast. Who would probably prefer to publish it in formal, public-pay-for-it format, if at all. Sorry. That's the difference in the original Realms agreement between Ed answering a question here by revealing new lore or providing his opinion, as opposed to extensively quoting something Ed's already been paid for, and that TSR (now WotC) already owns. (Even cutting-room-floor outtakes, if they were written and submitted as part of a project, are owned by the company.)

I'm certain that Ed hasn't seen the latest Compendium, because I haven't downloaded it and sent it to him yet. Nor have I seen it yet; we've both been very busy lately. Apologies; I'll rectify that state of affairs straightaway!

love,
THO

P.S. I'm sending all of your replies to my "which questions first" queries to Ed, verbatim, to let him be swayed (or not) without me as filter. We'll all await the result.

On July 10, 2008 THO said:- Hi again, all! BlackMoria, you have launched a query that hurtled straight into the bright, shiny unyieldingness of a new NDA.

1. Congratulations!
2. Sorry. Sigh.
3. Well, you can infer the obvious from this, of course: that the Crown has, or will, resurface in the Realms in some fashion at some time, and that you and all readers of Realms fiction might in time to come read about it.

You made Ed grin. Quoth he:

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

"They read my thoughts, I know they do!
Proof positive, once more!

Heh. So saith Ed.
love,
THO

On July 12, 2008 THO said:- Hi again, fellow scribes.
As it happens, I can answer Foxhelms' question right away, with a quote from Ed, thanks to one of us players asking him much the same thing:

Humans, halflings, half-elves, gnomes, and tieflings can all have freckles (it's rare in all of these except halflings), and there are freckle-like conditions created by the scarring of some diseases (akin to old "pox" scars in our real world) that can afflict almost all races.

So saith Ed. Who should be sending me a longer Realmslore reply soon. He promised.
love to all,
THO

Hello again, all. This time I set before interested scribes a Realmslore reply from Ed to scribe Firestorm, addressing this query: ". . . Currently, we are discussing powerful Spellcasters. Larloch, etc, and the story Tears So White came up. Larloch acts visibly afraid of Storm when she advances with Silverfire, and I personally maintain that this was a placating act on his part to show he meant no harm, etc. My reasoning being, Even if she smoked him with Silverfire, he would simply return to his Phylactery safely within whatever crazy pocket Dimension he hid it in and he truly had nothing to fear permanently."

[[THO: scribes' converse from a thread here at the Keep was then included, but I have snipped it here for brevity's sake]]

"Lol. So I guess in the end, What i am asking is: Could Storm have obliterated his Soul on the spot, despite usual lich Soul returning to Phylactery stuff (Or to another lich of his), Contingency spells teleporting him away, etc? Did he have genuine reason to immediately fear for his existence other than making powerful enemies of several Chosen who could together pose a greater threat??
Sorry about the long add ons and Quotes. Its just a weird question. It bothered me that Larloch the Ultra Lich would show fear to Storm, who a Manshoon clone could handle if she didn't have Elminster's help (Spellfire book 2 seems to indicate that Storm thinks she would not match up well vs. Manshoon without El's help)."

Ed replies:

You have divined matters correctly, Firestorm. Larloch is trying to seem seem unthreatening, and so retreats a few steps, but he also DOESN'T want to get struck by the silver fire, not out of fear,

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

but because it would burn away many layers of his interwoven magics, causing a "snowballing" deterioration of his lichnee condition AND forcing him to spend much time and trouble fighting this, and restoring all of his magics (if certain magics are destroyed, he would lose control over some of the liches who serve him, and they would certainly try to seize this opportunity [Larloch weakened? Our best chance!] to try to destroy him. I'm not saying they would necessarily succeed, I'm saying Larloch can foresee these problems and would prefer to avoid them. To do otherwise would be wasteful, and would also let others witness and remember (or hear of, from witnesses) this vulnerability and so perhaps foster future attacks on him.

The Sisters also know from experience and Mystra's teachings something that Larloch hasn't thought of, and the Princes of Shade never faced.

The silver fire is the raw energy of the Weave (and thus, effectively limitless; it's the channeled vitality of the WORLD), and by its nature tends to sear both existing spell effects and living things - - and whereas spells can block and foil the silver fire of one source, and a mythal or powerful ward can be crafted so as to "drink" (absorb) silver fire and therefore be strengthened by it rather than destroyed by it, no known magic can withstand the concentrated strikes of six or more sources of silver fire (six or more Chosen and/or avatars of deities of magic who know how to derive and wield silver fire, such as Mystra and Azuth).

Larloch can never "have" silver fire to wield unless he submits to Mystra, abandoning his lichdom and becoming one of her servitor creatures, alive in a vastly lesser body and subject to her authority. He doesn't know if she would accept him or destroy him, if he asked; all he knows is that she suffers him to continue to exist as he is now, a kingpin among liches, commanding many lichnee. Thus, as it's a form of magical energy he can't have and daren't (as a lich) have overmuch contact with, he's fascinated by it and hungers to have it ("human nature," if you will). He approached Storm's silver fire almost reverently, wanting to see it at very close quarters, yearning to have it - - and yet controlling himself iron-hard, to keep himself from touching it.

Yes, that was "the" (true) Larloch, by the way, not the lich lord inhabiting (controlling and speaking through) the body of another lich from afar (though he can and often does do this).

By the way, in response to "Nobody is going to try to go into the Warlock's Crypt fighting 60 high level liches" (et cetera), that's not Larloch's fear. He fears revolt from within, if he is weakened or incapacitated; his own dominated undead, who so intimately know his powers, where his magic lies, and their ways around his domain, turning upon him.

As for silver fire destroying souls: I don't know. Certainly no mortal has witnessed this happening (or if they have, understood what they were seeing correctly). Mystra and Azuth would of course know; her Chosen obviously do not.

In this case, with all of Larloch's contingencies and his phylactery being elsewhere (though there are some special forms of undead that result when liches are magically prevented from contact with their phylacteries, when their lich bodies are destroyed; sorry, NDA on these) I doubt Storm could have destroyed Larloch's soul on the spot, no. Nor do I think she would ever think she could. Liches are creatures of magic, and Mystra frowns on destroying them without good reason . . . and Larloch was NOT attacking her.

Whew. So saith Ed, master of all things lichnee from way back. Hmmm, "Expert on Lichdom" doesn't appear that often on resumés, does it?
love to all,
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

On July 13, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all! Ed was delayed in replying yesterday due to a Net access outage in his neck of the woods (storm took down a telephone pole, taking a run of fiber-optics with it), but has emerged to tell me he really enjoyed the queries from Zandilar (which he will soon answer; he just has to find one little lore file first), and to deal with the most recent question posted here, by crazedventurers (see directly above).

Ed replies:

Hi, Damian! I'll try to answer your questions in strict order, and restrict myself to the pre-Spellplague Cormyr in my answers; here we go.

Yes, there is a Crown law (brought into being about ten years before the death of King Azoun IV, when Vangerdahast and Alaphondar had an idle month and agreed on some things, this being one of them) banning businesses of all sorts (including inns, taverns, and private clubs) from using royal names, nicknames, heraldry, and "decrying the Crown" (which means you can't name your tavern Azoun's Codpiece or Duar's Head or the Steel Regent's Backrest, just to invent some examples). Local Purple Dragons would be offended, and might wreck such an establishment, even if there was no law; some veterans take a VERY dim view of anything that pokes fun at the Crown. They have a fierce loyalty to their "companions in harness" (comrades in arms) and the Obarskyrs who lead them (though not necessarily to some of the nobility serving as military officers). Such a naming would also, as you say, be seen as an attitude tempting misfortune, and might well be avoided by many potential customers as a result. Sometimes upstairs, undercover "drinking clubs" in Marsember get names that are a mockery of the Crown - - but never 'real,' taxable businesses.

In memory, Azoun IV is revered (and jovially celebrated in taverns everywhere as "our stallion," with increasingly overblown accounts of his sexual prowess [lovemaking on the back of a galloping steed that's leaping fallen trees and creeks as it tears through the forest, for example, something that sounds rather bruising for all parties involved]), but honoring him takes the form of remembrance festivals on the date of his birthday, and the naming of meals or ales as "Azoun's Preferred" or "Azoun's Chosen" (claims that everyone smiles at and does nothing to refute, this "everyone" including Crown agents), rather than dubbing buildings and businesses after him.

The naming law also prevents directly naming any business after a specific battle (even a victory), and any noble, noble family, local lord, and any specific heraldic blazon. So you could dub your tavern "The Rearing Stag" even though certain arms use a rearing stag as a device, but you could not duplicate the specific depiction of the rearing stag that appears in the Staghunt noble family blazon, nor adopt the heraldic description of that stag: "a full-antlered scarlet stag rampant to the dexter, its silver rack entwined with the branches of an oak tree" (heralds in the Realms do not use real-world French heraldic terms, though I have sometimes rendered their blazons into such, for clarity - - and ironically, now usually avoiding doing so, for the very same reason). There's no rule against duplicating the name of a Cormyrean naval ship, simply because there were a few unintended duplications when Vangey and Alaph were drafting the law, and because neither of them considered that any confusion of association could ever arise.

You CAN name your tavern, inn, or stables (but not any other sort of business) directly after the place it is located in (so "The Arms of Arabel" is an illegal name, but "the Pride of Arabel" is not). Tailors can't set themselves up as "the Flashing Needle of Arabel," even if their customers give them that nickname, and Crown agents (the same guys who show up to collect taxes) will force a

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

name change on the newer business in any case where they think a second business has been established with a name too similar to an existing one (for one thing, they never want the tax rolls to get confused). So if "the Pride of Arabel" is flourishing, you can't legally open "the Promenade of Arabel" across the street or at the far end of the city).

No business can name itself after a place it isn't located in (i.e. no inns in Espar calling themselves "High Horn Rest"). There ARE a few old, 'grandfathered' businesses that break both of the rules I'm addressing in this paragraph, and the right to go on breaking it can be bought and sold (but never increased; so the "Wyvernwater Inn" can continue to exist, but if it's sold and continues operating under the same name, the seller can't open a new inn called "the Old Wyvernwater House," and if "Wheloon House" burns down, it can be rebuilt, but it can't be expanded to two locations, "Old Wheloon House" and "Wheloon Castle").

Mythical nobles (so long as they can't be mistaken for members of a real noble family) CAN serve as the names of establishments, so "the Drunken Lord" or "Old Lord Roaringsides" are all right, but "Lord Old Roaringsides" would NOT be allowed in combination with a depiction, badge, or anything else (such as the black stallions famously bred by the Roaringhorn family) that would make a traveler think there was an association with the Roaringhorns.

Cormyr, like every other long-settled place, has several folk equivalents to our world's Baron Munchausen, Casanova, and Squire Allworthy. These include Old Lord Roaringsides (a hunting, brawling, tirelessly-enduring lover of every female within reach, slayer of animals who devours them raw in the forest where he spears them or eats like sixteen men at a feast, belches loudly enough to knock nearby folk over, and so on), Lady Doom (an icily-sneering haunt of a gowned, gliding woman who sails through walls and locked doors without hindrance, says nothing to most but whispers of doom to a few, and whose appearance presages misfortune or death), and Lord "Firetongue" Haubrynton (based on a non-noble knight of a different name who fought alongside King Duar, long ago, and had the same fiery speech; Lord Firetongue is a solemn, dignified noble of senior years who has fits in which he swears like a sailor, punches objectionable people, chases maids, plays pranks . . . and then reverts, apparently forgetting everything he's done; whereas the real knight apparently really had no remembrance, the fictional Lord Firetongue is always depicted as slyly winking when he claims to have no knowledge of his "wild deeds").

As for signage, inns, public stables, and taverns are required by law to have signs (lit by lanterns or some other means, such as magic, so as to be readable by night, except during instances where local authorities specifically decree otherwise, such as during a war) clearly visible thrusting out into the street.

Other businesses may choose to have such signs (and may be governed by local guild rules or trade agreements), and almost all do have signs, though not all businesses use out-thrust signboards; some, particularly crafters, have flush-to-the-wall signs mounted over their doors. In all cases, the Crown (acting through local lords, or Purple Dragon commanders in rural areas where there is no local lord) has instant and final say over the size, shape, content, and location of all such signage ("location" in this usage really meaning "how much the sign thrusts out into or over the road, creating a hazard for high-loaded wagons and coaches").

Yes, local heralds have a duty to inspect and order any necessary changes to all such signage (on the grounds of infringing on heraldry or misleading the public as to the nature of the business, NOT on grounds of "good taste"). The Heralds can override local heralds, who can in turn override the tastes of a local lord or his agents (so citizens have a route of appeal if their lord just doesn't like giant carved wooden boots or candles hanging from chains out over the street he rides down, for instance). It would be foolish for most shopkeepers to pick a fight with their local lord (who has many ways of getting back at them, if he chooses), but there is a strict prohibition on local lords harming businesses or crafters by denying them one sign after another, and in the past, local lords have been removed and publicly disgraced for doing so (notably Onslur Gelwood of Wheloon in the last few years of the reign of Rhigaerd I, and Caltath Malurt of Waymoot in the second year of Azoun IV's rule).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



The tax collectors and all traveling Crown officials and courtiers have clear, easy, and confidential channels through which to complain about bad beer and similar shortcomings in inns and taverns. (They can speak to any Purple Dragon barracks commander, any local lord or bailiff of a local lord, any War Wizard, or to the Desk of Justice in the Royal Court of Suzail. Everyone of these "complain to" persons can also make complaints from their own observations, or on behalf of any citizen.) All complaints are routed to the Desk of Justice, which is really a room rather than a desk, and has nothing at all to do with Black Robes or judicial proceedings.

Rather, it is a small band of undercover inspectors run by a Highknight (and escorted for safety by War Wizards and Highknights when it seems necessary) who have the power to close a kitchen or taps on the spot, and to confiscate or destroy food, yank Crown licenses, and effectively shut down a business for good, or for as long as it takes to fix it. They rarely have to do so, these days; their mere appearance awes many patrons and frightens most hostelry owners bone-white.

However, there aren't specific amounts or qualities set down in laws; what the Desk is trying to prevent is poisonings, the serving of food or drink that will spread disease or make folk ill, and (on a daily basis, the most important and prevalent part of their work) DECEPTION.

If you are promised a tankard of ale, there is an expectation that the tankard will be large enough to have a handle you can fit all of the fingers of your hand through, and that the tankard will descend at least two fingers below that handle and at least one finger above, in terms of the depth of interior space in the tankard that can be filled with drink, AND that said space is wide enough that all of fingers of your hand, squeezed together tightly, can be thrust down into that "hole." (YES, that means that drinkers with huge hands should be given larger tankards, or given more ale in other containers, per drink paid for. For everyone, it means no miniature "toy tankards," and no mugs that are only two inches deep, from lip to the "bell" [inside bottom].) Similarly, if you are promised "mutton" or "goose eggs" or "ale from Arabel," what you are served should be just that, and not something else passed off as what was promised.

In the ports of Suzail and Marsember, guilds are now forming or already exist to insist on, and try to enforce, strict labelling and precise identification of goods, so "Malaxan's Best Brew" won't be barrels of whatever Sembia sends labeled as such, but will always be beer actually brewed by the same guy called Malaxan, in the same place and to more or less the same recipe, and really be what he considers his "best," and not "the mixed-bottom-barrel dregs slop Sembians won't drink, so we'll ship it to Cormyr, where all they can taste is horse-dung, so they'll never know the difference." (Which is why you can now buy really cheap, bitter, horrible ale called "Sembian Odds" at some dockside taverns; it really is mixed "odds and ends" from barrels, which is perfectly fine because it is identified as such.)

And finally, no direct taxes are levied on the sale of ale, wine and spirits to patrons in a tavern, but the businesses that produce such drinkables are taxed, both as businesses and a 1cp/barrel (up to 1 sp for the largest "tuns," so making the barrel larger doesn't allow a brewer to escape "the Crown's take"). Small beer made at home is never taxed, and "local brews" are never taxed if they are drunk only by the owners or neighbors who may buy a tankard or pitcher. However, if drink is ever put into a barrel that is transported elsewhere (outside of town, as opposed to one street over in the same place), the "barrel tax" applies.

In Arabel, Marsember, and Suzail, ALL producers of "strong drink" (alcoholic beverages or "physics" and "cordials" [medicines]) are taxed, except for what they consume in their own house (i.e. the drinkers are their own family or guests). Individuals who try to elude tax by just running taverns or drinking clubs in their own homes quickly get visited by the Desk of Justice, the tax collectors, the Watch and everyone else (including War Wizards mind-reading them to determine their true intent and extent of their activities, because there's an everpresent "wary watch" for smuggling), to tax them as businesses and hassle them out of such behaviour back into serving just themselves, family members, and a handful of dinner guests or overnight visitors.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Great questions, and you're always welcome, Damian! May we both continue to enjoy the Realms for years upon years to come!

So saith Ed, creator of Cormyr and drinker of much ale.
love to all,
THO

Hmm. I think Ed and his editor (Brian Thomsen, who used to be head of Book Publishing for TSR) are still kicking ideas around, but I'll check, of course, and bring Ed's reply back to you.
Er, hello again, all.

More lore from Ed, this time in response to scribe althen artren: "Has Ed ever done anything with the Queen of Air and Darkness, or write up the Black Diamond, or create a comprehensive list of the gods of humanoid creatures, or did he use the Monster Mythology (one of my favorites)?"
Ed replies:

1. The Queen of Air and Darkness: yes. Currently covered by an NDA. Sorry.
2. No, that was another's baby, and in staff hands at the time. It should indeed be written up, and I believe was (in brief, sketchy terms), but that's hidden Wizards lore, not yet-to-be-published Ed Realmslore.
3. No, MONSTER MYTHOLOGY was published far too late for my use in designing the Realms. The published Realms has largely avoided "comprehensive" lists since, because designers always found it useful to create a new deity for this adventure or that back story. Until, of course, another designer expressed horror that we now had too many deities. :) Such is the "design cycle" that we Great Old Ones see, time and again. (No, I'm not a dread creature of the Cthulhu Mythos, though I have written about them. I'm a Secret Master of Gamin - - oops! FORMERLY-Secret Master of Gaming, and when you stay active in the industry for decades, you get the Great Old nickname.)

So saith Ed, who lies dreaming in lost R - - uh, in the book-filled basement of a farmhouse in a rural Ontario.
love to all,
THO

Heh. Here's Ed's lightning-swift reply to that:

Hi, althen artren. Mining's a ticklish topic in southern Ontario right now, what with various people trying to fight mining companies who have appeared and ravaged their homes drilling and digging. The problem is claims, and the definition of "working" them . . . and in some cases, large companies apparently being able to secretly receive government permission to override or set aside existing claims staked by individuals (in clear defiance of the law). Southern Ontario's been settled for about three centuries now, and some spots have half a dozen or more overlapping claims.

However, if you get the whole claim thing sorted out, lots of gold has been discovered in Ontario over the years, and fortunes have been made. However, nothing RECENT has been found near

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



where I live, on the northern shore of Lake Ontario, a heavily-glaciated landscape of drumlins. Recent discoveries, like Hemlo, have been well to the north, around Lake Superior. You really have to get up into Canadian Shield country (the Shield being the bare rocks that were once the roots of mountains the glaciers scoured away), which begins where the farms start to peter out (hard to farm bare rock and get much of a crop except . . . rocks) and "cottage country" starts . . . and people who have weekend cottages to relax from the city for weekends or the summer in tend to take a dim view of someone blasting or digging.

If it's truly recreational prospecting you're interested in (hiking with map and hammer), check with the relevant ministry about the rules and what permissions you have to get, and then just have fun. Up around Bancroft there are gems and semi-precious gems and nickel and copper silver galore, still waiting to be found, if past finds are any good indication.

And there are miles upon miles of wild bush that hasn't been thoroughly searched yet, though geologists with maps and cores and airplanes have tested all the "most likely" areas, following ore veins, et cetera. Again, find out the rules so you don't encounter any unpleasantness, and you could spend several lifetimes looking for rich lodes.

Right near me isn't the place to look, however. I'm about a mile and a half from Lake Ontario, and between me and the lake is a very large cement quarry (where they blast rock all day). Mines are called "gravel pits" around here, because that's all they mine. :}

So saith Ed. Who knows his stuff, as usual (and I know he does; when he was younger and more, er, slender, he spent many weekends exploring caves around Ontario). I know he went prospecting back in public school and again in high school, and found some sodalite and hematite; I'm not sure if he ever found anything more.

love to all,
THO

On July 14, 2008 THO said:- And when I laugh, my bubbles do . . . interesting things.
Damian,
Ed says:

You're very welcome. When I have the time to do Realmslore, it's always a pleasure to do so for those who love the Realms. Feel free to pepper me with questions to goad me to "fill in around the edges" of my reply, if you feel the need. As long as I'm breathing, I'm here for Realms fans. Oh, and BTW: NDAs prevent me from saying anything specific at all, but I've recently read some as-yet-unpublished Realms novels, and all who enjoy Realms fiction are in for more than one treat. :}

So saith Ed. I'm itching to read those novels myself, but of course must wait until they're published.

Damian, I'll raise a glass with him for you, in hopes we can all do it in person someday.
love,
THO

Hello again, everyone! This time I bring more Realmslore from Ed, specifically a reply to the queries posed by crazedventurers about the Moonshaes: "Well Again! A question (or three) about the Moonshaes this time, specifically related to the Halls of the High King module, (for me, the best module* written for the Realms, one can run an entire campaign from just those 64 pages, it is a must buy, so if you don't have it then get it!).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Ed could you provide us with some conjecture on what Gauntather and the other High Hands would do assuming that their plot to sacrifice King Tristan is thwarted by those pesky adventuring types that seem to poke their noses into other peoples business when its not wanted..... ? Would they continue in their aim to bring back Bane (Xvim) or fall into the 'somewhat less religious' work of carving out an empire and enriching themselves instead? (how, where and why?; and who can seriously oppose them? Flamsterd and the Harpers? Help from Waterdeep/The Lords Alliance?)

Would the failure of Gauntather in bringing tyranny to the Moonshaes be seen by the other High Hands and senior surviving clergy as an indication that 'his hand' does not seem to be able to crush Bane's enemies and therefore needs removing? In other words would they gang up on him and remove him for failure? Is this the Banite way of dealing with those who fail? Or would his hold and rank over the others save his skin? Am wondering how lesser clergy 'punish' over-ranking clergy and move up the ladder and how accepted it is within the Church to do so, do you need a good reason to kill another priest or will any reason do (assuming you have the power to back up and follow through with your reason).

Re. Manshoon's investment in the Risen Cult (which I think is the most interesting part of the entire module). Would I be correct in thinking that Manshoon has invested in other 'rogue' Banite sects around the Realms to act as a possible check against Fzoul and the 'orthodox' doctrine of Bane (Xvim) that he promotes? Can you suggest other geographical areas where Manshoon is secretly supporting Banite Cults that potentially oppose Fzoul and his Moonsea allies?

Finally can you share any more Lore on (Cantrev) Aithelar and its Lord, Haembar 'Hawkenhound' Cauldyth please? (Hawkenhound - nickname or family name?). Its a smashing place just waiting for a small group of young local lads and lasses to start their adventuring career in.

Once again, thank you for sharing your time with us on Candlekeep.

Damian

*I say the best module, this obviously will be the 2nd best Realms module of all time once WoTC figure out that a 64/96/128/256 (delete as appropriate) page module of Eveningstar, the Haunted Halls and the environs of the the Evenor Lands would be the single best thing that they can let Ed write - I don't care what edition it is written for, just give me the product please!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Ed replies:

Hi, Damian. Glad you like HALLS OF THE HIGH KING. Yes, I sneakily designed it (as much as I could, within the limited pagecount) to be the basis for a campaign; it's good to know that for you, I succeeded. :) And yes, I'd very much like the chance to someday do Eveningstar properly, with the entire village detailed, about a dozen subplots, the three mini "side dungeons," and the "how power groups based elsewhere will get involved" guidelines, too. As before, I'll try to take the rest of your questions in order.

I see one or two of the High Hands inwardly deciding to just try to seize as much wealth and power as they can for themselves, but concealing their self interest from underlings by doing it in the name of Bane (i.e. purporting to be carrying on with the holy Cause). To do otherwise will leave them without the believers to work for them, get them food and money, and provide other support; they'll be on their own. They would start in the Moonshaes, purportedly still loyal High Hands, until they had amassed good ships, substantial wealth, and some competent underlings whose loyalty they have begun to wean away from the Cause and more to personally being loyal to them. Then they would depart for Luskan or Neverwinter or Tharsult or Tethyr, seeking to carve out their own criminal empires, to end up living like a (tyrant) lord somewhere.

Gauntather wouldn't be one of these, not out of any great piety, but because Banites DO tend to kill Banites who fail, and he'll see himself as trapped, known to all on the Moonshaes who serve

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

the Cause he's so energetically fostered. Instead, he will announce that he didn't think this first attempt would succeed, but it did accomplish his secret aim: flushing adventuring bands and other foes of the Cause out into the open, so they can be destroyed. He will hurl all the Banites he can into ambushes on the PCs and other adventurers, making liberal use of poisoned weapons, harrying sleeping or exhausted adventurers, and sacrificing on his altars all he can capture alive.

At the same time, he will tell the other High Hands that not only must they try again to capture and sacrifice King Tristan, they must also seek all other "royal" rulers in the Moonshaes (of all the races, up to and including dryads) and sacrifice THEM, lest death by misadventure or other hands rob them of Tristan as a sacrifice. "The Cause must prevail!"

Flamsterd is most interested in his magical researches; he will be irked every time his attention is drawn away from his work, and will respond to High Hand (or other) violence and tyranny with short, violent spell-hurling responses (he has staves of power and others of his own devising that he can wield) or by coercing or hiring adventurers (sometimes using gates [3e portals] to bring adventurers from mainland Faerûn) to fight the Banites. The most dogged resistance to the High Hand will be local Harpers, who will work alone or in small bands (four or less) simply because they are so thin on the ground. Mistrusted by local rulers throughout the Moonshaes (who will also be suspicious of any forays by the Lord Alliance), they will only be able to get cooperation if the High Hand starts to conquer large areas (i.e. not until it's quite possibly too late).

The Lords' Alliance will act somewhat like the modern real-world UN does: sending envoys first, to fact-gather, and then more envoys to engage in delicate diplomacy (whilst the High Hand work goes on, unimpeded), then argue amongst themselves as to what the best policy is (Alliance members don't want to see other Alliance members achieve any trade or influence toeholds in the Moonshaes, and so will work to stymie and offset efforts of fellow Alliance members), and THEN move, sending in ships full of troops - - almost certainly too late.

All of which means, of course, that it's all up to the PCs. :}

And yes, the lowest of the Banites are of two sorts: the very lowest, venal thugs who obey orders because they can see that it will be death not to do so, but who are only in it for what they can personally glean; and those who are soon promoted one rung over the thugs: those who hope for a better life, and see Bane as the way to achieving it, and dare to believe in all of this, and become dedicated faithful. THEY are the true danger, because if Gauntather or all of the High Hands are slain, replacements will well up from below (from the cleverest, most Machiavellian, and most zealous of the believers).

Yes, the failure of Gauntather in bringing tyranny to the Moonshaes will be seen by many Banites as an indication that 'his hand' does not seem to be able to crush Bane's enemies and therefore needs removing.

Not by most of the High Hands, who are inwardly non-believers (or becoming so) swiftly, and who see these "god trappings" as a road to power rather than a Cause they believe in [remember, they all believe in ALL the gods, but like all Faerûnians, tend to look hard at human interpretations of the will and aims of the gods; Bane is GONE, and even if this will bring him back, is it the right way? Is it what Bane wants? Is it what other gods want, or is it the sin of sins? Gauntather is a more than a little crazed, after all . . .]. They will support Gauntather so as to keep themselves as safe and powerful as possible, until they see that supporting Gauntather is no longer likely to keep them "at the top."

However, the "believer" clergy beneath the High Hands in the ranks of the Risen Cult are a different matter. They WILL try to "gang up" on Gauntather (not all as one, but there will be various attempts by various factions and cabals), to remove him for failure. This IS the Banite way of dealing with those who fail. The strong smash those whose weakness or disloyalty has been revealed, to cleanse and strengthen the faith. Bane is, after all, Lord of Tyrants (Lord of Tyranny). Gauntather knows all of this very well, and will certainly seek to use his hold and rank over the

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



others to save his skin. Not only will he hurl orders in all directions to energetically pursue the aims I outlined above, he will also announce that there are unholy traitors within the Cause, who have helped bring about the failure to sacrifice Tristan (and any other reverses the Risen Cult has suffered). They must be found and burned alive (or just killed if that can't be arranged). He will order certain zealous priests to seek these traitors among their fellows, setting every priest against all the rest, so none of them will have time and unfettered opportunities enough to strike against him.

