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1 Dawn



A great life leaves a legend.
?Great deeds are eternal.?

Few lands espouse the heroic ideal in quite the same way the Dawnish do. When people think of the Dawn they imagine her favoured children, the nobility arrayed in armour, weapons drawn, eagerly seeking battle. Before them stand the troubadours, singing or reciting the epic lays of past heroes. Behind them, the war wizards, giving their strength to the battle.

Knights-errant travel the land, seeking an opportunity to prove themselves and achieve glory. Their nobility give battle in the tourney to judge who is fit to rule. The people turn their eyes on the enemies of the Empire, seeking victory and renown.

Her proud boasts are not hollow. Alone amongst the nations of the Empire, the Dawn has never given up land to the barbarians. But the aspiration to achieve great things is not just found on the battlefield. Every Dawnish feels that same urge; this is a nation that eats and drinks glory.

Enemies deride the nation for its stifling and outmoded system, where might makes right and the needs of ordinary people take second place to the quest for glory. And yet, they have forgotten the truth at its core - that great deeds are eternal.

1.1 Five things about Dawn

- **Nobility is an achievement, not a birthright.** Nobility is vaunted in Dawn, but it is a nobility of spirit they admire, not a title that you inherit.
- **A great life leaves a legend.** The only thing that remains when you depart this life is the memory of how you lived it. Death is nothing compared to great deeds.
- **Glorious in victory, proud in defeat.** The Dawnish relish a challenge. Those more skilled present an opportunity for glory by defeating them, those less skilled offer you an opportunity to demonstrate your prowess.
- **You cannot armour the soul.** The Dawnish do not hide the great passions of the soul; they wear their hearts on their sleeve.
- **Courtship, romance and tragedy.** The rules of the heart are complex in Dawn; sometimes love is the greatest challenge.

1.2 What the Dawnish are not

- **Chivalrous.** Dawnish nobility are always intensely competitive; they don't open doors for anybody, male or female. Dawnish women are independent and as obsessed with glory as their male counterparts.
- **Required to be honourable.** The Dawnish obsession is with triumph and renown; it does not demand a generous spirit.



Lady Griffinsbane surveys her nation

1.3 Further Reading

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2 Dawn people



Life is a quest; glory is the only acceptable end.
Life in Dawn is a quest, a great contest in which the goal is to achieve glory at any cost.

The people of Dawn are divided by the Test of Mettle. Those who have passed the Test are granted the status of nobility, the right to call themselves lord or lady, and entry into one of the noble houses that rule Dawn. Those who have never taken the test are yeofolk, farming their land, fighting as rank and file in the Dawnish armies, or serving as retainers to Dawnish nobility.

At the heart of each house is a powerful noble family, but the tradition of adoption means that many members of a house are only nominally related to each other. Membership is determined not by birthright but by passing the Test of Mettle set by the house. Each house is led by an Earl, selected by the nobility that make up the house. A member of a noble family who has not passed their Test of Mettle is technically a yeofolk, although one that may enjoy significant comfort depending on their family.

Any lineage is generally considered a mark of distinction in Dawn and individuals of every lineage, particularly the changeling and cambion, are common in many noble houses. Lineage clearly identifies an individual as being *special*, and great things are assumed of those who possess any amount of lineage. As a result, the Tests of Mettle are often significantly harder for those with lineage, not because of prejudice but simply because their "magical blood" is assumed to give them an edge.

A small number of noble houses choose to restrict membership to a single lineage, setting their Tests of Mettle such that only those that share their lineage can pass them. These houses often send their children that haven't manifested lineage to other houses, and prefer to foster lineaged children. They are often equally accepting of yeofolk children with lineage, and some actively seek them out. This practice is particularly common with changeling houses.

