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Enlightenment can penetrate even the helm of iron—Cuthbertine proverb

CAMPAIGN NEWS

News from the Top

Our bi-monthly round-up of RPGA Network news and information usually appears in *Polyhedron*, our sister publication. This month, however, we've got very important news that simply can't wait for the next *Polyhedron*. I apologize for interrupting your regularly scheduled LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign News, but I trust you'll agree that the following information is worth it.

So what could be so important?

In our bid to continue to offer better games for more members, the RPGA has dropped ALL membership fees as of the time you read this. For those of you now leaping around looking for the telephone number of HQ as you just paid us renewal money, I ask you to first please read on, as I suspect you'll like what I have to say.

To address and thank those members who have joined, renewed, or have multi-year memberships, we are working with Chessex, a leading manufacturer of gaming aids and accessories, to develop an RPGA Network member-exclusive vinyl Battlemat that will be sent free of charge to all RPGA Network members who joined prior to July 1, 2002.

Measuring 23 1/2 in. by 26 in., the new RPGA Battlemats feature a one-inch square grid suitable for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS miniature play. The Battlemats will be available for collection

at both the US and UK GEN CONS. Thereafter, we will mail all remaining qualifying members their Battlemats at absolutely no charge.

Is that the only good news? Not hardly.

I promised in *Polyhedron* #151 that I would release additional information regarding our brand-new DM Training program as that program was developed. I'm pleased to inform you that stage one of that program will be live by the time you read this. I'd like to offer a huge thanks to all those who have contributed to setting up this important initiative in such a short period of time.

The entry level in the new DM program is known as Herald level. To qualify as a Herald-level DM, new members must pass a simple test of basic table management skills administered via the rpga.com website.

This and future tests for higher judge levels have been designed to help DMs deal with situations that occasionally arise during Network-sanctioned games (what to do when a player cheats, when a die rolls off the table, or even when a player falls asleep!). The entry-level Herald test is available now. New members must take the test to qualify to order RPGA scenarios, including LIVING GREYHAWK adventures.

Current members in good standing retain their existing judge ranking (and

the ability to order scenarios). Once we've rolled out the complete program, higher level judges might have to sustain their current ranking through participation and/or additional tests, but that's a ways off.

Members who joined prior to July 1st, 2002 but who do not have an existing judge rating may continue to order scenarios as normal. Once the full program is in swing, however, such members will be required to maintain a DM rank at the minimum level to retain that ability.

We're initiating this new program because we feel it will improve the play experience of all RPGA members by giving Network DMs a common set of "best practices." In doing so, we hope to create a corps of superb DUNGEON MASTERS. Give it a little time, and we're certain you'll agree.

For now, may the goddess Tymora [or in this case, Rudd-ed.] shine upon dzos everywhere.

Ian Richards
Worldwide RPGA Director
ianr@wizards.com

GEN CON UK to Host Special Events

The RPGA Network is happy to announce that this year's GEN CON UK, taking place August 29 to September 1 at the Olympia 2 in London, will feature

both a LIVING GREYHAWK Open Regional Slot, and the special *Isle of Woe* event set to debut at this year's Origins Game Expo about the time you read this.

The LIVING GREYHAWK Open Regional slot premiered at WINTER FANTASY 2002, where hundreds of LIVING GREYHAWK players sunk their teeth into a single slot of Regional adventures from across the states and around the world run by DUNGEON MASTERS from those home regions.

Now, it's Europe's turn!

The Open Regional Slot is the only place that DMs can run a home regional adventure away from the real-world geographic region they are from. For an event to qualify, it must be a single-round LIVING GREYHAWK event, and the DM must be an RPGA Network member in good standing and a resident of the LIVING GREYHAWK region featured in the adventure. And yes, U.S. and other military servicepeople stationed abroad can run adventures from the region of their permanent residence.

And if that weren't enough GREYHAWK fun, GEN CON UK is also the second site for the *Isle of Woe* special event. Like the Origins Games Expo 2002 version of the event, the UK version features Dwarven Forge MasterMaze pieces for the dungeon works, graciously donated by the UK game store Hidden Fortress, which is co-sponsoring the event.

If you are interested in attending GEN CON UK, check www.genconuk.com.

The Curse of Tristor

It seems there is a Rhennee curse on the town of Tristor. The slated June re-release of the 2000 member-exclusive adventure has been delayed, due to some logistic issues. But, by the end of 2002, RPGA Network members will again have the opportunity to delve into the mysteries of a superstitious village in the heart of the famously intolerant Theocracy of the Pale.

The re-release of the *Fright at Tristor* LIVING GREYHAWK home play adventure, when it occurs, will give RPGA gamemasters the ability to order the adventure for home play. The new version of the event features an Adventure Certificate, instructions on how to run the adventure as a non-standard event (that is, longer than a typical five-hour slot adventure), and how to increase the challenge of the adventure to 3-6 levels of play. It also

will give RPGA Network DUNGEON MASTERS the ability to order hard copies of the adventure—which made its exclusive premiere more than two years ago—for \$9.95 U.S. (while supplies last). If you missed out on the *Fright at Tristor* the first time around, you'll definitely want to take notice of this new

the people of that recaptured and recovering city on edge. With reports that adventurers have discovered a small drow enclave under the city, that paranoia has turned to murderous insanity. No fewer than five vigilante killings have taken place over the last fortnight, as adventurers and even

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offer. Keep your eyes on the RPGA website (www.wizards.com/rpga) for more details about Tristor's rebirth.

Two Important Adventures to Debut at GEN CON 2002

Polish your sword and dust off the spellbooks—this year's GEN CON and GEN CON UK are set to feature two highly anticipated adventures—COR2-09: *Final Reckoning*, a conclusion to the series of adventures featuring everyone's favorite miscreant, Auldon Brendingund, and COR2-10: *Forgotten Echoes*, the much-feared follow-up to last year's smash adventure by Chris Tulach and Jason Bulmahn, noted masters of the LIVING GREYHAWK beat-down.

In *Final Reckoning*, by Sean Flaherty and John Richardson, your characters are tasked by Greyhawk City's Church of Pelor to help undo the taint of evil unwittingly unleashed by the Brendingund paterfamilias. After all he has done, can Auldon be redeemed?

Not even the healing spells of Pelor's priests can save you from the insane voice in your head—that familiar voice is back again, the one that whispered to you deep in the Vesve forest, and it's telling you that it is now free. Can you put an end to the *Forgotten Echoes*?

Both GEN CONS will feature a third LIVING GREYHAWK adventure: COR2-11: *Escape from Tehn*, by David Christ and Stephen Radney-MacFarland. In that event, the story that started with the *Isles of Woe* takes a dangerous turn, as its legacy erupts from the splintered duchy. Your only chance for escape is a running fight to the banks of the Artonsamay River.

Troubling Resurgence of Drow in Sterich

A troubling encounter with some disguised black-skinned elves in Istivin has

common citizens have taken to killing anyone suspected to be in league with the mysterious evil elves. While none of those who were brutally drawn and quartered by these "revenge mobs" were actually drow, the authorities are turning a blind eye to such sickening citizen outbursts. Even Marchioness Resbin Dren Emondav is said to have called the phenomena "understandable, if not unfortunate," and is said to be making plans to find out more about the danger currently threatening the capital.

The *Gloom and Disunion Cycle*, which started with the adventure COR2-04: *Birthday Bash*, and continued with COR2-05: *Behind the Veil*, marches on this October with COR2-13: *Bridge Over Svartjet*, in which characters delve deep into the Underdark in an attempt to ascertain the true nature of the threat to Istivin. ★

What is LIVING GREYHAWK?


LIVING GREYHAWK is the largest, most popular shared-world DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaign in the history of gaming. Run under the auspices of the RPGA Network (RPGA), the campaign offers gamers around the world the chance to contribute to the developing history of Oerth by playing specially constructed adventures at conventions, game days, or in the comfort of home. For more information on how you can get involved in the campaign, visit www.livinggreyhawk.com

THE

by Frederick Weining

illustrated by Kalman Andrasofszky

cartography by Christopher West

 Ages ago, in the youth of their race, a fundamental discord divided the elves into two opposing camps. On the side of goodness and light were the majority of olvenfolk, who were filled with a joyous and life-embracing spirit. But there were others, those whose natures were fettered with wickedness and cruelty; and they loved the darkness, for their deeds were evil.

So the goodly elves shunned their evil kindred and drove them out from their communities, denying their kinship and naming them drow. The two sides made war upon each other, but good was ever victorious over evil; at last, shamed and defeated, the drow retreated altogether from the sunlit lands of the surface to take refuge in the dark recesses of the underworld.

The most evil and ambitious of these drow venerated the demoness Lolth, Queen of the Spiders; and they, having imbibed of her venomous ichor, became the nobles of their kind. By demon-endowed fertility the drow multiplied and grew strong again in the underworld, their race born anew and nurtured in the balm of darkness. The drow themselves became dark, in flesh as in spirit, hating the light and all who dwelled in it.

