

Overall Background for Grayhorn

Overview

Grayhorn is a land shattered, once a thriving duchy for a mighty empire it has now fallen on hard times. The lands occupied by civilization have been eroding over the past three hundred years and now has taken a catastrophic turn for the worse. Into this dark time steps the Kingdom of Evendarr. The king of Evendarr has decided that the instability of the area threatens the safety of the citizens of Evendarr who trade there and the security of the Duchies bordering. In the year 599 he issues a charter for Kevyn Blackfox, Prince of Northmarch, to create the Duchy of Grayhorn.

The Ancient Past

Over two thousand years ago, a rift from the plane of chaos emerged here. A brief but destructive war was fought all over Grayhorn and the surrounding lands. The Quentari lead the fight and the rift was eventually sealed with nine crystals of great power: The crystal of the ruby flame, the malachite flame, the amber flame, the emerald flame, the azure flame, the sapphire flame, the amethyst flame, the ebon flame, and the ivory flame. The master crystal was the crystal of the chromatic flame.

The Quentari and their allies left settlements in Grayhorn to watch over the crystals guarding the rift. These settlements joined and formed the Kingdom of Grayhorn. The first King was an elf and it was to him that the chromatic crystal was given for safekeeping. The Kingdom of Grayhorn erected a beautiful city called, Alairneil. For many years Grayhorn knew peace and prosperity. Then after five hundred years the King died in a terrible accident. The races could not agree to a successor. The Dwarves of Khinzu took action and attacked and seized the chromatic crystal.

The next hundred years the tragedy of the Crystal wars ensued. The land was once again ravaged. All sides of the conflict took to hiring outsiders to augment their armies. With one of the mercenaries came a powerful necromancer who was able to seize the crystal and turn it against all the races. All the races united in the grand alliance and brought down the necromancer. At the conclusion of the war the chromatic crystal was lost. The Kingdom of Grayhorn was gone and the different races formed their own realms.

The Empire of Hadran

For the next five hundred years Grayhorn was untroubled by outsiders. Then to the north of Grayhorn the Empire of Hadran was founded. They expanded outwards especially toward the green and fertile lands of the south. When the Empire was a hundred years old the current emperor, Hadran III, sent a mighty army along the river Hadran to conquer to it's source. During this expedition the Empire discovered Grayhorn. Over the next hundred years the Empire sent several expeditions to the source of the Hadran each bringing explorers and traders to Grayhorn. Finally the Empire decided to permanently settle the area and created the Varkli (Duchy) of Grayhorn.

The Empire brought prosperity to Grayhorn and bound the other races into a web of mutual trade. The Varkli of Grayhorn was well off the main route of the Hadran and was backwater in Imperial history. This lasted for several hundred years until the Great Plague hit. Spreading from the barbarian hordes in the east the plague swept through the empire devastating entire regions. In Grayhorn the Elven races closed their borders and many areas under cultivation were abandoned. The plague died out and Grayhorn and the Empire slowly recovered. Then 41 years before the founding of Evendarr the great imperial mage school exploded in the capital, leveling it and the city.

The Grayhorn Empire

Every Varkli in the Empire was on their own as Varkl (dukes) and generals warred among themselves for the spoils of the Empire. Grayhorn was threatened on all sides when one man rose and became Varkl. Draco-lindus brilliantly led the forces of Grayhorn and defeated the armies threatening her. Draco-lindus did this by finding the chromatic crystal and using it to forge an alliance of all the races. After his victory he proclaimed the area for the Empire of Grayhorn and invited all the races to join.

At first the Empire was a success holding off Grayhorn's enemies. But the depopulation caused by the plague and the war took its toll and the Empire entered into a slow but steady decline. The end came over a hundred years ago when a simultaneous invasion of barbarians from both north and south overwhelmed the last defenses of the Empire. Since then the various regions and towns of Grayhorn have been ruled by a succession of petty kings and tyrants.

The Dark Night

As bad as the tyrants were they still brought limited law and order. But then the slavers of Niman realized the easy pickings Grayhorn offered. They established a small based called Larsa fifty years ago and now it has grown into a town. The Nimani searched all over Grayhorn raiding for slaves. The continual loss to the Nimani kept Grayhorn from recovering.

Then ten years ago from the west the undead armies of the Twin Overlords invaded. Supposedly they were two brothers transformed into greater undead. They marched into Grayhorn and ravaged the lands for over a decade. Recently they have managed to sack the largest town in Grayhorn, Stormsport. Only the holding of the Nimani in Larsa remain untouched.

RANGERS OF GRAYHORN

The Rangers of Grayhorn are a organization dedicated to protecting the land. They are a secretive organization and have been in existence for over two thousand years.