Within the faith, you DO need a good reason to kill another priest (or your actions are seen as "wasteful" and "disloyal to the Church" because the death you cause weakens it), so killing priests in front of other priests for no reason at all other than you can catch them at a momentary disadvantage will get you deemed a "traitor" and hunted down. However, if you can catch a rival alone, and can trump up a reason that will stick (and remember, Speak With Dead will be used on the corpse), you can slay them and then announce you discovered their "unholy treachery" and confronted them about it, imploring them to pray to Bane for forgiveness, but they instead attacked you, so you had no choice but to slay them.

Other priests will accept this explanation even if it's clear you ambushed a bound or sleeping rival from behind, and didn't really "implore" them to do anything (except die), but they won't accept such a killing if you have no evidence at all of the Banite you killed being "up to something" (such as building a personal cabal within the Church, disobeying the orders of superiors, withholding wealth for themselves rather than giving it to the Church, and meeting with clergy of other faiths without reporting it to superiors, or without their prior sanction). Now, many priests of Bane are guilty of such things, but proving it can be difficult. Fellow priests (often members of your own cabal) who verbally support your claims are often sufficient - - but you and they may well be denounced by members of the dead priest's cabal, who come out of the proverbial woodwork to accuse you and your witnesses of "unholy treachery." And so it goes. The obvious perils of all of this are what keeps the Church of Bane from being one ongoing bloodbath where the High Imperceptor will be the "last priest standing," and rule a church of animated undead or cowed villagers or no one at all. Bane himself has been known to "smite down the wasteful" by sending bolts of black lightning snaking from his altar, chasing targets around corners like magic missiles, to seriously injure or kill priests he regards as having been too brutal in their butcherings of fellow priests (who are, after all, his valued assets).

And yes, you are indeed correct in thinking that Manshoon has secretly fostered and supported other 'rogue' Banite sects around the Realms to act as a possible check against Fzoul and the 'orthodox' doctrine of Bane (Xvim).

These include the Black Chanters in Memnon, the Black Flame of Tyranny in the Vilhon Reach, and the Lords of the Lord in Tharsult, plus tutors who are readying new priests to found their own cults, in camps in the "wild forests" of the Velen Peninsula in Tethyr. He has his eye on Sembia, Impiltur, and the Tashalar for sites to found new cults, too, and is seeking to secretly recruit support among certain nobles of Waterdeep.

As for Aithelar, there was an NDA on this (for fiction by another author reasons), and I'll have to check and see if it's lifted. Until then, I can say that 'Hawkenhound' was Haembar Cauldyth's famous-for-hunting father's nickname (yes, it was then "Hawk-And-Hound"), and is now Haembar's own nickname, bestowed on him by his people, not taken by himself. And yes, Aithelar is a great place to start adventuring from, and in. :}

So saith Ed. Who hopes all of this is of help, and also sent me a brief note for two other scribes:

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



Zandilar: I'm still seeking that one last file, and then I'll reply re. the Women of the Woods! Kuje, the same applies re. the Reaching Wood.

So there you all have it, for now. Ed will return with more Realmslore as soon as he can.
love,
THO

On July 17, 2008 THO said:- Hi again, all! Yes, Jamallo, I can answer this one, because there have been many, many instances in our Realmsplay (with Ed as DM) where various NPCs played by him have uttered "Well met" sarcastically, or as a soft, menacing "You're in my hands now, and you're going to die!" greeting.

As the Common Tongue is just that: a commonly-used trading tongue employed by various races and therefore spoken with a wide variety of "accents," cadences, and habitual vocabularies, it can't make use of tonal inflection to alter meaning (only to reveal the speaker's intent, state of mind, or whether or not his/her words are to be taken literally or if he/she intends to signal exaggeration, untruth, sarcasm, etc.) [I have in the past discussed this specifically with Ed.] So it follows that NO salutations or stock phrases in Common require a specific tone of delivery. This may not hold for other languages of Faerun; I believe Ed postulated that the treant, thri-kreen, and pixie tongues ARE tonal.

love to all,
THO

P.S. Ed will send me more Realmslore as soon as he can. He's snowed-under-busy right noe, but I'm ferrying all lore posts to him pronto to fill up his platter.

Hi again, all. A few swift lore replies and comments, this time.

createvmind, capnvan is correct. Ed created the maedar, it wasn't picked up for subsequent editions of the game, but it remains "canon" lore for the Realms (only, perhaps). Or so Ed was once told by a head of design for the company, who loved the maedar. Thanks for the right-up-to-date lore, Rino (I haven't really had more than a peek at Ed's new 4e MM yet)!

AlorinDawn, modesty forbids Ed including any of his own work in any "his best" adventures over the years. He really enjoyed the various adventures that were collected and updated as QUEEN OF THE SPIDERS (and duly voted for that, in the DRAGON poll), I recall that he liked Len Lakofka's long-unfinished trilogy (Bone Hill, The Assassin's Knot, and the third one that saw print only in the 25th Anniversary box) for its roleplaying opportunities, and liked such things as the Slavelords module where PCs start naked in a cell, and Expedition To the Barrier Peaks, for the same reasons. I will, of course, forward your query to him for a proper reply, but he may decline (out of professional politeness) to be specific about the work of others. I know he believes that it's the DM who makes or breaks the adventuring experience, and also that he was mightily impressed with Wolfgang Baur's approach to custom-designing adventures for subscribers. I know he disliked White Plume Mountain because it was "unfinished" (at the bottom of the inverted ziggurat) and because it gave no plausible, logical history or reason for the various traps and magic items being there. Ed likes well-done murder mysteries and other "roleplaying first" situations.

Ergdusch, I believe your "John Smith equivalent" query has been asked of Ed before, and answered, but I'll have to search. Was it dealt with here at the Keep, moderators or senior sages?

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

althen artren, just at first blush, I think George Krashos has pretty much given you the same answer Ed would give, but of course we'll see . . .

Damian, Ed tends to use "sorceresses" just the same way as you do. And the mage known as 'the Blind' wasn't literally blind; it was a nickname born from his deliberately choosing to ignore something (i.e. his behaviour). What he was ignoring, I can't recall, but Ed will remember and enlighten.

The Hermit, there are rock quarries (mostly disused and heavily overgrown by the forest) west of the Ghost Holds; aside from some ornamental cladding, all of the stone used in building what are now known as the Ghost holds would have been local. Ed will elaborate.

Whew. Things are piling up. Keep it coming, scribes!
love to all,
THO

On July 18, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. Herewith, an Ed of the Greenwood Realmslore reply for Zandilar, about the Women of the Wood. Specifically, these queries: "Heya, My campaign recently jumped from my current home brewed world to Faerun (through the backlash of a portal being destroyed), and as such I've been doing a bit of reading up on certain places and people... Unsurprisingly, they're headed for Cormyr next.

I was just reading the Dhedluk entry in Volo's Guide to Cormyr where I came across the Women of the Woods. What additional information can you reveal about them? I'm also curious about whether or not they ever butt heads with the High Hunt (for example, if the current victim being hunted is a woman). Volo suggests that the leader of the Women of the Woods, Vandara "the Vixen" Thulont, is one of Azoun's many bastards, and Elminster in a footnote acknowledges this with a wink - can you reveal if it is actually true? Or have I found yet another NDA?

This organisation is likely to come up in the campaign very soon (within a fortnight at this point!) - the group is going to end up in Dhedluk following clues regarding the High Hunt (the party is a bunch of meddlers, who usually get into things over their heads but somehow still manage to land on their feet. I think they'll give the Harpers a run for their money by the time they're through with Faerun!). Anyway, the plan is that the victim is a female noble from Immersea (I'm thinking one of the Thunderswords?) - so maybe they might run across the Women of the Woods.

Speaking of which, anyone know where I might find more detailed information about the Thunderswords and the Wyvernspurs? Also, the entire Cormaeril family was exiled, right? So they no longer have holdings in Immersea?

Edit: I just realized how incredibly broad and unspecific I was in my questions just now, so here are a few I would mind getting answers for in regards to the Women of the Wood...

- 1) What role, if any, did they play in the war with the Devil Dragon? How much attrition did they suffer, if at all? And did the Ghazneth decide to feast on their highly magical headquarters (according to Volo, they made their home in the ruins of Meliyekur's Magical Museum - which I would imagine would have provided the Ghazneth with magical nourishment)?
- 2) If the Women of the Wood still survive in the current pre-spellplague timeline, what do they think of the current arrangement of the Crown - do they approve of Alusair as Steel Regent, or do they think she should be Queen? If so, what steps are they likely to take to ensure this comes to be (if any)?
- 3) What does Alusair think of the Women of the Woods, if she knows of them? Vangerdahast was watching and harrying the Women of the Wood, does Caladnei continue this policy?
- 4) What kind of numbers do the Women of the Wood have? Do they regularly get new women joining? If so, do the Women just accept any girl or woman who comes to them, or must they

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

meet some criteria?

5) What kind of policy do they have regarding male children of members? Are members likely to leave the Women in order to raise their sons?

6) How likely is it that the organization will survive the 100 year jump into the 4th Ed time line? I could probably come up with more questions, and plainly some of them are just questions that interest me rather than anything that is going to come up in my campaign - particularly the last two.

Zandilar”

Ed replies:

Hi, Zandilar! It's great to hear you're moving into the Realms. I'll try to keep it as happy a home for your campaign as I can, starting with these lore replies, and I'll begin with your numbered questions. By all means ask followup questions; I'm happy to reply when I can.

1. During the Devil Dragon War, the Women of the Wood fought many bitter skirmishes against hobgoblins and goblins who tried to pass through the King's Forest to outflank Crown forces (after several of these frays, the goblins realized they could goad the Women into appearing to give battle by setting fire to the woods). As a result, the Women suffered heavy losses. No ghazneths bothered them, because there's something (as yet unknown) about the magic of the ruin they dwelt in that made the ghazneths shun it.

2. A handful (perhaps nine at most) Women of the Wood survived to see Alusair's Regency begin. They approve of her, and think she'd probably make a great Queen, but have little desire to get involved in the politics of Cormyr outside the Forest, and most of them think Alusair will get heartily sick of the Dragon Throne before long (they were right about this, as you'll see in time soon to come); if she remains Regent for a good decade, until the boy Azoun V is old enough to be king, they'll be content with that.

If they hear of any monarch, courtier, faction, or force that threatens the Forest (e.g. by allowing unfettered woodcutting, or clearing roads through it or establishing settlements), they'll fight to prevent that, no matter who their perceived foe is.

They aren't interested in going down in glorious battle; they're interested in winning, so they will strike as stealthily as they think their survival demands, make alliances with the Harpers and anyone else who'll aid them against such threats, try diplomatic trickery and manipulation of nobles and fostering uprisings (to keep the Crown busy and its attention elsewhere) and anything else they think will work.

3. Alusair knew many of the Women, and regarded some of them as friends; she knows they took heavy casualties during the Devil Dragon War, and that "a bare handful" are left. She will do nothing to harm or harry them, and instead will give orders about the Forest that should result in them being left alone as much as possible. Vangerdahast is STILL watching (but not harrying) the Women of the Wood in his altered state (I'm trying to go light on spoilers here for those who haven't read *ELMINSTER'S DAUGHTER*), as much as he can, but Caladnei has NOT continued his policy of regarding the Women as "not-so-sleeping perils to be watched."

4. From those nine scarred survivors, the Women of the Wood have rapidly grown in numbers to around twenty, by taking in runaways, women hiding from family pressures or cruel husbands, escaped slaves (from the slavetakers and kidnappers in Sembia and Marsember), outlaws, fugitives from Suzail accused of crimes who are fleeing royal justice (either because they are innocent but don't expect to be found so, or because they are 'no contest' [my term, not an in-Realms term] guilty and know what fate awaits them), and women who just don't know where to

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

go after all their kin die.

So although they certainly don't "regularly" get new women joining, they have had many joiners in the last few seasons, arriving often. The Women have no formal criteria for accepting or rejecting (driving away) anyone who comes to them, but they are suspicious of werereatures, more powerful shapechangers, Crown spies, Harper spies, and spies from every other sort of group, and newcomers will be watched VERY closely (no "slipping away unobserved whilst others sleep;" if this is tried, Women will be watching and spying) to make sure no information is being passed to outside contacts, War Wizards, and the like. The Women are sympathetic enough to dazed, forest-unsavvy newcomers, but have little use for those unwilling to work with others, show loyalty to the team, and "rough it" in the woods.

5. The Women welcome young males born to their members, but make it clear (teaching this from an early age) they must leave the Forest to seek lives in the city when they start showing signs of puberty (growing dark body hair, et al). Until then, they serve as the scouts, fighters, cave explorers, and grunt workers among the Women (who, by the way, don't exclude them from discussions or bother to cover themselves so "the lads" won't see their bodies or witness them performing bodily functions or while bathing).

A rare few adult males (mostly former "lads" among the Women) are tolerated as "friends" to meet with the Women in a few select spots on the fringes of the Forest, and exchange news. Friends serve to find out things for the Women in the cities of Cormyr, deliver items and messages, and "fetch back" (to the Women) items and messages. It's very rare for Women to leave the forest to raise their sons, or to get them to medical aid, but it has happened (it most such cases, the Woman returns to the Forest eventually, to live out her days there).

6. I have no idea if the Women will survive (speaking as a game designer). In terms of in-Realms conditions: they are one of the groups least likely to be harmed much by the Spellplague and its chaos, so there's no reason why not.

On to your other questions.

Vandara "the Vixen" Thulont is indeed one of Azoun's many bastards, and she survived the Devil Dragon War (but has no means of magically prolonging her life, so she'll be long gone by the time 4th Edition is set (probably buried under the roots of a young tree deep in the Forest, as the Women like to do with their fallen, when they can). She is merry but sharp-tongued, and will age into a sort of Katherine Hepburn I'm-still-hale-don't-mess-with-ME warrior (if events in your campaign don't get her killed, of course :}).

By long-standing agreement, the Wyvernspurs are NDA'd (I created the family, but Jeff Grubb adopted it and Giogi is his creation, so I've stepped back to give him full freedom, if he ever wants to, to tell any Wyvernspur tales he wants to in the future).

The Cormaerils were stripped of their titles and holdings, so the Crown now owns their Immersea properties (and may well be renting them out, but NOT letting go ownership of them). Not all Cormaerils were exiled, and some of them even retain or have been granted new knighthoods and Court offices, but it's to reward their performance and loyalty as individuals, not their family name. Beliard Cormaeril, for instance, one of Azoun IV's bastards, has long been a prominent and trusted knight and envoy of the Crown, and may soon be named a Highknight.

The ranks of the Thunderswords also include at least two bastards of Azoun IV (more on the offspring of this most lusty of kings can be gleaned from my "Realmslore" articles on the Wizards website), and there is unpublished (but WotC-owned) lore about the family. I'm quite willing, if you ask specific-scope questions like your numbered queries, above, to try to do the "dance around the NDA" and answer which specific things I can without violating the NDA, okay?

The Women of the Wood customarily hide from, and avoid, the High Hunt (they have sentinels, and so usually receive good warning about the approach of the Hunt), but on rare occasions (yes, almost always when the victim being hunted is a woman), they have tangled with the Hunt, using snares, concealed pits, and arrows to - - thus far, on every occasion - - win the day.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



Members of the Hunt will slay Women if they can catch them during such skirmishes, but have abandoned all attempts to gather in strength to go and scour the Women out the Forest (the War Wizards watch for this, and attack the Hunt, not the Women, whenever it is tried, seeking to send them fleeing, not slay them [though they'll kill if they have to, and will be brutal if anyone tries to set fire to the Forest]).

The Women have deep caves they can hide in, and hole up in when the depths of winter grow harsh. They 'live rough' in the forest, tend to dress in hides and not much else (though they will snitch good boots whenever they can), and enjoy simple pleasures like swimming in the forest streams. There's not a lot more about them in my notes, because in my campaign, as in the published Realms, they remain as yet one of the "largely unused tools" I built into the Realms. Keep me posted about your campaign, okay? I'm interested in hearing how things unfold.

So saith Ed. Creator of Cormyr, the Women in the Woods, and of course the Forest they dwell in, too. Not to mention the Cormaerils, Thunderswords, Wyvernspurs, and dang near everyone else mentioned in this reply, too (except Caladnei and Giogi).

love to all,

THO

P.S. capnvan, Ed sent me this response to your last post:

Hey, I'm not annoyed. Harlan Ellison is great company to be linked with. :}

Hi again, all. This time a reply from me, to RodOdom:

Well, now, let's see. I may miss some things here, but of the "okay to talk about variety," I think Ed's print publications over the next little while will include these (Faraer, these may prove helpful to you, too):

* Contributions to the FORGOTTEN REALMS CAMPAIGN GUIDE (August 2008) and perhaps to the FORGOTTEN REALMS PLAYERS GUIDE

* THE SWORD NEVER SLEEPS, the third and final Knights of Myth Drannor novel (Wizards hc, December? 2008)

* DARK VENGEANCE, the second Niflghar dark elf (not drow) novel (Tor Books hc, October? 2008)

* ARCH WIZARD, the second Falconfar novel (Solaris [Black Library in UK, Simon & Shuster in the USA, hc, either December 2008 or March 2009)

short stories (some titles may change, of both Ed's stories and the anthologies):

"How Fear Came To Ornath" for WORLDS OF THEIR OWN (August 2008, edited by James Lowder, Planet Stories [Paizo; expect this one at GenCon]). Rewrite of a long-out-of-print Ed short story.

"What Dreams May Go" for LILITH UNBOUND (edited by Elaine Cunningham, Popcorn Press, forthcoming "soon")

"Father Maims Best" for CATOPOLIS (edited by Martin H. Greenberg & Janet Pack [or Janet Deaver-Pack; don't know how she'll be styled in print], Tekno Books/DAW, December 2008)

"Saving The Elf Princess Again" and a eulogy for Gary Gygax, for GAMER FANTASTIC (edited

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

by Martin H. Greenberg & Kerrie Hughes, Tekno Books/Daw, late 2008 or early 2009)

. . . and the rest of it is still secret, though word is out that Ed's doing consulting work for Wizards on a series of stand-alone mass market paperback novels entitled "Ed Greenwood Presents Waterdeep." Ed wrote the 'Waterdeep bible' for this series, and I know has since read at least four books in this series; the titles of the first three have been revealed already, I believe.

Believe me, the man does NOT sit idle.

love to all,

THO

On July 19, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. Herewith, a look at The Reaching Woods (circa just prior to the onset of the Spellplague) in response to a request by Kuje. Ed writes:

The Reaching Woods

This dense, hilly forest is a damp, lush, well-watered place of many small creeks and pools (most of which eventually drain into the [navigable] River Chionthar, immediately to the west), a thick canopy of shadowtops and duskwoods, and a "more open" southeastern region (burnt out by large forest fires about forty years back, this area has regrown with a bewildering mix of different trees, some of which have been targeted and cut as saleable timber by halflings of Corm Orp, notably the Darbuck and Yester families; as a result of the fires, the woodcutting, and the struggle for supremacy among various tree varieties, the southeastern Reaching Woods have far more clearings and "thin thickets" than the rest of the forest).

No accurate maps of the interior of The Reaching Woods are known to exist, but many who have explored therein agree that a string of small pools linked by smaller streams runs roughly northeast-southwest through the forest, and can be used for "rough reckoning" navigation. This "long water" is variously known as "the String of Gems," "Arlaveir," (an elven corruption of an earlier, now-forgotten gnome place-name) and "Raryntar's River" (Raryntar was apparently a long-ago local half-elf adventurer of note, said in some tales to have either fought a great victory along the banks of the pools, or to have died fighting there, his body fallen into an unmarked place among the various pools and lost). All of the water to be found in the Woods is thought to be drinkable.

Centuars and hybsil once dominated the eastern Reaching Woods, but over the last three decades they have been heavily hunted by hobgoblins and bugbears seeking food, and only a bare score of centuars (if that) survive, in the part of the Woods closest to Berdusk. There they wage ongoing war on all foragers from that city who dare to light fires in the wood or cut living trees; dead trees (including "ghostbranches," the local term for still-standing dead trees) are fair game, though the centuars watch all intruders closely, bows at the ready.

If any hybsil survive at all in The Reaching Woods, they take great care to hide from humans. A handful of satyrs (some having the power to awaken and command treants, as told of in many wild tales related late of nights in the taverns of Berdusk, Corm Orp, and Hill's Edge) inhabit the northwesternmost Reaching Woods. They shun the centuars and most humans, even to the point of moving treants to form "walls of wood" to foil overly-persistent pursuers, and seem to want most to just be left alone - - with their "corner" of the Woods also being left untouched by intruders.

Curiously, the halflings of Corm Orp have many legends of runaway fugitives from persecution, valuable treasures (including magical items), and deeds to important lands in Waterdeep and the cities of Amn, all being taken into "the Satyrshadow" part of The Reaching Woods and hidden

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



there (presumably with the cooperation of the satyrs). Tales vary as to how this assistance is obtained, how the hidden persons and items can be found, and how the satyrs can be compelled to yield them up.

As is often the way in such situations, the satyrs aren't talking.

Harpers from Berdusk often receive training from senior Harpers in woodcraft and as rangers in the Woods, and certain Harper agents know their ways around the game trails and wooded hills and ridges of the Woods very well - - south and east of the String of Gems, that is.

There are tales in many Sunset Vale settlements of long-ago burials of various important humans, elves, and half-elves, particularly adventurers, warriors, and rulers. The fallen were laid to rest with their weapons and magic, unshrouded and without casket nor tomb, apparently out of ancient local beliefs that "vigor should be returned to the forest, that vigor spring forth anew." Some burials are known to have been later found and dug up, to plunder the possessions of the dead, and dark tales hint that others rose as undead, and haunted the living (wandering as far from the trees as the streets of Berdusk and Corm Orp) until destroyed, or stalk The Reaching Wood yet, lurking to stalk and destroy intruders.

Somewhere beneath the eastern Woods lies a long-abandoned-to-monsters underground 'town' (stone-lined labyrinth of passages and chambers) built by gnomes centuries ago. Known as Arghenrock, this "dungeon" is today dominated by grell, death tyrants controlled by some fell sentience (some say an illithid, others an illithilich, and still others say the undead beholders are commanded by a living beholder of enormous size and powers, or by this or that other horrific monster), and at its lowest levels, by various jellies and oozes. Of old, Arghenrock was a small but thriving trademoot where gnomes from all over the region gathered to trade with each other, and to treat with the Arghen gnomes to gain what they mined in veins beneath Arghenrock: copper and silver so soft and pure that it needed no smelting, but could be dug out by the handful.

And that's where my notes run out, because this was a locale in the Realms that the Knights never ventured into. They saw it from both Berdusk and Corm Orp, but were rather busy with other matters, both times. :}

So saith Ed. So there we all have it, from Ed's thankfully found lore-file to all of you. (So keep those questions coming; you'll never know what they'll cause to be unearthed, if you don't ask!)
love to all,
THO

On July 21, 2008 THO said:- Hi again, all. This time I bring you the words of Ed in response to Zandilar's followup questions (oh, and a note to Zanan: Alusair's fate isn't ENTIRELY settled in all details at this moment, but the likely shape of it [if not where and when you'll learn about it] is known to Ed and to a certain scribe here at the Keep whose surname isn't James; I'm afraid NDAs prevent more specificity at this time, but there's neither harm nor foul in guessing, if you accept from the start that neither Ed nor the Mystery Scribe can confirm anything). For those trying to keep score, here are Zandilar's followup Women of the Wood [and other] questions:

"The small amount written about them in Volo's Guide to Cormyr seemed to paint them as somewhat like, well, to borrow a term I don't particularly like (and am unsure if these boards will

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

filter it or not), femnazis. Are they content with the status quo that seems to be "primogeniture patriarchy" or are they taking any steps at all to change it? (I'm sorry, that question is more something I'm interested in and isn't likely to come up in the game I'm running.)

What does Caladnei make of them personally?

Any of them you care to name? Any that are unusual? Do they have any spell casters among them (clerics, wizards, sorcerers and the like)?"

[[THO note: The following two sentences refer to the leader of the Women of the Wood, Vandara "the Vixen" Thulont.]]

"I have a feeling the party will run into her. Though I'm not sure what the result of that will be (from the description, she's exactly the sort they tend to get along well with - so I can see them becoming allies).

Who is living in the old Cormaerils' manor? Are any of the ones remaining" [[THO note: means Cormaerils still in Cormyr]] "in residence? Or is another noble family renting the property?

[[THO note: The following paragraph of questions all refer to the Thundersword noble family.]]

"Well first off, do they have a daughter who might be kidnapped to be used in the High Hunt? Who is the current Matriarch/Patriarch, and are they the sort to hire adventuring types to find their lost child? Are there any adventuring types within the family? What kind of people are they? Are they loyal to the Crown or might they be involved in plots against the Regent and her family and friends? Are there any within the Women of the Woods the family might know (like a relative (or relative of a friendly/allied noble family) who ran away and joined them?"

Ed replies:

Hello again, Zandilar!

The Women of the Wood (or "Woods;" either form is 'correct' by everyday usage, and the Women themselves have no preference; some Cormyreans even speak of "the Women in the Wood" and everyone knows quite well who they're referring to) are like any sufficiently large (that is, more than three) women or men anywhere in the Realms or the real world: though they may devotedly share a common cause or values, they see things differently from each other, may leap to different conclusions, and may well disagree violently over all sorts of things, large and small. However, in general, the Women of the Woods as they exist "right now" (in the modern, just-pre-Spellplague Realms) are not that interested in changing the laws and customs of Cormyr. They are "outlaws" in that they pay no taxes and avoid obeying royal edicts and proclamations by hiding and "not hearing them" (forest-tree-posted edicts not favorable to them will be burned, the moment they think no authorities are near). They did begin as a fellowship of abused or exploited women (and women embittered in love) who agreed that "no man's promises can be trusted" and that therefore no man is fit to rule - - a household, a city, or a realm, anywhere. However, that sort of talk is rarely heard among them nowadays (with the prevalence of newcomers and the aging of the few survivors), and they have never taken any hostile action against Azoun IV or any male ruler beyond not paying taxes, eating forest game that Vangerdahast and some traditionalists believe "belongs to the king" (though Azoun and Alusair have never seen it that way; they cleave to the view that it belongs to the Crown, and therefore to whomever they [King, Queen, Prince, Princess, or Regent] allow to hunt it, and therefore nobles can't freely hunt game except on their own lands because they are royally forbidden to do so, but everyone else can take what they need for food), and disobeying and avoiding royal edicts and agents (instead keeping to The King's Forest, and "living wild").

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



By the way, the status quo in Cormyr is by no means as male-slanted as one might think. Adult men and women are full and equal voting citizens and property owners, and inheritance rules are very egalitarian among "common folk," whereas among nobles - - and the royals - - they vary, being specific to each family.

For instance, if a "common" husband dies, his wife gets the house if it was his, and retains it if it was hers or partially hers [spouses and even unmarried individuals who don't cohabit at all can be co-owners or "share-owners" among many]; neither eldest sons nor daughters can override her interests. If the wife then dies, there are rules about who inherits (the Crown if there are no known descendants, and the splitting up does NOT favor gender, but rather [to a small degree] elder age, so an older son or daughter comes before a younger, but NOT to the exclusion of said younger siblings, i.e. the eldest son or daughter doesn't get "the house and all").

The various laws governing inheritance could fill a small book by themselves, so I don't want to get into this in detail (because the rulings of local lords and heralds, and city laws, all play into some details of inheritance cases), but if you've been thinking it's real-world quasi-medieval "men take all, women are voteless chattels," that's not correct.

Many mature males are physically stronger than females and exploit this if they're raging, drunk, desperate, or just plain nasty, yes. There are many wife-beaters (and for that matter, a far smaller number of husband-beaters) in Cormyr, just as there are many "tavern drunks" who go looking for fights once they've imbibed enough "liquid courage."

However, the Women of the Wood ARE darned determined that they personally aren't going to be taken advantage of by anyone, male or female, and that their rights (and the rights of the various oppressed women they know about, often friends and neighbors who dared not "run away to the woods with them") under Cormyrean law aren't going to be slighted.

The laws might generally not discriminate against women, but the Women want to see and make sure that the TREATMENT of women (starting with, ahem, themselves) matches the law, which as I alluded to above, often isn't the case.

For instance, to bring up inheritance again, anyone can willingly give up their share of an estate to a temple, or the Crown, or another sibling - - and many siblings aren't above privately bullying or blackmailing their brothers and sisters into doing so.

If a large, strong ne'er-do-well older brother privately threatens a younger sister that if she doesn't "give over" this or that property to him, he'll kill her some night, she might well give in. If he's living rough in the wilds or under another name in another town (say, in Wheloon rather than Suzail), she knows the Watch and the Purple Dragons can't safeguard her night and day for years; he'll "get to her" sometime - - so she might give in, or (more rarely, but increasingly) might just run off and join the Women of the Woods. They WILL safeguard her, or even tell a friendly passing Harper to find the brother, beat him up, and scare the stuffing out of him, telling him that Those Who Harp are watching him, and if he harms a hair on her head they'll come and kill him very slowly and painfully, starting with slow, sawing amputations of fingers and toes and other body bits . . .