Nobility and its trappings are widely and lavishly celebrated. Tourneys are held to mark religious celebrations, weddings, births - almost any public occasion will be used as an excuse for nobility to display their feats at arms. Not only knights take part - musicians, mages, and craftsman are all encouraged to participate in public demonstrations of (generally friendly) rivalry, with prizes awarded to those judged best by their peers.



Nobility and its trappings are widely celebrated.
Romance is a vital part of life in Dawn. The Dawnish pride themselves on their charm and good manners; they enjoy the act of courting for its own sake and many see clever flattery as an art form. But if a Dawnish citizen is pursuing love, then they are expected to treat the challenge as seriously as they would the pursuit of glory - to woo the object of their affections, to demonstrate their depths of their love with a test of ardour, and thus to win their heart. The unique traditions for marriage in Dawn reflect the importance they place on courtship, romance, and love.

Apprenticeship, and the relationship between master and apprentice, is a common tradition for Dawnish yeofolk. The children of nobility are more likely to be instructed by tutors, skilled professionals hired to teach them hunting, singing and the arts of war. Most tutelage include a series of ever more difficult, and sometimes dangerous, challenges.

Money is largely seen as something as the business of the yeofolk in Dawn. A noble enjoys the comforts and opportunities wealth affords, but few care where it comes from. A noble house usually employs a professional yeofolk called a seneschal to manage their estates while a noble will keep a retainer to deal with the ignoble activities of counting coins, working out budgets and paying for things. When an earl decides to throw a tourney, they tell their seneschal to see that it happens. A noble who worries about money risks forgetting that what matters in Dawn is glory.



Nobility comes from glorious deeds, not an accident of birth.

2.1 Names

Names in Dawn are inspired by chivalric French and Arthurian romance. Given names in Dawn are full of romance and meaning. Parents might name their children after great heroes, after beloved relatives or virtues to which they wish the child to aspire. A name should have a story, which the child should be ready to tell if asked ? ?*I was named for my uncle, who fell defending the Barrens at the battle of the Seven Fords the year I was born.*?

Formally, all nobles append the name of the noble house to which they belong. However, a noble may also be known for the manner in which they passed their test of mettle, for a distinguishing feature or for their heraldry. Geoffrey of House Rousillon, for example, might be known as Geoffrey the Brave, Geoffrey Wyrmsbane, Geoffrey the Short or simply Geoffrey Rousillon. An unpopular noble might find themselves mocked by the common use of an unflattering nickname.

Several noble houses retain the archaic prefix ?de? before the House?s name. The more traditional see this as mark of distinction and ancient lineage - other, newer houses have dismissed it as outmoded.



It is common for a noble to preface their name with a fitting title.

2.1.1 Sample names

Alys, Alienor, Ancelyn, Annice, Balian, Bohemond, Circe, Eddard, Elaine, Gawaine, Geoffrey, Guy, Honour, Hugh, Igraine, Isolde, Kay, Marguerite, Marthe, Mathilde, Melusine, Morgaine, Phillip, Rodric, Roland, Stephen, Sibylla, Tancred, Tristan, Yvaine

N.B. Whilst some names are inspired by real-world names which may be given to specific genders, Empire is a gender-blind setting and people of any gender choose any name they like that is appropriate to their nation.

2.1.2 Titles

Members of a noble house are entitled to adopt an appropriate title to indicate their status. Lady, Liege, and Lord (e.g. Lord Raynard de Courville) are the most common with the latter in particular used by nobles of any gender, but nobles are free to pick their own title as they prefer.

The head of the house may use only the house?s name (e.g. Lady Elaine de Courville, on rising to be the head of the household, may choose to be addressed simply as Lady de Courville), but all other members must also use their given name. More commonly the head will use Earl to indicate their status (regardless of gender). A witch who is the head of a house usually adds the epithet of ?Enchanter' or enchantress to their name. (e.g. Earl Raynard the Enchanter de Courville or often just Raynard the Enchanter.)

Knights - both questing knights and knights-errant - often use the prefix "sir" or "ser". These terms are used interchangeably by all genders.