Females of the noble blood waxed powerful in the service of Lolth, ruling their people with cruelty and cunning, leading the race of dark elves ever deeper through lightless caverns and black passages. In the grandest of all the deep caverns they built their principal city, palaces for their nobles, and a great fane for their goddess and her priesthood. Thus they created their own subterranean realm, a gloomy fairyland in which to practice all the perverse arts cherished by Lolth.

At last, rumor of their enduring evil has risen once more to trouble the lands above, speaking of strange elves as dark as the faeries are bright. If any would seek the truth of these tales, let



VAULT OF THE DROW

DARK ELF METROPOLIS

(Based on out-of-print material by Gary Gygax and Monte Cook)

them take the perilous road to the world below, that they may behold with their own eyes that terrifying and magnificent homeland of the dark elves: the Vault of the Drow.

The Last Testament of Algorhas the Seer
Councillor Emeritus to the Royal Court of Sterich at Istivín,
588 cy

THE VAULT OF THE DROW

Deep beneath the mighty Hellfurnace Mountains lies the Vault of the Drow, an immense hemispherical cyst in Oerth's crust over six miles long and nearly as broad. Its mineral-veined ceiling rises more than 1000 fathoms above its crystal-strewn floor; near the zenith of the dome is a huge mass of tumkeoite, which as it slowly decays and transforms into iacofcite glows like a ghostly, plum-colored moon in the firmament of the Vault, while other phosphorescent nodes dimly gleam like stars in the same stony heaven. The lights of this subterranean sky reflect in the dark waters of the Pitchy Flow and the Weeping Spring, and the image of the whole strange canopy is trapped and distorted within the Mere of Gloom.

Many passages and trails wind throughout the underworld, but one road enters the Vault through a fissure in its southern wall. The road descends through a gorge about 200 yards wide, which gradually becomes broader as it goes north. A full mile from the entrance, an ancient stronghold called the Black Tower stands four stories high, watching over the Underdark road. The tower's foundations rest upon a steep-sided mound of stone, its massive walls worn smooth

by the passing of ages, almost fused with the natural rock platform upon which the tower was built.

A narrow incline leads up to the Black Tower—all visitors are required to report there, for it serves as a checkpoint and customs house for foreigners entering the Vault. All non-drow are questioned regarding the purpose of their visit, and those deemed acceptable are issued a cloak of silk dyed an unnatural shade of green, which they must wear to identify themselves as aliens in the drow homeland. Interlopers who lack the special cloak soon find themselves killed or enslaved by the many drow patrols that range the Lower Vault.

An enormous natural antechamber to the Vault opens perhaps two miles west of the Black Tower. Its entrance is walled and gated, with six strong towers along its length. Behind this wall is the fortress of the military sisterhood of the Vault, a society of female drow warriors sponsored by each of the eight noble houses, but who swear allegiance only to Lolth. Nearly two and a half miles to the northeast of the Black Tower is a walled compound that serves as the stronghold of the military brotherhood of the Vault, a society of male drow warriors in service to Lolth, which is financed by the sixteen merchant clans who dwell in the Lower Vault.

The strongholds of these merchant clans are walled villas scattered throughout the Lower Vault. Disturbing forests and thickets of fungi grow between the sixteen merchant villas here, all on a floor of jagged rocks and jutting formations of crystal. To the north, by the banks of the Pitchy Flow, the black-walled city of Erelhei-Cinlu stands as a gateway to the Upper Vault. A plateau occupied by eight noble estates stands across a leering span called the Flying Bridge on the other side of the river. Further still is a guarded passageway leading to

the temple chamber of the Demon Queen of Spiders, called Lolth's Egg. The enormous red and green ochre cavern holds an accursed pagoda-like spider temple, the infamous Great Fane of Lolth.

The mostly likely destination for adventurers travelling to the Vault of the Drow is Erelhei-Cinlu itself. Representatives of nearly any race might be found here, whether as visitor, resident, or captive; indeed, it is not unknown for one person to have each of these ranks at some point during his sojourn in Erelhei-Cinlu, and the city of the dark elves is always ready to tempt new visitors with all the arousements that darkness can offer.

ERELHEI-CINLU (ch-reel-hay-sen-loo)

Erelhei-Cinlu looks out like a degenerate lover upon the homeland of the drow, as it has for countless centuries. Within its black walls ferment all manner of evils, depravities, and addictions. A 30-foot high wall of black stone surrounds the city on the east, south and west, with eleven square towers placed at irregular intervals around its length. The wall to the north is fifty feet high and made of smooth, perfectly joined stone, which runs alongside the banks of the Pitchy Flow. Two gates, one to the south and one to the north, give access to the city (though only the southern "Great Gate" is open to non-drow); there are also a number of small doors in or near the walls, though these are spell-warded, locked, and

concealed. A perimeter wall-walk links both the city gates and all eleven towers. Protected by crenelated battlements, the wall-walk crawls with groups of drow warriors on patrol.

Travelers enter Erelhei-Cinlu via the Great Gate, a broad stone structure four stories high crowned with rooftop battlements. Elaborate stone-carved figures of demons and monsters leer from the piled stones of the exterior, while the entryway holds four great warrior statues. The two larger of the quartet, the females, face each other across the entry arch, holding tall, narrow-bladed axes; the two smaller figures, the males, face out into the Vault, gripping their thin swords with both hands. A raised portcullis protects the Great Gate's interior passage on the southern end, and a large spiked bronze gate stands open to the north. Lurid frescoes of demon visages cover the interior walls, which cleverly conceal the arrow slits and murder holes that guard its length.

The Great Gate opens onto the High Street, which divides the eastern and western halves of the city. High Street runs generally north-south from the Great Gate to the Noble Gate. End Street crosses it running vaguely east-west; hence, the two branches are commonly called East End Street and West End Street, respectively. All told there are eight sections, or ghettos, of Erelhei-Cinlu. Four patrols of male drow soldiers make hourly rounds on the main streets, while six patrols of female drow soldiers roam the back streets and alleys on a similar schedule.

The two main streets meet at the broad circle intersection of the Concourse, at the center of which stands a temple of Keptolo, the drow goddess of flattery, intoxication, rumor, and opportunism. A large arena pit opens in the circle's center, where performances of the most depraved acts serve as public spectacle. The guardian priests determine who enters the

ERELHEI-CINLU (Metropolis):

Nonstandard; AL CE;
100,000 gp limit; Assets
135 million gp; Population
27,000; Demographic cate-
gory (drow 40%,
troglodytes 15%, bugbears
12%, others (surface
dwellers and undead) 10%,
mindflayers 4%, trolls 4%,
yugoloths 4%, kuo-toa
3%, demons 3%, xvarts
2%, deep gnomes 1%, orcs
1%, gith races 1%).

The Vault of the Drow



Erelhei-Cinlu

City of Drow



1. Palace of Amalriv
2. Foreign Temples
3. Antisolar Institute
4. Spire of the Encyclic
5. Twilight Gallery
6. House of Abandonment
7. Acrobats' Terrace
8. Silver Stage
9. Ceremonial Arena
10. Yugoloth Barrack
11. Verdict Hall
12. Menagerie Square
13. Sarcoma Keep
14. Alabastrer Slab
15. Necropolis Square
16. Great Gate
17. Noble Gate



Amalriv: Male drow wizard; CR 21; Medium-size humanoid; HD 19d4; hp 47; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (touch 16, flat-footed 18); Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+5, +3 quarterstaff); SQ: Darkvision 120 ft., drow traits, SR 30; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +16; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 23, Wis 18, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +26, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +10, Disguise +10, Forgery +16, Hide +12, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Listen +11, Profession (trader) +26, Search +13, Spot +2; Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Extend Spell, Improved Critical (quarterstaff), Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Still Spell.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/6/6/5/5/5/4/3/3; base DC = 16 + spell level): 0—daze (2), *mage hand*, *read magic*, 1st—*charm person*, *identify*, *magic missile* (3), *shield*, *and-darkness*, *knock*, *spectral hand*, *summon monster II*, *web* (2); 2nd—*fly*, *haste*, *hold person* (2), *vampiric touch*, 4th—*dimension door*, *improved invisibility*, *polymorph self*, *stoneskin* (2); 5th—*cone of cold* (2), *summon monster V*, *teleport*, *wall of iron*; 6th—*circle of death*, *disintegrate*, *flesh to stone*, *globe of invulnerability*, *repulsion*; 7th—*control undead*, *finger of death*, *limited wish*, *shadow walk*; 8th—*horrid wilting*, *maze*, *Otiluke's telekinetic sphere*; 9th—*gate*, *time stop*, *wall of the banshee*.

Possessions: +3 quarterstaff, ring of protection +4, rod of rulership, robe of the archmagi (black).

The so-called "tax baron" of the Ghetto of Foreigners, Amalriv is one of the most powerful permanent residents of Erelhei-Cinlu, and its wealthiest non-noble. Amalriv served house Eilservs for many years, but has since switched allegiances to Torntor. Eclavdra's return complicates matters, for although he no longer serves the cleric, his long relationship with her and her family cannot be ignored. In his own right, Amalriv is the closest thing to a mayor the city can boast, and he loves Erelhei-Cinlu as only a drow can. A survivor and above all a pragmatist, Amalriv respects power and enjoys the misfortune of the weak and foolish.

central flesh-pit: only the most attractive or wealthy. Facing this pit from the south end of the Concourse, just before rising to intersect with the High Street, is the main sewer gate.