This packet is not complete; It is meant to filled out by input from the ARGO plot committee and the players desiring to play this packet. It details four aspects of the Rangers. The legend of Grayhorn, The legend of Geran Blackoak, a basic organization for the Rangers, and the code of the Watch.

History

Grayhorn

Long ago the land was at peace and untroubled. Then the fabric of reality weakening and a rift open into the realm of chaos. The Horde poured through defiling the land with their very presence. With no two creature alike, the Horde numbers were vast and uncountable. The land was not large enough for them and soon the armies of the Horde marched into other lands.

In the Kingdom of the Quentari, the Elven knight Amburien Corlennas was commanded by his King to destroy the Horde and their access to the world of Tyrra. Amburien went to the races threatened by the Horde and united them in an alliance. The war was bloody but brief, and the Horde was beaten back to the rift. There, Amburien faced the Lord of the Horde and in single combat cut off it's gray horns and defeated the creature. For this deed Amburien earned the name Grayhorn.

The King of the Quentari sent his council of mages to seal the rift. They crafted nine crystals, one of the ruby flame, one of the topaz flame, one of the amber flame, one of the emerald flame, one of the sapphire flame, one of the turquoise flame, one of the amethyst flame, one of the ivory flame, and one of the ebon flame. The crystals were set around the rift and then with the master crystal of the chromatic flame the rift was sealed.

Amburien, now called Grayhorn, gathered the armies of the alliance and thanked them for their service. He would stay and watch over the rift to make sure that no evil emerge to trouble the world. The King of the Quentari gave the Crystal of the Chromatic Flame to Grayhorn's safekeeping. Many of the soldiers in the army volunteer to stay with Grayhorn to keep his watch. Each of the races that remained established a realm in the land to call home. Over the years the races looked to Grayhorn as source of unity and as a judge to rule on disputes. The land became known as the Kingdom of Grayhorn. Greyhorn refused to be called King preferring the High Lord.

Greyhorn used his prestige and authority to spread the ideal of the Watch. To keep watch for evil, to warn others of it's presence, and to aid in destroying it. He established the city of Alarneil on the banks of the Greatflood River were all the races can meet in peace and learn from each other.

The Crystal Wars

For several hundred years the Kingdom of Grayhorn knew peace and no evil troubled it's border. That changed when a great migration of Orcs, Goblins, and Trolls came from the Windarr mountains. Mobilizing and using arms not touched for hundreds of years, the races of the Kingdom, led by Grayhorn, fought the Orcs valiantly.

The Orcs steadily increased their raids and migrated to the north and east of the Kingdom. Soon the realms of Grayhorn was besieged on all sides. Of all the races, the dwarves did the best against the Orcs and had the most victories. The other races, except the elves, began to look to the dwarves for guidance in the Orc Wars. More and more the dwarves gave respect to those who practiced the craft of the war well, and the hammers turned from the making of tools and plowshares to the making of swords.

Friction arose between the Dwarves and Elves; the Dwarves felt the Elves did not do enough for the War, and the Elves fealt the Dwarves no longer upheld the Watch and only looked after their interests.

One day, Grayhorn, was slain by a orc arrow while leading a raid. Grayhorn's daughter, Arlena Corlennas, know as Graymantle, became the Lady of the Elves. She summoned a council of the Realms to Alarneil.

At the Council Graymantle said:

We are gathered here, to mourn the loss of my father, Grayhorn. In his person he united us with one common bond, the bond of the Watch. Together we have forged a peace of three hundred years and now together we unite to defeat the Orcs that threaten all of our lands. I hope to serve you as the High Lady as well as my father did and continue the common bond that unites us.

With a rage, King Kollodorin of Khinzu, shouted

Hold ELF! Who made you High Lady? Grayhorn was a fine High Lord, I will be the first one to admit that. But do we need a Elf to lord again, in these trying times? Nay, I offer myself as High Lord, together this Kingdom can destroy the orcs once and for all!

With that, the council lapsed into bickering and arguing for hours. Neither Arlena or Kollodorin could come to an agreement and the council was evenly divided, so no decision could be made. After the tenth day of debate, Kollodorin left the Council chamber:

When the annals of this day are written, Arlena, they will mark you as having caused the fall of your father's Kingdom. I will give you a choice, either acknowledge me as High Lord and Keeper of the Crystal, or feel your father's city trod underfoot by my dwarves iron shoes.

Kollodorin went home and gathered his army and his allies and marched to Alarneil. Arlena and her allies gathered to defend Grayhorn's city. The battle that followed was known forevermore as the Battle of Sorrows; Alarneil was destroyed and Arlena was forced to retreat to the elven home of Irminsul. In the battle she lost the crystal of the chromatic flame to Kollodorin.