Yeofolk usually take their trade as their surname (e.g. Fletcher, Steward etc.)

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3 Dawn culture and customs



The Test of Mettle proves the worth of a noble of Dawn.

3.1 The Test of Mettle

The Imperial citizenship tests were created by the Dawnish but the Test of Mettle remains unique to Dawn. The Test exists to judge who is glorious enough to join the ranks of the nobility. Passing a noble house's test makes the applicant part of that house. Consequently it is almost impossible to pass the test unless the noble house that is judging you is amenable to your success. Dawnish legends are full of tales of heroic individuals passing the tests against such odds, but the reality is usually more prosaic.

Any Imperial citizen is eligible to attempt the Test of Mettle and most scions of noble houses attempt it. In theory any yeofolk child can take the test, a fact of which the Dawnish are inordinately proud. In practice, while the rewards for success are high, the tests are difficult to pass without the support that an upbringing in a noble house provides. The tests are difficult even for noble children and groups of them will often work together to help each other pass their test. Setting an appropriate test is a key part of the responsibilities of the earl of any noble house.

Ignominy befalls those who attempt the test and fail, whether yeofolk or noble born, and the test is difficult to pass and often dangerous, not least because many Dawnish children take the view that you should pass the test or die trying. For this reason most tests are deliberately open-ended, giving the aspirant as much time as is needed to prove their worth. Those attempting to pass their Test of Mettle are formally called knights-errant and are often accorded some of the privileges of nobility.



Disputes are settled by a Test of Resolve; direct martial challenges are common but by no means universal.

3.2 The Test of Resolve

When a dispute arises between members of a noble house, it falls to the earl to settle the matter. Usually the earl sets a challenge to resolve the matter - a Test of Resolve. Choosing one side or the other risks favouritism. It is much more in the Dawnish spirit for the matter to be settled with a challenge. The loser faces the judgement of the earl, which can be anything up to expulsion from the house. The penalty is announced before the test begins, which has led to several tragic incidents. Refusing to comply with or enforce an agreed penalty causes a great loss of renown for all involved.

A fair test is one that plays equally to both parties' strengths; if two knights are arguing then an earl might order a bout of arms to settle their dispute. If a knight and a troubadour disagree, an earl is much more likely to set them a challenge that does not favour either of their particular skills. It is possible for either party to employ a champion from their house to compete in their stead. Champions are rare however for they share the fate of the noble whose cause they championed if they lose.

Tests of Resolve are often offered to citizens of other nations who bring complaints against individual nobles. They are not always accepted; however, facing such a challenge is a simple way for a foreigner to impress, especially if they can win, or at least lose graciously.

A Test of Resolve between members of a noble house is the only way for a noble to be ejected from the house. Such tests are rare for the challenger risks the same fate as the person they challenge; the loser is stripped of their nobility and reduced to the status of yeofolk. Such a fate is almost irreversible; it is exceptionally rare for another house to allow a former noble to join. They must take a second Test of Mettle to prove themselves and such tests are fatally difficult; it must be clear to everyone who witnesses the test that it was difficult enough to erase the stain of previous failure.



A noble suitor must succeed at a Test of Ardour if they are to marry into a house.

3.3 The Test of Ardour

Marriage brings yet another challenge for the Dawnish nobility. The suitor must put their troth to the house of their intended. The earl of the house must set the suitor a test of their choosing, called a Test of Ardour. A request for marriage, like a request for a Test of Mettle, may not be refused. If the suitor succeeds then they marry their intended and become a member of their spouse's house.

In theory such a troth can be put to a house without the understanding of the one the suitor seeks to wed. In practice such behaviour is more the stuff of legend than reality. A Test of Ardour that appears fatally difficult is a sure sign of an unwanted affection. More commonly noble lovers conspire to decide whose earl can be persuaded to set the easier test.