Many smaller streets and alleys wind and zig-zag between the city's buildings, but six are especially important in separating the eastern and western ghettos from each other. On the western side of the city, the Player's Lane separates the Performers and Artisans districts, while the Aisle of Scribes divides the Artisans and Scholars. Between the Scholars and Foreigners runs the Street

of Lies. On the east, Sentinel Street twists its way in a long arc from Necropolis Square (with its memorial Well of Despair) to the North Wall, dividing the Tombs from the Savage Ghetto. From the eastern corner of Necropolis Square to the easternmost wall-tower crosses Dead End Street, separating the Tombs from the Beggar's district. Finally, cutting between the Beggar's Ghetto and the Chattel's Ghetto, is Blackrail Alley.

The Noble Gate marks the far end of the High Street. It stands out against the towerless northern wall as a final defense, not for the city, but to protect the wealthy properties to the north from the dregs of Erelhei-Cinlu. The gatehouse stands six stories high, built with a set of double gates protected from each side with portcullises and topped with crenelated battlements on the roof and the wall balcony overlooking the city. The southern archway of the gate, facing the city, features a haunting carving of Loth in her spider form, while the Queen of Spiders in the guise of a regally attired drow noblewoman leers from the northern arch. Two small towers extend from this arch to watch over the Flying Bridge to the north, which leads to the noble manors on the plateau of the Upper Vault.

City dwellings range from abject squalor to sumptuous excess and are crowded together in a chaotic welter of different shapes, sizes, and styles. Its streets and alleyways are crooked and narrow, named by signs carved into elaborate plaques, or crudely etched into the building walls. Many such signs are outlined in phosphorescent chemicals or illuminated by glowing lichens or fire beetle cages.

Though no real order prevails inside the dark elven city, its eight ghettos are historically associated with the eight noble houses. The nobles have the right to tax the inhabitants of their related ghetto, but even this is not performed in any organized manner, for the tax collectors—despised by both their masters and their subjects—seek only to enrich themselves. In turn, the collectors are normally assassinated (again, whether by master or subject, it matters little) and replaced



after only a brief time in office. Yet, since they employ the greatest number of hirelings (notably mercenary guards), they provide a boon to the economy of the city. They do so even in death, for tax collectors traditionally are honored with expensive funerals by their masters, and even more expensive funeral celebrations by friends and foes.

The life of the city goes on otherwise in an almost timeless cycle of pleasure, pain, and oblivion. A civil war in recent years has not changed this; indeed, most of the casualties of that war came from among the nobles, or the servants and soldiers of their houses. The inhabitants of Erelhei-Cinlu, long inured to bloody conflict, treated the civil war as merely another murder-spree; knowing how to hide themselves, they cast only a few of their own before the blade to distract the blood-lust of the nobles.

With the cessation of internecine strife, the common citizens of Erelhei-Cinlu have returned to their chosen professions and turned their attention to their favored victims: each other. Visitors from the surface are also choice targets, but they are often too dangerous for any but the most skilled or powerful drow to prey upon.

THE GHETTO OF FOREIGNERS

Most humans resident in Erelhei-Cinlu live in the Ghetto of Foreigners, which teems with run-down dwellings for both permanent and transitory visitors from the surface world. The establishments found here reflect this in many ways: the use of light, far more prevalent here than in any other part of the Vault; the presence of foreign temples, for no outside deities are permitted worship elsewhere in the drow realm (and even here they are treated as just another business catering to non-drow); and even the food and drink are made to better suit surface tastes, though more exotic fare is always available for a price.

Foreign Temples

The Foreigner's Ghetto is home to the only temples of non-drow gods allowed in the Vault. All are located along the Street of Lies, over the entrance of which stands a tall, gated arch covered with a relief of the demoness Lolth. Indeed a shrine to the Queen of the Spiders lies just within the gate, and tradition dictates that all visitors make a nominal offering of silver as they enter.

The first foreign temple is that of Nerull, who is well respected in the underworld (particularly among assassins and executioners). The next is a small temple to the god Boccob, frequented mostly by wizards from the surface world, but whose clerics are on good terms with a modest number of drow scholars and sages. A similarly sized temple dedicated to Ralishaz stands further along the Street of Lies, the bane and boon of those addicted to gambling. A well-appointed sanctum of Incabulos, popular with both drow and non-drow (most notably poisoners) comes next, just before similar structures dedicated to Erythnul, Beltar, and Raxivort.

A black ziggurat temple of Tharizdun sits at the turn of the street, although it serves as more of a museum than an active house of worship. Finally, near the end of the street sits a large group of one- and two-story buildings connected by pillar-lined courtyards, a motley assembly that serves as a place of worship dedicated to the lich god

Vecna. Many drow scholars, as well as evil human wizards, sorcerers, and visiting liches frequent this bizarre complex.

Palace of Amalriv

The home and private fortress of the most successful tax collector in Erelhei-Cinlu rises seven stories above the city streets. The round, multi-domed edifice of puce-colored stone squats at the junction of Squander and Salvage, near the very center of the Foreigner's Ghetto. The palace was briefly put under siege during the civil war a few years ago, but proved impenetrable despite some damage to the outer facing.

Currently, the lower two floors of the palace see much traffic, for Amalriv also acts as a pawnbroker and moneylender for the entire ghetto. Common sorts of goods are readily available here, including adventuring gear, weapons, and clothing. Amalriv stocks second-hand goods particular to the Vault, such as the red eye cusps worn by some experienced visitors and various fungal ointments used by hunters, which otherwise must be custom made by a skilled artisan.

Amalriv also offers loans, usually with severe terms that would be illegal in any normal city. His yugoloth bondsmen are quite relentless in their collection activities, and the tax collector's relationship with the city's impressive vampiric community gives him connections even on the surface. In fact, he is rumored to have a vampire harem on one of the upper floors of his palace, but visitors are not invited there and intruders may never leave.

Establishments

The ghetto features many bordellos, casinos, and taverns (or combinations thereof) suitable for the pursuit of any common vice found among the surface races. Games and competitions of every kind are available, from cards and dice to races and combat, and anything in between. The most popular gambling house is the Demon's Draw Casino, a broad, four-story edifice on Serpent Street.

Other gambling establishments include the Black Widow (bordello, casino, and inn), the Dragon's Hoard, the Turning Wheel, and Gengar's Blade, the latter known for its hard liquor and bloodsport. Famous bordellos include the aforementioned Black Widow, the Green Door, the Serpent's Charm (which employs a group of medusa paramours for select clientele), and the Dreampearl, infamous for its free use of dangerous potions and elixirs.

The list of taverns and inns found in the Foreigner's Ghetto is vast, but two are imminently suitable for first-time visitors. The Deep, on Haze Avenue, and the Far Night, an inn and tavern located on Stranger Road. Both are owned and operated by humans who maintain their own security forces and keep the local drow patrols well bribed. Though these establishments are far from safe, the proprietors strive to keep good relations with others from the surface world.

THE GHETTO OF SCHOLARS

Located next to the Ghetto of Foreigners, the Ghetto of Scholars is the next most common destination of travellers from the surface. Indeed some of the savants and scholars found here are human, or once-human, and the language of almost any race can be heard somewhere within the ghetto's confines. Tutors in any of the arcane professions

liscul; Male mind flayer Mnk14; CR 22; Medium-size aberration; HD 8d8+16 + 14d8+28; hp 143; Init +7; Spd 70 ft.; AC 31 (touch 28, flat-footed 29); Atk +23/+18 melee (1d12+7, unarmed strike); SA flurry of blows, *ki* strike (+2), stunning attack; SQ abundant step, diamond body, diamond soul, improved evasion, leap of the clouds, purity of body, slow fall (50 ft.), still mind, wholeness of body; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +14, Will +27; Str 24, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 20, Wis 30, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Balance +30, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Listen +37, Move Silently +28, Sense Motive +21, Spot +37, Swim +17, Tumble +28; Alertness, Ambidexterity, Blind-Fight, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Endurance, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Swim), Stunning Fist.

Possessions: Belt of giant's strength +6, Daern's instant fortress, gem of seeing, periapt of wisdom +6, mantle of spell resistance (SR 21), necklace of prayer beads (bead of summons), robe of blending.

The chief scientist of Erelhei-Cinlu's Antisolar Institute, liscul first came to the Vault from his native city of Dhra-Muor-Shaiiu as a student of the institute 60 years ago. He left after a dozen years to participate in field study with several successful inquisitions, but finally returned to accept his current post at the institute just five years ago, replacing the previous chief scientist, who was slain in the drow civil war. Despite his stereotypical illithid reserve, liscul relishes his position and secretly enjoys the excitement that Erelhei-Cinlu has to offer. Often seen perusing the stock at different slave markets throughout the city, liscul has become something of a gourmand, always in search of delicious graymatter fresh from the cranium.

can be found here, divided into differing and rival philosophical schools, though all are devoted to evil. These folk spend much time in vicious debate and disagreement, creating conflicts in which truth is not the only casualty.

