

The Lands of the Verdant Wolves

Craincrath

A country virtually covered in forest much like Fornland, Craincath has the unfortunate luck of bordering Clan Geirfreki to the north. In the past, much of Craincrath's military resources were spent in defending its northern borders. However in the past seven years, the military has become divided into two separate factions, and patrols along the border have lessened, as they have been pulled into internal conflicts between the King and his brother.

Like Morthir, the soldiers of Craincath are trained in small units, learning the tactics of guerilla warfare rather than large scale battles that can be utilized in the open fields of the central Empire. Craincrath heavily relies on trade with its southern neighbors for much of its food, as only so many trees can be removed to create usable farmland. Craincrath lumber however can be seen used in buildings as far south as Ankeadtir.

Dreki ruins can be found scattered throughout the forests of Craincrath, which often have become home to small towns and villages. The capital city of Deiremore was initially founded on old Dreki ruins off the side of the High Road.

In October of 427, one fateful night on her trip home from the second major city of Craincrath, Culthair, the carriage carrying the Queen of Craincrath, and her two daughters, were ambushed in the middle of the night by unknown assailants. Soldiers that discovered the wreckage the following morning describe it as one of the most brutal and messed up murders that they had ever seen. Among the bodies however, the young Princess of Craincath was not to be found. For days, search efforts were held but turned up nothing. The Princess was presumed dead.

King Tiernan's response could be described simply as...appropriate. With the help of his advisor, Éibhear, the King launched an investigation into the matter and put pressure on the Fornish border, for the Fornish became an easy scapegoat for the attacks. It is unsure if the Fornish were the ones to commit the crime however.

Two years later, the King's brother, Eoin, made a bid for power of the throne. The claim being that King Tiernan was no longer emotionally capable of ruling the country and no heir to take the throne should he pass away, while he himself did have two younger daughters. A year later King Tiernan married a Princess of Kuenbeg. Princess Aine and her younger sister Fiadh moved up to the north from Siarisfair that year, and two years later was pregnant with their first child.

In February of 432, luck would have it that two mysterious girls would appear on the footsteps of the Deiremore palace. The bells rang through the city with a proclamation: The Lost Princess hath returned! While the citizens of Craincrath rejoiced that the supposedly deceased Princess

was in fact alive, King Tiernan and Queen Aine seemed less than joyous. Especially Queen Aine, as now her two year old son held no claim to the throne. Doubtful at first that the black and silver haired girl standing before him was indeed his lost daughter Caoimhe, King Tiernan would test his daughter to ensure her true identity. Her tales of growing up with a Fornish family seemed all too convenient, and now with her she brought her guardian "sister". Caoimhe passed the trials and was officially redeclared as Craincrath's heir apparent. One year later she would be sent to Portashan's Cennaire Academy. She however refused to attend if her sister Bryndis was not allowed to enroll either. An exception was made, for the house professor of the Verdant Wolves was very accommodating and had an ear with the High Priestess herself.

Not one for defeat, with their own mysterious and unknown warlock advisor, Eoin has been sowing the seeds of discontent from their seat in Culcathir, pulling loyalties from various generals. Tensions have risen in the past several months as civil war between the east and west of Craincrath seems all but inevitable.

Though Craincrath is ruled through a monarchy, many notable and prominent houses are left in charge of some form of governing. With the political divide between the two royal brothers, these houses have become split in their loyalties. A line is drawn near perfectly down the center of the country. Those houses in the west pledge their loyalty to King Tiernan, those in the east to Prince Eoin.

Notable Figures in Craincrath

King Tiernan Ó Conaill

A fearsome, tall man in his fifties, the elder brother of the Ó Conaill princes, Tiernan has been king for nearly thirty years now after the passing of his beloved mother in 407 PD who ruled the northern Empire country for nearly seventy years. Before the murder of his wife nine years past, Tiernan would often be described as a joyous man, fair and wise in his ruling, beloved by most. That day however replaced the Tiernan his citizens loved. The new Tiernan was emotionless, a cold stone face that passed judgement without care or thought. Clearly grieving for the loss of his family, Tiernan's public appearances dwindled and the man kept himself only in the company of his advisor, Éibhear.

Eventually, for the sake of the realm, Tiernan would remarry. A Princess from the South, Aine, ten years his younger, would travel to Craincrath with her younger sister Fiadh. Their marriage was one of convenience, for he truly did not love her. They would conceive a son, Anluan, a son Tiernan saw only to put on the throne. When his eldest child Caoimhe would one day return, he remained the cold and emotionless slate he had begun. A spark of life did ignite in him when he could properly confirm her identity, but it will take a while for that spark to bring the old Tiernan back.

