

# **The History of Arterra**

## **Mortals During Creation and Strife**

When the world was new and the gods were at peace the first races were born. Among them were the dwarves, elves, fey, orcs, and dragons. The dwarves were made by father Odin and his family out of the stone of Arterra. They were given the mountains of the north to live in and a firm code of duty to oneself and to one's clan. If a dwarf follows the code and dies in a glorious battle they ascend to Vahalla on the plane of Ysgard and can dine with the gods for eternity. The elves were sculpted by Zeus and his retinue out of the wind flowing through the trees of the forest. They were given the forests of the south to live in and were told to love each other, love themselves, and to work together to accomplish what they could not do alone. If an elf can fulfill the vision they have of themselves they ascend to Arborea to live in harmony with the gods.

To reach the goals laid out before them by the gods both the dwarves and elves formed civilizations. The dwarves dug into the mountains, mining the riches the gods had placed there. They separated themselves into family clans each with their own way of life. While there was peace the dwarves thrived, creating vast cities of stone and earth to venerate their gods. They founded the city of Nolduhr at the highest peak of the Stormcrag.

The elves saw the world surrounding them and dedicated themselves to its study and preservation. Using the power of the Weave they sculpted the trees and rivers around them into beautiful cities of harmony with nature. The greatest city made by the elves was Starleaf Vale, a place so full of life many elven gods favored it over the plane of Arborea. After their great city was complete the elves spread over the southern continent. They lived everywhere from the jungles of Iyus to the deserts of Edora. Everywhere they went they enriched the land.

The fey were made by the Seelie and Unseelie Courts. Born of the very essence of the Feywild and shaped in the image of the greater Fey they are mischievous and care free. The fey live mostly in the Feywilds and their beauty and charm are legendary in the realm of Arterra. Most fey are immortal and each has their own idea of what a perfect life is.

From his own essence Io created the proud dragons. Io was a being of balance and wisdom and created a color of dragon for each aspect of his personality. The chromatic dragons were vicious and cunning while the metallic dragons were powerful and wise. Io told the dragons to do what they wished and take what they could, as he did. They were the most powerful mortals on Arterra and magnificent to behold. Each dragon went their own way, living among the other races and carving out for themselves a place in the world.

Finally there were the orcs. The last of the races made before Strife, the orcs were a brutish race from the very beginning. When Gruumsh was done with his creation he placed them in the very center of the world in the northern lands of Edora. He told them to pillage and fight all those who opposed them. The orcs spread across the lands of Arterra with no place to call home and a trail of blood in their wake.

These were not the only races at the beginning of Arterra. The land itself bore many other humanoids including genasi, humans, gnomes, kenku, and many others. All the races were to be decimated in the coming conflict of Strife.

When the gods waged war on the world the ancient city of Nolduhr fell to ruins. The elves saw this and hid Starleaf Vale, far from the eyes of their enemies. The clans of the dwarves were dismantled while the newly settled colonies of the elves were wiped away. Even the orcs couldn't withstand the tide of war and their great roving hordes were scattered across Arterra. The dragons were immensely powerful and difficult for the gods to completely defeat. Instead they were bribed and coerced into one or another of the gods' armies. Their numbers dwindled as countless dragons died fighting the gods' battles.

The mortals of Arterra cowered and hoped that they would not be next to die. That was the way of things until Io split himself and began his effort to create the Divine Gate. When Io split he created many dragonoid races including the dragonborn and kobolds. Only when the Divine Gate was created did the races of Arterra finally have room to breathe. From all over the world and every race there sprang heroes and villains of great power in opposition to the gods that remained.

### **Primordial Arterra**

After the closing of the Divine Gate Arterra was a scarred and barren landscape. Wild abominations made by gods and demigods roamed the land. Most of the gods had left the Prime Material plane under their agreement and the Divine Gate kept each of them in their place. However, many gods refused to leave and give up their seats of power. Among these stubborn gods were the Dead Four: Vecna, Myrkul, Bhaal, and Bane who had ascended from their mortal form. The gods who had willingly left the Prime Material plane could no longer directly influence Arterra and had to think of more crafty ways to remove from power those who had stayed. ([Check here for a list of gods that agreed to leave and gods that stayed on the plane.](#))

It was at this time that Ymir unleashed the primordial elementals upon Arterra. Ymir had not been a part of the creation of the prime material plane. He was a god of creation and saw Io's new project as an affront to his nature. Ymir never thought the other gods would be able to actually make a new plane of existence. When proven wrong he took particular interest in the inner elemental planes. These planes were mounds of energy, sometimes made as leftovers from creations on the Prime material plane and sometimes used as material for those creations. Ymir used this link between the Prime Material and the Inner planes to set up a conduit from the elemental planes to the Prime Material.