Children passed over at birth are raised as full
members of the noble house that adopts them
The Test of Ardour is just one of the many complex social rules surrounding marriage in Dawn.

3.4 Fostering and adoption

Before Imperial rule forbade war between the houses, it was commonplace for a defeated noble to swear oaths of fealty or good intention. To ensure these oaths were kept, all the noble's children would be taken as hostages. To avoid this fate, a noble would send every second child to be raised in the houses of friends and allies. Over time it became increasingly common for powerful nobles to adopt talented children into their own family.

This custom continued after the Empire brought peace to Dawn, so that now, children passed over at birth are raised as full members of the noble house that adopts them. Such children have the same rights and responsibilities as their siblings who are born into the house; the Dawnish ideal is that an earl should treat all the members of their house as if they were of the same blood. Tawdry tales of earls who fall short of this ideal are common, but it is not unusual for an adopted noble to become earl of a house.

It is possible, though rare, for yeofolk children to be adopted by a noble family. Occasionally it occurs because a child catches the eye of a noble, impressing them with their potential, but usually this is done as an act of gratitude towards a parent by a powerful noble. A common tale in Dawn concerns a noble whose loyal retainer does them a great service, and the noble rewards them by adopting their child - after all, there is little advantage in adoption of an aged retainer to either party.



Heraldry helps define identity in Dawn.

3.5 Heraldry

Every noble house has its own unique heraldry. On the field, in camp, and decorating every castle and manor house in Dawn, is their distinctive heraldry, woven and embellished by the witches of the weaver cabals. Any noble of the house is entitled to bear its arms on their surcote and shield, and when the house marches to war they do so under their banner. Yeofolk require a noble house's permission to bear their arms, but most nobles prefer their retainers to be dressed in their colours, the better to emphasise the glory and majesty of their house.

Although knights-errant are not technically noble, they are permitted to carry the majestic royal blue national banner, displaying a blazing golden sun, and to display the device on their arms. For this reason, nobles who wish to conceal their identity, or house affiliations, sometimes choose to present themselves using Dawn's heraldry rather than their own.

Dawnish heraldry favours bold colours, high contrast stripes and chevrons, and fantastical beasts as devices. Very complex heraldry with multiple divisions and colours is generally avoided as confusing and less splendid than a simpler but more striking design.

On the rare occasions when a noble is exiled from their house, they are usually publicly stripped of their heraldry, their shield defaced, and their name struck from the house's records. In some houses, they are given a cloak or surcote in dull brown undyed cloth as a mark of shame before they are driven out.



The grand tourneys are an old tradition recently returned to prominence since the change to senatorial elections.

3.6 The Grand Tourneys

At each summit, the assembled people of Dawn host a grand tourney, which all Dawnish nobility are eligible to participate in. While yeofolk may not compete, by long tradition of the grand tourney, a blind eye is turned to the participation of knights-errant - who often take part incognito dressed as black knights. The tourney takes the form of a grand melee, the winner being the last participant standing when all others are defeated or have yielded. With help from the troubadours, the champion will be crowned as that season's knight-protector.

The winner could be a witch as easily as a warrior; the contest is open to both. The use of magic is expected in the tourney, and the victor is generally understood to be experienced at dealing with magic in battle regardless of whether they wield magic directly themselves. Regardless of their skills, the knight-protector is expected to help Dawn deal with the realm in question and in particular to be first to stand against any threat that might issue forth from the realm.

Each Knight-Protector is an Imperial title. The winner holds the title for a year, so the Knight-Protector of Winter will reign until the start of the next winter tourney, the Knight-Protector of Spring will reign until next spring - and so on. A reigning knight may not compete in a grand tourney until a year has passed - they can try to retain their title the following year, but they cannot compete for a different title before then, even if they resign their title or are revoked. They are often asked by the egregores to help oversee the other three grand tourneys, as they are not allowed to participate. Only one grand tourney is held each season. If a knight-protector dies, steps down, or is revoked, the title remains vacant until the next time the grand tourney would be held.