The greatest scholarly institution of the drow in Erelhei-Cinlu is the Spire of the Encyclic, which claims the membership of the vast majority of drow sages, whether as professors, professors emeritus, or simply as students. The district sports many other scholarly enclaves as well, and not only of drow. Some human scholars, as well as smaller groups of illithid and derro

savants, also live and teach here, and even visitors from other planes are not unusual.

The Spire of the Encyclic

The Spire of the Encyclic looks down on the city from the western end of the quarter, south of the Aisle of Scribes off of Libram Square. Its broad central stair spirals up 13 stories, though only the lower three are open to the public. The Spire houses the *Libram Encyclic*, which is said to contain all the accumulated knowledge of the drow, and its guardian, an ancient male drow known as

the Inscrutable Redactor. The Redactor appoints membership to the body of scholars called the Professors of the Encyclic, to whom he grants access to the great *Libram* as well as all the libraries of the Spire.

The Professors of the Encyclic are expected to be quite ruthless in the pursuit of knowledge, as well as in the uses to which they put their subordinates. These subordinates serve as the staff of the lower libraries and often sell their services as private tutors or sages, for they, like their masters, also have access to the upper libraries of the Spire. Even the lower

libraries contain thousands of tomes and scrolls found nowhere else. Thus, the Spire of the Encyclic draws many visitors from the surface world who come in search of knowledge forbidden in their own lands.

The Antisolar Institute

Ages ago, illithid scientists founded the Antisolar Institute to broaden their scholarly contacts beyond their own race. Built of greenish-gray stone not native to the Vault, the Institute is a broad, four-story building located on both sides of central Tumkeoite Boulevard. The larger northern section of the Institute houses laboratories and lecture halls, as well as the living quarters of the two dozen illithid staff members and their leader, the chief scientist liscul. The smaller southern section is home to three derro savants and their followers, and holds an unknown number of secret laboratories. Covered walkways on the third and fourth floors join



the two sections, but overall there is limited interaction between the illithids and derro who work here.

Under normal circumstances, derro and illithids seldom cooperate, but in this case they share a common belief in a secret radiation that permeates the Vault. At one time, the existence of this radiation was more generally accepted, but evidence of its presence is no longer considered valid by most of the drow and human scholars of Erelhei-Cinlu. However, the illithids hold that its properties alter as the hypothetical radiation phases through different wavelengths. The three derro savants employed here, refugees from a past Uniting War, are acknowledged experts in the field of preternatural radiation, and the illithids wish to take advantage of their expertise. If possible, they hope to find a way to use the secret radiation to nullify the detrimental effects of sunlight upon the races of the Night Below.

Establishments

Favored pubs in the Ghetto of Scholars include the Doctrinaire and the Poison Pen, two turbulent pubs on Polemic Avenue, and the more sedate Third Level located on the corner of Missive Street and Ruse Alley. The Third Level is favored by devotees of the drowic version of Dragon Chess, who can be found here at all hours exercising their strategic abilities against each other.

THE GHETTO OF ARTISANS

The insular craftsmen of the drow make their homes and businesses in the Ghetto of Artisans. Alchemists, jewelers, sculptors (of stone or flesh), scribes, painters, poisoners, tailors, taxidermists, and more all serve the needs of an eclectic group of customers. As with their neighbors in the Ghetto of Scholars, the artisans form cabals and guilds with ever-changing alliances, disputing the quality and worth of each other's craftsmanship while tormenting their own apprentices with impossible tasks and cruel, demeaning criticism.

Much of the ghetto is inaccessible to visitors, being a maze of private walled communities, within which are houses and workshops, as well as taverns, bordellos and gambling dens open only to the local residents. Small shops and storefronts ring these closed neighborhoods, guarded with traps, curses, and trained monsters (trained wolf-spiders are commonly found roaming the premises of local shops), as well as hired mercenaries (though the latter are hardly considered trustworthy). They also sometimes employ xvart menials as "runners" to fetch raw materials or other necessities from elsewhere in the city or the Vault. Some of the artisans have made contracts with specific merchant clans, trading their finished goods for needed raw materials, while the rest sell their wares to both drow merchants and outsiders.

The Twilight Gallery

The stained granite facade of the Twilight Gallery rises three stories above Rebuke Avenue. Two tall, narrow doorways that face the street are always open, casting a dim, shifting illumination on any passerby. Within is a veritable maze of halls and chambers, filled with the paintings and etchings of the legendary drow artist, Ool Eurts. A staff of six dopplegangers act as curators of the gallery, describing the works found in their allotted sections to visitors and sometimes adopting the

guises of those pictured in the paintings. The artist himself attends gallery exhibitions of his latest works, and may otherwise be encountered wandering the city looking for new subjects.

In the final chamber hangs the *Last Canvas*, normally covered by a heavy drapery, but clearly almost as tall as the three stories of the gallery. Each formal exhibition concludes here with a viewing of the magical canvas, into which admirers are drawn to enjoy its contents at close hand. Usually an image of some Abyssal vista, or occasionally a great event in drow history, the subject of the *Last Canvas* is always entirely vivid and often lethal to unlucky visitors. Nevertheless, it is considered the high point of any exhibit. The painting remains covered at all other times, when it is said to show nothing but the great void. Obviously, anyone drawn into that image would be forever lost, and many suspect that certain unwary critics have been disposed of thusly.

The House of Abandonment

The eastern ghetto holds the House of Abandonment, a large block of tenements occupying all of Mourningweb Court. Unwanted drow and half-drow children are given or sold to this orphanage, where they are tested to determine their fitness to live. Those with aptitudes receive some rudimentary training, and the chance to demonstrate their worth, up to the age of eight years. From there they are farmed out as apprentices, given to the military societies, or sold to the nobles; otherwise they are simply cast out.

Life in the orphanage prior to this point is hardly pleasant, but it does represent the drow social ideal. The strong torment and demean the weak; all presence of kindness and trust are exploited, then eliminated; and above all, the young learn to fear Lolth and her priestesses. Deaths are quite common here, sometimes resulting in the rare "child-banshees" so highly prized as mourners by the drow priesthoods.

Establishments

Tailors who make and alter delicate drow garments dwell along the length of Sash Avenue. The tattoo artists, barbers, and flesh-sculptors, who bear some little resemblance to surgeons, congregate along Flensers Passage, where they make their alterations to both slaves and beasts, as well as to the occasional willing victim. Survival rates are actually fairly high, but even when bad alterations result in the loss of favored pets or slaves, the skills of the drow taxidermists (most located along Shredfell Lane) stand ready and waiting. Alchemists and poisoners work closely together on Crucible Road, where visitors can purchase the best, and worst, potions and elixirs. Finally, jewelers and weaponsmiths congregate near the north wall on Daggerstaff Alley.

THE GHETTO OF PERFORMERS

Drow players and performers live in the Ghetto of Performers. Musicians, jugglers, tumblers, dancers, actors, puppeteers, playwrights, poets, and singers—as well as the dreaded lurking mimes—all practice their arts in the theaters, halls, squares, streets, and even the alleys of their ghetto. All save the mimes seek the attention of the largest crowds they can gather. The more lurid and gaudy the performance, the better they and their audience enjoy it. In spite of constantly changing fads, there is always a certain sameness to drow performances;

Pruuma She-bear: Female bugbear **FTR**; CR 13; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d8+9 + 1d10+33; hp 116; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23 (touch 11, flat-footed 22); Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (1d8+9, +3 *morningstar*); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 19, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +18, Handle Animal +14, Intimidate +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +10, Ride +20, Spot +2, Swim +18; Alertness, Cleave, Dodge, Expertise, Improved Critical (*morningstar*), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (*morningstar*), Weapon Specialization (*morningstar*).

Possessions: +3 *morningstar*, banded mail +3, rope of entanglement.

The reigning arena champion is the bugbear bounty hunter Pruuma She-bear. The warrior's dramatic flair aids her reputation as a flamboyant combatant and executioner. Those who underestimate her skills at bounty hunting seldom profit, as Pruuma studies her quarry carefully, learning their habits and anticipating their moves. An excellent strategist and developer of traps, Pruuma favors using decoys, spies, and many sorts of bait carefully selected to lure her prey into her powerful clutches. A great favorite of the mistress of House Vae, Pruuma nonetheless continues to turn down offers of a position in that household, for she knows it is better to catch slaves than to be one.

however, since most drow performers are severe addicts to every vice, few of them live long enough to develop any real perspective. Most wish only for a glorious demise. To their audience, it is all the same, and they quickly find some other "star" to watch until it too falls.

The Silver Stage

The drow playwright Drucena owns and operates this seven-story theater, the lower four levels of which house the city's largest stage. Named for its pale, shimmering proscenium arch and renowned for its elaborate moving scenery and other mechanical gimmicks (including the classic *deus ex machina*), the theater also boasts the most debauched company of performers in Erelhei-Cinlu. No act is too vile or depraved for their tastes, and they constantly seek young talents to despoil.