So the Women aren't "man-haters," but they are suspicious of all men they meet, and ready for trouble. They DO hate and target specific individuals who have done their members harm, but aren't recklessly stupid, either; they won't take down a local lord or high-ranking courtier in a way that tells others who is responsible, and would likely provoke a response from the War Wizards or Purple Dragons to capture and kill or imprison them. They will think of effective, subtle vengeance (both great and small, as appropriate; sometimes public humiliations and reputation-ruinings are enough), and patiently carry them out when circumstances are right. They do want the wrongs that were done to them righted, somehow, if it's possible.

As for Caladnei, she has done some covert mind-reading (NOT "reaming," which she abhors and avoids whenever possible) from afar, enough to make sure that the Women aren't a cutthroat band of outlaws. Wronged women taking their revenges she can understand and even sympathize with (turning a blind eye, officially, to some of their deeds), and she has far larger and

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



nastier problems to deal with (like wealthy noble families doing their darndest to mess up the Steel Regency and the general happiness and loyalty of the citizenry, demonize the War Wizards and the Obarskyrs, and foment trouble and hatred against Sembians or rival nobles or men with blue eyes or whatever whim has taken them to seethe about THIS particular tenday). Inwardly, Caladnei (like Laspeera) sneakily admires and to some extent envies the Women in the Wood for "making their own way" in life, getting out of the Cormyrean daily Court 'rat race.' (The Suzailan term for our real-world term 'rat race' is "the pomp and round," by the way.) So she largely leaves the Women alone, assigning experienced War Wizards (often females, and definitely not any known to mistrust or dislike women) to use magic to spy on them occasionally, but to leave them be if nothing amiss is discovered. If such an 'observer' is curious about anything and wants to "go in" for a better look, Caladnei has given standing orders that they are to ask for assistance (backup wizards, plus a ranger or two, hopefully female) AND report what they're doing, to her or Laspeera, BEFORE they go. (It follows that other Wizards of War will be assigned to farscry their foray, and make sure they don't use their magic or status inappropriately.)

Yes, the Women of the Woods include a few sorcerers, at least one wizard, and a cleric of Selune [sorry about the lack of accent mark there; I have some technical problems with my ISP about preserving diacriticals, in transfer to the lovely THO], all of them of low level. In terms of names and "unusuals," here we go:

- Vandara "the Vixen" Thulont (human female Ari2/Rgr4) is quick-witted, wood-wise, and cunning. She takes care to keep well-informed of political events across Cormyr, and the Harpers (at the urging of both Dove and Queen Filfaeril, though neither knows the other is giving such direction) bring her much news, often (Filfaeril did this, with her husband's approval, to as much as possible keep Vandara friendly to the Crown). She is tough, merry, and hard to scare, regarding threats as challenges. She has been known to use her body as a weapon (both sex and simple nudity), and cannot be shamed into anything. She is the leader of the Women, and none of them challenge her in this - - because "leader" to her doesn't mean "tyrant" or even "autocrat."
- Phathaspre Imriltarth ("Fah-THAS-pur") is (a human female Ari 1/Sor2) from Arabel. Tall, slender and dark, she fled from an abusive husband who was a social climber. As a result, she has some suitable clothes, and can adopt the manners, of a highborn lady, though she prefers not to, being quiet and gentle by nature. An accomplished mimic, even of voices far removed from her own, who can and does lure or mislead intruders in the forest by this means.
- Ammarandra Delmantle (half-elf female Rgr1/Rog4/Sor1) is an acrobatic, energetic, merry sort, openly lesbian and uninhibited, but too jovial to offend those Women of the Wood who aren't. She is NOT a player-of-pranks, except on male intruders into the forest, but is a "free spirit" who takes many partners, holds no grudges, helps everyone, and is good at swiftly crafting snares, pitfalls, and barriers that blend in with the natural foliage. She is still busily exploring every nook and cranny of the Forest, and will always know where the nearest cave, crevice, or other shelter is.
- Maerla Hamaeryl (tiefling female Rog3/Wiz4) is burly, and except for her blazing eyes and two tiny stubs of forehead horns that are well-hidden under her copious tangle of long red hair), she looks almost entirely human - - like many a strapping backlands Cormyrean farm lass, in fact. She is restless, and often goes on long walks to work off the anger that rises in her for days. As a result, she loves combat, as it gives her a chance to let it out - - and that means fist to fist and blade to blade, not merely hurling spells from afar.
- Shymra Feintar (human female cleric of Selune5) is a small-boned, fine-featured, quiet woman who with the proper garb, can very convincingly act the part of a young girl or teenaged lass when she wants to, as a lure. She wasn't truly running from anything; she came from a farm

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



upbringing to the city to “follow the moon,” was horrified with the stench, crowding, ugliness, and nastiness of Suzail and even more at what she saw of Marsember, and was directed to an older, wiser priestess of Selune in Marsember who sent her to an elderly hermit of the goddess in wildest, northwesternmost part of The King’s Forest to receive instruction and share in a holy life in a place more peaceful. There she blossomed in the service of the goddess, until her teacher (Dorouma) died. Wandering and grieving, she came upon the Women of the Woods for the first time, joined them, and has begun a new life full of friends and adventure.

Now I’ll leave the Women in your hands as DM (by all means ask more questions about them), and shift to the matter of the Cormaerils’ manor.

No Cormaerils are in residence (or in the town, for that matter) any longer. Currently the Crown is renting the sprawling, many-winged manor to three ‘wannabe noble’ rich merchant families, who coexist uneasily, none of them having the full rights of a proper owner and all of them heaping complaints and troubles onto the head of the local Crown seneschal who was installed to dwell in, and oversee the running of, the manor.

This seneschal is one Elhander Hallowmar (human male Ftr6). A short but broad-shouldered, shrewd and worldly, retired Purple Dragon who has battle-scars on his face, walks with a limp, and bites back a lot of things he’d very much like to say to his tenants, Hallowmar is popular with the poorest locals, because he hires their sons and daughters to do repair work and to spy for him (on the tenants), pays them well, and stands up for them when they run afoul of the local authorities. Elard and Beliard Cormaeril have both visited the manor while riding past, and Hallowmar has quietly put them up for the night in his rooms, parting from them as friends. The three bickering families (each of whom have haughty, spoiled multiple sons and daughters with such names as Braera, Jessiira, Vaunla, Yansreldra, and Rael, Morstyn, and Halivant) are the Boraunts, the Hildremmers, and the Mauntanstars. They will hire adventurers for all sorts of illicit tasks, and are spending money like the proverbial water.

Right, on to the Thunderswords. This is a large, many-branched family, but there have been many deaths recently (Devil Dragon War onwards), with the result that the “main” current branch consists of Feldrath Thundersword (human male Ftr12), who is a REAL patriarch (as in, a wrinkled, wasted, sleeps-most-all-of-the-time bedridden old man who has a prodigious memory, but can’t even stand without help). He never leaves his bedchamber, where he’ll probably die soon.

As a result, the family is ruled by his decade-younger wife Tananthra, strong-willed and sharp-tongued, who was stunningly beautiful some six decades ago, and still has large, liquid dark eyes that make many a man stop and look twice at her when they happen to see her. She is no one’s fool, with a grasp of consequences, tactics, social alliances, and human nature equal to that of the shrewdest Master Harpers.

Lord and Lady Thundersword have three daughters, all in their late twenties: Maurara, who is fast becoming a copy of, and worthy successor to, her mother; Chansaera, who has a smoky-eyed beauty that has half Suzail (the male half) panting at her feet, and reportedly has tried a good number of them out thus far, without ‘love’ having taken any root in her head, as she learns to be every whit as shrewd as her mother; and Delphaera, a hard-riding, hunting, and sword-swinging lass who wants to ride and drink with the boys and seemingly outdo Princess Alusair at such pursuits when she grows up).

There is also a (younger, in his mid-teens) son, the darkly handsome but rather shy Teltristram, who rides and hunts half-heartedly, but is really interested in becoming a writer or artist (he’s good at the latter, but his poetry and prose reek to lurid, purplish heaven), and dwelling in luxury with lots of adoring women somewhere where he’ll be showered with acclaim and coins, and not use the Thundersword name at all. Sembia, perhaps, or even Waterdeep.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



Chansaera spends much of her time in Suzail, at the Thunderswords city house where her uncles Nalthar, Raien, and Dunstrar dwell (all of them saturnine, worldly men who live to daily get richer in the cut-and-thrust of trade; they are loyal to the family, above all [think the fictional Mycroft Holmes, brother of Sherlock]). They let her play as she pleases, so long as she doesn't overmuch hamper THEIR little conquests and happy trade-feuds with local rich merchants.

The rest of the main branch of the Thunderswords spend most of their time in the country estates of the Thunderswords, and their loyalties can be summed up thus: Maurara and Chansaera are truly loyal only to themselves, though Maurara always plays her mother's trick of cloaking what she wants in the guise of "what's best for the family," Delphaera is truly loyal to her mother and the family, and Teltristram is truly loyal to the family but often thinks his mother is anything but; when he can, he sneaks in, wakes up his father, and asks HIS advice on things and permission and direction in matters, then ignores whatever his mother says as beside the point, because he already has Father's wishes or opinions, which are (to him) the TRUE interests of, or position and views of, the family.

Any of the main branch of the Thunderswords would hire adventurers without hesitation. The extended Thunderswords family include one female and three males (a niece and three nephews) who are vigorous adventuring types, all in their second decade of life, but they are all far afield (Waterdeep, the Vilhon, Amn, and the Tashalar) finding their own fortunes. (Let me know if you want me to provide more details of these, because this is where the NDAs come in, and I'll have to dance about VERY carefully.)

The Thunderswords are all over the map in terms of personal loyalty to the Crown, but the family has avoided openly standing against the Obarskysrs, and so has thus far eluded being regarded as "disloyal" or even "troublesome" to the Crown by the Highknights and War Wizards. Tanantra and Maurara could well be involved in "plots against the Regent and her family and friends," but only if they saw and clear (and likely) eventual personal benefit in doing so - - and they would be VERY discreet, covering their involvement well. The rest of the family would only be involved in such things unwittingly, as dupes or if the entire family has been manipulated into doing something. The Thunderswords can't effectively be blackmailed, because they have no dark secrets they are afraid of being revealed.

And so far as I know, they have no relatives, or relatives of friends, who have run off the join the Women of the Woods. To them, the Women are a colorful legend (they know they exist for real, but believe half the tales told of them are "bright lies or stretchings of the truth," and can't think they'd ever come into contact with them).

As for your reaction, posted here, to the 4e Cormyr backdrop piece, I understand. And sympathize.

Let me just say this much: Brian (and behind the scenes, Garen Thal and to a small extent, yours truly) had the task of tracing, inventing, and convincingly writing down "what happened" to link "what we know of Cormyr now" [as in, pre-Spellplague, though we never got the chance to do a 3e sourcebook, and as all scribes know, enough lore was amassed and even assembled to readily do one] and "what we know of Cormyr nigh a century later." In other words, the "new status quo" the article had to arrive at was written in-house. I, too, lifted my eyebrows at the paucity of strong female characters. Not at Alusair riding off (a regency has to end somehow, and what has been said in print thus far is true to her individual character), but at the lack of much of anyone else prominent in the local Cormyrean picture who is female.

However, I and some others have some fiction plans that will hopefully touch on the "new" Cormyr. If or when they come to fruition, I hope to be able to post here a message for you to the effect that there'll then be something you can enjoy in the later Cormyr.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



Until then, I am quite happy to answer lore replies here about the older Cormyr, and provide lore like this for you and everyone to deepen (I hope) your enjoyment of the Realms. Your campaign need not make the big time-move if you don't want to; how much or how quickly the Spellplague affects a particular locale is up to you (for a decade or more of in-game time it can easily be "bad news from elsewhere," happening offstage). It's YOUR campaign; as I have said for years, don't let anything published ruin the fun for you and your players.

For instance, let us suppose your players WANTED to move to the later, post-Spellplague Realms, and play in Cormyr. Right, we've said very little about the noble families of this "newer" time (other than that the Goldfeathers were restored). You could easily, without contradicting any lore (caveat: there may be something in the forthcoming FRCG that would contradict this, OR contradict what I've just said about no strong female Cormyrean characters being evident in the Cormyr of the 4e Realms), make the current heads of all the major noble houses be female. ALL of them. You could even have some of them putting intense pressure on the Crown to provide female envoys and female courtiers in dealings, either as a deliberate move to advance the status of females or just as the mass effect of personal preferences of said matriarchs - - or far that matter, the Obarskyrs who aren't married yet to be paired off with their daughters, some of whom could be VERY strong-minded, and have up their sleeves all sorts of plans for legal changes they might make in the realm once they were in the Royal Palace, to change the status and role of women).

Other gamers might roll their eyes at all of this, but again, we're talking about YOUR campaign. Do what you want; the seeming "lighter level of detail" we've seen in the 4e Realms thus far would seem to allow you far more freedom to do that without having to worry about "straying from canon."

As always, I hope this is of help.

Hugs,
Ed

So saith Ed, who despite being a flirt, is one of the least sexist, racist men I know. Comes from being raised by all those strong women, and working for more than three decades under female bosses, I'd say. (And, yes, he's already heard all the jokes about working UNDER female bosses . . .)

love to all,
THO

On 21 July, 2008 THO said:- Hi, all.

Great questions, Icelander. Off to Ed they've gone, but in the meantime I can respond to two of them before Ed gives you the in-depth, REAL answer.

Question 1: I have no idea what the demand for sapphires is, as adornments or magical components/spell foci, but all gemstones have another use in the Realms: as currency. Instead of staggering around under the weight of 5000 gp or so, merchants carry gems in little "don't shatter if dropped" metal boxes (a moonstone is 50 gp, and sapphire is 5000 gp). So that's the main demand, and an infinitely hungry one.

Question 3: "Sembia" owns no trading ships. SEMBIANS (individuals, highly competitive with each other) own lots of ships, of all sizes and descriptions, from tiny "fast coaster" boats through creaky fishing-boats right up to luxury yachts and the largest cogs known in Faerun. Just from my memory of Ed's notes of "what has home berths" in various Sembian harbours, their total number has to be over two thousand.

love,
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Oh, and a postscript, about your "sailing times" question. I know from playing in Ed's campaign that these vary quite a bit, too, with the size of the ship. Large ships can't use the shallow near-shore areas but can carry warriors and charge through pirate-infested areas; smaller boats detour around pirate areas.

Finally, there are some small boats that don't sail out of sight of land, and would make the journeys you list by the VERY long "all around the coasts" routes.

All of which means Ed's going to have to qualify his answers greatly.

love,
THO

On July 23, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. Ed has chosen to answer Eldacar's Knights of Myth Drannor (and other) questions now (probably because he's been thinking about our fictional iterations recently, though he long ago turned in the completed THE SWORD NEVER SLEEPS, and corrected the final galleys).

You can see from these words that Damian's (crazedventurers) replies, which Ed hadn't seen when he penned what follows, are basically spot-on.

Oh, and Kuje, I'd not call either Ed nor myself Fruheads (sorry for the lack of umlaut there), but I know Ed has all of their CDs, enjoys their music, has attended some of their earlier gigs (in Toronto bars and clubs) and has met Jian Ghomeshi (he whom George Stroumboulopoulos, now of CBC's The Hour, famously said: "He has the eyes of an Egyptian princess").

Here, for the hard-of-scrolling, are Eldacar's queries: "Just thought I'd throw in a few questions that I've been musing about. Apologies if they've already been asked, or if the answer is somewhere already and I missed it. Some of the questions deal with the Knights of Myth Drannor series (which become some of my favourite Realms novels, and I'm re-reading them almost religiously). Anyway, on with the questions (though I'd imagine that THO could probably answer a couple of them as well).

1) The Knights seem to basically fall headlong from one catastrophe into another, all with a sort of reckless abandon that almost typifies the basic "novice adventurer" archetype. Well, all of them except Pennae (plans ahead) and perhaps Florin, that is. How close to the truth is that particular guess? Indeed, it's somewhat funny how they just keep on ruining well-laid plans that may have been months or years in the making, entirely as an accident. How often did everybody attempt to be cautious about things? And is it still mostly the same sort of idea now?

2) Hesperdan. Not sure if this one is covered by an NDA or not, but can any clues be given as to what he's up to? Will more detail be provided in the third Knights book?

3) Semoor Wolftooth. Entirely an out-of-FR comment, but I seem to notice a number of similarities between his attitude and that of Torm. Such as his inability to not make comments, though I still fondly recall the banter between Torm and Rathan in Spellfire, and put it almost in a class of its own.

4) How close have Vangey and Laspeera gotten in the past? She seems to enjoy being mind-reamed, but did either of them ever go any further than that? Or did Vangey just stay away from that kind of thing for some reason? (Business and pleasure, embarrassment, simple preference?) He did seem to care about her quite a bit, after all.

5) Moving slightly away from the Knights of Myth Drannor books now, but still relating to the Zhentarim. Elminster has in the past interfered quite thoroughly with the Zhentarim leadership, such as his impersonation of a Beholder to stall Manshoon's bid for the "top job" that was

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

elaborated on in one short story (Realms of Infamy). How aware is Manshoon of these various attempts (e.g. did he ever find out the truth about the aforementioned Beholder incident?), and has he ever attempted and/or succeeded at "getting payback" for it? If not on Elminster personally, then on the Harpers? (EDIT: Or other associates of Elminster that happen to be less vulnerable than the Old Mage is?) And along those lines, was his drawing away the Shadowsil (and potentially others?) linked to situations like that? After all, somebody who had once been an apprentice of Elminster's can be quite valuable for a variety of different reasons, and I can't see Manshoon as not being sly enough to pick up on the possibilities. Has he done it before?

6) What would have happened to Shandril Shessair in the Sellplague? She seemed to become something of a spirit tied to the Weave, but the Weave obviously ran into problems. I won't be using that whole series of events in "my" Realms, but I'm curious about the possibilities.

7) Lastly, how long did it take for the War Wizards to really become the force they ended up as? As in, approximately what year/century? I ask because I'm designing a character (a sort of counterpoint/old sage style character for a little project I'm fiddling with) at the moment who I'd like to insert into the War Wizards at some point in his career. If you could include the general times of founding and any sudden loss of trained War Wizards (reasons why?), too, it'd be helpful. I imagine that at times over the years, the War Wizards have lost quite a few of their number. The Cormyr: A Novel book detailed a few of what seemed to be sudden losses (the events leading to Amedahast's death, for example), but any others that aren't mentioned there would be appreciated.

(Side note: More Knights of Myth Drannor, please. Short stories, series, anything, really, just to satisfy my addiction... and keep the pages of some of my books from becoming any more dog-eared than they already are.)

Whew. Okay, I'm done."

Ed replies:

Hi, Eldacar. Okay, to answer your questions in order:

1. Yes, the Knights ARE reckless, naïve novices in these books, with, as you say, the exceptions of the veteran Pennae and Florin (who always TRIES to consider the wider implications of actions, though often he's too inexperienced/ignorant of the wider Realms to do a good job, and even more often his fellow Knights charge ahead and make his ponderings moot/too late. However, it should also be obvious that when in Cormyr, they get manipulated a LOT by intriguing nobles, courtiers, Vangey, and nigh everyone else they meet, so as to send them crashing into the intrigues and doings of rivals, so the frying-pan-fire-frying-pan cycle isn't entirely of their own making. :}

Once they settled into Shadowdale, they did start to get a lot more cautious (talking strategy with Storm at her farmhouse often, for one thing), and they're a lot less reckless now.

2. Beyond what I've already revealed here at the Keep (on earlier occasions; THO tells me my earlier reply to George Krashos has been dredged up here recently), I can't reveal much more about Hesperdan (unfinished business = NDAs still in force). THE SWORD NEVER SLEEPS might have some very brief Hesperdan scenes, if they survive the editing, but not enough to really tell you much more about him. Sorry. :}

3. Yes, Semoor Wolftooth (who later took the name Jelde Asturien, as is usual with priests of his faith advancing to a certain rank) is quite similar to Torm (who of course you see briefly in these

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

three Knights books; his future best friend and fellow Knight Rathan gets the same treatment). They are alike not to fulfill some archetype or to copy each other or any other character (some gamers have commented that he's similar to Belkar Bitterleaf of Rich Burlew's *The Order of the Stick*), but because (starting back in 1978) Victor Selby played both characters, Semoor first (then Torm after Jelde retired from adventuring to more devoutly serve his god in other ways) - - and played them that way. Often annoying as heck, but also great fun and an integral part of the chemistry of the Knights. The Sarcastic Tongue That Is Never Stilled (as Ian Hunter, who played the Knight and druid Lanseril Snowmantle, once dubbed Torm) was just "part of us all." I would LOVE the chance to do more of that repartee, but we'll just have to see if I get any opportunities.

4. Vangey and Laspeera are very old, very close friends. They truly trust each other, and Vangerdahast has ached with lust for her on many occasions in the past, but forced himself to go no farther, for two reasons: she was very fond of him, but NOT interested in anything more intimate, and able to gently make that clear; and he valued having such a trusted friend so much (he has almost no friends nor any other sort of folk he feels he can trust, remember) that eventually he vowed inwardly that he would do NOTHING to damage their relationship. So mind-to-mind nigh-orgasm is as close as it's every gone. Yes, they have seen each other naked, kissed, embraced, patted each other's shoulders and even behinds occasionally in a friendly, teasing manner, and on various occasions carried each other's unconscious and partially-clad bodies around [usually hurrying them to healing], in the course of being "fellow soldiers in the same cause." Only more Puritanical cultures (such as, ahem, modern America) insist on seeing all of that behaviour as inevitably signifying intercourse or an ongoing affair (whereas, for instance, you can stand on a nude beach in France chatting with unclad members of the opposite sex, and even cuddling with them or jokingly slapping, tickling, or towel-flicking, and it is NOT automatically seen by others as sexual play that must inevitably "go all the way," and not NECESSARILY by the participants as anything more than carefree, fun flirtation). So they DO care for each other very much. Laspeera admires Vangerdahast immensely for what he does for Cormyr, the ongoing political games he plays year after year that have made Azoun IV's reign the golden age that it largely was - - and Vangerdahast regards Laspeera a bit like the little sister he never had but wishes he did, a little like a mother figure, and something like the sexy camp councillor he can never have but can admire from a distance . . . and so on. They both acquired other partners in the end, but their relationship wasn't about bed partners, it was about working partners ("you guard my back; I'll guard yours"). This is something I've tried very hard to do down the years, in Realms fiction: show the wide variety and subtleties of relationships, and how they change over time, so they aren't always the obvious ones we expect from Hollywood and the Brothers Grimm and classic fantasy fiction. Sometimes I'm hampered in that by editors changing a few words here and there and thereby ending up with the printed result suggesting different meanings than I intended, and sometimes I'm hampered by the attitudes and baggage readers bring to the material. Such as all the "Elminster's a dirty old man who MUST be bonking the Seven, which is sick because he raised them" reactions, which entirely miss the point of: so how do guys and gals who have been alive for centuries relate to each other? Aside from the goddess they serve, who's to judge them, when they've outlived KINGDOMS (and the laws and attitudes of those lands, too)? And so on. I'm not saying there's anything "right" or "wrong" (or "normal," for that matter) in the relationship between Vangerdahast and Laspeera (although I AM suggesting that readers shouldn't unthinkingly apply modern real-world wherever-they-live moral and legal standards to what is, after all, clearly a fantasy world and imaginary characters in it). I'm just describing what that relationship is, warts, subtleties, changes, and all. :}

5. Manshoon is aware of about a tenth of what Elminster has done (because Elminster does those obvious, unsubtle things to distract attention from the subtler, slower manipulations he also works, which usually have greater impact because they change Zhent attitudes over time). Manshoon SUSPECTS the truth about the beholder incident, but is too busy to deem trying to

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



root out all the details to ever be worth it.

Manshoon is far too subtle and far-thinking (and busy!) to engage in petty revenges; he does whatever will advance his aims, cold-bloodedly - - so he may aid, elevate, and praise someone he knows has done him dirty if doing so will further the strivings he's engaged in. In this, he's like Elminster; they are both far more "mature" and far-thinking than the average Faerunian.

(Elminster doesn't care if folk think he's crazy or a meddling, bumbling old fool because they judge him by those obvious wham-slam deeds, and entirely miss the more subtle stuff; Elminster is centuries past caring about his own reputation; like Manshoon, he cares only about results.

[Which allows me, with both characters as with Vangerdahast and the various moral positions of the Seven, to explore the eternal "Do ends justify the means?" debate.]

So Manshoon will rarely "get back at" someone through their allies, unless deliberately trying to goad that someone into stepping forth or doing something specific (because the allies might end up being useful to him later, in some other scheme, and because one shouldn't needlessly make enemies, so harming Harpers to get back at Elminster he would regard as foolish, though he might well harm them for all sorts of other reasons). Manshoon has learned the hard way (as I've shown in CROWN OF FIRE and elsewhere) the folly of trying to face down Elminster in direct face-to-face spellhurling duels.

Yes, the chance to use the knowledge of the Shadowsil was a great attraction to him, and he has indeed done this sort of thing (befriending or taking as lovers powerful and interesting females from whom he can learn much) before, though not multiple times with former apprentices of Elminster . . . because Elminster just hasn't had that many apprentices who would have anything willingly to do with Manshoon, or that he'd dare to try to get that close to. :}

6. NDA, sorry. "Creatures of the Weave" (spirits) could be destroyed, driven mad, or mutated into monsters (or forced into already-living monster or intelligent race bodies) by the Spellplague, but they could have "suffered" more benign fates, too. Some DID survive. So those are the possibilities, but I'm afraid I can't speak specifically about Shandril at this time.

7. The answer to this really depends on how you view the War Wizards. You could say centuries, or you could say that Vangerdahast refurbished them so extensively that the "all-powerful spy service" War Wizards we think of really began with him.

The long career of the Wizards of War is largely NDA'd (I'm sure you can appreciate the usefulness to any Realms author of being able to "set up a new character whose motivations were rooted in the past" or - - as Troy did with most of the ghazneths - - even exist now after they had lives back "then"), so I'm afraid I can't run down the long history of the War Wizards pointing out where they took heavy losses, suffered defections, and so on. It really doesn't matter, because nobles and their agents, monarchs and their agents, and foreign powers such as Sembia and THEIR agents, can "take down" a War Wizard (aside from the heads of the organization, whose fates we know) whenever you as DM need them to. Various minor revolts (Arabel, Marsember, this or that cabal of nobles) were going on all the time, and every one of them can have a War Wizards body count. So can "monster raids out of the Stonelands" and "hungry wolves in winter" (and every severe winter CAUSING lots of both of those sorts of depredations).

Believe me, I'd love to say a lot more about the War Wizards, but I can see what doing so would jeopardize, so: sorry on this one.

As for more Knights of Myth Drannor: believe me, we are of one mind on this! I do not, and never have had, the power to solely decide what I'll write a novel about, or when and where I can get a short story published, so it's not entirely up to me, but the Knights are (though I named and gave back stories to most of them) my friends' (longtime players') characters, are near and dear to me, and I would happily tell endless tales of their exploits.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

So saith Ed. Creator of the Knights, the Realms, Cormyr, the War Wizards, and Uncle Tom Cob -
- ahem.
love to all,
THO

On 23 July, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. Ed has chosen to answer Eldacar's Knights of Myth Drannor (and other) questions now (probably because he's been thinking about our fictional iterations recently, though he long ago turned in the completed THE SWORD NEVER SLEEPS, and corrected the final galleys).

You can see from these words that Damian's (crazedventurers) replies, which Ed hadn't seen when he penned what follows, are basically spot-on.

Oh, and Kuje, I'd not call either Ed nor myself Fruheads (sorry for the lack of umlaut there), but I know Ed has all of their CDs, enjoys their music, has attended some of their earlier gigs (in Toronto bars and clubs) and has met Jian Ghomeshi (he whom George Stroumboulopoulos, now of CBC's The Hour, famously said: "He has the eyes of an Egyptian princess").

Here, for the hard-of-scrolling, are Eldacar's queries: "Just thought I'd throw in a few questions that I've been musing about. Apologies if they've already been asked, or if the answer is somewhere already and I missed it. Some of the questions deal with the Knights of Myth Drannor series (which become some of my favourite Realms novels, and I'm re-reading them almost religiously). Anyway, on with the questions (though I'd imagine that THO could probably answer a couple of them as well).

1) The Knights seem to basically fall headlong from one catastrophe into another, all with a sort of reckless abandon that almost typifies the basic "novice adventurer" archetype. Well, all of them except Pennae (plans ahead) and perhaps Florin, that is. How close to the truth is that particular guess? Indeed, it's somewhat funny how they just keep on ruining well-laid plans that may have been months or years in the making, entirely as an accident. How often did everybody attempt to be cautious about things? And is it still mostly the same sort of idea now?