To mark the prize, the Dawnish egregores have asked the weavers of Weirwater to recreate a set of glorious banners, one for each of the seasons. The banner will be presented to the winner after the tourney, either by the egregore or by the previous winner. The bearer is expected to protect the banner with their life - and to hang it prominently in their tent at Anvil and in their hall at home where all may see their glory. Each banner bears an enchantment that allows the bearer to pass through any portal connected with a regio - including the ability to visit the Hall of the Worlds. In addition, the knight-protector is treated by the eternals of the appropriate realm as an emissary, and granted certain protections from treachery or violence when treating with them if they carry the banner.



While the pursuit of glory can be a serious business, the people of Dawn never pass up an opportunity to celebrate love.

3.7 The Night of Flowers

At the Spring Equinox the people of Dawn celebrate their Night of Flowers. Although similar in some respect to the Urizen Festival of Flowers that takes place at the same time, this is a celebration of emotion and openness - although not necessarily of Virtue. Participants are encouraged to "wear their hearts on their sleeves", and it is customarily a time where romantic relationships begin or are renewed. The festival is an important part of Dawnish culture, as it encourages a period of relatively consequence-free communication between the noble houses of Dawn.

During the festivities, the Dawnish mark gifts of flowers to those toward whom they have strong feelings. While it is common to celebrate romantic feelings, flowers may also be given to make feelings of respect, hatred, filial affection, or any number of other emotional ties. As befits a time of new beginnings, the Night of Flowers often sees the formation of new bonds of love, friendship, and respect, or the beginning of fresh rivalries between those who compete for glory.

Every house has their own codes of what flowers mean. Although some flowers have universally accepted meanings, part of the festivities revolve around deciphering the meaning of any flowers that have been received.

As part of the celebration, one member of the nation is chosen to be the Knight of Flowers; a guised figure who can be prevailed upon to carry favours and flowers on behalf of any noble or yeofolk to their intended recipient. The Knight of Flowers is important to the celebration as it is their role to ensure flowers are shared and to help decipher meanings while ensuring that the festivities match the Dawnish spirit. It is seen as an honour to be girded as the Knight of Flowers and (unsurprisingly for Dawn) competition for the right to bear the mantle can be intense.

Those who choose not to partake in the ceremony are encouraged to wear a black sash to display their choice and it is not appropriate to give flowers to these people.



3.8 Funerals and births

Funerals are sombre occasions in Dawn, accompanied by a period of public mourning for friends and relatives. A Dawnish funeral often represents a display of grief, an outpouring of passionate despair that a loved one has departed the mortal world. After the funeral itself, the friends and relatives of the departed celebrate the return of the soul to the wheel, and tell great tales of the dead to persuade the hand of destiny to speed the hero?s return, but they do so in the knowledge that the parting of death is something tragic, not something commonplace.

After death, the body is normally interred in a grave, usually marked by flowering plants or trees. Where several people die at once, such as in the aftermath of a battle, a barrow mound may be raised. Graves in Dawn are generally well tended by surviving relatives, and as memory fades they are slowly forgotten. The graves of heroes, however, often become sites of pilgrimage for those inspired by their tales, who also ensure that the site is tended. Several great heroes are interred in the marble tombs of the Necropolis in Highguard, but this is not commonplace. In a nation of glorious heroes, it requires something special for the priests to request that a body be interred in the necropolis to serve as an inspiration to the entire Empire.

There is a tradition of visiting expectant parents and telling tales of great heroes, to awaken the heroism of the unborn baby?s past lives. There is a folk belief that an unborn child has a close connection to the Labyrinth that may persist for up to a year after birth, and if a baby consistently seems to "react" to certain tales, it is taken as a sign that the child may be a reincarnation of one of the characters in that tale. The Imperial Synod does not endorse this belief, but it does not prevent the tradition remaining popular.