Perhaps the most admired play in the company's repertoire is the *War of the Houses*, depicting an idealized Vault in which the noble houses bloodily destroy each other, allowing the survivors in the city to enjoy a perfect and uninhibited anarchy. The show then devolves into a typical drow orgy; performances usually sell out weeks in advance. The audience is expected to participate, and for grand performances ushers release airborne hallucinogens into the theater to add to the mayhem.

The Acrobats' Terrace

A large courtyard known as the Acrobats' Terrace stands near the southeast corner of the Noble Gate. The gate's parapets allow a good view of the courtyard, and guards often gather here to watch the performance of acrobats practicing on the field below. Three graceful towers rise four stories high in the middle of the courtyard, joined by slender ropes of woven silk that bridge the tops of the towers. Protruding arms of stone run down the tower walls, and between and around them on the ground stand small fountains, benches, and statuary.

During festivals, the resident acrobats climb and tumble between the towers, or perform feats of daring while combating each other with bladed pole-arms. Jugglers practice their arts in the courtyard below, heedless of the safety of onlookers. During less hectic periods, the lurking mimes sometimes congregate here, where they have been seen to cavort with marigoyles from the outer Vault. Outsiders are not welcomed at these silent fêtes, and will be stalked by mimes for the duration of their stay in

Erelhei-Cinlu should they breach the dignity of the mimes' gathering.

Establishments

All the underworld's a stage, at least in the view of drow entertainers, and that outlook certainly holds true in the brothels, taverns, and drug emporiums of this



ghetto. The Silk Curtain on Strut Lane is known for its acrobatic and dancing harlots. Further north, on Odium Avenue, the costumed and painted doxies of Mock Hall hurl their derision, and sometimes their ordure, on both customers and passersby alike. The Uprturned Jar, at the intersection of Mingle Street and Tac Alley, serves the best of the musty-flavored fungal wines found in the Vault, to the accompaniment of drum and pipe. Finally, the Quandarium, on Netherlorn Road, serves more refined and addictive liquors, like the deadly abyssenthe, which is said to sharpen all the senses even as it destroys the body.

THE GHETTO OF SAVAGES

Large numbers of non-drow soldiers, whether of goblinoid stock or members of the scaled-races, make this ghetto home. Bugbears and troglodytes form the bulk of these fighters, whose status in the Vault hovers somewhere between mercenary and slave. The most prominent of these mercenaries is a bugbear bounty-hunter named Pruuma Shebear; when not chasing escaped slaves, she serves as mistress of ceremonies at the arena, and she carries her heavy, spiked Morningstar of Office wherever she goes.

The Ceremonial Arena

This arena on Chainmail Boulevard provides solid, brutal entertainment to drow and non-drow alike. Built of common clay brick, it stands six stories high at its outer edge, with a special seating section for drow nobles and their retainers. The only rule on the floor of the arena is kill or be killed. Combatants include paid gladiators, bugbears, or troglodytes alone or in groups (here to settle grudges), trained or wild beasts, monsters, or any combination of the above. In addition, escaped slaves are often brought here when recaptured, assuming no one else claims them, to be given to the troglodytes for combat practice. Such captives are killed (or at least wounded) and then eaten, their unwanted remains thrown to the ghouls of the Ghetto of the Dead.

The arena is home to two popular annual festivals. The first, the troglodyte Triumph of Strength, begins with horrifying violence and concludes with the even more horrifying troglodyte mating ritual, performed each year at molting time. Visitors are welcome, but protective magic is recommended for those not naturally able to withstand the stench. The other festival is the Executioners' Revel, in dishonor of the traitorous House Kilsek, held every year since their departure. It begins with the normal roster of killings and concludes with the dismemberment and execution of drow "traitors" (potentially any in disfavor with Lolth's priestesses) by ranking bugbear soldiers.

The Yugoloth Barrack

Most of the many nycaloths and mezzoloths (see *Manual of the Planes*) that dwell within Erelhei-Cinlu live in the Yugoloth Barrack. A long, three-story structure situated between the bend of Sentinel Street and West End Street, the barrack occupies all the area from Netherdelve Alley to Carveheart Road. Built by fiends from dark red stones, the barrack's outer walls bear a beaten bronze gate on the southern face. Night hags come and go at odd times via several small doors on the north wall.

The yugoloths who dwell here are the unchallenged masters of this ghetto, though they wander throughout the rest of the city as well. It might be possible to purchase the service of one of the fiendish mercenaries, though not for any action against the priesthood of Lolth. They likewise will take no action against any of their kin in the Vault, although other creatures, including outsiders such as demons, devils, or the gith-races are fair game.

Establishments

The rank neighborhood between the Concourse and northern High Street teems with taverns and brothels catering to the goblinoids and other savage humanoids that visit the city. The Old Battleaxe, a large gambling house and tavern on Hauberk Street, caters mostly to bugbear soldiers. Further east, on Rend Road, sits the Hair o' the Grog, a tavern and inn managed by a human former mercenary who happens to be infected with lycanthropy. The jolly proprietor often entertains his jaded guests by transforming into a werewolf.

THE GHETTO OF CHATTELS

The Ghetto of Chattels holds Erelhei-Cinlu's slave and livestock pens. The slaves' treatment (and resulting quality) varies widely by trader. Many of the best slaves and beasts are located in the southern sections of the ghetto, or anywhere along the High Street. Traders offer undead and even demonic slaves along with natural creatures, though such unusual chattel usually comes from hags visiting the city from their refuge in the Lower Planes.

Demons and undead also come here to buy slaves or other livestock, as do derro, illithids, and the occasional surface dweller. The markets primarily serve noble drow, of course, who also enjoy the specialty brothels found in this ghetto. The priesthood of Kiaransali is predominant here, though always under the watchful eye of Lolth's priestesses and their servants in the city patrols.

The Verdict Hall

Overlooking the city from the east side of the High Street, just south of the Concourse, the bleached limestone walls of Verdict Hall rise eight stories high. The top three stories are actually one large pillared auditorium. Any foreigner or non-noble drow arrested in Erelhei-Cinlu is brought here for trial and ultimate disposition. Of course, guilt is the only verdict ever delivered in this court, and there are but two possible penalties for the convicted: slavery or death. Therefore, in drow jurisprudence, the winning strategy is the one that avoids trial altogether.

Bribery is the key, but negotiations must be carefully handled. Offering too little moves a detainee closer to trial, but offering too much has the same effect; for it is obvious that anyone capable of paying much is also capable of paying much more—especially when they are visitors to the city. Chief Discriminator Kemehdra reviews all cases involving foreigners that come to trial, for she particularly enjoys adding mutilation to their sentences, a task she occasionally performs herself.

Menagerie Square

Menagerie Square is home to the largest slave-market in the city, and surrounding it on all sides are establishments catering to the needs of the slave-buyer. Smiths work chaining slaves or repairing cages, while branders work to mark slaves and

Jalvan: Male half-drow Rog12; CR 12; Medium-size humanoid; HD 12d6+12; hp 54; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 18, flat-footed 10); Atk +21/+16 melee (1d6+3/crit 18-20/x2, +3 rapier); SA Sneak attack +6d6; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., half-elf traits, improved evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked, +1 against traps); AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +16, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 27, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +12, Balance +15, Bluff +11, Decipher Script +12, Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +18, Escape Artist +18, Forgery +12, Gather Information +11, Hide +24, Innuendo +12, Jump +11, Listen +3, Move Silently +18, Pick Pocket +20, Search +3, Spot +3, Tumble +20; Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse (rapier), Weapon Focus (rapier).

Possessions: +3 rapier, gloves of Dexterity +4.

An Erelhei-Cinlu native of unknown parentage, Jalvan was cast out from the guild of scribes early in his apprenticeship. He has since risen to a position of leadership among the rakes of the city due mostly to his heroic actions during the drow civil war. The nobles of House Kilsek persecuted the upstart rakes, sentencing them to mutilation and death by torture. Through his skills as a forger, Jalvan helped pass false orders and documents to mislead the authorities that attempted to rule the city, until their attention was turned elsewhere. The outcasts hid as the nobles fought, and before long Kilsek was itself brought low by the cruel goddess Lolth. Jalvan dreams of true revolution, but has made few advances since the end of the civil war. In the meantime, he makes a good contact for adventurers from the surface world who hope to find allies in the city.

beasts with hot iron and crushed crystal. While brands can be, (and often are) altered as ownership of a slave is transferred between masters, the root-brand is indelible. When properly marked by a drow slave-brander, the imprint cannot be removed by anything short of a *wish* or *miracle*.

The Venerable Fleshpeddler, master auctioneer of Menagerie Square, has dwelt and worked here for nearly six centuries. None of his many apprentices and juniors can compare to his talent for getting the best prices for slaves and livestock, though his large commissions are often too much for many slave-traders to afford. Many other "deals" can be made on chattels found in this large ghetto, but the buyer should (here, as everywhere in Erelhei-Cinlu) always beware.