2) Hesperdan. Not sure if this one is covered by an NDA or not, but can any clues be given as to what he's up to? Will more detail be provided in the third Knights book?

3) Semoor Wolftooth. Entirely an out-of-FR comment, but I seem to notice a number of similarities between his attitude and that of Torm. Such as his inability to not make comments, though I still fondly recall the banter between Torm and Rathan in Spellfire, and put it almost in a class of its own.

4) How close have Vangey and Laspeera gotten in the past? She seems to enjoy being mind-reamed, but did either of them ever go any further than that? Or did Vangey just stay away from that kind of thing for some reason? (Business and pleasure, embarrassment, simple preference?) He did seem to care about her quite a bit, after all.

5) Moving slightly away from the Knights of Myth Drannor books now, but still relating to the Zhentarim. Elminster has in the past interfered quite thoroughly with the Zhentarim leadership, such as his impersonation of a Beholder to stall Manshoon's bid for the "top job" that was elaborated on in one short story (Realms of Infamy). How aware is Manshoon of these various attempts (e.g. did he ever find out the truth about the aforementioned Beholder incident?), and has he ever attempted and/or succeeded at "getting payback" for it? If not on Elminster personally, then on the Harpers? (EDIT: Or other associates of Elminster that happen to be less vulnerable than the Old Mage is?) And along those lines, was his drawing away the Shadowsil

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

(and potentially others?) linked to situations like that? After all, somebody who had once been an apprentice of Elminster's can be quite valuable for a variety of different reasons, and I can't see Manshoon as not being sly enough to pick up on the possibilities. Has he done it before?

6) What would have happened to Shandril Shessair in the Sellplague? She seemed to become something of a spirit tied to the Weave, but the Weave obviously ran into problems. I won't be using that whole series of events in "my" Realms, but I'm curious about the possibilities.

7) Lastly, how long did it take for the War Wizards to really become the force they ended up as? As in, approximately what year/century? I ask because I'm designing a character (a sort of counterpoint/old sage style character for a little project I'm fiddling with) at the moment who I'd like to insert into the War Wizards at some point in his career. If you could include the general times of founding and any sudden loss of trained War Wizards (reasons why?), too, it'd be helpful. I imagine that at times over the years, the War Wizards have lost quite a few of their number. The Cormyr: A Novel book detailed a few of what seemed to be sudden losses (the events leading to Amedahast's death, for example), but any others that aren't mentioned there would be appreciated.

(Side note: More Knights of Myth Drannor, please. Short stories, series, anything, really, just to satisfy my addiction... and keep the pages of some of my books from becoming any more dog-eared than they already are.)

Whew. Okay, I'm done."

Ed replies:

Hi, Eldacar. Okay, to answer your questions in order:

1. Yes, the Knights ARE reckless, naïve novices in these books, with, as you say, the exceptions of the veteran Pennae and Florin (who always TRIES to consider the wider implications of actions, though often he's too inexperienced/ignorant of the wider Realms to do a good job, and even more often his fellow Knights charge ahead and make his ponderings moot/too late. However, it should also be obvious that when in Cormyr, they get manipulated a LOT by intriguing nobles, courtiers, Vangey, and nigh everyone else they meet, so as to send them crashing into the intrigues and doings of rivals, so the frying-pan-fire-frying-pan cycle isn't entirely of their own making. :}

Once they settled into Shadowdale, they did start to get a lot more cautious (talking strategy with Storm at her farmhouse often, for one thing), and they're a lot less reckless now.

2. Beyond what I've already revealed here at the Keep (on earlier occasions; THO tells me my earlier reply to George Krashos has been dredged up here recently), I can't reveal much more about Hesperdan (unfinished business = NDAs still in force). THE SWORD NEVER SLEEPS might have some very brief Hesperdan scenes, if they survive the editing, but not enough to really tell you much more about him. Sorry. :}

3. Yes, Semoor Wolftooth (who later took the name Jelde Asturien, as is usual with priests of his faith advancing to a certain rank) is quite similar to Torm (who of course you see briefly in these three Knights books; his future best friend and fellow Knight Rathar gets the same treatment). They are alike not to fulfill some archetype or to copy each other or any other character (some gamers have commented that he's similar to Belkar Bitterleaf of Rich Burlew's The Order of the Stick), but because (starting back in 1978) Victor Selby played both characters, Semoor first (then Torm after Jelde retired from adventuring to more devoutly serve his god in other ways) - - and

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

played them that way. Often annoying as heck, but also great fun and an integral part of the chemistry of the Knights. The Sarcastic Tongue That Is Never Stilled (as Ian Hunter, who played the Knight and druid Lanseril Snowmantle, once dubbed Torm) was just "part of us all." I would LOVE the chance to do more of that repartee, but we'll just have to see if I get any opportunities.

4. Vangey and Laspeera are very old, very close friends. They truly trust each other, and Vangerdahast has ached with lust for her on many occasions in the past, but forced himself to go no farther, for two reasons: she was very fond of him, but NOT interested in anything more intimate, and able to gently make that clear; and he valued having such a trusted friend so much (he has almost no friends nor any other sort of folk he feels he can trust, remember) that eventually he vowed inwardly that he would do NOTHING to damage their relationship. So mind-to-mind nigh-orgasm is as close as it's ever gone. Yes, they have seen each other naked, kissed, embraced, patted each other's shoulders and even behinds occasionally in a friendly, teasing manner, and on various occasions carried each other's unconscious and partially-clad bodies around [usually hurrying them to healing], in the course of being "fellow soldiers in the same cause." Only more Puritanical cultures (such as, ahem, modern America) insist on seeing all of that behaviour as inevitably signifying intercourse or an ongoing affair (whereas, for instance, you can stand on a nude beach in France chatting with unclad members of the opposite sex, and even cuddling with them or jokingly slapping, tickling, or towel-flicking, and it is NOT automatically seen by others as sexual play that must inevitably "go all the way," and not NECESSARILY by the participants as anything more than carefree, fun flirtation). So they DO care for each other very much. Laspeera admires Vangerdahast immensely for what he does for Cormyr, the ongoing political games he plays year after year that have made Azoun IV's reign the golden age that it largely was - - and Vangerdahast regards Laspeera a bit like the little sister he never had but wishes he did, a little like a mother figure, and something like the sexy camp councillor he can never have but can admire from a distance . . . and so on. They both acquired other partners in the end, but their relationship wasn't about bed partners, it was about working partners ("you guard my back; I'll guard yours"). This is something I've tried very hard to do down the years, in Realms fiction: show the wide variety and subtleties of relationships, and how they change over time, so they aren't always the obvious ones we expect from Hollywood and the Brothers Grimm and classic fantasy fiction. Sometimes I'm hampered in that by editors changing a few words here and there and thereby ending up with the printed result suggesting different meanings than I intended, and sometimes I'm hampered by the attitudes and baggage readers bring to the material. Such as all the "Elminster's a dirty old man who MUST be bonking the Seven, which is sick because he raised them" reactions, which entirely miss the point of: so how do guys and gals who have been alive for centuries relate to each other? Aside from the goddess they serve, who's to judge them, when they've outlived KINGDOMS (and the laws and attitudes of those lands, too)? And so on. I'm not saying there's anything "right" or "wrong" (or "normal," for that matter) in the relationship between Vangerdahast and Laspeera (although I AM suggesting that readers shouldn't unthinkingly apply modern real-world wherever-they-live moral and legal standards to what is, after all, clearly a fantasy world and imaginary characters in it). I'm just describing what that relationship is, warts, subtleties, changes, and all. :)

5. Manshoon is aware of about a tenth of what Elminster has done (because Elminster does those obvious, unsubtle things to distract attention from the subtler, slower manipulations he also works, which usually have greater impact because they change Zhent attitudes over time). Manshoon SUSPECTS the truth about the beholder incident, but is too busy to deem trying to root out all the details to ever be worth it. Manshoon is far too subtle and far-thinking (and busy!) to engage in petty revenges; he does whatever will advance his aims, cold-bloodedly - - so he may aid, elevate, and praise someone he knows has done him dirty if doing so will further the strivings he's engaged in. In this, he's like Elminster; they are both far more "mature" and far-thinking than the average Faerunian.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

(Elminster doesn't care if folk think he's crazy or a meddling, bumbling old fool because they judge him by those obvious wham-slam deeds, and entirely miss the more subtle stuff; Elminster is centuries past caring about his own reputation; like Manshoon, he cares only about results. [Which allows me, with both characters as with Vangerdahast and the various moral positions of the Seven, to explore the eternal "Do ends justify the means?" debate.]

So Manshoon will rarely "get back at" someone through their allies, unless deliberately trying to goad that someone into stepping forth or doing something specific (because the allies might end up being useful to him later, in some other scheme, and because one shouldn't needlessly make enemies, so harming Harpers to get back at Elminster he would regard as foolish, though he might well harm them for all sorts of other reasons). Manshoon has learned the hard way (as I've shown in CROWN OF FIRE and elsewhere) the folly of trying to face down Elminster in direct face-to-face spellhurling duels.

Yes, the chance to use the knowledge of the Shadowsil was a great attraction to him, and he has indeed done this sort of thing (befriending or taking as lovers powerful and interesting females from whom he can learn much) before, though not multiple times with former apprentices of Elminster . . . because Elminster just hasn't had that many apprentices who would have anything willingly to do with Manshoon, or that he'd dare to try to get that close to. :}

6. NDA, sorry. "Creatures of the Weave" (spirits) could be destroyed, driven mad, or mutated into monsters (or forced into already-living monster or intelligent race bodies) by the Spellplague, but they could have "suffered" more benign fates, too. Some DID survive. So those are the possibilities, but I'm afraid I can't speak specifically about Shandril at this time.

7. The answer to this really depends on how you view the War Wizards. You could say centuries, or you could say that Vangerdahast refurbished them so extensively that the "all-powerful spy service" War Wizards we think of really began with him.

The long career of the Wizards of War is largely NDA'd (I'm sure you can appreciate the usefulness to any Realms author of being able to "set up a new character whose motivations were rooted in the past" or - - as Troy did with most of the ghazneths - - even exist now after they had lives back "then"), so I'm afraid I can't run down the long history of the War Wizards pointing out where they took heavy losses, suffered defections, and so on. It really doesn't matter, because nobles and their agents, monarchs and their agents, and foreign powers such as Sembia and THEIR agents, can "take down" a War Wizard (aside from the heads of the organization, whose fates we know) whenever you as DM need them to. Various minor revolts (Arabel, Marsember, this or that cabal of nobles) were going on all the time, and every one of them can have a War Wizards body count. So can "monster raids out of the Stonelands" and "hungry wolves in winter" (and every severe winter CAUSING lots of both of those sorts of depredations).

Believe me, I'd love to say a lot more about the War Wizards, but I can see what doing so would jeopardize, so: sorry on this one.

As for more Knights of Myth Drannor: believe me, we are of one mind on this! I do not, and never have had, the power to solely decide what I'll write a novel about, or when and where I can get a short story published, so it's not entirely up to me, but the Knights are (though I named and gave back stories to most of them) my friends' (longtime players') characters, are near and dear to me, and I would happily tell endless tales of their exploits.

So saith Ed. Creator of the Knights, the Realms, Cormyr, the War Wizards, and Uncle Tom Cob -
- ahem.

love to all,
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

On 25 July, 2008 THO said:- Hi again, scribes!

I bring to you once again the words of Ed of the Greenwood (and a few of mine own, forsooth) in regards to another of his marathon multi-scribes half-replies, a clearing of the decks as it were, so as to tackle more weighty queries.

Without further ado, I'm going to answer Talwyn about whether or not he based the drow deity of Eilistraee on me, and then hand all of you over to the Words of Ed.

Talwyn, Ed based Eilistraee (when a TSR editor commanded he create "a good-aligned drow deity, focused on surface-dwelling drow") on quite a bundle of design notions and favourite fantasy elements and real-world things, including Tolkien's delight in his wife dancing for him in the forest, which J.R.R. in turn drew upon for Luthien (I'm sorry that I can't reproduce the proper accent marks here), in his LOTR root tale of Beren and Luthien. At least three other real-world females, including me, are echoed in various aspects of the Dark Dancer. And you're very welcome for the mammaries lore. (Ed will soon get to your Torm-related questions, Talwyn.)

As for the rest of the queries, Ed speaks:

Hello to all scribes.

To all who wished me happy birthday, thanks very much. I've been largely ignoring birthdays these last few years (except for letting family spoil me with a nice dinner at a restaurant somewhere), but these darned computers help friends remember for me!

To Alorin and others who will be at GenCon (THO informs me that The Sage can't be with us, but that I must make up for that to the Lady Kazandra!), I hope to see you all there!

And you're all very welcome for the Realmslore replies. Of which, here are some more light and quick ones:

gomez, I'm afraid I'm going to say nothing about Countess Mirabeta (whose surname bears a striking resemblance to that of a certain WotC editor; no, I didn't create the character), thanks to NDAs (Rinonalyrna Fathomlin's post tells you why). I, too, hope to soon be able to speak more freely about 4e places and characters, but as I haven't created many of the people, I feel less than comfortable pontificating about them rather than referring you to their creators.

Agnitio Veridicus, the marks that Highknight Glarasteer Rhauligan gains in "The Grinning Ghost of Taverton Hall" are indeed significant, but I'm going to duck behind NDAs again as to precisely why for the nonce, for the sake of possible future Glarasteer Rhauligan tales. Perhaps I should term them "hope-for" Rhauligan stories.

Zandilar, I'll get back to you soon with more about the Women of the Wood (and your latest responses re. them). No, I am not responsible for those two Loudwater NPC writeups, as it happens.

To The Red Walker: Mirt the Moneylender was the first character I created who later featured in the Realms. I was age 6 at the time, and he was arriving in a nameless coastal city that soon became Waterdeep, coming hastily from Neverwinter, and soon departing for Scornubel (chased by various creditors, thieves, and rival swindlers). I knew these cities were on "the Sword Coast" right from the beginning, but these cities got their names (Waterdeep first) a few months later. Silverymoon, Amn, and the High Forest soon followed, plus Calimshan and the idea of the great gulf that holds Tharsult and is bordered by the Tashalar. Then came The Sea of Fallen Stars, the Moonsea, the Dalelands, Cormyr, and the Realms gaining ITS name, in 1967.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Yet my main focus stayed on all the merchants and the shady traders and rulers who interacted with them, on ships and the coastal caravan routes, along the Sword Coast, for quite some time. (Most of the other places were "where merchants came from, or were heading to.") The first Realms story I finished was "One Comes, Unheralded, to Zirta" (which has been published in THE BEST OF THE REALMS VOLUME II: THE STORIES OF ED GREENWOOD). The D&D® game didn't come along until 1974 (and really only started to reach a wider public in 1975), and I only truly fell under its spell in 1978.

Neither Mirt nor those initial places have really changed all that much, over the years. They've become increasingly detailed, yes, and acquired an ever-growing history of events and ongoing minor changes, but their essential natures are just as I first imagined them.

And as for what THO is made of, I'd say love and lust and daring, iron-hard nerves and laughter, soft, soft . . . er, shoulders and softer caresses . . . and a tongue that never quits.

Or so (he added hastily) I'm told. :}

Cato the Elder, thanks for the kind words. Your Llorck questions are complicated by the fact that I haven't ready access to some of the past RPGA (Green Regent) details about this (yes, created by me) Realms locale. If any scribe can provide such (a Word .doc file sent to THO, perhaps?) I can "square" that with my lore notes, and come up with something.

Baleful Avatar, I don't run Wizards (nor yet Hasbro's licensing arms), and so can't tell you at all what future computer games may hold. As for non-computer-game coverage of things, I'd love to see Neverwinter detailed AND a Cormyr sourcebook, so if I was running Wizards, those things would happen as quickly as I could make them happen. Yet of course I don't, so I'll pass your requests along to the right Wizards folks, and we'll see.

Broken Helm, your guess about being able to get bowstrings easily in all of the dales is quite correct (though the folk of Archendale are reluctant to sell such to anyone they don't like the look of, which is apparently most non-Arkhen). As for the lute, hand-harp, and yarting: these strings are made in many, many places around the Realms, but those for sale in the Dales most often come from Saerloun or its immediate surroundings in Sembia, yes. Hand-harp strings are almost as easy to come by as bowstrings, but lute and yarting strings are always available in Deepingdale, almost always available in Battledale, Featherdale, and Harrowdale, usually available in Mistedale and Shadowdale, and are "uncommon to rare" elsewhere in the Dales.

So saith Ed. Who will return with more "divers answers" when he can, but looks most likely to tackle Damian's (crazedventurers') SWORDS OF EVENINGSTAR queries next.

love to all,

THO

On 26 July, 2008 THO said:- Heh. Badly, I hope. Ed can be as flirtatious as I can.

Ahem.

Hello again, all. As promised, the words of Ed in response to these queries from crazedventurers:

"Well again. A question (or two, or three, or....) relating to The Swords of Eveningstar book if I may? (I have just read it for about the 8th time, it's great!)

Speera and Vangy can't scry the Swords when they enter the Haunted Halls yet Whisper can do so from his Crypt as the Swords blund, errr explore the Halls. Is this a localised effect? (i.e. you can scry within the Halls but not from without?) Or does scrying not work at all unless you find your way around the wards somehow (as Whisper has)? Do the anti-scrying wards extend to other spells and prayers related to divination?

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

On pg 252 of the paperback version is a small piece I have entirely missed before. Sarththor teleports to the Stonelands and is musing on Whisper and his accomplishments and he states that Whisper has taken his Zhentarim name from Whisper's Crypt and that the crypt is not named after him. Do I take it that all Zhentarim Wizards have another name given to them/chosen by them when they join the Brotherhood? (for instance would this mean that Manshoon, Sarththor, Hesperdan etc are not their given (birth) names etc).

Which then leads to, who was the original Whisper? or is the name a corruption of The Whispering Crypt (or something similar) given that it is infested with undead?

Re Whisper, he is listed in the OGBS as an evoker (Magic User Level 2 as was in 1E), but seems to command greater magic than that (Chain Lightning* on the Chuul etc), was this a misprint (level 2) and it should have been 12 (which would explain the 6th level spell) or was his command of the Art entirely down to Mhzentul's rings and other magic items he had located in the Stonelands?

A final question (a 'what if' really), related to the end of the book when Khelben offers the Pendant of Ashaba to the Swords. During the gameplay session was there any hesitation on the part of the players to accept the gift? And what if they had declined Khelbens offer, what next for them? Am wondering here about long term DM campaign planning. As a DM I think through the 'what ifs' of the critical moments upcoming in the ongoing campaign and try to come up with a few answers/plots/solutions dependant on what the players might do/say etc. Would be interested to know how far you plan in advance? (I think I can guess the answer, but am still curious).

Thanks and best wishes,

Damian

ps a belated happy birthday

pps *am assuming it is not poetic licence but the spell, though it might be entirely a different spell given Ed's very extensive home-brewed spells!"

Ed replies:

Hi, Damian. Great questions, as usual.

No one can scry into the Haunted Halls by any known means thus far attempted, nor penetrate into the Halls with any divination magics thus far attempted, thanks to the way the wards were crafted (they "reflect" such spells back at the source but are then re-intercepted by the wards and sent back, in an endless volleying that results in "no readings at all" at the caster's end. Whoever did this, and how, is now forgotten (except, presumably, by Azuth, Mystra, and any of her Servants who might have been involved with casting, augmenting, or repairing the wards at some time).

Again, I want to stress that the wards might not block all such magics, but have blocked all of those sorts of 'spying' magics thus far tried.

Yes, you CAN use of all those magics successfully within the Halls (not from inside to Halls to outside, but to another part of the Halls - - and Whisper's Crypt really IS a farflung 'arm' of the Halls, as far as the wards are concerned.

No, all Zhentarim mages do NOT have a "special Brotherhood name." A few have taken "bolder, cooler" names by personal choice when first attempting to join the ranks of the Zhentarim (usually because they are dissatisfied with their birth name for some reason), but it's not a practice encouraged by the Brotherhood, done all that often, or undertaken to denote being accepted into (or achieving a rank within) the Brotherhood.

In this specific case, Whisper was a long-ago wizard of middling power (9th to 12th level, I believe) who fashioned his own tomb out of a "hidehold" he'd constructed for himself, earlier in life, and was interred there.

This is in the bygone days when few humans dwelt in the area, and elves dominated (Whisper

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

was the "classic" sort of mage who wants to dwell and study in isolation, far from fellow humans who might pester, and built himself a tower in a desolate, rocky part of the Stonelands that doesn't survive; a dragon tore it apart after his death to take any treasure that might lie therein, and to make of it a roost and perhaps nest for breeding). This "first" Whisper's real name is now forgotten; in life, he used the nickname given to him for his normal speaking voice, which was a hissing, menacing-sounding (even when he wasn't trying to sound menacing) whisper. His remains had vanished (no one knows where or how; if he became undead, he never returned to "haunt" his tomb) by the time a much later Zhentarim mageling (novice wizard of low power) happened upon them after being ordered to the vicinity of Eveningstar to be the local Zhent spy and "safehold keeper" (host of a place where visiting Zhentarim members could hide in). The mageling took the name (and fell, impressive "villain behind much" reputation in local folklore of the original Whisper, which was probably largely undeserved) of Whisper, and gained much power from the magic items he found in the Crypt.

Whisper's 2nd level status is not a misprint; he gained not just the original Whisper's magic, but the Seven Lost Rings you refer to, and many other tomb-treasures and hidden treasure caches he found in the Stonelands, and used these items to wield Art far above his trained mastery. So, yes, he is using Chain Lightning, but it does come from a magic item (a ring of spell storing, if I remember rightly, but it could also have been from other items in the large pile he amassed).

When Khelben offered the Pendant of Ashaba to the Swords, there was a lot of hesitation (Florin outright declined, there was a lot of 'after YOU, Alphonse/No, I insist, after YOU' stuff, and of course the Knights later fobbed it off on young Mourngrym so he could sit and rule whilst they returned to the "freedom" of adventuring).

Yes, I do plan multiple outcomes ahead of time, tied to various PC responses (but modified during play as I roleplay the NPCs and react to EXACTLY what the PCs do and say). Not too far ahead of time, because details depend on the specifics of the confrontation or other situation, but then I already know the overall goals and aims of all major NPCs involved, power groups, and governments.

If the PCs had declined Khelben's offer, he would have gravely accepted this, then eliminated any PCs he found most evil or set against its acceptance (Pennae, definitely, and quite likely Semoor), and arranged to have someone else (a beautiful female Harper, perhaps) offer them the Pendant elsewhere, under different circumstances. If they'd refused then, he'd have begun "pressure to get them to move on from Cormyr" from one direction, and magically whisking the Pendant into their saddlebags or putting it among spare armor or down a boot among their spare footwear, and so on, trying to "wear them down" or frighten them into accepting it. (When dealing with young adventurers, Khelben is very much an "end justifies the means" guy, trying to teach said "dangerous younglings" their "proper place" in the wider scheme of things.

Hope this is of help, and thanks for the birthday wishes. I sure feel a" hunnert and two t'day, by gum." Of course, that might be something to do with the six-full-plates family feast I had at a Mandarin last night. :)

So saith Ed. Who I once saw eat an entire LARGE smoked salmon, all but the bones (yes, eyes and skin included) at one sitting. Really smoked, mind, not this "chemical bath" nonsense diners must so often endure now. (As for eating entire shrimp rings, that's something he does at least four times a year.) Good thing he's watching his portions, eh?

love to all,
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

On 26 July, 2008 THO said:- Hi, maransreth. Yes, Ed has written lullabies, both in Elvish and Common (heh; English). And yes, pacifiers do exist, though as I recall most folks just use one of their own knuckles (smallest fingers of their hands, usually), thrust into the babe's mouth. However, Ed will provide the definitive reply, of course; your query has gone off to him. When last I spoke with him, he was in the middle of writing a chapter of ARCH WIZARD, his next Solaris book.
love,
THO

On 27 July, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. This time I bring two replies from Ed. First, A Publishing Lackey asked this: "Can Ed say anything yet about his future Realms novel plans? Or is he deep in negotiations or constrained by NDAs?" To this, Ed makes reply:

No, I can't . . . because, yes, I am. :}

So saith Ed. Right, there you have it. This next reply, however, conveys something of more meat and interest to divers scribes. It is a response to Broken Helm's recent query: "Hi Ed and THO. I'm looking for the names of a few prominent merchants in just-pre-Spellplague Corm Orp. I don't need stats, just names and what they do, and I was hoping to find individuals, not large, well-established halfling families. Thanks!"
Ed replies:

Sure. Here goes:

- Onder Halivan [aging human male; has a large staff, is long-established and prosperous, and so has invested in many area shops and local rental housing] (custom wagonmaking, wagon repairs, wagon and harness sales)
- Laryndur Mrantaveth [charismatic, glib halfling male from Amn; not liked by the long-established local halfling families because he undercuts their prices; a tireless "wheeler-dealer" type, and handsome and agile to boot] (panderer [equivalent to pimp, but acts as a landlord to his working girls, and is NOT violent or domineering towards them], moneylender, "shady deeds done for coins," importer of spirits [and, say, his rivals, "tainter" and "mixer" of inferior spirits], owns a local oddjob carpentry crew of ex-adventurers and other hardened misfits)
- Dahessa Darwinter [elderly human female who has used magic to restore her wrinkled and sagging looks; loves the caresses and company of young, handsome, vigorous men, and is very wealthy, though she has little coin, preferring to invest in land and crops sewn and reaped by others; has a large staff of her loyal daughters and adopted daughters, who "take care of" any man who seeks to bully or coerce 'Old Dahessa'] (rental landlord, farm investor, maker of jewelry, dealer in curios, antiques, and monster body parts and essences, maker of scents and healing ointments, herbalist and herb-grower)
- Sardeeyr Hallowhyl [half-elf male of stunning good looks and ruthless morals, who came from Tethyr to escape justice and is rumored to have murdered dozens of rivals and creditors there; has magic items, including 'dancing' weapons and rings that give them the powers of flight and short-range teleportation, that aid him in defending himself; has taken care to 'behave himself']

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

since arriving in Corm Orp four seasons ago, but also made certain word got around about his past] (owns a firm of human and gnome builders who specialize in cellars, stone buildings, secret passages, and irrigation drains, is a fabrics and clothing dealer [specializing in stolen goods], and is an expert archer who runs an archery school)

- Andelorna Mrakephethaer ["Murr-RAKE-feath-air" half-elf female of great age and many scars, retired from adventuring to become a 'lady of sophistication' who dabbles in the arts, pays attention to Sword Coast events, politics, and fashions, and seems to have a nigh-inexhaustible stream of funds from Athkatlan rents and other Amnian investments] (owns a furniture making and repair works, is a dealer in tapestries, rugs, and draperies, breeds and sells horses, and owns a local cheese factory and many goats and dairy cattle)

- Thormgorn Beltreth [human male of middling age and weatherbeaten looks, retired from adventuring in the Vilhon and Tethyr and the Shaar; has a small staff who are intensely loyal to him] (armorer, weapons dealer, ironmonger and smith, specializing in ironbound doors, barred iron window-frames, and heavy-duty hasps, hinges, and lockplates)

So saith Ed. Whew. Instant potted NPCs, served up hot and ready. No stats, as per request, but there are the all-important "story" bases of the characters, which is all most DMs really need. I see some Corm Orp forays in certain Realms players' futures.

love to all,
THO

On 27 July, 2008 THO said:- Recently Purple Dragon Knight posted this query: "Dear Lady Hooded,

Could you ask Ed if he has considered using his basement's unpublished home campaign realms notes to create a brand new setting? I mean, anything that's scribbled on a napkin in his basement, which has not been turned into official lore for TSR/WotC, is basically still Ed's baby right?

Obviously the new setting would have to be largely different from the known Realms... but anything high magic semi-medieval fantasy would see me happy, as long as it's from Ed. I mean if some corporate heads have decided that a Realms reset was required, why not beat them at their own game, use their "knowledge" that something new is now (moneywise) better than something old, and make a brand new setting, perhaps in collaboration with Paizo?

I have a premise for Ed too, if he so desires to use it:

"At the beginning there was nothing. The void. Then seven blue stars shot out of a tear in the fabric of the cosmos, and filled that void. The all powerful Goddess of Magic had arrived, and she suffused life into that emptiness. Rumor has it that she came from another, distant world, sacrificing herself over there to begin anew over here." "

Well, I asked Ed, and here's his reply:

I haven't thought of using my basement lore to craft a new setting from, no, because to me, it's all part of the Realms, and because FINDING it all would take me far too long to make that approach practical, and because I'm just way, way too busy right now trying to earn a basic living (by writing novels, because game writing barely pays enough to cover my utility bills, month to month) and supporting the settings I've already put out there (such as Castlemourn) or are committed to writing (like Embersea). I love your premise, though. :}

I like all of the Paizo guys and admire the way they do business, so working with them would be a

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

delight (and as you know, I already have) and I'm not saying 'no' to a new setting, because I LOVE designing settings and have a few more up my sleeve, but just now: sorry, no time. Please keep the faith, though, PDK, because I do hunger to design more settings (oh, and be sure to check out Embersea when it finally does come out; I am the delay there, too). You can also dip into my non-Realms fiction to glean details of Darsar (the Band of Four), Niflheim (my current Tor "Dark Warrior" series), and Falconfar (my current Solaris series). Watching Gods Above, I'm a busy boy!