After the Divine Gate was created Ymir finalized his connection, unleashing upon the world the primordial energy contained in the Inner planes. So great was the effort required to do so that Ymir fell into a deep sleep, one that he still rests in today. Ymir's motives for this connection are still questioned by the gods. Some say he was simply bitter at the gods for creating without him and wished to display his own magnificence. Others say he wished to help the creation effort by providing a direct conduit of material to the new world, though it was much too late in happening as many gods were sealed behind the Divine Gate. Still others think he wanted to give power to the gods who had stayed on the Prime Material. Whatever the motivation, Ymir's act set the stage for another conflict in the Prime Material plane.

On Arterra the gods who had stayed used this new source of energy to create massive titans who roamed the world and did their bidding. The gods trapped behind the Divine Gate

could not directly use the energies but rather directed their followers to sources of power, creating many great heroes and villains of the age. Some of these mythic figures were even able to control the elements directly and became the first to practice the now dying art of bending.

The result of Ymir's actions and the creation of the Divine Gate was another great war that spread across Arterra. This time the war was not exclusively between the gods but also contained a proxy war between these titans and mortals.

Many generations passed as the war raged on. Bane's horrid fortress in the north was destroyed by the dwarven clans. Lathander's golden nation was corrupted from within and he was forced to leave the Prime Material or succumb to the same corruption. Daragor was hunted like the beast he was and on the verge of death he was transported to the Beastlands. Even St. Cuthbert was convinced his army and stalwart leadership was not needed on the Prime Material plane. Finally all that was left was the Crawling King Torog and his realm under the world. A coalition of gods directed the most powerful heroes and armies to delve underground and banish Torog to the Abyss.

With the removal of Torog the last of the gods had left Arterra. The world was broken and scarred and the great nations of the past were shattered. Only a select few bastions of civilization remained, including the secret city of Starleaf Vale. The mortals that had survived were few in number but resolutely powerful. They and their ancestors had survived Strife and fought off the gods who refused to leave. They began the task of rebuilding.

### **Restoration**

The healing of the world came from an unlikely place. The race of humans had recently appeared on the world stage. They were as ambitious and short lived as the orcs but possessed a spirit for innovation and trade unlike the rest of the races. Humans welcomed races of all kinds into their towns and learned what they could from each and every one. Of particular note were the humans settling in Northern Edora on the eastern side of the Sea of Tithe. This served as the perfect location to foster trade between the burgeoning human nations, the dwarves of the north and the elves of the south. Over time this area would grow to be a colossal trade hub and the backbone of civilization.

So great was the humans' success that the gods could not ignore them. Many of the gods admired the humans and invited them to worship. Some hated the humans, saying since humans were not made by any god they had no right to their success. Whether wanted or not, the humans choose for themselves who they would worship. They set the precedent for many races who came from the land of Arterra itself rather than the hands of gods.

The dwarves had lost their home in the northern mountains during Strife and now lived on the outskirts of the Crag. The dwarven clans wished to return to their ancestral home, but Nolduhr was now infested with the very horrors that had removed the dwarves. Under the leadership of Thorum Stormfist (a devout follower of Thor) the dwarfs founded and built the new city of Daghult on the western edge of the Stormcrag. It has remained a dwarven stronghold ever since.

The elves had not suffered as the other races had during the war. They were able to hide in their forest homes until the danger passed. Once the gods were gone from Arterra a faction of

elves began the process of healing the physical and metaphysical damage done to the world. They banded with other great minds to use The Weave and the connection to the Inner planes forged by Ymir to remove the scars of the land. Together this faction was known as the Harmony Conclave. They swore to protect the realm of Arterra from further incursion of extraplanar inteities and to safeguard the land itself against corruption. Through their efforts, starting with the lands of Levanni, Arterra was eventually returned to a place where crops could grow and people could thrive.