3.9 Icons and Artistry

The arts of painting, weaving, and tapestry are very popular in Dawn. Dawnish artists favour bold colours and dramatic scenes with the most common subject being either a glorious or romantic figure (or group of figures), or a magical heraldic beast. Art that celebrates the Dawnish virtues is seen as superior to paintings of landscapes or abstract art.

The most easily recognisable Dawnish icon is the golden sun-in-splendour against a blue field. This represents the highest aspirations of the nation and is found everywhere in Dawn. It is especially common as part of the heraldry of a knight-errant. Heraldry is most commonly found on surcotes and banners, but it is often added to shields and favours. In Dawnish eyes, almost anything can be enriched by adding personal or house heraldry to it.

In particular, there is stiff competition to have the finest heraldry and the brightest banners. Weaving is highly-respected talent in Dawn where a resplendently painted, embroidered, or appliquéd banner is a source of immense pride to the artist that creates it, and to the house or noble that bears it aloft. The most coveted Dawnish standards are beautiful and valuable works of art, prized as heirlooms by the house that owns them.

3.10 Further Reading

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4 Dawn look and feel



Sumptuous materials and vibrant colours secure Dawn's place as the land of glory.

4.1 Overview

Arthurian, competitive, gleaming, glorious, romantic, Shakespearean, tragic, triumphant
Dawn is the land of valour; the classical images of gleaming plate, of brightly coloured banners and traditional heraldic devices provide the imagery for the nation. Where the Marches is gritty and down to earth, Dawn is the opposite in glowing primary colours. There is a sumptuous nature to the materials and tones used, idealistic in design instead of practical. The Arthurian, pre-raphaelite and neo-medievalism movements all provide strong themes and forms to the nation.

There is a touch of tragic flaw to the people here though also, with elements of Shakespeare's tragedies and Tennyson's poems threaded through their lives, leaving shadow in contrast to all the glorious polished armour.

Also see Dawn costumes and icons and artistry.

4.2 Breakdown

Influences
Idealised high medieval, Pre-raphaelite, Arthurian

Materials
Linen, velvet, silk, damask, brocade, fur linings and trim, butter-soft kid leather and suedes.

Colours
The palette is summer, a meadow in full bloom. It?s a myriad of bright, floral colours, accented with some darker jewel shades. Gold, emerald green, bright reds, clear sky blues set off against an occasional sumptuous black. Whatever the colour it should be vivid and lush but remain tasteful.

Armour
Most knights wear the most flamboyant armour they can afford, often covered with a surcoat bearing their personal or house heraldry. Some will wear mail, some with plated reinforcement, and some a full harness. Knights-errant often wear less armour but everyone who is part of a noble house will

sport their colours.

High quality leather armour mimics the form of plate ? breastplates, gorgets with articulated arms, vambraces etc may all be worn and often bear their owners? heraldry as a form of rich decoration. Full length ?coats? of leather scale or plates may be worn alone or under more leather armour.

The armour is designed not only to protect in war but also to proclaim their glory and make their deeds all the more memorable.

Shields

Shields are highly popular in Dawn, as much for their decoration as their ability to protect. Heater shields are the favoured shape, decorated with personal or household devices.

Weapons

The archetypal Dawnish weapon is the medieval broadsword, but ornate warhammers, maces and axes are also used. Missile weapons are rare; archery is seen as a fitting contest of skill, rather than a glorious weapon of war.

4.3 Clothing

The classic dress for all genders is a long robe with full sleeves or houppelande. The cloth may be silk, velvet, brocade or fine wool and could be subtly patterned. They are often fur trimmed. These are generally worn over a long shirt, well cut trousers and high legged boots. Some Dawnish might choose to wear a dress or bliaut instead, with simple flowing lines and quite a low neck line, possibly revealing a chemise or shift below. Sleeves are again often extravagantly long. Houppelandes may be worn over a long shirt, well cut trousers and high boots.