So saith Ed. Who is indeed. He has a day job, remember, in addition to writing three novels, divers short stories, a raft of game articles, and working on two or three game products, EACH YEAR. He reads, reviews, blurbs, and edits books by other writers, too, by the way, a few for pay but most just out of friendship . . .

love to all,
THO

On 27 July, 2008 THO said:- Hmm, Markustay and Sage, I'm not sure. I doubt his agreement has changed, but I can see NDAs under the new regime being thick, tall, shiny, and many-layered, so to speak. I wouldn't be surprised if Ed has a quiet chat in some corner at GenCon with certain Wizards senior staff, just to clarify matters.

Just from talking to him over the last month or so, I'd say one rule should still apply: on't heave 4e RULES questions in Ed's direction (as opposed to Realms lore queries). I can also say that Ed will probably be evasive when it comes to questions aimed at "filling in the century gap" between 3.5e and 4e Realms versions, because of current WotC policy.

Yet as always, Ed will answer this properly, when he can.

love,
THO

On 27 July, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, scribes. This time I bring you Ed's reply to this, from Blueblade: "Thought of another one. Do cloaks in Cormyr, Sembia, and the Dales ever have inside pockets (that aren't added by a seamstress at custom request)? If so, how well could a small, flexible item carried in one escape being noticed by someone nearby glancing at the cloak-wearer? I'm thinking rope, thinly-filled coin purse, or scrap of parchment, not a knife or a sack of nails."

Ed replies:

Certainly. Thinner, "for looks" cloaks, if made of fabric that doesn't wrinkle terribly, are habitually constructed with a "pocket" that runs along the collar or shoulders, so that the entire cloak can be rolled tightly up, stuffed into this pocket, and the whole thing hung from a belt or around the wearer's neck on its own sewn-on thong, when not in use.

Of heavier cloaks, many have draw-string-closed (and then knot) mini coin-pockets along the lower edges, for easy carrying of emergency spending money (fares for conveyances, a night's lodging, a meal), and to double as weights to keep the lower edge of the cloak down in breezes (stops women from being publicly embarrassed or momentarily blinded by having their clothing blow up into their faces).

About 1 in 5 cloaks have a small-opening, deep "handy" pocket, usually in what for us would be

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

the "low-hanging breast pocket" area, for carrying small items (supporting the weight of a spare purse that depends from a thong around the wearer's neck, carrying a hanky, or for thieves, a garotte/strangling cord or thongs for binding wrists and ankles of captives or victims). Larger pockets, or more pockets, would have to be custom-sewn additions, yes, and most cloaks that have such pockets have linings sewn around them that make identifying carried items difficult. The bulk or "bulge" of such carried items can usually be seen (concealing that betraying shape is one reason many merchants wear a loose scarf knotted so as to hang in an arc across their upper chests; the scarf also serves to readily cover the mouth and nose in dusty or stinky conditions), but a good cloak will hamper identification of exactly what's being carried.

So saith Ed. Who owns a few cloaks like that, because he lent me one once, to keep me warm in a frigid high-winds winter blizzard. Nothing interesting in its pockets, though.

love to all,

THO

P.S. Markustay, no Horse's Mouth offenses taken.

On 27 July, 2008 THO said:- Ed replies:

Okay, let's run through these in order, as much as possible. I'd not call the Women of the Wood "peaceful." They're actively trying to avenge their wronged members, remember, so they are conducting night raids, swindles, rumor-spreading, and the like to do that. Essentially they're a bandit gang that has no general quarrel with the government, only with certain male citizens. They hide in the forest because, as you surmise, that's where they know the Women already are, and they're seeking safety in numbers. The Women started out hiding in The King's Forest because certain of their early members (who had troubles with nobles, powerful courtiers, and rich and ruthless merchants) literally could not think of anywhere inside Cormyr, their homeland that they did NOT want to leave, where their various nemeses wouldn't be able to easily track them down.

Most of those joining the Women, even today (unless it's the dead heart of a harsh winter, when very few dare to run away from hearthfires or other warm shelter), blossom swiftly in the woods into a love of freedom from etiquette and daily cares and fusses, and the simpler life of enjoying the surroundings and just gathering food (water and bathing are never problems). It's generally believed that the Purple Dragons and War Wizards GENERALLY turn a blind eye to the Women (and this is true, or they'd not exist at all in the Cormyr of "today"), so women running off to join them feel there is some security in the woods. Some do try to "go it alone," but fear of rape, robbery, and perhaps being eaten by wild beasts, and apprehension over being ignorant in woodlore, drive most women into joining the Women (there have even been young lads who have dressed as females so as to gain the security of the group, though in most cases they were thrust out, as potential spies sent by the particular men various Women were running from, the moment their gender was discovered).

Some Women do return to "everyday" Cormyr outside The King's Forest, usually when their oppressors have died or circumstances have otherwise changed so they don't feel in the same danger, or unhappiness. (Sometimes a humbled former oppressor is a very different man. The husband who used to beat his wife bloody and/or force himself on her constantly, who is now ailing, weak, and bedridden, may cease to be a threat - particularly to a wife who returns to nurse him as a confident, bold person who will no longer take his abuse even if he dared attempt it.)

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

As for males not trying the same thing: it's easier for a man to join the Purple Dragons and request a posting far away across the realm, or run off to become a sailor - - or head for the Hullack or the Stonelands to become a "wild outlaw." There are many independent-minded shepherding families and hermit-like individuals dwelling in subsistence-level existences on the Cormyr-side slopes of the Thunder Peaks, and showing up occasionally in the caravan-road villages and waystops to make a few coins by selling fleece, arrowheads they've made, and semi-precious stones they've chipped from rocks. Young Cormyrean males are also more likely than young females, for some reason (probably they are more willing to break family ties), to leave the realm entirely to seek happier lives elsewhere.

The tendency of the nobility and royalty is to favour the first born son, yes (though I worded my reply carefully to point out that the rules vary in details for almost every family). If Foril had been the second born and survived, with Tanalasta as older sister, he would indeed have been named Crown Prince upon attaining his "fitness for rule" (age of majority, in Cormyr's case 13, unless he was deemed mentally "slow"), but she would have been Queen (with whomever she married styled "consort"). In other words, the "Crown Prince" or "Crown Princess" title means "designated heir." The moment Tanalasta had produced a child, of either gender, that progeny would be the heir, and would precede Foril in the line of lawful succession. They would also, upon reaching their majority, be styled Crown Prince or Princess, and each successive child born of Tanalasta would have pushed Foril back a step farther in his claim to the throne.

Note that I'm speaking of law, here, and not "the right [ahem] of force;" as we've seen in what Jeff and I outlined of Cormyr's past in our novel, Cormyr is not immune to the greedy and ruthlessly ambitious seeking to seize the throne with the backing of various self-serving nobles. (It would be accurate to say that Cormyr's royal history has been shaped and is typified by a succession of sieges and assaults on the Dragon Throne by various noble cabals, families, and issue-based alliances.)

Yes, there is some bias against women in Cormyr, but it's more that they can't physically get their hands on family funds, or physically thrash and defeat an abusive spouse, that drives them to seek other means to guard their slighted rights. Remember, Cormyr has no lawyers per se, and the Watch are primarily concerned with preventing violent crimes and keeping order on the streets, not "charging into homes" to settle domestic disputes (because if there's one thing nobles who fulminate at Court hate more than anything else, it's ANY move by the Crown or its agents to be able to charge into THEIR homes for any reason whatsoever, and the best way to get the Crown to agree to that hands-off approach is to claim it for ALL Cormyreans, so the nobles can't be seen to be (or accused of being) claiming "special privileges" for themselves.

People across Cormyr, male and female, do indeed know that if they need help, they can contact the Harpers. It's not commonly done (so, last resort), and it's not usually because Harpers are travelling openly in the realm. It's because the Harpers long ago spread stories with various tavernmasters and innkeepers, as well as local heralds and certain "local lords" (judging each of the latter by their character before making the approach) that anyone in such-and-such a place can 'leave word for' the Harpers, to arrange a meeting or "surprise Harper visit" by speaking certain words at the bar of this tavern at a certain time, or at this particular well or market stall, or so on. In other words, word is left, some undercover local spy for the Harpers who is overlooking the leaving of the word identifies the person asking for the Harpers, and a Harper finds that person in a time and place where they don't think it's a "catch a Harper" trap, to talk to them about their needs. Harpers constantly watch over and often aid the Women in the Woods, because they long ago decided that the Women were a Good Thing or at least a Good Response to Distressing Necessity.

We would all like to know more about events in Cormyr between the time covered in THE

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

GRAND HISTORY OF THE REALMS and the "Year Zero" of the 4e Realms books, but your suspicion as to how it will be officially handled is, I believe, right on (with the exception of a LITTLE more than the bare succession timeline seen in that Background web article; certain Cormyr scribes are working secretly on this). So yes, you can go your own way - - and yes, it's a pity we won't see more of Caladnei. As to riding off into legend with Alusair . . . we'll just have to see. (As I said, certain scribes are . . . ahem.)

If you were to adopt the 4e rules, I would make the "tiefling" Woman of the Woods essentially human, with fiendish features, yes. If 4e in the fullness of time presents us with something akin to "alu-fiends" and "cambions" (from earlier rules sets), feel free to jazz her up again. :) Myself, I'd present her from the outset as having innate talents of heightened smell, ability to "smell magic nearby," move quietly and with great balance, and the always-operating ability to see keenly in dark or gloomy conditions (just to underscore that she's "a little more than human").

Yes, although Delphaera would be the ideal "good hunting challenge," as you judge, Maurara Thundersword seems the most likely next High Hunt victim.

She's the most "important" of the three daughters in their eyes, and she can easily be lured off to a secret meeting by a false offer to meet with fellow young nobles to scheme together (to gain mutual power and wealth, so as to impress their families and the Crown). So that would be the logical kidnap method; let her get herself in secrecy to some edge-of-The-High-Forest cottage/hunting lodge (so anyone seeing her getting there will think she's on her way to a tryst), and then pounce on her once her mount has been quietly stolen away. Confront her with a wall of threatening masked foes between her and the open country, giving her only a handy forest trail to flee down, let her get a head start, and the Hunt can begin.

The Hunt could easily frame the PC party for this by spreading rumors about seeing them chase her into the forest (perhaps rushing directly to the Thunderswords to do so). You could have Maurara run straight into the Women, and keep alive because foresters, and Harpers and War Wizards watching over the Women, get involved in protecting the Women (Maurara simply being caught up among them).

There's much scattering and hiding of the less battle-inclined Women (again, including the frightened and bewildered Maurara), throughout The King's Forest, as the rest of the "good guys" battle the Hunt in earnest. So then the Purple Dragons and hasty Thundersword hirelings can come charging in, looking for the PCs' blood. "Over engineering"? Nah. :)

No more so than any DM who hurls PCs into a nasty dungeon, right?

And yes indeed, the Thunderswords can provide you with plot hooks galore. One of the best ways to craft a colourful Cormyrean campaign is to get PCs involved with two or three noble families; they're endlessly fascinating, dangerous, and exciting "prime movers" in Cormyrean society.

Cormyr and Elversult have friendly relations (if a trifle wary, on Elversult's part; they're always on the watch for attempts to covertly, usually through wealth and mercantile efforts, to take them over or dominate their decision-making). Yes, Elversult is indeed the sort of place the Crown might send an envoy.

I'm not going to comment any farther (right now) about the end of the Steel Regency, because of some future possible plans re. saying more about this in another place, at another time. Beyond saying it has nothing to do with the genders of the principal characters involved, but about their personalities and the factional nature of Cormyrean politics. I think Damian ("crazed venturers") stated things pretty well (in his post that begins "Well of course things are not right with her regency," in the thread about the New Cormyr piece, in the WotC News and Releases section, here at the Keep [THO forwarded it to me]), if that's hint enough.

I am in full agreement with you that there seem to be, from what we've seen thus far, "no women at all mentioned in positions of power," and I agree with you that this is a blunder for a company

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

seeking to attract new female gamers. I happen to know that the Brand Manager and Marketing areas of Wizards of the Coast are staffed by some very competent women, of accomplishment and strong character, so I'll mention your concern to them and reference this post to underscore that this is a consumer's opinion, not just my own. After all, the "babes in show armour" aren't being retired as a marketing strategy, to hook the young males, so there's no reason to spurn the still-largely-untapped market of females they have neglected to properly court in the past. I'm not (and never have been) in a decision-making position, but I can advise and cajole (and I do!). This is one "hobby horse" I'll be proud to ride. (For one reason, if I'm told that females aren't the target audience, I can remind them that strong female characters fascinate and attract males, and history shows us that they've done so for as long as recorded history exists.)

Of course you'll change "your" Realms to be whatever best suits your campaigns and style of play. Everyone does, and that's just fine. As things diverge more widely from the published canon Realms, it makes more work for you as the DM, but that's just the price for "having things your way," which is a beauty of this game form that shouldn't be sacrificed on that particular altar. As for the Spellplague: remember that mortals can NEVER know the truth about godly events, only the "accepted wisdom" taught by clergy and based on what the gods want their followers to think. So what has been written about the Spellplague thus far could be very wrong, and almost certainly has some details wrong. All that is known is that the Weave is gone, that Mystra has fallen silent, and that the collapse of the Weave caused a widespread (and still not entirely finished) calamity dubbed "the Spellplague."

That's all people dwelling in the Realms really know - - and of course, in your Realms, any or all of those three things might not have happened. Perhaps just some of the Chosen have disappeared, and there's much strife among rival churches arguing about "something" that happened among the gods. Perhaps some lands did change, perhaps not.

And I don't expect ANYONE who's having fun running a perfectly good, stable campaign set in the Realms at a particular time to change ANYTHING about their game until that campaign winds down, or their players or they get restless or want to adopt some of the 4e things they've seen or heard about. The one good thing about the century jump is that it lets you just keep going, as the decades pass, and the Spellplague (if you do want to make the changes) "just hasn't happened yet."

And perhaps, in the future Cormyr, male nobles have become hunting/jousting/posing snobs and "upper-class twits" clinging to a world of pomp, pageantry, and the etiquette of yesteryear (duels, perhaps), while their far more practical (and exasperated) wives TRULY run things, running the business affairs of the families and making Lady-to-Lady agreements on what disputes to just set aside, when to collectively humour their men, and acting in concert (or in strong, opposed factions) at court to influence Crown decisions and in truth lead and shape life in Cormyr. Boy, as a ham-actor DM, I could have fun with that conception! All of the monacle-dropping, large-moustache-quivering, sneering and prancing grander-than-thou Lords, and their gently-sighing, steering-them Ladies . . .

And I know your Alusair as Queen question is hypothetical and must be taken with the usual other-factors-we-can-only-guess-at caveats, but in my opinion (as, ahem, the creator of Cormyr and Alusair), I think she would have reigned as a female version of Azoun IV: lots of energy, fearless in battle as loved by her soldiery for it, cheerfully bedding men in all directions whenever she felt like it (though in her case, I'd say a few women, too), impetuous and dismissive-of-tedious-pomp and bureaucracy, but willing to listen to advisers she trusts, and mellowing into an increasingly-strong monarch. I can also see her as being better than her father in regards to the succession, ruthlessly dealing with nobles and even treacherous kin as she ages, to produce a situation where there is a clear heir, a protected spare, and loyal courtiers and nobles dedicated to transferring rule to her successor peacefully, swiftly, and surely. Alusair may have been a brat in her youth, but she became the greatest ruler Cormyr never had (of the Obarskyrs; a strong case could be made for many of the Royal Mages having a better claim to that particular title than

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

any Obarskyr).

1. I'm afraid I can't really say much about the fate of Caladnei yet. There's a nice new NDA on this one. I or another Realms creator will reveal Caladnei's fate as soon as we best can.

2. I'm trying to avoid saying much about the 4e Realms until I have a good heart-to-heart with certain folks at Wizards, but I don't think it does great harm to consider that Ganarahast is the son of Myrmeen and Vangerdahast, not a grandson or nephew or something else.

So saith Ed. First and Greatest Master of Realmslore.

love to all,

THO

[Go to Top of Page](#)

On 28 July, 2008 THO said:- Hi again, all. A reply of sorts from me to Jamallo Kreen this time, re. the Dungeon of Swords:

It's one of those places in the Realms that was developed by others in a different direction than Ed's original.

Which I recall as having a large, square-cross-section shaft (descending about 700 feet or so) with magical swords floating in it that attacked anyone descending over the lip of the shaft (from the underground tomb that opened into it). Treasure levels of the dungeon opened off the sides of the shaft at much deeper levels. A NASTY place, but we did end up with some powerful enchanted blades as treasure, once we learned how to control them. The canon version, however, may be quite different.

love,

THO

[Go to Top of Page](#)

On 28 July, 2008 THO said:- Jamallo and Wooly, I forgot to mention one detail: all of the magical swords were different from each other (there were nine, as I recall, not all of them "awakening to attack" with the same triggers nor at the same time), and all of them were "Ed specials" with various powers. A few of them were later published as canon weapons, with many of their minor, 'odd' powers "simplified out of existence."

love,

THO

On 28 July, 2008 THO said:- Ed replies:

Okay, bearing in mind that this is a hypothetical query, if I was running Wizards/TSR/Realms fiction publishing, the "century jump" for 4e wouldn't have happened, so I could squeeze in more stories of the Realms circa the 1370s.

I would first have highlighted Mirt the Moneylender in his own book. Then Alustriel, in a political intrigue book to show "life in Silverymoon." Then back to Cormyr to do the same for Alusair (1 book), then Vangey (1 book), then Myrmeen Lhal (1 book), then Caladnei (1 book). Then Storm

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

would get her own adventuring book (as a Harper 'den mother,' not as a Chosen. THEN I'd do a "what it's really like to be a Chosen" book, probably centered on Dove. Then I'd spotlight Durnan and Halaster, in a Waterdeep-set book. Then I'd turn to my NEXT dozen or so most pressing ideas... Note that I have no idea if these would be financial successes. I'm a writer in love with my Realms, not a business-head (good or bad).

So saith Ed. Whose love for the Realms really shows.

love to all,
THO

On 30 July, 2008 THO said:- LOL! I actually suggested that the dying Mystra "jump" from mind to mind of all the protagonists in Ed's shopping list of novels (we've talked about this privately, before Malcolm ever asked Ed that "what he'd like to write" question), and so give him the excuses he needed to write them, but now that you've suggested Elminster, I'm sure Wizards would prefer that to keeping Mystra around. It's not, after all, as if she's (ahem) Bane . . . I'm expecting another Realmslore reply from Ed tomorrow. He's a busy, busy boy . . . love,
THO

On 31 July, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. I bring you Ed's response to this query, from Sage of Stars: "Lovely Lady THO and Ed, do nobles of Cormyr ever have "dress up" ceremonial occasions where they would wear robes, coronets, etc. to denote their ranks? I'm thinking of regalia controlled by heralds, not just a fashion show." Ed replies:

Yes, indeed. Attendance at Court whenever there's to be an investiture, nobles are going to sit in judgement on anything or anyone (such as a fellow noble accused of crimes), any Obarskyr is going to be given a title (and the feast/ball afterwards), at royal christenings and crownings (and the feast/ball after, again), and so on. There are nobles who LOVE to wear their regalia, and do so every chance they get . . . and others who prefer to show their casual regard for the Obarskyrs or the life at Court by wearing hunting gear . . . as well as everything in between.

So saith Ed. Who as I recall has portrayed nobles of all of those shades in our 'home' Realmsplay.
love to all,
THO

On 3 August, 2008 THO said:- Hi, all. I bring two swift responses from Ed:

To Markustay: Correct. These guards are used whenever "close-in" escorts are desired. When

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Obarskyrs speak to each other, however (at least during the reigns of Azoun IV and the Steel Regency), guards tend to keep "just out of quiet-voice earshot" in a large ring, moving with the strolling conversers. (A habit that arose out of Azoun's propensity for making love to Filfaeril on all sorts of handy surfaces in the Royal Gardens; the ring just turned to face away from the royal couple and stayed stationary, until matters were, ahem, back to strolling.

To Garen Thal: Correct on the "sending messages" reply, and as for "Lhaeo In Fishnets: A Love Story," I can promise you that (if it survives the editing; if for any reason it doesn't, I'll e-mail you a copy of the original version), a certain character picks up a copy of that exact work during the story, and reads out its title, too! When you see some of the characters in the story, you'll see why I couldn't resist using them and the setting I did, and foregoing Lhaeo for this time around. HOWEVER, the 2008 Spin A Yarn is not much more than a week away . . .

So saith Ed, Creator of the Realms and Much of Its Twisted Deviancy.
love to all,
THO

On 4 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. This time I bring you another brief Realmslore reply from Ed, this one to these queries and speculations from Markustay: "First, a question, inspired by some of the above:

It occurs to me that in a magical world, one need not think in terms of 'traditional couplings' when it come to children. In fact, it's entirely possible that Elminster himself is a mother!

So, oh wise one of the Verdant Wood, have there been any children in Faerûn that had parents of the same sex?

It would also make for one helluva a story for Caladnei - if it didn't violate WotC's new 'morality clause'."

Ed replies:

Markustay, it's MORE than entirely possible that "Elminster himself is a mother." However, NDA on who, how, when, where, and offspring.

And yes indeed, there have been children born to parents of the same gender. This is rare, and it is also NDA (sorry).

It would indeed "make for one helluva a story for Caladnei," but as it happens, her story is different. And (ahem) NDA.

Sigh. There are times when "NDA" just has to come out of my mouth more often than any other word, acronym, or phrase. Sorry again, to all.

So saith Ed. And there you have it; another NDA by Ed regarding NDA and NDA, when what he'd REALLY like to say is NDA NDA NDA NDwheeA . . .

love to all,
THO

On 6 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all!
althen artren, Ed sent me a reply to you straight away:

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Yes, there has to be some discussion, but I'm not at liberty yet to say what conclusions were reached, other than these factors: I will never tire of writing about the Knights (and have always had a soft spot for Myth Drannor, one of my favorites among my creations [with "mythals" being another], but there have been strong pressures for me to get back to writing fiction about Elminster - - and, of course, the "time shift" between the 3e Realms and the 4e Realms makes stories set in the "new" Realms a higher priority than tales set in the old. However, it's too early to give you a reply that's anything like definitive on this, yet. I have about forty people and places I desperately want to write about, in the Realms, and unless I can somehow convince Wizards (and my wife and family) to let me write and get published four Realms novels a year, I'm never going to get to do even half of them, before I die of old age or ill health or mischance or my own stupidity. :}

As Pink Floyd first sang in my youth:
"And you run and you run to catch up with the sun
But it's sinking, and racing around to come up behind you again"
. . . and so on.

Wish me luck, everyone. And give me Spin A Yarn story elements each year that allow me the opportunity to do some serious Yarns, as Realmslore-full short stories, not just joke-fests.

So saith Ed. I hope many GenCon-bound scribes will read and heed that last line!
love to all,
THO

On 6 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all.
To The Red Walker: Ed really doesn't want to try to influence what anyone in the audience suggests, other than following the rules (no real world named people or racial, ethnic, or national groups, no named real world places, no real world trademarked things, and no toys primarily belonging to other writers; e.g. Drizzt or Danilo and Arilyn, though Elaith IS fair game) and hopefully giving him stuff to work with that isn't TOO offensive or way-out (and believe me, Ed can handle more way-out than most writers!).

However, having talked this over with him in the past, I know he'd love to include one or more of the Knights (Rathan and Torm?) or Mirt, or Azoun and Filfaeril (remember their lovely little slanging matches in the Realmslore web-columns?), or Alusair, or . . . YOU know; Ed-created Realms characters we'd all love to see more of.
Have fun at the con!
love,
THO

On 7 August, 2008 THO said:- createvmind,
When TSR first started publishing the Realms, they had a strict Code of Ethics: in all their published fiction, the good guys HAD to win, evildoers could never be shown to profit from their evil deeds, and no specific real-world "shady techniques" (how to break into a place, how to strangle someone) could be described. And so on.
In the early days, the results of this disgusted some readers (why the Zhentarim so "Keystone Kops" incompetent?), but it was the Way It Was.
Over the years since, there have been various codes applied by Wizards (and now by Hasbro),

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.
Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.
Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.
This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

governing what can and can't appear in Realms fiction and game design. Moreover, you can't read a word of Realms fiction that hasn't been read, edited, and approved by an in-house editor (which is only sensible; it avoids having something horrible slipped into print maliciously or by accident in a printers' mixup).

So Ed has always had to write under such restrictions, yes.

In the old days, when things went at a much slower pace (at the company end, anyway; Ed always seemed to be racing along writing tons of stuff), Ed used to write detailed sex scenes for his books purely for fun (to be read aloud in the publishing cubicles for the amusement of all, with both Ed and the editors knowing beforehand they'd be "cut" and never appear in print. However, Ed has less time now, and there's been personnel turnover at the editorial end; Ed has no interest at all in embarrassing or upsetting an editor who wouldn't find reading such sex scenes to be fun. So I alone get to read them, now.

Ah, I'm such a naughty girl. Whip me, someone . . .
(please?)

love,
THO

On 7 August, 2008 THO said:- To Christopher Rowe,
Hi. Ed describes the signing and public proclamation of an adventuring charter (the Knights' charter) in SWORDS OF EVENINGSTAR, the first Knights of Myth Drannor book. I know he has prepared at least six actual charters, but I believe they're NDA (owned by Wizards and not yet published), and I also think he's posted in the past (perhaps here, perhaps in a Wizards website article) about their physical form. Sage? Wooly? Kuje? Help!

In the meantime, I'll go looking to see if I have anything in my players' notes (almsy three decades' worth, so this may take me some time!).

love,
THO

On 8 August, 2008 THO said:- Hi again, everyone. This time I bring a brief reply from Ed to sfdragon's query (from July 5th of this year): "hey I have a deranged question. what is the abilities of the true blackstaff??? and its history"

Ed replies:

Sorry, sfdragon, but that's all NDA. Thanks to future fiction possibilities (and not just mine own; Steven Schend, for one, would not want me to Spill All here, when tales could be spun from this in future). You might want to read his superb novels BLACKSTAFF and BLACKSTAFF TOWER for more about the true blackstaff. If you mean the item rather than the person, that's NDA too, for the same reasons. :) Sorry.

So saith Ed, creator of both The blackstaff and Khelben 'Blackstaff' Arunsun, though in his opinion Steven Schend "really brought them to life and now knows both best of all." (Oh, and Khelben has a brief cameo in THE SWORD NEVER SLEEPS, Ed tells me.)

love to all,
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

On 8 August, 2008 THO said:- Hi again, all. I bring you Ed's response to sfdragon's question: "Does Ed think wotc would let him write an alternate what if novel that placed alusair as the ruler of cormyr?"

Ed replies:

Probably not; I've never asked, but having a variety of alternative "histories" would bring down design headaches galore and lessen the perceived importance of any Realms fiction ("Oh, so this doesn't really happen? Good, I don't need to read - - or buy - - it, then."), so it would tend to be a "no no" for any coherent campaign world. Tell you what: I'll pop that question face-to-face with certain Books Department folks at GenCon, and let you know what reaction I get, okay?

So saith Ed. Who hopefully won't time his question to coincide with moments wherein those Books Department personages are trying to swallow food or drink.

love,
THO

On 10 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. This time I bring you Ed of the Greenwood's lore response to chance87, specifically to a query made in a post back at the beginning of April, this year (Page 24 of this year's version of this thread): "I've a query to toss on the pile: the recent questions about the pantheistic Realms practices got me to thinking. How slow are non-"in-the-know" folk of the Realms in accepting a new diety into the fold for veneration or propitiation? Over time, the various ethnic pantheons appear to have been folded into the Faerunian pantheon, and presumably, this still occurs to an extent in certain areas...the Shou expatriates in the East, as well as the Mulhorandi border with Faerun proper spring to mind."

Ed replies:

Hi, chance87. Sorry for my delay in getting to your question. The 'proper' reply depends on how you define non-"in the know" folk of the Realms.

If you mean isolated dwellers in backlands or far from large communities of their own race, the answer can well be "decades" or "most of a century" (unless a deity sends an eloquent cleric or divine servitor into their midst, or sends dream- or prayer-visions to influential elders and other "important" persons among these rural folk.

If you mean slum-dwelling or "just plain folks" in caravan-route waystops, trade towns, and cities, knowledge of a new deity, or a change in divine status proclaimed by clerics, takes mere months. However, as one might expect, hearing of something and adopting it are two very different things. Just as in our real world, some eagerly accept new ideas, or grasp at any idea that will better their current lot. Others like the status quo just as it is, or are by nature conservative (preferring the established, unchanging, and more comfortable "norm").