Each of the infant civilizations of Arterra worked the land in their own way and after some time carved out a place where they and their children could live. Once the people of Arterra had a stable home they began to explore, populating the world once again and discovering both what the gods had placed in the world and what the Strife had done to those creations.

### **Appearance of Other Races**

While the gods and the first races dealt with their wars, the energies of Arterra itself began to form life. Though the gods had created many entities, both conscious and not, the world itself worked to create even more diverse and specialized creatures. When the gods were banished the creatures that had been in their infancy during Strife and stewed in the Primordial energies of Arterra could finally thrive during the period of Restoration.

During Strife not many races were formed. Notable exceptions are Gnomes, Halflings, and Humans, each of which came about without the influence of gods. Humans were created by a very unlikely union between a fiend and celestial whose names have been forgotten. Both the elves and dwarves say that gnomes are an offshoot of their races, though none know for sure how gnomes came about. When they did, Garl Glittergold and his family adopted them as their race and guided their development. Similarly, halflings are said to be an early offshoot of the human race who were adopted by Yondalla and her family. It is said that during Strife occurred the first sightings of half breeds such as half elves and half orcs. Strife also allowed for fiends and celestials to visit the Prime Material plane, eventually creating tieflings and aasimars.

When Ymir connected Arterra to the elemental planes in the time of primordial Arterra several races came about. Genasi of each element were formed in the primary elemental planes and drifted to the Prime Material through the connection. The aarakocra were able to make their way from the elemental plane of air to settle in select locations of the Prime Material Plane just as the triton merfolk were able to journey from the elemental plane of water. Ymir's influence also created giants of many types. The giants would eventually spur the development of other races such as Goliaths and Ogres. It was also during this era that the centaurs were made from fey energies and the god Skerrit ascended.

Once all the gods were forced to leave many other races were able to take the stage. These races are often thought of to be more connected to the land and the primal energy of Arterra. They more often stray away from civilization then create it. Such races include firbolgs, kenku, lizardfolk, minotaurs, nymphs, tabaxi, and yuan-ti.

### **The Tribes of Iyus**

During the time of primordial Arterra while the gods who refused to leave were still being ousted, a tribe of half breeds and humans formed a particularly close relationship with the

elements. They were able to bend the elements of fire, earth, air, and water to their will. Their tribe lived on the western edge of Levanni and stressed the importance of balance in oneself and with one's surroundings. Such teachings were ingrained into their manipulation of the elements. They were able to develop an art which used the idea of balance to combine martial arts and arcane magic. These were the first benders.

The bending society was not safe in the land of Levanni. Though the elves of the land troubled them little, many gods saw their way of life as a denouncement of divine magic and their mixed heritage as a rebellion of the plan the gods had set for the first races. The bending tribes were forced to leave Levanni and traveled across the ocean to the islands of Iyus. There they were able to create their own society hidden from the view of the gods that plagued them. On Iyus the elemental tribes created great cities and forged an identity and culture around the elements they bent. Their unique heritage and elemental powers split the tribe into fire folk, earth kin, water tribe, and air monks.

Throughout the period of Restoration each of these peoples were able to form their own way of life and find a place on Iyus to settle. The fire folk settled in the south east and named the land mass closest to Levanni, Zhaogong. They were led by an emperor and had a monarchy rule their industrial Fire Nation. The earth kin settled in the south west naming their portion Battlan. They created many city states which ruled themselves and were brought together under a council consisting of leaders from each city. Their stout and vast society was called the Earth Federation. The Water Tribe used their water bending to cross the water to the land they named Shakanai. There the tribe split: the swamp people of south Shakanai and the sailors of north Shakanai. Some of the Water Tribe followed their wanderlust and crossed great swaths of The Sea of Nasteia and settled on the colder island of Kina, creating the polar water benders. Though the Water Tribe was divided in this way their "go with the flow" attitude has allowed them to stay a cohesive family. Finally the air monks created their first temple in the northern reaches of Battlan and named the surrounding area Hangaa. After this they began to spread out to the lands of the other nations, gaining their name the Air Nomads. They established a temple in each of the other nation's lands as they traveled, though the one in the homeland of Hangaa remained the largest.

With the beginning of the elemental nations an odd phenomenon began to occur. Perhaps drawn by the unique union of elemental magics and inner balance in Iyus a race of spiritual beings called the okabe began to appear. Spilling over from the Feywild and Shadowfell these okabe created small villages on the outskirts of the Iyus nations. They are rarely seen today, the stuff of legends and fairytales.