The years of sorrow that follow were known as the Crystal wars and all of the lands of the Kingdom of Grayhorn were laid to waste. The borderlands became inhabited by orcs. But those who followed ideals of the Watch labored to help those affected by the Wars and establish new homes that were safe and at peace.

Geran Blackoak

Geran Blackoak was a human farmer during the waning days of the Crystal Wars. At that time the Black Lord, a human who seized the crystal and used it to forge a kingdom of darkness, held the Chromatic Crystal. Geran never knew his parents and was raised by the creatures of the forest. The locals that have seen him called him the 'Wild Boy' and Geran became something of a local legend.

When Geran was about twelve, the Black Lord's men took control of the surrounding countryside. Forced to flee, Geran wandered far. One day, when he was walking thru the woods he heard the sound of a beautiful voice singing. Peering thru the Golden rushes he saw by a stream a beautiful young maiden singing and playing a harp. Geran slowly sneaked up to her and stood behind her for a long time listening.

The elf maiden finally noticed Geran and with a shriek clubbed Geran in the head with the harp. Geran fell into the stream and was knocked out when he hit head on a rock. When Geran came too he was in the prison of the ruler of the elves the lady Arlena.

For many years Geran was a servant for the Elves, the girl turned out to be Alyssa the daughter of Lady of Arlena. Alyssa took pity on Geran and taught how to speak and then to read and write. She vainly tried to teach him proper elvish manner but Geran never seemed to grasp it.

One day, when Geran was eighteen years old, the Black Lord's men kidnapped Alyssa and her servants. Geran went berserk, and left the Elves, searching for Alyssa. After an initial failure Geran formed a warband and was then able to rescue her. Geran returned Alyssa to her mother and then continued with his warband against the Black Lord. The name Blackoak stems from the first location the band ever met, Geran bade them to meet him at the old black oak by the stream. Ever since then they called him Blackoak. Geran grew older, and learned about the terrible suffering the Black Lord brought to the land. Year by year he slowly put together an organization to aid those affected by the Black Lord. But he always failed to convince the Elves, Dwarves, and other races to re-unite and destroy the Black Lord. Despairing he went into the deepest part of the forest where even the elves do not go. When he reemerged Geran was a changed man. Geran reunited his old band and went into the stronghold of the Black Lord and successfully stole the Crystal of the Chromatic Flame.

With the Crystal, Geran re-united the races and overthrew the Black Lord. Realizing that the Kingdom could never be again, Geran negotiated the Swordsheath Scroll agreeing for the wars between the races to end and that all will live their own lives. At signing of the Scroll Azadarum, Dwarven king of Ironholm said:

Before I sign, I want to know about the Crystal, whom shall it abide with, Elf, Dwarf, Hobling, or Man?

And Geran replied,

The crystal was given to Grayhorn for the wisdom he has shown in uniting the races. I do not consider myself his equal. To earth will be given the safekeeping of the crystal until the time it is needed.

With that a great chasm opened before Geran and Geran tossed the crystal into the crack and the chasm closed.

Now good King Azadarum you may sign the Scroll.

Geran became a widely respected sage, and his words on the teachings of Grayhorn was sought by many. Geran formally organized those who upheld the Watch into the Rangers. The lands of Grayhorn knew peace and prospered under the eyes of the Rangers. However with the memory of the war still fresh the races did not reunite and maintained their separate realms.

When Geran died his final death, his most faithful followers casted a spirit farewell. At that last meeting Geran spoke the following:

Before I go to the great beyond, I bid all, do not stop what we have begun, for the Watch must be upheld or evil will threaten all the lands again.

Organization

The Warriors of the Moon

These Rangers are most common. They are the strike force of the Rangers. When a menace has to be destroyed the Warriors of the Moon are the ones to do it.

The Guardians of the Trees

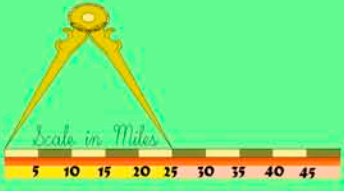
The Guardians are charged with the protection of a specific place or community. Traditionally the care of the earth and celestial circles have been given to the guardians. They establish safeholds where the races can find shelter in time of dire need.

The Runners of the Waters

They train greatly in the arts of stealth and tracking. It said that a Runner can track a man even in water. The Runners are mainly solitary in nature and specialize in scouting and finding information.

The Code of the Watch

*I do swear, as a Ranger
To uphold and maintain the Watch
To promote and foster unity among the races
To protect and defend the land
To find and destroy chaos without cession
To respect and help the weak
To attack and fight evil wherever it may lie.
I pledge my life and my sacred honor to this oath.*



Duchy of Greyhorn

599 Evendarr Reckoning