In trade towns and all cities, there are cults (a hallmark of my original Realms campaign; one of the reasons there were so many gods is that a relatively small number of divine beings were worshipped in many different guises by many mortal beings, so one might stumble over a secretive cult in a cellar, upstairs chamber, ruin, graveyard, or hidden "dungeon" almost anywhere - - and when PCs did so, my players were forced to roleplay, not just rush in to hack and slay and rescue anyone lying on an altar, because they simply couldn't keep track of all the deities, and know "for sure" who was good, who was evil, and who was an utter fraud.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

The young, the financially desperate, the oppressed, and thrill-seekers always gravitate towards new cults, if airs of secrecy and exclusivity ("You Hallowed Ones will have the power of the Risen Xoblob working for you, while the ignorant swine who lord it over you remain blissfully unaware of the reasons behind your successes, and their own drifts down into misfortune and coinless despair!") are fostered, and there's violence and/or sex and/or personal financial gain and/or the spice of danger (but not TOO much danger).

So if a merchant murmurs to his friend that if he "comes along" some dark night to see "something to our mutual gain," and they go masked and cloaked down mysterious tunnels to where the friend gets a momentary glimpse of a stunningly beautiful female priestess yielding herself on an altar to another masked and cloaked personage, and the merchant then whisks away the friend and promises him that the Risen Xoblob can reward him, too, if he but does thus and so, quite a few such friends will fall for the bait. (And if a friend cringes away, or reports to the authorities, the merchant denies all - - with the aid of some magics that guard his mind from prying - - and the friend can't direct the authorities to the altar, priestess, or any evidence of the rites he saw.)

In this way, new cults are constantly arising and enticing new adherents in cities. A few of these cults are frauds, concocted to win coin and influence for a few (or cover for murder or something nefarious, such a treason or theft, arson, or other techniques of ruination practiced on a trade rival), but most are legitimate worship, born of a priest's visions sent by a divine being cloaking him- or herself in a new guise, to win new worshippers (all sane folk of the Realms "believe" in all deities, but belief and propitiation are but pale beginnings when placed against fervent worship, and many deities face the problem of "my parents' worship just doesn't appeal to me," but don't want to lose the younger generation - - so they adopt a new guise to appeal to mortals who otherwise wouldn't favor them.

The Knights of Myth Drannor learned this lesson when they came across some bored, jaded young nobles who were bored and repelled by sex-filled "whipping orgies" of worship to Loviatar, purely because their parents had enjoyed and participated in them for years, so the rebellious younglings wanted no part of such "old graynoses' worship." (But happily plunged into sex- and whipping-filled veneration of "Nathra of the Dark Kiss," billed as the "true face of Siamorphe, that your parents can't handle.")

If a cult accomplishes local political successes, or a spectacular "miracle" witnessed publicly by many, they may swiftly achieve "fad" popularity through a city or town (but this may soon fade away, if the clergy can't show lay believers tangible rewards and benefits to following the new faith). More often, cults remain underground for years, slowly spreading through guilds, neighborhoods, and social classes until they dare to become public - - and only when that last step happens will non- "in the know" folk hear about them.

Merchants get many free or cut-price meals or drinks by telling the latest news as they travel about the Realms (and of course embellish as they tell, to gain more by their tellings), and in this manner, word of miracles, the proclamation of new deities, avatars or prophets doing things "among the people," and major holy events spreads quickly across Faerûn. Again: acceptance, belief in, and devoted worship of are three different things, and mortals move from one stage to the next at different rates.

However, a "commoner" should hear something of the name, symbol, portfolio, and physical aspect and nature of a deity within a year if they are on a trade route or are regularly visited by "merchants from afar," regardless of how far away in Faerûn the source of such news is.

By the way, Realms fans who don't want to include this or that detail of the divine changes first reported in the closing pages of THE GRAND HISTORY OF THE REALMS and since revealed in various places (FRCG coming up, just days from now) can easily use this approach to explain some of the news as wrong, distorted, or even deliberate falsehood, spread by some clergy to gain ground at the expense of others. As I've said before at various times and places, how would any mortal really know the truth? Can't trust the deities themselves, or their avatars, or their clergy, or any bearer of news or eyewitness. Not that all of these sources are liars, but they may be mistaken in what they saw, or be deceiving even themselves (explaining things in terms of

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

what they "knew" to be "true" beforehand). In 4e, the Weave is gone, and it collapses in spectacular fashion as a series of magical "bad things" happened that gained the name "Spellplague." That's ALL that mortals really know; everything else (this god dead, that one greater or lesser in power, this new one arisen) is all hearsay. Perhaps God X (missing from the pages of the new Forgotten Realms books) is really just using a new name, portfolio, and approach (the new "God Y" that does appear in those same books).

There. As Gary Gygax and I joked once, when DMing together at an early(-ish) GenCon: I Have Spoken, and It Shall Be So!

So saith Ed. Ending on a grander note than my wrapup, for once. He'll soon fall silent for the drive down to GenCon, scribes, and although I PROBABLY won't be able to make the con, I'm going to try (so if I, too, fall silent, I'm deceiving my bosses and working my way across America to drop in on Ed). If you should see someone winking at Ed and tugging at her nipples in a clear signal as she does so, it might be me. Or just another female gamer who is no lady.

love to all,
THO

On 10 August, 2008 THO said:- Heh. I already asked Ed that one, myself, a few days back. And he replied:

Reports of the Harpers' demise are greatly exaggerated. More will be revealed in my next Realms novel (after THE SWORD NEVER SLEEPS). Suffice it to say that the Harpers got so infiltrated by undercover foes as to become compromised, so a trick was pulled that Elminster (for one) has pulled before.

The Harpers "disbanded," but a MUCH smaller and more secretive group of Harpers carried on. Eliminating certain false former Harpers was one of their ongoing goals. What their goals are now, few can say . . . for there are few Harpers indeed, and these days they say little, believing in "deeds, not words."

So saith Ed. (How personally angry he is, Uzzy, I don't know. Ed is a "slow to anger" sort; patience has been his watchword these past 49 years. As the Beatles sang, "Life is very short . . . and there's no time/For fussing and fighting, my friend")

love,
THO

On 10 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello, all. I just received this e-mail from Blueblade, and am posting it here for all to see:

"Ed and THO,

Myself, I keep reading online comments about the Harpers as some sort of vast do-gooder army, and that view just isn't supported by the in-print lore. To me, they seem more like a cross between Aragorn as Strider (travelling alone and rough in the wilderness) and James Bond (has to report to superiors, may be given some fun gadgets, but operates essentially alone, or soon ends up that way).

Accordingly, I have a Realms question: Archendale is a notoriously hostile-to-outsiders place. Do

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

the Harpers have any local spies or agents there? If, say, two armed Harpers came skulking into the place trying to track someone who harmed or slew an Arkhen, how much cooperation (questions answered) might they get from any Arkhen they approached?

Thanks,
BB"

Blueblade, off it goes to Ed for a reply. Myself, I'd say they'd have "eyes" among several elderly Arkhen, who have seen and judged the doings and effects of the Harpers (and continued to do so, not cling blindly to any loyalty). Arkhen might well help someone hunting someone who harmed another Arkhen, in my opinion. Yet we'll see what Ed says, of course.

love,
THO

On 11 August, 2008 THO said:- Yes, createvmind, there are Tome Dragons in the Realms, as I recall from chats with Ed. Your query goes on to him, of course, for a proper answer.

love,
THO

On 12 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello, all. As for Ed, he's (sing together, now) "Off to see the Wizards, the Wizards, the Wizards/He's off to see the Wizards, wonderful gamers because . . ." Which leaves me to pinch hit until * I * take off after him.

Hoping to sneak into GenCon and, ahem, surprise him. (Black lacy lingerie? Check. Thigh-high slit gown? Check. Flavoured rouge for nipples? Check? Ahem . . .)

Ahuh-ahem, as I was saying . . .

Wooly Rupert, in Ed's original Realms, Mask was one god of mischief (the nasty sort) and Lliira was another (the happy pranks sort). I think those aspects got "played down" because some TSR designers wanted to take this setting very seriously. (The elves, gnomes, and halflings all had deities who indulged in pranks, too, as I recall, as did the pixies and quicklings.)

Markustay, I'll leave Ed's olden-time geography questions for the Man himself, but I can enlighten you as to Carragar.

Originally, Carragar was the name of a now-long-dead holy man who founded the present-day settlement of Carragar (it was his hermitage, established next to a good strong drinkable spring, and before his death a hamlet of his descendants and like-minded worshippers). It is now, over a century later, a village-about-to-become-town dominated by a grown-from-the-days-of-the-mortal-Carragar community of priests. That community (and therefore the village) is centered around a temple, the Holy house of Carragar.

At least, so my handwritten notes say, copied from Ed's notes and what Ed told us (in-character) during play; for more details, we'll still have to wait for the return from e-silence of the Man Himself.

Lastly: the 2007 Spin A Yarn SHOULD be posted very soon, on the Wizards website.

I, for one, can't wait. Ed always manages to put together a tale that's a good read AND more than mere silliness.

love to all,
THO

On 12 August, 2008 THO said:- Well, Ed is on the way, and I shall very soon follow. Yet let not the e-silence still your tongues, scribes! Keep those queries, comments, and follow-up lore

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

questions coming, because they are meat and drink to the Father of the Realms, and he'll continue to try to answer all he can! The 2007 Spin A Yarn publication is imminent, and of course GenCon attendees will have the fun of making a new one, just days from now! Heh. Enough cheerleading. Let's see what unfolds at the con; Ed may of course not be able to tell us all the inside info, but I'm sure things will be said and decided that will have a great influence on what see published about the Realms in the future.

love to all,
THO

On 21 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all!

Well, I'm back from a few brief visits to GenCon, and Ed is back from an exhausting but fun time with many Keep scribes and co-authors, but rendered silent for another day or so by the latest layoffs from Wizards (don't worry: the Books folks who creatively handle the Realms are untouched), and by the need to get his car fixed before one of the front wheels falls off. (An hour ago, he was helping to hammer a control arm back into its housing, with the aging chariot up on a hoist at his local dealership.)

In the meantime, let me just add a few notes: Ed's snatch of soprano singing at the Spin A Yarn was from two lines Buttercup's song (Gilbert & Sullivan): ". . . I'm called Buttercup/Sailors should never be shy" and Zandilar, rest assured that Ed has the daughters you mentioned firmly in mind but they are even more firmly NDA'd.

Ed also has lots of future fiction plans for the Realms in mind, and intends to add game coverage of the countryside as plentifully and as swiftly as his schedule and the planned WotC channels (Realmslore columns on the website, probably) allow.

He truly cherishes the love and fierce devotion to the Realms expressed here at the Keep and at GenCon, and intends to go on try to make the Realms as detailed, positive, and exciting a place to read and game in as possible, come what may.

Truly. He's not a Wizards employee, not their paid spokesman, and not trying to gild over difficulties and awkwardnesses. He just believes that angry words can't be "unsaid," and that the best results will come from everyone working together to make the Realms as great as possible and at the same time, everyone making the Realms "their own" as they see fit, for their own uses. He also told me this GenCon was superb for him, personally, thanks to the Salvatore family, several WotC staffers, many fans and fellow game writers and designers, and his good friends among the Realms fans and designers who hang out here at the Keep, and took time to chat and hang out with him at the con.

Ed is of the opinion that it might take a couple of years, but that you should see some new WotC-published Realms novelists, designers, and short story writers arising from the ranks of Candlekeep scribes.

love to all,
THO

On 23 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. Ed has returned, his chariot restored, and has responded to many recent questions in this thread with a blizzard of short replies, as follows:

Sir Urza, to respond to your Aug 13th query, back on page 56 of this thread: I wrote about the elves of Golarion (more than would fit in the product Mike McArtor was assembling at the time, of course, so some of it'll show up elsewhere, too).

Wooly Rupert, Susan Morris edits my Spin A Yarn pieces and then Miranda Horner (the lovely

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Lady Gumdrop) gets them onto the website. This year, when she was doing so (literally in the hours before I departed for GenCon, and then when I snuck onto a Net-connected computer partway through my journey down), I begged her to find the "long lost on the Wizards site" first Spin A Yarn tale and restore the links - - and she eagerly sleuthed and found and came through for us all! Hurray and much thanks, Lady Miranda!

althen artren, the mountains west of the Dalelands hold just about everything in the way of mineral wealth, from easily-mined surface veins of iron and copper to "tubes" where lodes of gemstones can be found. Unfortunately for delvers of today, most of the easily-found and -accessed veins have been found and worked out in the past, so one must go into the monster-haunted deeps under the earth, braving drow and worse, to gain much ("mining" the ruins of Myth Drannor for gems and metal treasures was far more profitable than mining mountain rock, circa the 1370s, if one managed to survive the demons and devils infesting the place).

sfdragon, Menelvagor, and Kuje: the fates of the Seven are revealed in the FRCS or in Realms novels, or will be revealed in the fullness of time. One of the two ladies sfdragon mentioned is definitely NOT dead in the Year of the Ageless One.

Menelvagor, Elminster is still alive for other reasons, some of which will be revealed in the novel I write after THE SWORD NEVER SLEEPS, if not sooner. I'll just hint this much: Elminster's mind is a very crowded place, these days ("these days" meaning days in the Year of the Ageless One). [[So, yes, unless I get run over by a truck soon, there probably will be more Elminster books in 4e.]] As for your speculations regarding The Simbul: heh, you're going to be surprised . . .

Ashe Ravenheart: Elminster definitely hasn't been put in a retirement home, though I'm sure there are many times he wishes he has. The possible perils of bland food, boring routine, dementia, and smells are a lot less daunting than the perils he DOES have to face, trust me. Your guesses re. his "voices" are very good ones, and I'll just have to correct you by saying [NDA] [NDA] [NDA] and of course [NDA], except when [NDA].

Zandilar, I'm glad you liked The Weaver of Dreams. I wrote it in half a day, once I finally got around to sitting down to do it, and had a lot of fun. I have safely received the file from this year's Spin A Yarn, but probably won't get to it until very early 2009. As for your daughters questions, I'm sorry, but big fat shiny NDAs are indeed still in place. Which, when you think about, should hearten you (hint hint ahem hint).

KnightErrantJR, I believe I did meet your charming daughter on Sunday, but then again: there ARE other kind gentlemen at GenCon (and for that matter, I spend a lot of time at the con being, er, less than gentlemanly).

The Red Walker, glad I could brighten your day. Although we "industry professionals" often use the con as a time to sit and talk business (and meet old friends, too, just as everyone else does) GenCon is for the fans. When I meet you, it may be my two-thousand-and-thirteenth encounter with a gamer that day, but it's probably your first meeting with me, and the gamer behind you may be awaiting his first meeting with me ever, and so on. Nothing in the world is more important than making you happy, hearing what you have to say (crit as well as kudos), and finding out what you'd like to see. I just wish more gaming company folks never forgot that.

At my first GenCon (Number 8, in Lake Geneva) all the "old pro gamers" were very nice to me, a skinny bespectacled and shy kid from Canada, and I will be d**mned if I'll do less for gamers I meet now, than they did back then.

I remember meeting some kids from Kenosha at GenCon 23 (I think) in Milwaukee who were just awed by all the games or sale. So they'd spent all their food and "bus home" money by early Saturday, and were facing starvation and a long walk out of the city, so I gave them a hundred bucks for food and drove them home Sunday - - and was more than a little stunned to be

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

introduced, at a much later GenCon, to two young gamers who'd been named after me by their forever-grateful fathers, because of that little, little helping hand.

Anyone who designs games for money is crazy (well, yes, anyone who designs games is crazy, but . . .). I do this for the friendships and the fun.

And the few lines of cracked soprano I managed to croak out at GenCon (the front of that room was COLD, and since my throat surgery I really need to warm up my voice, to have any upper register or falsetto at all) was from "I'm Called Little Buttercup" from H.M. S. Pinafore (the Gilbert & Sullivan operetta).

Which brings me to wanting to express deep thanks on my part to many, many folks of the Keep who made my GenCon a delight this year, including Garen Thal, Steven Schend, Brian Gute, Jeff Thetford, Brian James (and thanks for putting up with my teasing you re. Toni with such grace and good humour, too!), Jaleigh Johnson, Paul Kemp, Erik Scott de Bie, and Kuje and Wandering_mage and so many, many more. I HOPE I got to meet the Lady K (I did, didn't I?). I'm forgetting dozens more right now, but please believe me: I don't WANT to forget or slight you, I'm just getting old and overloaded. (The Lady THO can overload me all by herself when she wants to, believe me. Umm, didn't think you'd have all that hard a time believing that . . .)

To all scribes: I don't care if you've sworn off the 4e Realms or not, you're missing out on some GREAT novels if you pass over any of the four books in the "Ed Greenwood Presents Waterdeep" series that I've had the pleasure of reviewing thus far. Three of them have been publicly announced, and two were signed and given away as fast as gamers could snap them up at the con. In order of appearance, the three announced tomes are Steven's BLACKSTAFF TOWER, Jaleigh's MISTSHORE, and Erik's DOWNSHADOW. Three very different books, yet all capture the essence of the great city of Waterdeep, and all of them are darned good yarns that I have re-read several times with much pleasure. That preceding sentence also applies to the still-secret fourth book.

And if you're looking for something a little offbeat, WORLDS OF THEIR OWN debuted at GenCon, too. Jim Lowder ably herded catsXXXX er, thought up and edited this collection of stories by Elaine Cunningham, Paul Kemp, me, James Lowder himself, and such familiar names as J. Robert King, Bob Salvatore, Michael Stackpole, and Gary Gygax: stories we all wrote that are NOT set in shared worlds. Mine is a "sky pirates" sort of story from decades ago, and the other tales are similarly "different from what you're used to." A trade paperback in the Planet Stories line from Paizo. End of shameless plugs, I promise.

Edit: Ackkh, I'm getting old! I forgot to mention Monte Cook, Lisa Smedman, Greg Stafford, Will McDermott, etc as contributors to WORLDS OF THEIR OWN. Thank goodness Jim Lowder is nowhere near as forgetful as me, and got stories from them and still others!

I have some urgent matters to clear up after the con, and will plunge right back into lore replies as soon as I can. Which means soon, I promise.

So saith Ed. Who keeps his promises, believe me. (I once had the bruises to prove it, but that's another story.)

love to all,

THO

On 23 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Ed speaks:

Awww, you guys, you'll give me a swelled head with all this praise. I'm just as nice guy as I can manage to be, who likes to write fantasy stories, created a world to do set them in, and was in the right place at the right time.

Uzzy, I'll do what I can. If not on the Wizards website (where I should have Realmslore pieces in DRAGON, eventually), or in some other WotC offering, then here at the Keep. I don't know ywt, and I'm struggling to fulfill my contractual obligations first. In life, if I don't keep my promises, I am nothing.

So saith Ed. Who is buried in post-GenCon communiques, legal matters, plans, and unfinished novels. To say nothing of my teasings.

love to all,
THO

On 25 August, 2008 THO said:- Hi again, all. I bring you the latest words of Ed:

I am away from my notes on the Red Wizards at the moment, so I probably won't be able to give you the few lines therein on the origins of their name (from the hue of their robes, of course, but I mean the origins of their wearing garments of that color, which should be a shiny crimson, or "deep red with a sheen to it" if you prefer) until tomorrow.

In the meantime, let me tackle the easy few amongst the latest flood of questions from althen artren:

Yes, El and the Srinshree have been intimate. Any offspring would only occur if Mystra wanted it AND a certain elven goddess wanted it, too. Have they? Heh-heh: NDA!!!

NDA's usually cover alternative "what ifs," just to prevent eloquent and clever gamers (which, let's face it, is most gamers, right?) from learning too much with a succession of carefully-worded questions.

Yes, THO and the Knights have journeyed to the Elven Court, in-game. Descriptions forthcoming? Not so much. :}

The Mantled King has ALREADY been offered the chance to live again, and refused. He has, however, accepted augmentation of his undead powers (from certain Weave-ghost servitors of Mystra) so as to serve more effectively as a ghostly guardian of the Dales.

Larloch is guarding against something, but just what, is decidedly NDA.

No, a nature elemental alone couldn't restore Sessrendale, because other magics have been cast there since its desolation. What, why, and by whom, are all, yes, NDA!

Yes, I've mapped Myth Drannor and its environs. However, those maps are the property of Wizards, and can't be revealed/published except with their permission.

Yes, Chosen who switch gender CAN father or bear children, as the case may be, but only with Mystra's permission (she controls conception). As to who may have done this, why, and with what result, yep, those trusty NDA's are riding forth again! Yee-hah, and so forth and suchlike and tings

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

of dat naytchooah.

So saith Ed. Who is imparting all he can, believe me. So, Thay lore (we hope) tomorrow.
love to all,
THO

On 25 August, 2008 THO said:- Hi, Skeptic. I'm afraid I can't, yet, because neither Ed nor I know. Tell you what: ask anything, but don't expect any substantial answers at least until after the FR Players Guide (the text of which Ed hasn't seen) is out (and Ed has had a chance to look at it). Okay?
In the meantime, I do bring this from Ed, in response to Marek:

Hi, Marek. I'd say Nevron looks human, acts human, and has fiendish bloodlines at about the grandparent (or great-grandparent) level. Which means he has a minor latent power or ability or two, that will manifest at moments of great stress (i.e. when the DM needs them, in a fight with PCs), and that Nevron will instantly be able to understand and use, if not necessarily control precisely. There. Heh-heh. :}

As for paladins of Mystra: they get tested (with temptation, not anything formal, and at least twice, in two entirely different ways) by undercover servants of Mystra, to make sure they won't easily be corrupted with power. If they fail, they don't progress unless they redeem themselves somehow; if they pass, Mystra grants them the ability to begin to understand and wield the Art. There's a formal ceremony afterwards, which is what conceals the nature of such testings from the uninitiated, that is referred to as "the initiation," but it's more of a "momentary meeting with the goddess" plus party than a real test. Mystra WILL spot any secrets and deceit within the paladin at this meeting, however.

Regarding the Dawn Cataclysm: Eric Boyd, George Krashos, Brian James, and others have speculated and written extensively about this event here at Candlekeep and in THE GRAND HISTORY OF THE REALMS. Mortals may never know much more about exactly what occurred, way back then . . . which may help them stay sane, for one thing. Are your questioners familiar with all of this lore. or are they looking for a different take on matters? :}

So saith Ed. Creator and Eternal Master of the Realms. Note that when he talks about temptation testing for the paladins, he means they shouldn't know they're being tested, at least at the start; it's by circumstances of life, and not a formal ritual or "holy test" in a temple.
love to all,
THO

On 25 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all! Ed's still not home to lay hands on his Thay notes, but he did send me this:

Hi, Menelvagor.
Herewith some replies. Steven (thank you, sir!) has ably dealt with your Laeral/Khelben query, and Wooly with your "Mystra replacement" triad.
So, herewith SOME replies for your others.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.
Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.
Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.
This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

First: the Simbul didn't spend a century looking after Elminster. Oh, no. More the other way around . . .

Very few mortals can carry the power and "load of cares" of divinity; attempts to do so drive many of them insane (see: Cyric and ALL of the senior Chosen of Mystra). So that's why the Simbul is the way she is.

One of these reasons they go crazy is sheer frustration, and that's often rooted in what Mystra prevented them doing. They are usually forbidden to just go and blast a powerful magic-using foe (e.g. Manshoon) because Mystra wants magic to be widespread. They can battle and frustrate the schemes of oppressive magical organizations (i.e. those that seek to control general magic-use), but can't go around "settling scores." Gamers who complain that the Chosen are goody-goody all-powerful types who get in the way of PC heroism have usually overlooked or forgotten this basic fact.

I'll put it even more strongly: Mystra and Azuth want "mere mortals" like PCs to live their own lives and undertake their own strivings, so as to use magic "on their own two feet," and THAT'S why the Chosen are often unable to assist, even when they dearly want to. In the case of fellow Chosen, they AND Mystra are forbidden (By Ao, presumably) to "bring a Chosen back to life" directly. By indirect means, mortal assistance, forethought and caching magic or setting up pacts with non-Chosen and non-servitors of Mystra, yes, but by direct magical means, no. The silver fire screws up Wish and Limited Wish magics, by the way, which is why they can't successfully be used in a hostile manner on any Chosen of Mystra.

As for "what would the Seven/El do?" . . . I need clarification: during the 100 years? In any given situation? To try to replace Mystra? ?

So saith Ed. So, over to you, Menelvagor.
love,
THO

On 26 August, 2008 THO said:- Now, now, Blueblade dear, there is no such thing as an inane Realms question.

Or to put it another way, the Realms encompasses all forms of inanity.

Yes, there are "spun sugar" desserts with airy confections atop them, as I recall from Realmsplay, but I don't remember if Ed ever described their making. Our visits to kitchens usually involved fleeing through them at high speed, with Rathan and Torm grabbing handy food, and pratfalls galore occurring (involving sliding helplessly in food, upsetting platters of food, clearing off tables full of food, and ducking cleavers).

love,
THO

On 26 August, 2008 THO said:- Whooo, things get a little rough around here when I'm not looking. I've heard of major snippage here at the Keep before, but . . .

CylverSaber, worry not; Ed did get your question and will get to it. When he or I respond to later questions first, it's either due to the nature of the request or because we happen to have the answer handy (e.g. Ed has recently been doing Realms work or looking something up for another Realms writer that involved dredging up lore that can now be used right away in the answer, rather than being hunted for).

GoCeraf, I recall that Ed had no say at all in the change in El's portrayal from "near- Gandalf" to "Sean Connery carrying the Lion Sword." For the record, Ed likes both portrayals, and made the point at the time of that change that El magically controls the way he looks all the time, anyway,

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

and is a consummate actor, so whatever the "real EI" is, we may not be seeing it. In the original Realms campaign, The Simbul is almost always disguised as a bird, fencepost, snake, spider, kitten, or whatever; she moves about the Realms in other shapes, spying on things, more than she's in her own shape.

love to all,
THO

On 26 August, 2008 THO said:- Menelvagor, let me try to tackle some of your followup queries. As Ed said, ALL of the Chosen are more or less insane, thanks to all they've seen and done in Mystra's service (outliving not just all the people they knew and their loved ones, but outliving cities and countries!) and from the stresses of holding Mystra's divine power. EI may not SEEM that way, but that doesn't mean he isn't. As for the voices in EI's head, the questions you pose are very good ones, but are specifically NDA: they are what you'll have to wait until Ed's next novel (after this December's THE SWORD NEVER SLEEPS, which deals with we Knights) to get answers for.

Now, as to your specific queries about what EI and the Seven did during the "Hundred Years of Chaos," and what are they up to now, the answer to the second is: whatever your DM desires (until Ed's next novel says more), and the answer to the first is: Wizards has decided as policy not to "fill in" those hundred years (except as individual DMs want to, in their own campaigns, and if you glance at Ed's "typical Harper's year" in the old CODE OF THE HARPERS 2e sourcebook, you'll begin to get some glimmer of just how MUCH any Chosen "gets up to," in any year.

As for what now prevents pregnancy: we strongly suspect that some of the Chosen are barren, either genetically or because of the ravages of the silver fire (spellfire, a slightly weaker variant of the silver fire, SPOILER ALERT SPOILER ALERT FOR THE SHANDRIL TRILOGY, SKIP TO END OF NEXT SET OF BLOCK CAPS IF YOU WANT TO AVOID SPOILER [[slew Shandril's unborn child within her when she used it to heal Narm]] END SPOILER ALERT coursing through them over the years.

And yes, published Realms lore (notably the end of ELMINSTER'S DAUGHTER) has revealed that Elminster has sired many children, some few of which he may not know about (as with Narnra). Very few of them have any "special" magical powers, because that's where Mystra stepped in to control things. Most of them have the ability to wield the Art, because that's why (increasing the numbers of magic-using mortals) Mystra allowed conceptions from EI's lovemaking in the first place.

Now, I'm not Ed, but every one of the answers I've given here is based on years of talking with Ed, working with Ed on Realmslore, playing in his "home" Realms campaign, and learning from other answers he's crafted to questions posed here at Candlekeep.

love,
THO

On 26 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all.

GoCeraf, the change in language was deliberate, and started when TSR acquired the Realms, and started changing the archaic, quasi-medieval speech Ed was using for his older and more rural characters to a more-accessible-to-modern-American-readers style.

The shift was speeded up with the hundred-year-time-jump, which deliberately introduced "hours" and "minutes" into the Realms to make things even more "familiar" to modern-day new readers and gamers.

Jim Lowder has often told the tale of his first job at TSR being to "fix" the dialogue Ed put into SPELLFIRE, using the example of a male character asking someone else if they thought he was a lecher: "Think ye me a codloose winker?"

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Me, I LOVE that language, particularly when Ed spoke it while portraying a male character trying to seduce one of my female characters. Makes me go all soft and fluttery-buttery inside. However, that may just be me.