The tribes of Iyus were unified during the time of Restoration, but everything changed when the Fire Nation attacked. The Fire Nation began a hundred year war and sowed the seeds of division between the tribes. Though that first war was brought to an end, the four nations have ever since squabbled over their lands. Largely isolated from the rest of Arterra, the nations began to decline as they cannibalized themselves. This allowed the natural wilderness of Arterra to overtake the civilization of the tribes. In the modern day the tribes of Iyus are shadows of their former selves and bending is a dying art. Some of the other nations of Arterra have begun to take an interest in Iyus and many of the benders have begun to travel the world,

seeking their fate outside of Iyus. For the lands of Iyus and for those that cling to the art of bending, the future is uncertain.

### **The Elves: Isolated and Free**

During Restoration the elves thrived, some by venturing to new lands and others by sequestering themselves in nature. The elves had been told by their gods to protect the land and grow with each other into the vision they had of themselves. Some took this to mean that they should shelter themselves from the rest of the world in order to keep their minds and bodies pure. Others took it to mean that they needed to journey far and wide to take in as much experience as possible and grow through it.

As the dwarves were reclaiming their ancestral home, the wards placed on Starleaf Vale waned slightly. Some elves left Starleaf to explore the world while others began to study the now waning ancient magic. During this time the elves discovered the vast forests on the western side of the continent of Edora. There they made a new home for themselves, free to wander and live in those trees. If you see an elf in Edora or Odom today it is likely they are the descendants of those elves.

The elves who stayed on the continent of Levanni delved deep into the old arcane and divine magics present there. It is said that there is no greater mage than the elf that has spent their life in study on Levanni. During the period of restoration the elves were able to set up port towns in the north of Levanni and begin prosperous trade with both the dwarves of the north and the humans who had taken over most of Edora and some of Odom.

### **The Split of the Dwarven Clans**

Many of the dwarves had been scattered during Strife and their efforts to regather during Restoration created the great city of Daghult. These dwarves under the mountain were at the forefront of civilization, trading (and at times warring) with the kingdoms to the south. So focused were they on the south that they did not think of the north.

When the dwarves were removed from their homes a splinter of their clans were forced north of the Zundinul Crag to live in the Rotted and Withered Woods. There they hid from gods of Strife and lived in the harsh environments of that northern place. The dwarves survived by adopting a naturalist way of life, honoring the land and sea while becoming barbaric raiders. The dwarves were ill suited for the woods and many wished to return to the crags they had called home in times past. Yet they stayed on the shores of the north, praying to the Northern gods to remove the evils in the Crag so they could return home.

When Strife finally ended with the removal of Torog from Arterra the northern dwarves began to move back into the Zundinul Crag. The forests they left were much better suited to the other races that had recently arisen, such as the yuan-ti and firbolgs. These dwarves had forgotten how to construct the large subterranean cities of their forefathers and instead created a collection of small settlements around and in the Crag. As they moved further and further south they were met with unlikely resistance, their cousins from the south.

At first there was confusion. Both clans of dwarves had thought they were the only ones who had survived the calamities that befell Nolduhr and the surrounding areas. For a brief time they tried to reconcile their differences, but their time away had been too long. Though neither

side wanted it, a war between the tribes began. To an outsider their reasons for war were petty, but to the dwarfs their particular codes and traditions were everything.

After a bitter civil war, peace was struck. The clans would not fight again. They would consider each other distant family if not brothers and sisters. The raiding and warlike dwarves of the north would settle in the Zundinul Crag and along the rivers which flowed from them. The industrious and rugged dwarves of the south would settle in the Storm Crag and the Ironwood Jungle. Thus it was that the two clans of dwarves split during Strife stayed so during Restoration as each worked to rebuild their idea of dwarven society.

## **Decline**

The period of Restoration lasted for a long time. The peoples of the world were driven and had a purpose. Each established for themselves a society to live in and claimed the wilds around them. However, Arterra was not built for the absence of the gods.

Without the gods' guidance the many natural forces and processes in Arterra took over. Famine, drought, floods, and rampaging beasts forced the relocation of many outer settlements in Arterra. The gods tried to protect their people, but with their lessened influence were forced to rely on their followers to carry out their. This process was often messy and always inexact. Many of the glorious civilizations of the past were changed and dismantled.