Prince Eoin Ó Conaill

Whereas Tiernan was the brawns of the Ó Conaill princes, the skinny Eoin would always consider himself the brains of the two. The mastermind behind all the shenanigans the two found themselves in as children. The brothers were once close with each other, but as they entered their teenage years and Tiernan was taken away for Royal Studies, Eoin couldn't help but feel jealous. The jealousy persisted for years, and while he gladly accepted his position in Culthair overseeing the efforts against the Fornish invaders in the north east, he always longed for the throne. Though he longed for it, he would never take it, for above all else Eoin loved his family. He always knew that he would be the wiser of the two, the more adept at handling military affairs, for which he proved on the battlefield in his defense against the Fornish, but he knew deep down he would never sit on the throne and came to terms with that. Instead he would find pride in being the King's top advisor, knowing the King, and his daughter would always find value and comfort in what he would say.

For Eoin to then make a bid for power seemed rather out of character. While it was true that Tiernan at the time did not seem emotionally capable of ruling and no longer held any heir, to claim the throne just two years after the death of the former Queen and her children seemed very out of character. Those close to Eoin would say that, like Tiernan, ever since the ambush on that carriage, Eoin has not quite been the same. In the years since he has resorted to listening to a shadow advisor, one some may place the blame on his change. Regardless, Eoin's clever way with words has given him a rather large following. Having been leader of a large portion of the Craincrath general, Eoin has several prominent Generals loyal to him. His disregard for some of Tiernan's laws have made him more popular with the country folk in the north east as Eoin has lowered their taxes and provided them with additional security. Though his coffers are starting to hurt, Eoin knows if he is to win the throne he needs the people on his side. For now.

Queen Aine Bean Uí Conaill

Hailing from Kuenbeg in Siarisfair, Queen Aine is one of the last lines of royalty from the old nation Siarisfair annexed decades past. It took her a long while to become accustomed to the northern climate, but since she has come to thrive. While knowing Tiernan doesn't truly love her, Aine will do whatever it takes to protect her family, to which Tiernan has reluctantly become a part of. She is seemingly well liked by the citizens of Deiremore and if not for her presence, many think that Tiernan would not have the support he currently does.

When Caoimhe returned when Anluan was but two years old, she feared for the safety of herself and her child, for she was unsure as to what Tiernan's reaction would be now that a true heir had returned, an heir that confidently possessed Dragon-Blood. It was through her subtle manipulations that Caoimhe was sent away so rather quickly to Portashan.

Princess Fiadh Ní Ceallacháin

Queen Aine's younger sister by many years, Fiadh is closer in age to Caoimhe than to Aine. She resents the north, having begged her father to not send her away from Kuenbeg. She is very quite clever, and with the re-introduction of magic into the realm has proven herself to be a very capable and talented mage. She currently works alongside Éibhear as he teaches her

more and more magics. When Caoimhe returned, for the year that the returned Princess stayed in Deiremore, the two seemingly got along rather well, for some it seemed too well.

Éibhear

A mysterious mage that works for Tiernan as his court Sage. Éibhear was a powerful mage before the Quake, and with the re-introduction of Traditional Magic maintains that status. He has been advising the Royal Family for nearly twenty three years now, and has become a welcomed sight in the palace. When Caoimhe was young, before her disappearance, it was Éibhear that was her personal tutor. When she returned it was Éibhear that she was able to find a familiar and trusting face, while her father doubted her. From time to time Éibhear will appear in Portashan for business, and always makes time to visit Caoimhe.

Tallavcarriga

This small, but powerful, country borders the Íssbjarg Mountains, which divide up the continent. For Tallavcarriga, the footsteps of the great mountains provide an excellent mining resource, while the southern fields offer a prime source of farmland.

The capital of Carndrum sits upon a large ridge of cliffs that overlook much of the country. A year a half after the Quake, an event that caused magic as it was known to disappear, the city of Carndrum was faced with disaster. Ruins that ran deep inside the mountains were home to magics that kept parts of the mountain intact and the city of Carndrum safe. With those magics disappearing, large portions of the mountain fell on the city, while some portions of the city itself went sliding down the mountain. Large scale humanitarian efforts from across the Fallen Empire were made to help dig the city out and repair portions that could be repaired. In the seventeen years since the disaster, portions of the city still lay in ruins at the foot of the mountain, but the former glory of the shining palace overlooking the country from the cliff sides has been re-established.

In the past decade, Tallavcarriga, and more precisely, Carndrum, have not made a great name for themselves in Verthaca. Nearly twenty years ago, Tallavcarriga was supposed to have built a tunnel through the mountains that would connect themselves to Ballenoc and Adaawe for the purpose of building alliances and establishing trade routes. The discovery of a pre-existing tunnel to the Great Plains soured those negotiations. In the aftermath of the Quake, those tunnels were destroyed. However reports are starting to surface that Carndrum has re-established those tunnels to the Great Plains, and has been sending soldiers across to bring back supplies for the country as well as establishing an outpost and colony in the Great Plains.