LOTS of things make me go fluttery-buttery inside.

love,
THO

On 26 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. Here's Ed, in his promised answer to Marek's query: "Why do Red Wizards wear red?"

Ed replies:

Hi, Marek. Here, paraphrased from my notes (I'm omitting details still germane to play in my ongoing "home" Realms campaign), is the lore you seek:

Long ago (around 860 DR), in what would become Thay, when its various independent Mulhorandi cities were being welded together into little kingdoms ("tharches") by war-leaders ("tharchions") using not just warriors and slaves but wizards and monsters controlled by mages, various wizards started to form cliques for mutual protection (i.e. to rise above being ordered about, tortured, blackmailed, and otherwise controlled by tharchions and their bodyguards and champions).

In order to make these groups seem grander, more mysterious, and less of a direct response (and threat) to the tharchions, the wizards insisted they weren't forming "cabals" but rather "orders" in response to divine directives from the deities of magic. They further insisted that the gods would afflict non-wielders of the Art with various dooms and curses if they tried to eradicate or control any order, and that in any case the nature of what made an orders couldn't really be understood by those not gifted with the ability to wield the Art, just as the mysteries of forging certain metals and alloys so as to have certain properties were beyond the understanding of those not trained as smiths - - though ANYONE could be taught the secrets of smithing, whereas those unable to wield the Art could not comprehend the secrets of the Art. "Ye must feel it, to know it," was a famous quote by the early Thayan mage, Alaerdrus.

Alaerdrus founded the Order of the Ordraukh (in early Thayan speech, "ordraukh" is the name of the beast today usually termed a "fire lizard"), who were viewed as wise but miserly, greedy, and cantankerous old men. They were all of these things, being exclusively mature and elderly human males who wore dark robes, jealously guarded their spell-knowledge, and sought high prices for casting the mightiest spells, so as to (in the words of Order member Nalriekus Rauntoun) "cool the bloodlust of each rising tharchion."

The Order of the Ordraukh began to bicker over the wisdom and ethics of using magic to compel or ally with or work through various "fiends" (otherplanar creatures); disagreements that were ultimately to sunder it.

Long before that fate befell the Order, however, they acquired rivals, including the Order of the Moonflame (Art-gifted females enraged by being shut out of the Order of the Ordraukh, but even more prone to fierce internal battles; the Moonflame was a high mountain waterfall where they first met, that "blazes" on clear nights with reflected moonlight), and the Order of the Alaunklar (named for their symbol, the three-legged table brazier used in many Thayan spells), who saw themselves as young upstarts defying the cautious "let's keep things mysterious" teachings of the Order of the Ordraukh.

For some three decades various minor orders rose and fell, appearing and collapsing monthly, until at last the Order of the Ordraukh was destroyed in an orgy of spell-duels, murderings of member by member, and raids upon the weakened survivors by rival non-Order mages seeking

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

the magic items and spell-tomes of the old Ordraukh wizards.

Most of the tumult among all of these orders was a matter of simple lust for power, but it was influenced by certain deities desiring more widespread use of magic, who used dream-visions and servitors gifting wizards in what would become Thay with spells; and by those in power in Mulhorand, who wanted to use the wizards to govern the increasingly-unruly tharchions; and by a few Mulhorandi who saw the orders as cover for, and dupes of, their own plottings to rise to power in Mulhorand - - or form their own breakaway realm.

One of the latter "secret societies" covertly adopted a minor junior order, the Order of the Red Wizards, by mind-controlling its founder, the wizard Ulzunder.

The Red Wizards wore blood-red robes because Ulzunder liked to "bathe in the blood of virgins" (that is, magically sacrificed young, strong, and virginal males and females of human, elven, and half-elven bloodlines) as part of his experimentations toward achieving youthful vigor, lifelong - - and wanted some means of readily concealing bloodstains. He wore blood-red robes, and so did they, many of them attempting the same evil processes Ulzunder indulged in (with the same limited success; they managed to keep joints supple, skin elastic, and muscles strong, but could do nothing about the slow decline of organs and mental faculties; the sharing of his observations and experimentations was Ulzunder's main inducement to other mages to join him in his order). Ulzunder was brilliant but insane, even before the wizards of the secret society (who called themselves "the Thael," after a fanciful beast in Mulhorandi folklore who changes those it doesn't devour, and so is the Bringer of violent Change) started meddling with his mind, and his Red Wizards were ruthless but subtle; they preferred secrecy in their dealings to all else, fearing retribution from more powerful mages and Mulhorandi rulers and priesthoods.

The spells and manipulations of the Thael allowed the Red Wizards to rise swiftly in real power (if not, at first, in reputation), and a certain Szass Tam (then living under another name, "Tarloth Narmandur," and hiding much of his magical knowledge and adventurer-assembled magic items, said adventurers perishing by his hand once they brought him magic "enough" that he deemed them dangerous for what they may have held back from him) saw their power and drive, and resolved to covertly control them and so rise with them. He began by merely spying upon the Red Wizards, and soon became aware they were being manipulated from within.

Szass Tam patiently watched until the strife surrounding power struggles within Mulhorand and the founding of Thay thinned the ranks of the Thael, before slowly and subtly supplanting them (destroying one after another, and waiting for other foes to destroy many of them, between his murders) as the "unseen hand" that controlled the Red Wizards.

Ulzunder is known to have died a spectacular death fighting off four rival wizards in the fledgling Thay, but a handful of senior members of the Red Wizards may survive, if they achieved lichdom after fleeing to other planes (after they became aware of Szass Tam's tightening control).

So saith Ed. And there you have it! Essential Realmslore, scribes!

love to all,

THO

On 26 August, 2008 THO said:- GoCeraf, Ed had his own terms for all weights and measures. Remember, he created the Realms as a setting for his own fantasy fiction, well before the Dungeons & Dragons game existed. He was just a (very young) fantasy author, writing things the way he wanted them to be. He finds modern real-world terms jarring in a fantasy setting (example: one dragon-rider to another, who's riding a different species: "Get good mileage from that?"), and so crafted his own.

The commercial needs of TSR, to make the Realms more accessible to gamers playing D&D, Ed quite understands and has never fought against. He DOES prefer gentle, subtle, elegant

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

terminology rather than use of the latest (and quickly dated) slang.
And, yes, Phil Athans introduced accurate water clocks in HIS Realms fiction, and therefore possible widespread use of "hours" and "minutes" over the century timejump, as a deliberate change or evolution, to make WotC Realms fiction and the game environment yet more welcoming to novice gamers and readers.

love,
THO

On 27 August, 2008 THO said:- Hi, Charles.
According to the Realms agreement (which Wizards can't modify without negotiating with Ed), the answer to your question is: yes.
However, Ed is more "out of the design loop" than in the past, and for practical reasons doesn't want to contradict Wizards-generated Realmslore every time he speaks. Hence his caution re. timing, until he's seen all the printed 4e FR lore.
Though there were a few slipups over the years, TSR made certain Ed saw draft text of ALL Realms stuff as soon as it was in "final" form, which is how things are still supposed to work . . . but aren't at the moment. For instance, Ed should be shown each Realmslore column before it sees print, not so he can "approve" it, but so that he can point out consistency problems and avoid generating consistency problems himself, because he isn't aware of the appearing lore. So Ed is being cautious, because more damage is done to the "shared suspension of disbelief" (enjoying the setting we all know is fictional, together) by contradictions than by anything else, and avoiding doing damage is Ed's paramount interest.
Right now, Ed's family has descend on him for a visit, he's struggling to finish a novel, and has umpteen projects on the go, as usual.
Me, I'm waiting impatiently for THE SWORD NEVER SLEEPS.

love,
THO

On 31 August, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. This time I bring swift and simple Realmslore from Ed in response to arry's question: "I would like to ask Ed and Lady Hooded if there is a word in any Realmsian language that is the equivalent of safari?"
Ed replies:

"Safari" originally meant "about or pertaining to a journey" ("safar" is journey), but in 'Western' English, these days, usually means a journey that's a big game hunt (with camera, if not always, as it almost exclusively meant not so long ago, with guns).

There are, of course, many words for both meanings in the wide variety of Realmsian languages, but only these I list here are often used by speakers employing the Common Tongue (because they've crept into Common):

- "starstride" (from a human bardic translation of an elven saying) means: "leave on a journey that one wants to make, or because one has the itch to travel." It's used somewhat as Australians say, "going [or: gone] walkabout."

- "hardride" (old human word, retained into Common) is any longish journey in wild or lawless or unfamiliar to the speaker terrain, often for trade purposes (so no one in Cormyr would speak of "hardriding" to anywhere else in the realm, even the westernmost mountainous areas, but might

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

use it for the Stonelands, and would definitely use it to describe a journey that went into backland Sembia or westwards into Tunland or "monster-haunted parts beyond").

- "harhoon" (derived long ago from a misheard goblin word that's curiously close to the gnomish word "larahoun") means a kidnapping (or beast-capturing) expedition, and these days is used when one is expecting trouble and perfectly prepared to kill without hesitation, if need be, to achieve the goal of the trip. A "harhoon" is never a regular military patrol (which is, ahem, a "patrol" or a "sword-see").
- "creak-saddle" is an adjective (of fairly recent Common-Tongue coining) used to describe any journey that involved harsh conditions or that tired or injured (or slew) mounts, pack animals, or riders/walkers. It is usually extended to describe bad routes, dangerous passes or trails, and so on ("proper creak-saddle way of getting there, if ye ask me").
- "bloodlance" is the polite or formal term (of fairly recent Common-Tongue coining) for an extermination expedition or killing raid (either to "put down" enough predatory beasts to make a route safer, or to slay intelligent foes in a skirmish or as part of an ongoing war).
- "tarsark" (derived from the gnomish "tarsurk" or the halfling "tassark," or both) is the more casual, less polite equivalent of "bloodlance."
- "barellar" (derived from the gnomish "bellarra" [because gnomes dwell so much with humans, in human-dominated cities, many gnomish words influence the Common Tongue]) is a hunt to kill beasts, either for food or sport.

So saith Ed, creator of most of the Realms and most of its linguistics.
Love to all,
THO

On 1 September, 2008 THO said:-

Ah, Faraer, great question!

I have forwarded it to Ed, and I know a swift answer should be forthcoming (once his family has departed), because two close friends of Ed's have already asked him this very question, privately. I can't recall all of his answer off the top of my head, I'm afraid, but I CAN recall that he considered the two dragon empires (which Wizards asked him to include) too unbalanced if the continent sees "standalone" use, UNLESS they are even more "fallen" than they are presented as, in the FRCS (i.e. draconic rulers dead, or l-o-o-o-ng asleep and nigh-legendary [so PCs better not wake them or else!], or insane after being magically transformed into non-flying, trapped-in-their-lair forms.

I also know that Ed REALLY wanted to detail the Sword River settlements and the larger port cities more than he had space to, and will try to amend that in Realmslore web-columns.

love,
THO

On 3 September, 2008 THO said:-

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Hello again, all. I bring you the words of Ed, in response to Faraer's recent query: "Ed, If one was to use the FRCG's 'Abeir' under another name and as part of another world from Toril, what might that name be, and what other advice would you give?"

I know Rinonalyrna Fathomlin (and I suspect many of the rest of you) are eagerly awaiting these particular words of Ed, so here's Ed's reply:

Hi, Faraer! As it happens, the idea you raise is something I'd thought about a time or two during the whirlwind creation of Abeir, given my familiarity with the longtime situation of early D&D DMs (who all had to cobble together campaigns using this Judges Guild module here, that DRAGON article idea there, and so on; even if they wanted to "stick to canon Greyhawk," they had to wait forever for new official material to appear, when they had players in their laps wanting to adventure RIGHT NOW).

I'd recently done the same thing with CASTLEMOURN, after all: here's a continent you can use on its own or as part of a larger campaign world (or specifically a planet, or part of a plane of existence).

So, considering "Returned Abeir" as a continent all on its own, I'd first point to its unbalanced state. In short, as currently detailed, it shouldn't be used "all on its own."

All of the ports down in its southerly areas need other, offshore lands to trade with, to create the bustling shipping traffic (and piracy, plus waystop island harbors along the shipping lanes where ships can be repaired and take on fresh food and water, and outlaws can flee to) necessary to justify the implied or described wealth, population, and energy of these places.

So we need other continents, or at least an Earthsea-like band or cluster of thousands of inhabited islands (some of them quite large) that have mineral wealth and copious food to sell to the crowded Abeiran ports and Sword River settlements. I'd put these features about three-Abeir-continent-widths or more distant, to east or west (or east-southeast or west-southwest) of the lower third of continental Abeir.

(My original Abeir map, by the way, has been "slimmed down" a bit for publication. I had larger wilderness 'backlands' along the east coast of Abeir; more room for monsters, hideouts, lost and overgrown ruins, and bandit-ruled areas. And more mountains wherever there are mountains, too. :))

Just glancing over the published Returned Abeir area writeups, one can see that some basic layers of detail are missing: the general "look" and topography of the land (dominant flora and fauna); the tenor of local life (rural and sparse, or tightly-ruled and law-abiding, with popular interests—music? theater? books? Lots of smithies? Innovation, or reverence for tradition? Family-based, or guilds, or - -?) and details of local imports, exports, and current politics and government. Rorst and Ulark, for example, are barely more than names.

DM freedom is both desired and necessary, but all game users of the Realms need more "commonly known lore" about the current politics and overall nature of the Sword Lands and the major ports.

Even if one emphatically does not want detailed histories for every area (and many of us longtime Realm fans do, because those same histories let us more fully understand local feuds, intrigues, power groups, current power balances and political aims, and the seeds that will spur many future adventures), this lack of the basics I mentioned above is something I've got to try to address (and the Wizards website is an ideal venue because it doesn't have to fit the severely limited wordcounts of trying to fit everything about a given land or area into one page, or a two-page spread, or some multiple thereof, in a printed book). So there's work to do, no matter how one uses this continent of Abeir, or Returned Abeir, or whatever you prefer to call it.

If using it as part of a new, non-Faerûnian setting, I'd call it "Laerakond" [pronounced "L-AIR-ah-KON-d"].

I settled on the 'sounds' of that coined name because they are different from the softer, more Celtic-green-and-pleasant-fantasy-Sherwood 'feel' of much of the most loved areas of Faerûn; if

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



you'd prefer to echo that look and feel, call it something like "Tarathdeon," instead.

Right, let me refer to this newly revealed continent as Laerakond henceforth, to distinguish it from the published version, which works fine as part of a wider Realms where we need to have a place for the Primordials to come from or hold sway, a place where the dragonborn were once slaves to dragons, and a surviving dragon empire or two as an example of what the dragonborn rebelled against.

Separated from the Realms, we might not need Laerakond to perform any or all of those back-story functions, which leaves us facing an imbalance problem: unless those two surviving dragon empires are really on the verge of collapse for some reason (or firmly turned in on themselves, ignoring the rest of Laerakond), how have all of these bustling ports and the Sword Lands and Gontal had any chance at all to develop? If hungry dragons can swoop everywhere, marauding from the skies at any time, what keeps all of these southerly cities and smaller settlements in existence?

So, we need to take how I described those two empires and nudge them a little farther along the paths I hinted they were headed along. Let us have two insane dragon rulers, aging and with their bodies failing them, and make them obsessed with staying alive and as powerful as possible. The western empire, with the jungles, becomes a realm of undead, with an undead dragon emperor (super-dracolich? unique powers, regardless, so adventurers daring to directly challenge the ruler don't know precisely what they're facing, and have to fall back into roleplaying (or at least "preparing for everything and then poking the Great Baddie, ready to flee and try better later, to see what we're facing").

This draconic ruler will be endlessly experimenting with creating new forms of undead and augmenting existing undead into warriors and guardians to protect itself and its domain (seeking to fight the ruler? wade through legions of skeletal titans and gigantic bone scorpions, plus flights of flying bone bats with stabbing stinger-tails, or out-and-out undead wyvern and dragon servitors). It will therefore coerce, induce, and otherwise hire necromancers of all sorts (NPC warlocks, illithids and neogi and driders and anything or anyone else the DM thinks fitting) to work for it in crafting such undead, and use dupes, hirelings, and controlled servitor-creatures to plant "treasures" and spread rumors of such riches through the various ports, to lure adventurers and even armed expeditions from human-ruled city-states into its jungles to serve as "fresh meat" for ongoing necromantic experimentations (oh, and bring your beasts of burden, mounts, and aerial steeds, too; they, too, are welcomed as necromantic fodder).

Across the Dragon Sea lies the more infamous dragon empire, with a gigantic living dragon empress seeking ever-greater magical powers rather than a lich-like undead existence. A tyrant, served by lesser dragons who tend herds of edible dragon food (being as the design direction of 4e at the time omitted mention of dragons drawing sustenance from sunlight, water, or anything else other than devoured meat). An empress who has ruled for a long time, and become paranoid yet bored during that time, and so both craves entertainment (watching intruders into her empire from afar, yet also closely watching over and controlling everything in her empire). She seeks a worthy mate, to birth an heir/heirress, yet fears trusting any creature powerful enough to be that worthy mate. She seeks to learn all about, and seize or control, all mighty secular magic (so it can't be used against her, and so she can use it to make herself ever-more-powerful), and to reach agreements with major deities so their priests won't work against her.

So fear keeps her within the boundaries of her empire, working through layer upon layer of servitors, and fear of, and obsession about, magic keeps her using such intermediaries (down to the level of well-paid human, tiefling, and orc-half-blood merchants and mercenaries) to reach out into the rest of Laerakond, and beyond, to gather ever more magic—or if she can't gain it, to destroy it and those who wield it, so as to keep herself safe.

Note that these DM design foci remain the same if one is using Returned Abeir in a Realms D&D campaign or Laerakond/Tarathdeon by itself, in a homebrew FRP setting. There are "design gaps" to be filled somehow, by official lore, unofficial "here's my alternative" offerings, or the creativity of individual DMs doing what they desire or need to do, for their own campaigns.

If one likes the concept of worlds linked by gates/portals, but not the effects of PCs and NPCs

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



controlling and using gates hidden in castle closets and guild cellars, consider such worlds as Abeir-Toril, Golarion, or my own Darsar (setting of the Band of Four novels), Falconfar, and Castlemourn, all linked by gates that function only from time to time, when conditions are just right, to ships at sea (Moorcock's "Seas of Fate" concept, from his Elric books). Or the same multiple worlds linked only by those who have the power to "shadow walk" (as in Zelazny's Amber novels; the Amberites and other powerful beings, such as the nobility of Chaos, who can "add" and "subtract" elements of their surroundings so as to travel through an infinity of "shadows" or planes that echo each other).

However, the root needs remain the same: what sort of campaign do I, "DM Number 42," want? Set or starting where? If it's to be anything more than an endless dungeon crawl or Underdark exploration, and Returned Abeir/Laerakond/Tarathdeon is to be involved, I must make some decisions as to which rulers are going to be busy doing (or trying to do) what. Who's making war on whom, or trying to do damage or effect change without going to war? What movements or social changes or priesthoods or innovations or fads/fashions are on the rise, or declining? Who are the "movers and shakers" (or wannabes) likely to force changes or dramatic events, or hire PC adventurers (or seek to dupe or exterminate PC adventurers who get in their way)? That's where I'd focus my design work first. If beginning in the upriver Sword Lands (keeping the large, rich ports as fabled destinations for later), I'd decide on nearby "here's where I plo down commercial dungeons for my PCs to explore, there's the place that'll fit that commercial uber-adventure, here's where I'll have my rebel getting ready to attack a ruler, and there's the ruler he'll go after" locales. Give the PCs aims, day jobs, and backgrounds, throw in the matter-to-the-players mysteries that every campaign needs, and go for it!

So saith Ed. Who's been doing this superbly for decades now, remember.
love to all,
THO

On 5 September, 2008 THO said:-

I, too, have noticed a certain "blandness" to 4e prose, as if Ed's little idea-nuggets, get-you-thinking-hooks and "word pictures" he puts into his Realms game lore sentences were getting "smoothed out." A real pity.

Sorta like having a veteran quarterback and using him as ball boy, to use just one (sports; sorry) analogy.

I believe the real culprit in the FRCS situation (aside from the "do it in a week or so" deadline, over Christmas) was the wordcount: only this many words, and coverage of all topics must fit on 1 page, or a 2-page spread, or multiples of same.

To use another analogy, instead of Ed writing the equivalent of "Here's an interesting state of the United States for you to explore," extreme space constraints forced him into "Here's a line or two about the major places in a state," such as one finds on a travel map prepared by an auto club.

I'm very much hoping that Ed will have the chance to address some of the lack of detail in forthcoming Realmsmore columns. They don't have to be huge screeds, they just need to be long enough to make me "see and feel" a place in my mind.

love to all,
THO

On 6 September, 2008 THO said:-

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Red Walker,

That's a lovely question. To answer it best, though, I and Ed would both like a little more information.

What general ages are your children and how mobile is everyone? Or to put it another way, if Ed or I suggested climbing mountains, exploring flooded caves, or real trackless wilderness "roughing it," would that be horrible?

Are access to shopping and fine restaurants preferred? Swimmers/non-swimmers? Love hot climates/can't handle them?

Do you all want a week to relax together and take it easy, with perhaps some "when we like it, as slow as we like it" day trips or expeditions, or do you want to cram in all you can of travel and sightseeing in ten days?

Is a tight budget part of it, or have you coins to spare?

Are there any places you've been already, that you really liked or really hated?

One of Ed's players really likes exploring castles all over Great Britain (JUST castles, no stately homes need apply), but one of his longtime gaming colleagues just likes to camp, far from people and shops and cars.

See what I'm trying to find out? The last thing Ed or I want to do is lead you astray!

love,
THO

On 7 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hello again, all. I present another "handful of brief replies tacked together" post, this time, with Ed handling several queries in no particular order.

First, in reply to this, from Ashe Ravenheart: "THO, Would Ed be interested in having an assistant/indentured servant/slave that would work for mere scraps and could help him in various degrees of searching and cataloging Realmslore? I can send my resume with a bribe, if that would help!"

Ed replies:

Ashe, thanks for your kind intent, but I'm afraid I must decline. I spend much of my time caring for my wife, these days, and sagging (gracefully, I hope) into my declining "gray" years. Don't get me wrong, I would LOVE to have FORTY assistants (and if they could all be beautiful female humans who don't like to wear clothing and are rich enough to pay for all my needs, all the better), but when viewing matters in sober real-world consideration mode, there's a big problem with even the most eager of assistants: I have to direct and explain, and that eats up as much time as doing it myself. It's the old dilemma faced by the veteran worker: I can either work long hours doing it myself, or spend even more time training and guiding someone else to do it for me. Hmm, which to choose? Well, alone I eat less, can wear less, and can relax and think more - - so for a writer, the "going it alone" usually works best.

Yet thank you very much for your expressed intent. I have had many kind offers in the last few months, and may some day weaken enough to accept one. :}

So saith Ed. Who isn't done yet, as we turn to this, from Marek: "One more question from my community that is now madly in love with Ed: We would like to know if there are organized cults

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

worshipping dragon deities. We know about some divine intervention of Bahamut/Xymor/Marduk in Mulhorandi but no info about any human worship of them. As far as I know the only described cult is Tiamat's.

Do you have any info concerning this subject?

p.s. a new fellow player wishes to play a cleric of a Dragon god and we're trying to figure out a way to do so. Do you have any suggestion?"

Ed replies:

Yes, there are literally scores of small, local cults in rural areas of the Realms who worship a locally-lairing dragon. Some of the dragons thus venerated are flattered enough (or see enough practical lair-guarding benefits) to repay this worship in some way, usually with an eye to protecting their sleeping selves or gaining wealth for their horde, either by sending devout worshippers out into the wider Realms to seize or steal magic and gems, or by using worshippers to spread tales of the fabulous hoard so as to lure adventurers and others to become food or yield up magic and wealth they may carry.

Certain deities (notably Talos, Malar, and Bane) have taken to granting divine spells to self-styled clergy of a few of these individual dragons, so as to influence cult activities and ultimately those of the wyrm the cult is worshipping. Such dragons can become "secret weapons" to hurl at armies or communities, or to serve as steeds on rare "travel far and fast" emergencies, for a deity's senior clergy or important personages.

I would have a PC wannabe-dragon-cleric hear of such a dragon god priest immediately after said cleric has been slain or died of sickness or misfortune, or even blunder (with the party) into wounding or slaying such a cleric - - and being forced, on pain of death, to become the replacement (a roving, adventuring one, in penance). More than a little unsubtle DMing technique, but swift and effective (and can become the backbone result of an interesting adventure you can craft, if you have a little more design time to play with).

So saith Ed. Who now moves on to this, from Menelvagor: "Oh! Another question I forgot. Why don't El and The Simbul marry? Why are they content to remain lovers? In fact, all the Chosen I remember (except Laeral&Khelben, and Dove) are unmarried, even if they have (like Alustriel - 12 sons, I think, and some daughters not mentioned), more than 10 children."

Ed replies:

Menelvagor, you seem (forgive me if I'm misreading you) to have fallen into the trap of thinking of the Realms in modern real-world terms.

Mystra's Chosen, whether they may formally marry "in the eyes of mortals" or not, can have children only with Her permission (in any time in the Realms in which Mystra is alive), and can only be happy in any long-term relationship if they have Her blessing for it. They are servants of a greater goddess whose lives are dedicated to her, and although they have a degree of personal independence unknown in senior servitors of most other deities (Lurue, Azuth, and others are exceptions, but that's because of the essential nature and character of such exceptional deities), serving Mystra and pleasing her with their diligent service is what fulfills them.

So they will only consider themselves married to another being if this pleases Her. They don't need to find a church, temple, shrine or altar and a mortal priest, unless She deems such fripperies necessary; they ask Her personally to grant and confirm their unions.

And being as we've seen only glimpses of the deeds of any of the Chosen, most of whom have lived for centuries and crammed many, many deeds into those very long and very full lives, I

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

don't believe any of us can make any definitive statement at all as to whether any of them are, were, or are still married, other than to note that several of the Seven Sisters DID formally marry, centuries ago in kingdoms they founded or ruled, that have now vanished (and have outlived those spouses).

When you have to request permission from your goddess (and remember, Chosen are among the relatively few intelligent beings in the Realms dedicated to just one deity) to wed, you have no need to approach clergy to hold a wedding service; if the deity wants a service, the clergy will be divinely commanded to perform it, whether it's a moment of murmured words over joined hands, when all concerned are falling down a cliff together, or a grand ceremony in which Mystra transforms all the buildings in a town into walking statues that move into a path and then become bridal arches.

So saith Ed. Whew. He's mindful of other outstanding marriage and other religious ceremony lore requests made by various scribes of the Keep, and will get to them, though he remains as busy (and overloaded; you would not BELIEVE all the novel short story, article, column, and game article requests Ed is fielding right now) as ever.

More soon, I believe, and in the meantime:

love to all,
THO

On 8 September, 2008 THO said:- Hello again, all. StarBog, I have sent your question on to Ed, who will reply in the fullness of time, of course, but from playing in the Realms I can tell you that there are rag-and-bone men, vellum gets scraped and re-used, smiths often melt down metals (and priests of Gond regularly melt down alloys and separate the metallic components!), and bones get ground up for use in fertilizer. I'm not sure if any of this is thought of as "recycling" so much as it's "just getting by" and making sensible use of what's around. Yet, as always, we'll see .

. .
love,
THO

On 9 September, 2008 THO said:-

Ahhh, fresh-caught trout. As it happens, I caught two nice ones a few days back, right off my dock, and got them into the pan right away. Lovely. A completely different taste than trout that aren't fresh, or that have been refrigerated or (gak!) frozen.

And as it happens, your question is one I and some others have asked Ed, over the years. He has declined to give details for "unfolding campaign fun" reasons, but has confirmed that some gods have quietly tried to covertly eliminate many other gods, and that "at least four" mortals have made "serious attempts, that 'got somewhere,' " to take on, and destroy or take the place of, various gods.

Obviosuly without success. Or wait . . . perhaps they WERE successful, and we mortals just don't know! Bwoohahaha! (And so forth.)

love,
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

On 10 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hi again, all.

No, createvmind, I'm afraid they're not Ed creations.

Broken Helm, there are frequent "expressions of interest" about many of Ed's creations from various television, feature film, and console or computer game makers. If they are Realms-related, Ed often doesn't even hear about them until after the fact (thanks to the increasingly poor communications between Wizards' and now Hasbro's licensing people and Ed as the original creator (Hasbro tends to handle its properties in a certain way, ignoring [or being unaware of] the details of the original Realms agreement re. "keeping Ed in the loop" at all times). For non-Realms Ed creations, Ed is of course informed right away (usually because the interested parties contact him directly). I am aware of four recent such contacts, but I'm not aware of any going on "right now." (There's no reason why I would, of course.)

The majority of such plans, all across the entertainment industry, never make it to a final product, for a huge variety of reasons. The majority of "adaptations" of written works aren't very close to the original. And thanks to "Hollywood accounting," the majority of movie adaptations make the creator of the original written work surprisingly little money. As another writer once put it: "I got enough money to repair my porch, not buy a new house."