The tribes of Iyus fell to infighting and almost lost the art of bending they had cultivated for so long. Today each of the four elemental tribes are shadows of what they once were. The dwarves of the north lost touch with each other as natural disasters and distance separated them. They became many separate clans living in harmony with nature and the other races around them. The elves had a similar falling away as individual elven cloisters began to lose touch with one another.

Not all was doom and gloom for the world. The dwarves of the Storm Crag were able to hold fast to the city of Daghult and remained true to their old ways. The elves in the ancient city of Starleaf Vale continued their protection of the Green Wood and stayed, as always, sequestered in their forest home.

Though the golden age of civilization had come to pass the diversity of Arterra exploded during the age of Decline. The immensely inclusive cities of Edora fought back against the wilds and expanded. As nations rose and fell they spread across, Edora finding ways to live in even the harshest places such as the Darrak Desert and Barazir Crag. Spearheaded by the driven and short lived humans these mixed civilizations were allowed to survive the age of Decline. However, the wilds were fierce and there has been little to no civilized settlement in eastern Edora or the land of Urutac.

## **Modern Arterra**

Modern Arterra exists at the end of the age of Decline. The scars and success of the previous eras in Arterra still show their face in the day to day lives of the citizens of Arterra. The current world power is split among the peoples living on the shores of the Sea of Thithe. The nations there trade and war with each other in order to vie for power.

Humanoids now live all across Arterra. In the south of Edora many dragonborn and humans have chosen the harsh climate of the Darrak Desert to live in to escape the confines of

society. Many monstrous races live in the east of Edora, unseen by the commonly thought of as “civilized” world. The northern continent of Urutac is beginning to be explored by brave souls seeking fortune. The world of Arterra has many possibilities.

### **Wars in the Modern Era**

- Iyus Infighting
  - The elemental nations of Iyus have a long history of infighting. Their separation from the rest of the world and limited resources are the sources of this conflict. In modern times the conflict is centered around the Earth Federation and Fire Nation. The Earth Federation sought to subjugate their neighbors of Buutraan and the western Fire Nation settlements. They believed that the other nations would be better served under the order and stability of the Earth Federation. While the air monks were easily able to repel initial attacks (as the temple at Buutraan is all but a fortress) raids on their lesser temples throughout Iyus have weakened them. Similarly while the Earth Federation now occupies much of western Zhaogong the Fire Nation has been able to stop their advance into their larger cities. The Water Tribe has largely retreated into the wilds, taking little part in the conflict.
- Shadows from the East
  - The settlers in Edora have reported increasing raids from eastern Edora. The reports detail twisted monstrosities attacking in concert and shadowy figures slicing through townsfolk. While the civilized people of Northern Edora know these reports to be embellishments of typical attacks on small towns the ferocity of the attacks and their tactics have created a kernel of fear in the larger trade cities.
- Dwarven Ritualistic War
  - The Northern barbarian tribes and southern deep seated dwarves have entered a war between each other. Dwarves believe that the only way to enter the afterlife is by dying in glorious battle. A death to sickness or accident will lead to an eternity serving under Hel in the Gray Waste. Therefore when a dwarf reaches a certain age they are sometimes sent to fight their brother dwarves in border disputes. Recently disputes over ownership of the Ironwood have turned these small skirmishes into full on battles. Both nations of Odom are concerned about where the bloodlust of war will take them.
- Discord in Edora
  - In the southern reaches of Edora much is still to be determined. There are constant disputes between the people of the era as to who has the right to live in which area. In particular the elves living in the western woods are said to be vicious warriors who do not take kindly to travelers trespassing on their lands. While no nation is at the helm of this war, the factions of the south have banded together around charismatic leaders to protect their homes and expand their lands.
- Tensions of the Settled World

- The Vistron Dynasty, Clans of the Storm Crag, and Elves of the Forest currently enjoy what may be the end of a prosperous era of trade and peace among their nations. Though many still work to keep the peace, the greed of each of those nations may soon lead them to trade their ledger books for sharp steel.
- Most recently the king of Oakshore has died. As the largest trade city on the Sea of Thithe, Oakshore's leadership is a worthy prize. The power struggle currently rests between a coalition of merchants named the Violet Coin and the deposed daughter of the late king Taliyah the Bandit Queen.