Establishments

The Silver Collar, on Venom Boulevard, is an expensive and exclusive bordello, while the sanguinary pleasures found in the numerous torture parlors lining Throttle Street are priced more negotiably. Other popular brothels and taverns include the Cloven Hoof on Stable Street, the Dark Desire on Manacle Avenue, and the Soulcrusher Saloon on Slavers' Way.

THE GHETTO OF OUTCASTS (Beggar's Ghetto)

This section of the city is given over to the Outcasts, the ultimate undesirables of Erelhei-Cinlu. Among their number are the beggars, tainted by disease; the half-breeds, tainted by mixed blood (either human, elven, or outsider); and the lost foreigners, who bear the taint of their own inferior races. One quality unites all who dwell here: poverty.

The drow dislike poverty, as they dislike sickness, weakness, and ugliness, but they still occasionally have uses for those so afflicted. Therefore, the outcasts are permitted to remain here, on the edge of dark elven society. Thieves abound here, though they practice their art throughout the rest of the city, as do the ubiquitous beggars.

Thieves

The thieves of the city band together for mutual support and protection. Of course betrayals are common, but such is the way of thieves everywhere. Here, however, there are two groups at almost opposite ends of the spectrum. One branch is the lowest of the low, the dregs of even this most depraved of cultures. Most of these rogues lack the wit and skill of the powerful drow masters of Erelhei-Cinlu, but they are well practiced in the low arts of mugging, ambush, and brutal murder.

Members of the other branch hate dark elven society and would see it changed. Among them are many who have the blood of surface elves or humans. These principled outcasts call themselves rakes, to distinguish themselves from mere rogues, and they are particularly despised by the nobles. The leading voice among the rakes is the half-drow



Jalvan, who makes his headquarters in the Tavern of Nines off of Cresset Alley.

Beggars

The beggars who wander the streets of Erelhei-Cinlu make their homes, such as they are, in the so-called Beggar's Ghetto. Many—perhaps most—are simply poverty-stricken, brought to their destitute state by the usual array of addictions, curses, or incurable madness. These beggars wander the back streets and alleys, scavenging what they can and seeking handouts from those they encounter. Sometimes the drow, even the nobles, respond favorably to these supplications, for the dark elves are moved by the suffering of others and wish to prolong it when possible.

Erelhei-Cinlu also possesses different sorts of palmers, who ply the begging bowl with even greater fervor, and these are feared in their own right, for they carry a dread disease. Called the Poxbearers, these beggars plead with glazed white eyes, picking at skin covered in milky lesions connected by chalky, deep-veined tendrils of rotting flesh. The stricken rogues serve Govoc the Prophet, an influential orator most often seen begging on the Concourse in a place of honor before the sewer gates.

The mere threat of their touch is enough to provoke the toss of a few coins, but the Poxbearers also are rumored to have second-sight. To an obliging donor, they usually predict good fortune, while to the ungenerous they foretell doom. They might even grasp such an offender in order to spread the contagion they bear, which even the strongest magics cannot cure.

Establishments

Numerous cheap brothels and taverns operate in the Ghetto of Outcasts. Several rakish retreats cluster near the eastern wall. The best is the aforementioned Nines, but only those known in the area are permitted to enter the tavern. Not far away, on Crew Lane, stands the Greedy Beggar Inn, a place entirely unwelcoming to beggars, but where visitors may find food and lodging. Nearby on Fathom Avenue is the Snake & Weasel, a notorious dive, though the owner is well respected for his ability to fence stolen goods, even to markets outside the Vault. Finally, the Itchy Witch, a brothel and inn on Furuncle Road, is considered remarkable for the advanced skill, and advanced age, of its prostitutes.

Closer to the Ghetto of Chattels are the lairs of the lowly roguish thieves of Erelhei-Cinlu. Few visitors would have any desire to call on these establishments, but two are worthy of mention. The Bent Bar, on Shirk Street, is famous for its cockatrice fights. Run by a pair of half-ogre brothers with connections to the temple of Erythnul in the Foreigner's Ghetto, the place is a good spot for diners looking for a fistfight with their food and drink. The Grimacing Wizard, on Blackrail Alley, is rumored to be the best place in the city (other than the Snake & Weasel) to find the location of goods stolen in the city, particularly magic items.

THE GHETTO OF THE DEAD (The Tombs)

The Ghetto of the Dead, more commonly called the Tombs, is the lair of the undead in Erelhei-Cinlu, ceded to them in honor of their service to the Queen of Spiders. The city's vampiric

denizens are most often found here, rather than in one of the more upscale areas; for even in Erelhei-Cinlu, a city devoted to addiction and depravity, the vampire and vampire spawn's addiction to blood is considered *declassé*, little better than the ghouls' craving for flesh. Necromancers dwell here too, where they can practice their craft without restriction. They produce an almost endless supply of zombies and skeletons for their own use, as well as animating some of the creations of the taxidermists of the artisan's quarter. The ghouls who lair here are reasonably tame, following the leadership of their ghastly masters, for they have learned that they need only wait—eventually, all the inhabitants of the city become their meat.

Necropolis Square

Whether an elaborate funeral procession of some wealthy noble, the modest death service of a commoner, or even the callous final disposition of a pauper, all end in Necropolis Square. The Square is well tended and maintained, licked clean as it were by the ghouls and ghosts of the city. Eight tall obelisks, one for each of the noble houses, sit at its eight corners. At its center stands the Well of Despair, considered the birthplace of the Vault's shadows, and certainly a stronghold of those vaporous undead. By tradition, the undead do not enter the Square to feed until a drow priest or priestess has ritually shut the eastern gate. The exception to this is the annual festival called the Running of the Ghouls.

Once a year, the ghouls and ghosts of the city revert to their feral natures, running through the Tombs and spilling out into the rest of the city, where they may feed freely on any who cannot defend themselves. Many noble youth join in the debauch, though covering themselves first in a protective fungal ointment to avoid being scented as prey. A few of these young drow may even participate in the feeding, but most often they simply use their skills to open the locked gates and doors of the poor, or strangers, for the young nobles enjoy the spectacle of forcing others to defend themselves against the ravenous undead. Citizens of greater means buy wards against the undead from Lolth's priestesses, as the priestesses call the ghouls back into the Ghetto of the Dead to end the festival.

The Alabaster Slab

Erelhei-Cinlu is a city famed for its bordellos, and even the Tombs are no exception. While there are several here, the one most often spoken of is the Alabaster Slab, simply called the Slab. Only two stories high, but many more below, it is located at the intersection of Banshee Corridor and Handpallor Avenue. A true den of iniquity, the slab is a brothel of the dead. From pale and beautiful vampiric paramours to other, more repugnant offerings, the Slab serves a clientele whose passion runs cold. Particularly favored by necromancers, this establishment is operated by a seldom seen, possibly demonic madame named Suraala Mora. A devout worshiper of Lolth, Suraala makes it her mission to provide dark oblivion to her clients and customers, while seeing that her favored employees are always well fed.

Sarcoma Keep

This fortified mausoleum at the north end of Annihilation Street is the stronghold of the vampire-warlord Telagos. Once a proud human warrior of Flan heritage, he has dwelt in the Vault since he fled the surface nearly five centuries ago and

has made Sarcoma Keep his lair for more than three. The building stands four stories high, with a central tower rising four more above that. Surprisingly, many of the vampire's servitors are outcast drow or half-drow whom he instructs in the arts of warfare in exchange for their procurement of necessities for him. He also houses a group of trained trolls to guard his keep from attack, and these creatures proved most useful during the recent civil war.

Establishments

A few watering holes that cater to troglodytes hunker along the "Tomb-side" of Sentinel Street, the proprietors of which often trade flesh for coin, even to ghouls and ghosts. Closer to Necropolis Square are a small number of vampire-run taverns where humans or other living clients might occasionally be found. The best of these is doubtless the Black Chalice on Pandemonium Way, a haven for those gamblers who would "risk all" during their visit to Erelhei-Cinlu.

ERELHEI-CINLU IN THE CAMPAIGN

The drow metropolis offers many opportunities for adventure. Good or neutral parties can be drawn here in order to retrieve a lost adventurer, purchase the freedom of a slave, or capture a fugitive from surface justice. Even good-aligned characters on missions such as these might be allowed access to the city, on the understanding that they will not interfere with the ongoing commerce of the drow.

For evil characters, training in many dark arts can be obtained in Erelhei-Cinlu. For both neutral and evil alignments, there are unusual magic items, spells, or other forbidden lore that may be found here, as well. Neutral or evil parties can even enjoy visiting the city on a recurring basis; unlike other bastions of evil in the *World of Greyhawk*, the great city of the drow is "open for business" to all who wish to risk its perils.

RECENT HISTORY OF THE VAULT

Before the Greyhawk Wars fractured the nations of the Flanaess, the noble house of Eilservs devised a bold scheme to establish themselves as leaders of a true drow monarchy. Though the priestesses of Lolth opposed them, the rebellious Eilservs found power in the worship of an alien god, and through alliances with evil giants from the Hellfurnace and Crystallist mountains, Eilservs created a clandestine stronghold outside the Vault. But this gambit proved their undoing.