Both professional courtesy (and, if a deal is reached, often clauses in the actual contract) keep Ed from speaking freely about any of these negotiations. So even if there was a deal actually moving forward as I post this, Ed probably couldn't talk much about it. I would caution all scribes not to interpret his silence as meaning there IS a deal, because if there was no deal, he's still have, yes, nothing to say about that non-existent deal.

love to all,

THO

On 11 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hello again, all. This time, Ed makes reply to The Red Walker's query re. a good possible family trip, as follows:

Well met again, Red Walker! This is a GREAT question, and the first thing I'm going to say is: don't be swayed by me; listen to your heart and longings (and those of your loved ones) first and foremost. From what you replied to THO, if I were in your shoes, I'd be jumping on the plane to England right away - - but that's ME. :}

Let me state my case a little more fully. :} London alone is packed with years of potential exploration, from the Tower of London to the London Museum to seeing Harrods to the Victoria & Albert to some superb gaming shops to the British Museum to Highgate Cemetery to St. Paul's to . . . (well, I could go on for literally PAGES, and not knowing exactly what would grab you most, many of my suggestions might be a little off-base; what I mean to communicate is that there's a HUGE variety of things to see and do). In the case of your family research, it's also home to the National Archives, which took over from Somerset House in keeping all the genealogical records. There are also three money-saving wrinkles available to North Americans (unless my information is out of date), the first two of which aren't available to locals. These first two are the Britrail Pass and the London Transport Go-As-You-Please pass. Both of these work as follows: you can only buy them as a tourist IN THE USA (or Canada), before you hop the Atlantic (I'm not current on whether they're only available at consulates or embassies, or if you can still get them at travel agencies [there was talk of "tightening up" in the wake of 9/11]). They entitle you to a number of days of "hop on any train outside of London, and any tube or bus or tram inside London" use, being stamped the first time you use them, and with your clock running from then on (I believe my

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

last Britrail Pass lasted 14 days, and my LT ran for 12 days). So if you miss a train or decide to stay later, so what? (Assuming, ahem, you don't miss the LAST train of the day.)

The third wrinkle is the Hospitality Trust.

Most vacationers have heard of The National Trust, which is the organization that owns and maintains stately homes, gardens, and other historical or tourist sites (and Web searching from home, using their site and others, can pack your days with potential sites of visit.

The Hospitality Trust, on the other hand, is an organization that maintains houses, flats (apartments) and cottages for short-term rentals (i.e. a week or several weeks). So you can live, sleep, and do your own cooking in one of these places, using it as a "home base," and make day trips from it; if it's well-located, car rentals (and driving on the left-hand side of the road on often very narrow streets with roundabouts and perennial parking problems) can be kept to a minimum. The kicker is, of course, booking far enough in advance, but your wise lead time leaves you perfectly positioned to do that. (Look them up on the Net, too.)

For a lot of the "nitty-gritty" of enjoying vacations in England, hit your local library for a copy of (or an interloan from another library) of MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH ENGLAND or ENGLAND FOR ALL SEASONS or one of the other good "my tips for trips to England or experiences there" books by Susan Allan Toth, who covers many of the everyday problems (how electrical "points" work a little differently than North American domestic juice, how to turn on gas, washing up and laundry, packing tips, etc. etc.)

There's an Automobile Association (AA) in the UK as well as the USA, they publish many large-scale maps, and even better they publish endless "walking trips" books, some of them VERY detailed ("go over this stile beside the large oak, not that stile;" my older ones have painted "scenes" of their suggested walking routes), that again you can get from your local library (or interloan from larger libraries, through your local library).

London dominates the transportation system in England far more than any American city dominates in the USA (an "up" train is towards London, and a "down" is away), so use of those passes I mentioned earlier allow you to make easy day trips out from London to such places as Hampton Court (palace), Oxford and Abingdon (the colleges and the Bodleian and the "atmosphere," medieval alms houses), Wimbledon or Ascot if you're interested, and some beautiful Home County rural areas, too. A few hours on the train can get you to Cornwall (and LOTS of beaches; Dawlish is a nice smaller center) or the Lake District or the city of York (where you can meet at a pub and go on a REAL ghost walk, that leaves many similar ghost walks in the dust) . . . and then, of course, there are the many, many stately homes (Hatfield House, just to name one, is within very quick and easy reach of London) and historical sites (Roman ruins at St. Alban's) and you can also take bus trips (e.g. to the New Forest) that do the "dump you here, you have the day to do what you want, pickup is right there at X o'clock this evening" thing. Roughing it is actually harder in densely-populated England than in North America, unless you deliberately set out to do so (i.e. walking the fells, or going out to Exmoor or Dartmoor).

Hint: it's going to be damper, and often cooler, than your tropical trip; take layers of clothing and stuff you can easily dry, so you can change socks often and keep warm, dry, and refreshed.

Ah, so much to cover . . .

I also love both Australia and New Zealand, but either one of them is a longer and more expensive trip with (probably) more traveling over longer distances, once you get there, and my trips to Ireland were made too long ago (when I was much younger) for me to pass on much still-accurate advice.

Thanks for asking me, and I hope I've been of some small help. (If I were wealthy, I'd visit London for a three or four-day stretch, about every two or three months, for the rest of my life.)

So saith Ed. Who as you can tell, loves the green and pleasant sceptered isle fondly. As do I.
love to all,
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

On 12 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hello again, all. This time I bring a reply of sorts from Ed of the Greenwood to Menelvagor, re. this query: "This is a question that probably has been asked before (by me), but I have seen no answer.

I found in the Fall of Myth Drannor that Syrumstar Auglamyr was last seen at the Battle of Shadusk's Glade, where she was last seen exploding with Malimshaer. Malimshaer's seared skull and ribcage fell at Captain's Selorn's feet. No remains of Syrumstar were ever found, but Captain Selorn found that he held her Choker in his hand at the end, and she had sworn it would leave her only at her death.

So my new question is, why were there no remains of Syrumstar? Was she totally consumed by the fire, leaving only ashes that were swept away in the wind? Or did she survive and go somewhere else? If so, why did she leave her Choker?"

Ed replies:

Hi, Menelvagor. Well, I can't say much about this because the official WotC position on Syrumstar Auglamyr at the moment is that she is NDA. Which itself should tell you something, yes?

So saith Ed. Who (I'm explaining because Menelvagor is newer to the Keep than some scribes who've seen such responses from Ed before) is implying that some future publication plans on someone's part for Syrumstar Auglamyr exist.

Love to all,
THO

P.S. Ah, the Reef. Ed's been once, I think, and I've been many times. I love Melbourne, but have only passed through Victoria briefly.

On 14 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hello again, all. I bring you the words of Ed in response to Kosta the Lich:

Hi, Kosta. You've raised a question that a LOT of gamers have been asking me and various folks at Wizards. Here's the straight answer: the future plans of the company are unknown to me - - and, I suspect, not set in stone; sales will govern all. However, as of right now, the emphasis on all future published Realmslore will be 4e. As in: we've made the century jump, and the lore that's needed is the "new" Realms we find around us now.

However, brief flashbacks in some novels, and some ongoing fiction series (notably Bob Salvatore's Transitions trilogy, and my just-finishing Knights trilogy) are still "in the past." I have promised to wrap up the Border Kingdoms articles, in the "free" part of the WotC website, and they are set in the past (i.e. in 3e, just pre-Spellplague on the timeline). Wizards has agreed to publish this, though many of the staffers I dealt with have since been let go. If in time to come when I get the BK finished, Wizards for any reason doesn't want to host the completed file, I intend to publish it here. [The original Realms agreement allows me to do such things, though I suspect the Hasbro legal folks won't be happy - - but then, they haven't approached me to

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

renegotiate the agreement to prevent such publications. I'm hoping they'll just tack it on to the existing BK web-columns, put them all together in a big .doc file, and provide it on the WotC website for free.]

I also intend to go right on answering lore queries here in this thread, and right now I'm a lot better at answering "old timeline location" Realmslore queries than I am the "new" Realms of 4e. I intend to go right on answering 3e-time queries for as long as scribes ask such questions. That won't get you full-length products, but it will get you lore coverage that any DM (if scribes ask the right questions and follow-up questions) quite enough to run a particular Realms locale or facet of Realms life in game play.

We all die sometime, and Wizards could indeed find ways to stop me (the easy way is just to keep me so blamed busy with writing new stuff that I don't have time to answer the queries THO constantly ferries into my lap, because such writing is how I earn my living), but as I type this, I don't intend to stop doing this. In other words, for those whose campaigns are still pre-Spellplague, I intend to "be there" for you.

I also have much 3e-current lore (e.g. Cormyr, the completely detailed city of Teziir) that's essentially complete, but has been "orphaned" by the time-jump, and am looking to WotC for some answers as to when and how we'll see this lore published.

For one thing, if you have a campaign you and your fellow participants are enjoying, set pre-Spellplague, why abandon that? Just keep on playing; you have almost a hundred years (or even more, if your timeline hadn't quite reached the date of A GRAND HISTORY OF THE REALMS) before the 4e Realms game products become fully relevant. The Spellplague isn't a moving curtain that proceeds across Faerun changing everything; it takes years to spread, affecting some areas greatly and others scarcely at all. So play can easily go on for another DECADE of real time before the Spellplague becomes more than a source of rumors and wild tales of stuff that's happened "somewhere else in the world," plus a lot of worry high up in priesthoods (and more rumors, for everyone else).

So as your lore queries arise, I'll still be here to answer them.

That's how I see things as of now. So, all Realms fans, keep those questions coming . . .

So saith Ed. Who has Been There for us all, for nigh-forty years now.
love to all,
THO

On 16 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hello again, all scribes. I bring to you a brief Realmslore reply from Ed of the Greenwood to this query from Baleful Avatar: "Oh, and just so my questions don't always sound like "fix my campaign please" queries, I have a very different one: in Waterdeep and Baldur's Gate, circa 1374 DR, what's the "hottest" fashion in lady's hats or hairdos, if any?"

Ed replies:

Ah, something I have sitting at my fingertips! Herewith, a swift reply:

The hottest fashion in feminine hair fashion is long, free-flowing hair down the back of the head and the shoulders and back below that, that is held "up" just in front of the crown of the scalp with an elaborate hair-comb (with upward-projecting spikes, so it looks like a tiara projecting up through the hair) that ends, on the back of the head, with a decorative weave of wires (think elaborate "open" knots akin to real-world Celtic knotwork) that gathers the "fall" of hair through a large defined 'tube' or oval of wire. So the fall of hair is really a gigantic ponytail, spread out wide by the knots.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

Those who lack long hair of their own buy woven wigs of washed, combed, sorted, and dyed real hair, originally belonging to multiple others, that attach with hooks and clips to this back-of-the-head knotwork of the hair-comb (bald individuals wear chinstrap thin flesh-hued cords that hold the comb to their scalps).

This hairdo is known as "the ar-fall."

The most fashionable headgear (for wearing over hair) is a prowed, peaked soft leather cap (think Hollywood Robin-Hood caps), fashioned to be very long and thin, that is attached to the hair-comb so it won't fall off easily AND to keep it raked at an angle to one side of the head, and always "prow low in front, rear up at back." Such caps always sport at least two large, fluffy feathers (from peacocks or other birds with large, colorful tailfeathers or flight feathers), one of each side of the cap. That's the minimum; fops and the haughty may wear caps with nine or more feathers stuffed in, though all of them will be raked back (plumes to the rear). Caps of this sort are even appearing that have gauze-work woven among the feathers to support many tiny dangling "sparkle" faceted gemstones.

Such caps are formally known as "fancy-mes" but have now become more commonly known as "dees" (corruption through usages).

If Waterdhavian fashion patterns hold true, the hairdo and the cap will enjoy about the same period of wide popularity: two seasons. Thereafter, they will be used by those who want to signal they are NOT "irresponsible younglings" for another two seasons, and then retained by a few individuals for decades.

So saith Ed. And there you have it: detailed Realmslore of the sort we all love. Concise, easily ignored (without umbrage) if your campaign doesn't need it, and embraced if it's useful. Just like Ed.

love to all,
THO

On 17 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hello again, all. I bring you Ed of the Greenwood's reply to Aseran:

Hi, Aseran. I'm not sure how much detail the 4e Wizards design team intended the "new continent" of Returned Abeir to have (lighter than 3e, yes, but how much lighter, I'm not sure). From my point of view, the FRCG wordcounts meant many areas (notably the Sword Lands and the southerly ports) don't have enough. Specifically, just to start a short list:

What does the countryside look like? How good are the roads? Road signage? Inns?

Patrolled, law-abiding, or "your sword your own justice," or wild? Monster-roamed, or not?

Major imports? Exports? What are the local jobs, and what industries or trades "rule"?

Politics and government, enforcement and trials/courts/if any?

Architecture and local "character"? Adventure hooks/brewing problems?

That sort of thing. Short detailings of all of these can give DMs a lot more to go on without restricting DM or FR novel writer creativity.

I hope I can fill in some of those gaps as web columns; I've been communicating with Wizards staffers as to when and how, but nothing's been settled yet.

Stay tuned, as I try. :}

So saith Ed. Who's "on the job" as we speak.

love to all,

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

THO

On 20 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hello all, I bring you Ed's reply to this query, from Marek: "Is there a list of all Thayan enclaves in the Realms? I realized those listed in the paragraph in Lords of Darkness are not all. Thanks!"
Ed replies:

Hi, Marek. No, the Realms designers (this is the 3e team I'm speaking of) deliberately did not want to list them all, so a DM would be free to have either no Thayan enclave in a given settlement (with the exception of the relatively few specified in canon printed lore), or to place a small, hitherto-unknown (or even secret, save from a ruler or a powerful cabal of nobles) local Thayan enclave in whatever locale the DM desires to, in his/her campaign.
In other words, don't worry about having a complete list; do what fits your campaign.
This is the same reason I long ago established the "loose ends" rule: for every "loose end" you explain away in the Realms (as a game or fiction writer), generate at least three new ones, so as never to run DMs out of "elbow room." The best have followed this rule whenever possible.

So saith Ed. Creator of the Realms and THE Master of "making it all seem real."
love to all,
THO

On 20 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hi again, everyone. This time I bring you Ed's response to Malcolm's post: "Aha! Been thinking about that reply of Ed's re. the hair and the headgear, a page back in this thread, and Rino wanting to see a picture. Ed, re. the hats: would some of the (simpler, early) hats in THE 500 HATS OF BARTHOLOMEW CUBBINS (think I've got the title right; the Dr. Seuss classic, anyway) be right, in appearance? It sure sounds like it!"
Ed replies:

Sounds like it and IS. You've got it exactly, if you picture that sort of hat mated to long hairpins (not the "straight pin" sort, but the bobby-pin two-pronged type) that can "clip" around tresses of hair and at the same time penetrate the hat, to hold it securely. Two or three of those used to keep the front point ('prow') of the hat down and the rear of that hat "up," so the result is headgear pinned diagonally, front low and rear lofting into the air.

So saith Ed. Primping well-dressed Waterdhavians everywhere.
love to all,
THO

On 21 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hi again, all. This time I present Ed's response to Blueblade's query: "Hi Ed and THO, I have yet

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

another Realms question, too. Fish. Taken well inland, for sale as food. Customarily: Dried? Smoked? Salted and dried? Made into cakes or something? Packed in clay jars, in oil?
(?) Thanks! BB"

Ed replies:

Heh. All of the above. In Waterdeep, you can buy it all of those ways, though salted-and-dried is intended for long-term travel and storage (i.e. you'd buy it to consume during a long overland journey, or if you were a caravan merchant intending to resell it along the way or at the end of your "run" (overland journey).

In the Sword Coast north, smoked (and North American scribes please note: this really means smoked, in smokehouses until dried out, NOT chemically bathed with a flavoring agent the way most supermarkets sell so-called "smoked salmon") fish that's packed in wax-sealed clay pots of oil is the most popular way that "fish or shellfish from afar" (as opposed to fresh-caught local fish, which is abundant across the North, from crabs and river clams to all manner of fish) is offered for sale.

A "tile" or square of wood about two feet across, on a side, is fashioned with three layers: a bottom and a top that are latched together with rope or metal bolt-and-crosspin corner fastenings, so as to sandwich a centre layer wood square pierced with holes. The clay pots, which are really circular lidded bowls, fit snugly into round holes in the centre wooden square, and are held immobile by the "top" and "bottom" squares (plus, usually, some old scrap cloth padding that's clamped between them).

Traditionally, a few spices have been added to the oil, which is typically saved by the purchaser after the fish has been consumed, and used for other "keep from the air and therefore from rotting" food storage, i.e. for some cheeses, for small cooked meat scraps, and the like. (However, please don't infer from this that they are strongly or "hot" spiced; the spices tend to be a gentle mix that's either "tarragon plus sage plus wild leek" or some variant of same, NOT hot peppers or anything of the sort. The LAST thing most folk of Faerûn desire is to have the mild flavors of no-longer-fresh fish overwhelmed and hidden by seasonings.

So saith Ed. Whose notes were at the ready for this one, I see.
love to all,
THO

On 21 September, 2008 THO said:-

Malcolm, I can't confirm if it was Phil Athan's first GenCon, but it was indeed the famous "doo doo doo" reading, and the bedchamber scene was an outtake from CROWN OF FIRE. Embarrassed Jeff Grubb but left his wife Kate whooping with laughter, as I recall. . .

And I echo Blueblade's comment: great Cormyr rakes reply (as usual) Garen!
love to all,
THO

On 22 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hello again, all. althen artren, your Ed question has been passed along to Ed, but as for your queries to me:

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

No, no, I'm The Hooded One.

Madam Peekaboo was a SUPERB stripper, but she's 94 years old now, and hasn't been performing for years. Thanks for the compliment, though.

And under my hood are the usual things. Including two warm, parted, willing and welcoming lips, and a tongue that never quits . . .

HEL-lo, althen . . .

Ahem.

As for your other query ("In any of Ed's games, have you ever got the impression that the Srinshree was one of the winged elf race. I have looked over some of the older material and just get this feeling that it might be a possibility."), I'm afraid my answer is: no.

The Srinshree is short (and of petitebuild, in all ways), and VERY old, and my character has met her only a handful of times in play (with Ed as DM, of course). The matter of her race has been answered three times: two different ways in official canon game material, and definitively by her (in a short story Ed wrote, that is ALSO official Realms canon material). I've no reason to doubt the man, but will query him just to remove all doubt, okay?

love,

THO

On 22 September, 2008 THO said:-

The Berdusk end of the gate is located in a cellar beneath Castleview Rise, the centermost of the trio of high-class "manyhearths" (we modern real-world folks would call them low-rise luxury apartments) immediately southwest of (across the street from) The Running Stag inn and tavern. The Stag is Feature 35 on the Berdusk map included in VOLO'S GUIDE TO THE SWORD COAST, and best seen in the "Castle Hill" detail map. For those who have access only to my original FORGOTTEN REALMS ADVENTURES sourcebook map, the Stag is the large, "almost a closed figure, slightly more than three-sided" building west-northwest of Feature 1, The High Lady's Castle (a clump of trees in the Castle gardens, two small buildings, and a road separate them). On the FRA map, Castleview Rise is right across the street from the "curving" end (actually, it's a tower) of the sprawling Stag building. (That street, by the way, is Woodrun Lane, better known to all Berduskans as "the Woodrun," and retains that name right out to the Wood Gate.)

The Stag has open-air "galleries" (continuous balconies, like many a modern real-world motel) running around its interior walls (that open into a parallel enclosed passage, used in winter, when the balconies serve as firewood storage dumps; the passage in turn opening into the various rental bedrooms) and rises four floors above ground level, as well as plunging three levels of cellars deep, below grade. Two large "ready rooms" (used for storage and assembly of "gate-run" goods and persons) on that bottom-most cellar level are connected to each other and to a tunnel running under the street (and turning a wide "dogleg" corner while doing so, to absorb magical blasts without allowing their fury to fly right in under the Stag) into the lowest of the two levels of cellars under that manyhearths, where the gate itself flickers and glows, its Berdusk end being identical in appearance to its Drawn Swords end (just stepping into the gate, in either direction, triggers a "single step" journey to the gate's other end).

A spiral stair inside the interior walls of Castleview Rise links the cellar gate room to the back of a storage room in one of the ground-level "homes" (suites) within the manyhearths, and also leads (along a VERY narrow inside-the-walls ground-floor passage) to a secret door in the outside (northwest) wall of the manyhearths (where there's a iron-bars-walled, but unlocked, terrace, shared by the residents of Castleview Rise and Prospect rise, next door; completists should know that the manyhearths on the other side of Castleview is known as Swordsar Rise [after the surname of its builder, the long-dead Amhro Swordsar], and is by far the most "exclusive"

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

address of the three manyhearths).

These "secret ways out" from the cellar gate are nigh-forgotten (except by a handful of master and senior Harpers) and almost never used, these days (with most of the inhabitants of all three Rises being utterly unaware that the lingering Berduskan talk of "ways to walk clear across the Realms, under our very feet!" have anything to do with where they live; the owner of the ground-level home with the secret door in its storage room, a retired Harper fighter by the name of Laernduth "Leapingflame" Duskriver, being one of the exceptions to this blissful ignorance). Almost all gate traffic moves via renters of the Old Stag meeting-room, on the ground floor of the Stag. This meeting room has a serving-kitchen in its rear wall, which has a wide, easily-used ramp down into the cellars to access pantries (and the next cellar level down, and therefrom, the deepest cellar level, right at the doors of one of the gate "ready rooms."

The Stag is a busy, cozily-furnished, expensive but worth it establishment. Luxuriously comfortable, upper-crust without any of the haughty airs (what many travelers fervently wish all lodgings were like). It's well-loved by visitors (many of whom become loyal repeat clientele) and Berduskans alike; its staff is riddled with Harpers who cheerfully spy on all guests as a matter of habit, because those ground-floor rental "function rooms" are used by Berduskans for all sorts of interesting get-togethers, trade-related and otherwise.

So saith Ed. I am PMing this to Gelcur, Asgetrion, Kuje, and Damian, with the hopes that Kuje will tell everyone the moment the "gate location secret is out of the bag" in his campaign, so that this lore from Ed can then be made public at Candlekeep.

I'm also hoping everyone involved will keep it secret until then, for maximum roleplaying fun. "In the Realms," the location of this gate is always on the verge of being publicly revealed just because so many Harpers use it, and that means a large number of people have to try to keep a secret (never a good idea).

love to all,
THO

On 23 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hello again, all. I have been ferrying your posts to Ed in the usual manner throughout these difficult last few days (his wife is not well and he's caring for her, as well as facing the death of his close friend BrianThomsen).

All things considered, I was a little surprised to receive this relatively swift reply from Ed to Kajehase's query: "I've been reading a short biography about the Swedish 17th-century queen Kristina who managed to make quite a few waves in Europe when she abdicated and converted to catholicism - and a small query popped up: What status would a monarch who voluntarily (without being pushed) left his or her throne and crown and left his/her erstwhile realm have in the Realms at large?"

Ed replies:

Hi, Kajehase. That depends entirely on how the abdicating monarch's successor treats him (I'll stick to "him" in this reply just to keep us from getting tangled up in endless gender choices, okay?).

They can accord him honored status, ignore him, declare him a traitor and execute him, declare him to have done something bad or be about to do something bad and then hunt him down and have him slain, they can spread horrible rumors about him (insanity, blasphemy against the gods,

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

etc.), or they can fake his death and let him "change identities" and live a different life (or the abdicator can do these last two things, in order to gain freedom from birth status, perhaps with the aid of shapechanging magic, hired impostors, and so on). Some monarchs have done this latter dodge to escape determined assassins, try to shake curses and holy censure, and so on. How the succeeding monarch regards and treats the abdicator depends most on the nature of that successor, but it of course can also depend in part on how the abdicator treats the successor. If the abdicator names and supports the successor, they are going to feel more kindly towards their predecessor, and their legitimacy in the eyes of the people, at least initially, is going to be strongly tied to their predecessor's support.

If the monarch bolts the throne and leaves a burgeoning civil war behind, everyone in the realm is likely to see the abdicator in a less friendly light - - and if the abdicator sticks around (stays in or near the realm, with a high public profile) and comments on the ruling deeds of the successor, particularly as a critic (so they can be seen by those who do not like the successor as a potential rival for restoration to the throne, wither as a pawn or willingly), the successor is highly likely to see their predecessor as a foe who's better eradicated.

Voluntarily abdicating monarchs are, of course, rare, though published Realmslore records at least one king of Cormyr.

My unpublished notes contain several others, usually lords of lesser stature who ruled small demesnes or cities, and most of these were wealthy and took themselves far away from their former land, to dwell either in seclusion or under an assumed name (often in the Border Kingdoms or the Tashalar), or as themselves in crossroads cosmopolitan cities where money confers status (such as Waterdeep and Athkatla), where they tended to live the lives of "guest nobility," often increasing their personal fortunes by shrewd investments in real estate (landlords and property resales) and local mercantile trade. At certain times in the histories of Amn, Tethyr, Sembia, and Calimshan, "getting out of town fast while you still have coins, a title, and an intact neck" was an oft-necessary survival tactic.

I should also mention that among the gnomes of the North, dwelling in modest villages in the few instances in which they didn't entirely co-mingle with humans in human cities, rulers calmly resigned when they thought they were not longer the best for the job, and named the one they deemed best. If that gnome didn't want to rule, they deposed themselves on the spot, and handed things on THEIR chosen candidate. If no one wanted to rule, a council of all family elders was convened and the rulership (often by a trio or quartet) was hammered out that way; such teams usually set out to train and inspire their own (one gnome) replacements.

So saith Ed. Who has thought about this before, because we Knights long, long ago met a self-deposed Sembian noble (a "Duke of Windsor" sort, who married as he pleased, kicking over the family traces, and simply fled their disapproval and his duties) living the "high, idle life" in Waterdeep (including maintaining a hunting lodge northeast of the city). To fight off recurring assassination attempts (from bounty-hunting adventurers sent by his Sembian relatives), he'd amassed quite a private army of veteran adventurers, and was beginning to hire them out to protect Waterdhavian nobles in need.

love to all,
THO

On 25 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hello again, all.

Ed is frantically busy right now caring for his wife, handling many, many phone calls and e-mails re. Brian's death, and (oh yes) trying to finish a novel, too. He promises he'll send me more Realmslore replies as soon as he can.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep

In the meantime, I am still ferrying all of your queries his way, and am going to step in and answer Icelander with a "quick and slim" partial answer until Ed's real one arrives.

Icelander, from play in the "home" Realms campaign, I know that wild rice is harvested in shallow freshwater lakes and riverbanks all over the Sword Coast North and the Dales, rural Sembia, Tethyr, and Cormyr, plentifully in Unther and Mylhorand, and the rivers that empty into the Lake of Dragons. (I imagine it's also harvested in Turmish and the Vilhon and many other places, too, but the list I've given, I can confirm from notes I made during play. Yes, Thay with its slave workers would be an ideal rice-growing land [in the right parts of it]).

Rice is therefore a locally plentiful staple where conditions permit it to grow, and hence cheaper than wheat (where it's scarce, it tends to be "unknown for the table," so the "price higher for rarity" factor doesn't come into play much). I know it can (or could, in the 1350s) readily be bought in Waterdeep, Athkatla, and Calimport, and was traded in Tharsult. So, yes, it's a Faerunian crop, and transported for sale as flour as well as grain.

I've drawn this from various notes made during play, of things our characters saw, overheard, and read in ledgers. Yes, Ed thinks of an amazing number of things.

love,
THO

On 30 September, 2008 THO said:-

Hi, all. Ed is still tearingly busy dealing with life, but promises me more lore replies will be forthcoming, the first one perhaps as soon as tonight.

In the meantime, I will try to answer DMJutti - - though I stress that Ed will give you a PROPER reply.

Ed comes up with new lore all the time, based on how he thinks things are (and are changing) in the Realms. Yes, he has stuff memorized, and yes, he occasionally references his notes. Some of which are "somewhere" in the vast morass of his house (only Steven Schend, of the scribes here at the Keep, has glimpsed the full horror of Ed's crammed basement, piled-to-the-ceiling old study, and crammed with books new basement study).

Which should tell you just how little of Ed's original notes ever made it into the Old Grey Box (for which he was submitting weekly packages of "typed and cleaned up" stuff, his pencil originals being illegible to most other mortals).

Despite all the words published about the Realms over the years, Ed has as many or more unpublished handwritten notes. However, many of them are campaign-specific rather than useful (except as a picture of an unfolding campaign) to a wider selection of gamers.

Heh. So saith me. More from Ed ASAP.

love to all,
THO

[...]

Hi again, all.

Zandilar, I DO recall shapechanging horses and shapechanging pegasi (human forms for both, and the pegasi also had a giant-eel-like aquatic form) in Ed's "home" Realms campaign. I don't think these ever got published. More from Ed soon, I trust.

love,
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa and Bradley Russo.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

Candlekeep