Headgear for everyone is extravagant, and it is definitely headgear rather than hats. Chaperons are often worn to impress, and the type of headdresses worn by Arthurian women are the stuff of legend and fantasy. Circlets and headbands are also popular for all whether made of gold or simple leather.

Jewellery is exquisite - a jewelled dagger sheath, a filigreed necklace, a pair of combs, even the poorest will have a piece of treasured jewellery handed down.

4.3.1 Noble costume

Noble costume should aim to be resplendent. The cut is simple - sleeves may be dagged but are not slashed or puffed - the fabrics are luxurious, the colours are rich and hems are lined with fur or ermine. Often costume is in house colours or embroidered with the house?s device. An emphasis on form over function can mark an outfit as particularly Dawnish. With dresses, cuts are simple, but the materials, the colours, the linings and the trims are rich, detailed and luxurious. Silk, velvet and brocade are ideal. Belts and pouches are best richly dyed leather suggesting wealth, with metal accents.

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4.3.2 Yeofolk costume

The costume of Dawnish Yeofolk echoes that of nobles, and while it often includes vibrant colours it is likely to be a little less ornamented and more practical then the resplendent clothing of their betters, but many are prosperous and most still dream of taking and passing a Test of Mettle. They mix easily with the nobility and richer yeofolk may look similar to nobles from an impoverished house.

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4.3.3 Headwear

Dawnish Headwear encompasses all the more elaborate medieval variety of hats, up to the start of the Renaissance. Headgear for all genders is extravagant, and it is definitely headgear rather than hats. Chaperons are often worn to impress, and the type of headdresses worn by Arthurian women are the stuff of legend - henins, crispinettes etc.

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4.3.4 Jewellery

Jewellery is an important part of costume for all Dawnish nobility. Ideally it should be ornate and bejewelled to emphasise the status of the wearer. Jewellery is exquisite - a jewelled dagger sheath, a filigreed necklace, a pair of combs, even the poorest will have a piece of treasured jewellery handed down. Crowns and tiaras are common for earls and other nobles who wish to demonstrate their political power. Fillets and headbands are also popular for all whether made of a precious metal or simple leather.

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4.3.5 Children

Young children are an opportunity for noble houses to display their wealth and power. Squires are dressed in robes decorated with the house symbols. Older children, noble or yeofolk, want the most expensive clothes their parents can afford. Even when it is not ornamented, it is often strikingly coloured.

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4.4 Armour

4.4.1 Plate

The very wealthiest knights of Dawn possess a harness of plate, but it is more than just armour. The nation, house or personal symbol maybe etched, engraved or decorated on the armour. Alternatively a rich embroidered cloak could be thrown over the plate. A beautiful surcoat or jupon can be used to emphasise the knight?s regal nature . Individual pieces of plate are often worn over mail. Even without a surcoat, a noble can demonstrate their link to a house with a richly dyed padding worn under the harness.

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4.4.2 Mail

Mail is highly valued, either worn under plate or by itself. Ideally such armour should include a surcoat or a robe decorated with a house symbol, often a fabulous beast like a chimera or a dragon.

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4.4.3 Leather

Leather armour is common in Dawn, and is often worn by yeofolk and knights-errant. It should range from simple protection to something designed to look as stunning as possible.

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4.4.4 Mage Armour

Mage armour, like other Dawnish armour, is often ornamented and may bear heraldic devices.

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4.4.5 Shields

Shields are highly popular in Dawn, as much for their decoration as their ability to protect. Heater shields are the favoured shape, decorated with personal or household devices. The traditional Dawnish shield is a heater or a kite shield. Whatever the shape, a shield is the perfect place for a Dawnish noble to display their personal arms or the insignia of their house.