Marauders from the upper world followed the trail of influence back to the Vault, where they assaulted not only the Eilservs estate, but also the Fane of Lolth itself. The destruction that the surface dwellers wrought was not vast, but its effects were ruinous to house Eilservs. Its nobles were made hostages, to be ravaged by their captors; with its wealth and pride despoiled, the noble house of Eilservs fell in disgrace for its weakness.

The Fane of Lolth survived intact, but not unshaken. The wrath of the priestesses was visited upon the surviving Eilservs, and the wrath of Lolth was poured out upon the surface world. The Queen of the Spiders did not scruple to build upon the foundation laid by the fallen house of Eilservs, and in the midst of the Greyhawk Wars the giantish cohorts they had assembled were finally loosed upon the

nations bordering the central Crystallists—but this time at Lolth's command.

Though her power grew on the surface, the remaining noble houses tested Lolth's strength in the Vault. House Tormtor, former ally of Eilservs, now pressed their claim to be first among the nobility, in honor of their strength and decisive action against the enemies of the drow. Set against them was house Kilsek, once the greatest enemy of Eilservs, who also demanded preeminence among the houses, asserting their long devotion to Lolth as justification. In response, Tormtor espoused the newly militant faith of Kiaransalee and took up the banner of rebellion.

With Tormtor were joined the houses of Everhate and Alevel, who saw the prospect of advancement for themselves in a Tormtor victory. Kilsek aligned with the houses of Despana, Noquar, and Godeep, who held that sanction from the Fane of Lolth would determine the victor. Further complicating matters was the intrusion of astral mercenaries called the githyanki, ancient enemies of the illithid race. As the githyanki served on the side of the rebel faction, so the illithid felt compelled to join the conflict on the side of those who claimed loyalty to the Spider Queen.

Civil war erupted in the drow homeland—a brief, yet bloody conflict that spilled from the noble estates of the Upper Vault to the camps and villas of the Lower Vault, and finally into the streets of Erelhei-Cinlu. Before the end, hundreds of drow and hundreds more of their savage mercenaries were killed. The nobles might have destroyed themselves entirely had not the Queen of the Spiders intervened, though the cost was great to both Lolth and the noble houses. For her, the price was the loss of her holdings on the surface of Oerth, but the price she exacted from her most devoted house was even greater—Kilsek was sent into exile.

This was no simple expulsion, but a divine punishment for the failure of Kilsek to triumph over their rivals without putting the entire drow nation in jeopardy. All those of Kilsek blood were branded like slaves with the device of their house, and over this with the sign of the spider, marking them as anathema in the Vault. The servants of Lolth could detect the presence of those so marked, lest they ever attempt to return surreptitiously to the Vault. And so the Kilsek were cast out, and with them their servants and soldiers. Perhaps Lolth has other designs for her outcast children, but these will only be revealed far from the homeland of their birth.

In the wake of this departure came the revelation that Lolth had accepted the repentance of her most wayward disciple: Eclavdra, mistress of house Eilservs. The Eilservs were restored to their former holdings, if not their former position of leadership; and Eclavdra herself, that most resourceful of adventurers, became Lolth's ambassador to the realm of luz. Lest the dynamic rivalry of the houses again become unbalanced, an eighth noble family was introduced: the Vae.

A family of landless nobles from a lost city beneath the Pomarj, the Vae had long worked as slave-traders traveling with their attendant merchant clans, from whom they were indistinguishable, save for their house emblems. House Vae was granted the properties of the exiled Kilsek and charged with the task of restoring the drow to prosperity. Though they and their merchant followers were worshipers of the goddess Kiaransali (as they named her), the traditions of their cult allowed them to give deference to the Queen of

the Spiders, and so the Vae were found acceptable to Lolth and her priestesses.

Lolth took living sacrifices from the six warring houses before departing the Vault, so that none should go unpunished. Her high priestess put the chief consort of house Tormtor through the Test of Sacrifice, one of her many punishments, transforming him into a hideous drider, and conferred the surviving githyanki mercenaries to her illithid allies, to deal with as they saw fit. The drow nobles were then free to set about repairing their estates and nurturing new rivalries under the watchful eye of the Fane.

NOBLE FAMILIES OF THE VAULT

Eight noble houses control the affairs of the Vault. Over the years, houses have come and gone (usually due to internecine fighting), the most recent change being the expulsion of House Kilsek (and its subsequent replacement by House Vae) roughly seven years ago.

☐ Tormtor

House Device: Electrum javelin

Urban Mandate: Ghetto of Foreigners

Rank: 1st

Alliances: Aeval, Vae

Verdaeth (CE female drow Clr13/Ftr6), mistress of House Tormtor, has been without a chief consort for nearly seven years, since her previous mate was taken to the Fane to endure the Test of Sacrifice. Failing that test resulted in his transformation into a spiderleg horror (See "The Punishments of Lolth"), and saw him driven out of the Vault. Lolth and her priesthood exacted this price from Verdaeth in exchange for permitting her house to retain its position of superiority over the other drow nobles. Mistress Verdaeth is philosophical about the sacrifice of her consort, but would enjoy seeing Charinida, the high priestess of Lolth, suffer his same fate.

☐ Aeval

House Device: Gold wand

Urban Mandate: Ghetto of Performers

Rank: 2nd

Alliances: Tormtor, Vae

Under the rule of mistress Mevremas (CE female drow Clr14), Aeval has grown from the weakest of the drow houses to its current position near the top of the social structure. Mevremas's choice to ally with house Tormtor has proven very advantageous, as have the close relationships she has maintained with adventuring bands in the Underdark. Of all the nobles, Mevremas has the most extensive spy network in Erelhei-Cinlu. Her agents report to her on the activities of visitors whom she might find useful. Indeed, her willingness to bring foreigners into her service as more or less "free agents" is unusual among drow nobles, but she rationalizes that there will be plenty of time to enslave the world once she has gained supremacy over her own kindred.

☐ Despana

House Device: Adamantine mace

Urban Mandate: Ghetto of Savages

Rank: 3rd

Alliances: Noquar, Godeep

The aggressive Mistress Nedylene (CE female drow Clr8)

took command of house Despana during the midst of the civil war seven years ago. Nedylene's evil is unusually brutal, almost crude by drow standards, but very effective on the field of battle. House Despana is now organized in a more or less military fashion, maintained with a very un-drowlike discipline. Many in her own household would like to see their mistress assassinated, but her yugoloth guards have so far prevented the success of every such attack to date.

☐ Noquar

House Device: Bronze nightmare head

Urban Mandate: Ghetto of Scholars

Rank: 4th

Alliances: Despana, Godeep

House Noquar is ruled by mistress Fedarra (CE female drow Clr17), a traditional drow matron steeped in the virtues of Lolth. However, her house owes its current position to her close contacts with several conservative illithid factions outside the Vault. With their counsel and support, Noquar withdrew early from the house-strife of seven years ago, and so was in a stronger position than most of the other noble families when Lolth intervened to end the conflict. With the passing of time, however, the other houses have been able to rebuild their strength while Noquar has continued to play a defensive strategy, making it vulnerable to future gambits from its rivals.

☐ Godeep

House Device: Platinum Crossbow

Urban Mandate: Ghetto of Artisans

Rank: 5th

Alliances: Noquar, Despana

The mistress of house Godeep, Siadef (CE female drow Clr8/Ftr8), has ruled for longer than any of the other noble leaders currently in power. She succeeded in having the mistress of house Everhate assassinated two years before the civil war began, and with the exile of house Kilsek at the end of the conflict, Siadef was left as the most experienced noble ruler in the Vault. She was unwilling to commit to any significant military action (save for a series of strikes against Everhate) during the civil war, and this defensive stance allowed Godeep to come through nearly unscathed. In the long run, however, caution is seldom the path to power among the drow.

☐ Vae

House Device: Iron chain

Urban Mandate: Ghetto of Slaves

Rank: 6th

Alliances: Tormtor, Aeval

House Vae had no direct involvement in the civil war, but mistress Sereska (CE female drow Clr7/Wiz8) responded quickly to rumors of the house-strife in the Vault, hoping to ally with the winning side. The unexpected seriousness of the conflict proved especially rewarding to this wandering house, which not only joined with the winning alliance, but also supplanted the leading house of the defeated faction. The Vae are still not well accepted by the other noble families of the Vault, but they have made themselves useful in the restoration of drow commerce, based on active and efficient slave trade.

■ Eilservs

House Device: Bronze staff
Urban Mandate: Ghetto of the Dead
Rank: 7th
Alliances: None

The legendary mistress Eclavdra (CE female drow Clr23) returned to the direct rulership of house Eilservs just three months ago, after several years in the Flanaess. She has been invaluable in her service to Lolth since the end of the Greyhawk Wars, but the time has come to begin her final gambit in the Vault. She intends to make a bid for the leadership of the Great Fane of Lolth. The Queen of the Spiders does not oppose this so long as Eclavdra is precise in her strike against the current high priestess. The drow nation must not be further harmed, but when the time comes, Eclavdra must not be hesitant. In the coming duel, there will be no second chances.