Meanwhile, with the efforts required to rebuild the city of Carndrum and send soldiers through the mountains, the Queen of Carndrum has demanded that the farmers of Tallavcarriga provide more food to the city, as well as more coin, having raised the taxes. The outlying folks generally have been proud of their country and supportive, having dropped everything to help rebuild the

nation capital. This time it was a straw too much, for Carndrum now faces adversity on all fronts. In the east, their expansion into the Great Plains have not gone smoothly, a force of Ainvi's have taken the liberty to consistently attack the Tallavcarrigans, pushing them further and further back. Among the Ainvi is a powerful wolf some call Gichimashkode's Fang, a fearsome Ainvi that appears with the blink of an eye, wreaks havoc, and then just as quickly disappears. Descriptions vary, but many can be summed up as a terrifying oversized, giant wolf that teleports and shreds men to pieces, throwing them everywhere. The Royal Family of Carndrum has put out a bounty for this figure.

On the western front, Carndrum faces a growing rebellion as many of the farmers in the small towns and villages have become unhappy with the current rule. The rebellion grows more and more each passing day, and if Carndrum is not careful they will be fighting a war on two fronts.

Notable Figures in Tallavcarriga

Queen Saoirse Ceallach

After the previous Queen passed away eight years ago from illness, Queen Saoirse took the throne as eldest daughter. In her heart she truly cares for all of Tallavcarriga, and her initial reign was largely plagued by her mother's former advisors and ministers working over her. In the past four years she has finally been able to come into her own and establish her own rule. Much of the expansionism into the Great Plains is the result of her mother and her council, rather than Queen Saoirse who inherited the issue. However, she does not attempt to withdraw her forces from the Great Plains, as the large amount of resources being brought through the mountains is invaluable to Tallavcarriga. Where Queen Saoirse is attempting to put most of her effort into is appeasing the peasantry and quelling the growing rebellion to the west. Queen Saoirse has a thirteen year old son named Conal, who aspires to be a renowned knight of Tallavcarriga one day. He will be entering his first year at Cennaire as an early applicant.

Padraig Docherty. Captain of the Guard

While Padraig's title is that of Captain of the Guard, his actual role is General of the Carndrum Military. This bitter old man is the driving force behind the campaigns into the Great Plain, and is constantly working over the Queen's head to continue his projects, for he has a large stake of wealth in the success of establishing a foothold in Ainvi lands.

Muirfeur

Much like Aughagarv, Muirfeur is a flat sea of grass. The most exciting thing about this country typically was the High Road, an ancient road built by the Dreki that runs from Portashan all the way up to the northern Craincath border, over the river and into Fornland, where it continues to the base of the mountains inhabited by Clan Lithskjalf. Clontradail is built around a major

crossroads, where the High Road meets with the ancient highway that connects Carndrum and Traroe. With large numbers of travellers coming down these two roads it is of no surprise that Clontradail is a city that flourishes in trade. In Clontradail you can find people from just about anywhere in the Empire.

Four years, ago after a late night meeting of the ruling Council, each and every single Council member was brutally murdered in the middle of the night in different parts of the city. The country mourned for fourteen days, two days for each council member. As Council membership is not hereditary, but rather members are selected from the Dragon-Blood bearing noble houses, loyalties and faction lines were quickly drawn as there are numerous houses in Muirfeur claiming possession of Dragon-Blood but only 7 vacant seats. These last four years have been tumultuous for the citizens of Clontradail and the citizens of Muirfeur as leadership has been relatively unsteady. Currently in 436 PD, while a High Councillor has been chosen among the Council members, there still remains one vacant seat on the council. After years of covert warfare, sabotage, and espionage, only two houses have the likelihood of filling this last remaining seat, the Ó Catháin's and the Mac Uighilín's.

For the most part, the outlying villages of Muirfeur haven't had too much trouble in the last two decades beyond crop yields becoming lower and lower. The faction loyalties of the urban populations have spread to some villages, and there were several inter-town disputes as Council seats were being decided. In the last year, much of the country has settled down and resumed back to normal, save for the lands of the final council seat, the southernmost province of Muirfeur on the border with Saloreat, where the loyalties have been struck between the Ó Catháin's and the Mac Uighilín's.

At the same time as these struggles continue in Muirfeur, the criminal underbelly of Clontradail finds itself in similar situations: loyalties divided as two mob bosses fight over control for the poorest district in the city. Some claim the control over this district is not only directly related to the dispute over the remaining Council seat, but that whomever wins the district will determine the seat on the Council.

Notable Figures in Muirfeur

High Councillor Eithne

Selected as High Councilor among the 6 Seated Councillors, Eithne is a wise old woman. Chosen for her ability to filter all political bullshit, Eithne was initially slated to be on the previous Council before all murder assassinations. Whether it was a stroke of luck, or a role in the killings, Eithne has not only greatly prospered from the new Council, but is poised to be one of Muirfeurs best leaders.

Shannon Ní Catháin

Cunning, sly, and brutal, Shannon Ní Catháin will utilize every carefully placed card in her sleeve to get what she wants. There are very little tales of those that defied her, for they rarely exist. Or remain alive.

Finlay Mac Uighilín

Whereas Shannon Ó Catháin prefers parlor tricks and covert warfare, Finlay Mac Uighilín is an intimidating beast of a man. With very little disregard for the obstacles and path to his destination, Finlay takes what he wants and leaves a trail of devastation behind him.