■ Everhate

House Device: Silver daggers
Urban Mandate: Ghetto of the Outcasts
Rank: 8th
Alliances: None

The strategy of mistress Gahnah (CE female drow Clr12) during the civil war was to commit all the resources of Everhate to house Torntor, while still proclaiming loyalty to the Fane of Lolth. The result was that Everhate gained nothing politically, while at the same time losing nearly everything in its estate. Since the end of the conflict, the house has continued to lose status. Everhate now has very little left to offer any potential allies, and its lowly position is quite properly blamed on the poor leadership of mistress Gahnah.

THE SERVANTS OF LOLTH

The Great Fane is the principal temple of Lolth on Oerth. It houses the servants of Lolth, a small but powerful community of priestesses, together with their servants and guards. All of them are required to abandon the loyalties they may once have held to noble families or factions, in favor of pure devotion to Lolth and obedience to her high priestess. Matron Charinida (CE female drow Clr21) currently holds power here, as she has for the past two centuries. Her rule has been at risk several times in the past, but never more so than during the drow civil war.

Charinida chose sides in that struggle, which only helped to prolong the fighting and diminish her own authority. The civil war was finally ended by the intervention of Lolth, but at the price of her holdings on the surface. However, what few understood at the time was that Charinida had not summoned the deity. It was Eclavdra of the ravaged house of Eilservs who abased herself before the Queen of the Spiders, undergoing another of the punishments of Lolth to further prove herself. Eclavdra survived unmarred and communed directly with Lolth, making a pact with her in the Web, the details of which Charinida still does not know.

Now, seven years later, Eclavdra has returned to the Vault. Both she and the high priestess have grown in power since their last encounter, and it seems that the time is swiftly approaching when they must determine which of them is most fit to rule. In the coming duel Lolth cannot be

expected to intervene, but the rewards for victory will be great, and the penalties for defeat will be absolute. If Eclavdra should prevail, the surface nations of the Flanaess can also expect to suffer her retribution, and feel the venom of the Queen of the Spiders once again.

Drow Deities

The three gods detailed below will help Dungeon Masters interested in fleshing out the inhabitants of the Vault. Zinzerena and Keptolo are completely new. Kiaransali has appeared in several sources, but the version presented here describes her persona and motivations in the *World of Greyhawk*. The *Forgotten Realms* version of a larger drow pantheon can be found in *Forgotten Realms: Faiths & Pantheons*. A description of Lolth, the Demon Queen of the Drow, can be found in *Deities & Demigods*.

■ Keptolo

The Eager Consort
Drow Demigod
Symbol: Stylized mushroom
Home Plane: Demonweb Pits (Abyss)
Alignment: Chaotic evil
Portfolio: Flattery, intoxication, rumor, opportunism
Worshippers: Drow males
Cleric Alignments: CE, CN, NE
Domains: Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, Travel
Favored Weapon: Longsword

Keptolo (kep-toe-low) is the drow male ideal: elegant, quick-witted, attentive, and eagerly debauched. He normally appears as a young nobleman dressed in well-tailored silks of red, purple, jet, and amber. He is armed with a thin but sturdy poinard and a filigreed longsword. He affects a two-handed fighting style, using both weapons at once. Otherwise he appears dressed for the hunt, velvet-cloaked and armed with a magnificent crossbow. His relationship with other drow deities is one of insincere amity, save for Zinzerena, whom he openly despises. His symbol is a stylized mushroom, which in drow culture is associated with both strong drink and fertility.

Feed the vanity of your mistress, and all her treasures shall be yours. Be careful whom you offend, and keep an expendable companion nearby to hold culpable for your crimes. Gossip can be as deadly as the venom on an assassin's blade. Use the poison of words to destroy your rivals, that you may claim for yourself all they once presumed was theirs.

Shrines to Keptolo are found throughout the underworld, for many male drow worship him as their patron, mostly due to his association with drinking. Tales of his sexual exploits are quite popular, and there are groups of performers who act them out for festivals and private gatherings. His greatest temple is in the drow city of Erelhei-Cinlu, but only his most attractive or wealthy worshipers are permitted to participate in services there.

Clerics of Keptolo are found as advisors, critics, philosophers, and politicians; essentially, any role that does not require actual work. They seek to emulate their deity in all ways, and as such number among the most handsome and charming of the drow race. However, followers of

Keptolo remain very dangerous, for many of them are skilled dirksmen, poisoners, or spies. Utterly capricious and completely untrustworthy (even by drow standards), worshipers of the Eager Consort are deferential to priestesses of Lolth and attentive to the matrons of the powerful noble houses. In other relationships, they are manipulative and abusive, particularly with fellow clerics lower in the hierarchy.

☞ Kiaransali

The Pitiless Dowager

Drow Demigoddess

Symbol: Female drow hand wearing silver rings

Home Plane: Demonweb Pits (Abyss)

Alignment: Chaotic evil

Portfolio: Slavery, Vengeance, Undeath

Worshippers: Drow, necromancers, undead

Cleric Alignments: CE, CN, NE

Domains: Chaos, Death, Evil

Favored Weapon: Dagger

Kiaransali (*kee-uh-ran-sa-lee*) is the divine sponsor of the drow slave trade in all its varied aspects. She appears as a sinuous drow female wearing only silver jewelry and black silk veils. Her only obvious weapon is her curved dagger, but her long, sharp fingernails are just as dangerous, and her touch is said to be as cold as that of a lich. This goddess has flirted with madness, even thinking to defy her queen. But Lolth's power is inexorable, and Kiaransali has taken of the queen's venom, returning once more to sanity and servitude. The symbol of Kiaransali is a hand of a female drow with three silver rings on each finger and one on the thumb, with the entire image surrounded by the silver strands of a spiderweb.

Forgive neither a slight, nor a debt; remember that payment must always be collected, whether in treasure or in vengeance. Life is the greatest crime, and perpetual slavery the fittest punishment. Let there be no freedom for the enslaved, even in death. Death comes for all; when it comes for you, take your slaves and your treasure with you to the grave. The riches of the grave are the dowry of the mistress.

Worship of Kiaransali has changed since the drow civil war. Prior to that, she was known as Kiaransalee, but the final glyph of her name was altered in all texts and inscriptions, and her liturgy was abridged to conform to more acceptable doctrines. Her religion no longer claims any authority that does not derive from the Queen of the Spiders, though some long-time worshipers still maintain the traditional resentments.

Clerics of Kiaransali often work as slavers, and occasionally as torturers or executioners. They are meticulous, almost paranoid, about record keeping, as well as being miserly with wealth. They commonly work their slaves to death and then animate the corpses so they may continue to serve. They keep their other servants in a state as close to slavery as they can manage, and withhold wages for the slightest offense. However, despite their stinginess, they are the first to offer bounty on escaped slaves and prisoners, and they will pay these rewards in full.

☞ Zinzerena

The Princess of the Outcasts

Drow Hero Goddess

Symbol: The draped sword

Home Plane: Material Plane

Alignment: Chaotic neutral

Portfolio: Deception, humiliation, ambush, assassination

Worshippers: Drow outcasts, rakes, assassins, malcontents

Cleric Alignments: CE, CN, CG, N

Domains: Chaos, Luck, Trickery

Favored Weapon: Shortsword

Zinzerena (*zin-zuh-RAY-nuh*) is a rebellious heroine venerated by the dissidents and outcasts of drow society. She appears as a cloaked and masked drow rogue who moves with astounding agility. Her cloak has the powers of *displacement* and *protection*, while her shortsword produces a paralyzing venom. She also carries a black-handled crop, which she uses to stun her victims. The great artifact also has the powers of a *wand of wonder*. Her sponsor to divinity was Keptolo, though she gained a fraction of his power by a ruse, for which he hates her. Her symbol is the draped sword, representing her hidden menace.

Raise yourself up by bringing others down. Don't reveal your strength, or your hatred, until your victim is helpless. Don't strike until you have the advantage; the only fair fight is the one you win. Once the trap is sprung, make time to gloat before the kill. The legs of the spider are made to be broken.

The liturgy of Zinzerena is passed on in the form of folk-tales, for her faith has no place among the leadership of drow society. Her tales usually describe her hiding and waiting until her foes are weakened or lax in their attention before she attacks, and stories of her origin always describe her as local to the region in which they are told.

Clerics of Zinzerena often multi-class as fighters or rogues. They are much more common in the decadent cities of the drow, but may be encountered almost anywhere, for even the noble estates have servants and staff drawn from among the commoners. Only the most bohemian of nobles would enter her priesthood, though some have done so; inevitably, when they are discovered they are cast out as traitors to their social class. Ironically, such downcast nobles often become the greatest leaders of Zinzerena's clergy, for they are the best educated and most politically experienced. Her clerics work as anything from simple rogues, to laborers, guides, physicians, poets, prostitutes, or nearly any other profession. What they all share is a rebellious spirit and a desire for change.

LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Note: Knowledge of Zinzerena's cult has not yet spread to the surface world. At the present time, no player character in the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign can take Zinzerena as a patron. ✨