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4.5 Inappropriate Costume

Whilst this look and feel page provides the ideal costume for the nation, it is important for players to familiarise themselves with the general costume rules for further guidelines, including those for inappropriate costume.

4.6 Further Reading

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5 Dawn hearth magic



Flowers are often used as a symbol of love - or as a favour.

5.1 Overview

In the world of Empire, formal magic is the application of learning and willpower to create supernatural effects. There is another form of magic, however which does not require the user to be a magician. Hearth magic employs the innate natural magic of the world to produce subtle but significant effects in much the same way that a compass needle always points true north. The magic is not based on the abilities of a magician, but relies on the innate mystical properties of the world. Hearth magic is usually subtle rather than potent, and where formal magic is predictable and reliable, hearth magic is none of these things.

While the principles that underlie hearth magic are common throughout the world, in Dawn there are certain specific practices, customs, or traditions that draw on the power of the world's innate magic. Often these proud customs are nothing more than traditions - but sometimes their practice taps into some facet of the world resulting in a truly magical effect.

You can learn more about hearth magic, what it is and how it works, here.

5.2 Favours

When worn openly a favour serves as a talisman to ward off misfortune and may bring triumph or glory. A common favour is a strip of cloth which has been embroidered or painted by the donor, often with something that symbolises the noble or their house, but they can take any form with Flowers especially popular. A common practice with a favour is to include its presentation as part of a girding ceremony - the favour is usually the last piece of equipment attached during the ceremony. Likewise, ritual magic in Dawn that creates a personal enchantment is often reinforced by the presentation of a favour from the ritualists to the targets.

It pays to be judicious when accepting or wearing a favour. There are cautionary tales of Dawnish folk who suffered ruin when a favour they carried was stolen or secretly swapped for another. Likewise, favours are not guaranteed to protect the bearer. There are ignominious stories of knights slain while undergoing a test of ardour because of a favour gifted by someone who secretly loathed them. Such favours may even carry powerful curses, or simply fail to protect the knight at a crucial moment.

Favours in Play

Although a favour can be a beautiful work of art, it doesn't have to be. Something as simple as a ribbon with a flower pinned to it can serve as a favour - especially given the associations in Dawn between flowers and love. Using a favour in play can be as simple as preparing a suitable item and presenting it to someone with appropriate in-character ceremony. The actual presentation is more important than the favour itself, it is an excellent opportunity for iconic Dawnish interactions.

Trying to win someone's favour can lead to many dramatic scenes, but they can also be offered by political rivals to breed competition or suspicion. If you spot that a Dawnish character is wearing a favour, enquiring after its provenance encourages the other player to share the story with you - or to be creative if they have a reason not to tell you who the favour came from. There are plenty of opportunities for drama when publicly wearing a favour from an unexpected source, or one with unfortunate political implications. When recounting stories, it can be fun to assign any success or good fortune to the influence of a favour.

It's great to use favours in any ritual magic used by Dawnish magicians to create an enchantment - or a curse. Rather than use a more traditional favour, a coven might create strips of cloth marked with a magical symbol such as one of the realm magic sigils developed by Dawnish enchanters to use as magical tools in their rituals. This makes them distinct from common favours which represent a close bond between individuals, and highlights that they are used as anchors for magical effects.

If you want to roleplay that you are giving someone a favour that is laced with loathing or contempt, then that's best done by taking an out-of-character opportunity to let them know. It's always up to the recipient to choose how their character suffers from accepting a malignant favour (hearth magic is never a reliable way to cause trouble for another character after all).



A knight becomes larger than life by girding themselves.

5.3 Girding

Traditionally, girding refers to donning armour and readying weapons before a battle, but in Dawn it is used to describe preparing for a challenge by formally dressing oneself in appropriate garb. It is usually done with the assistance of friends and trusted companions and is a way to take on a glorious persona. A magician may take on the qualities of a glorious war-witch by girding themselves with mage armour, rod and shield. Likewise, a senator or archmage might gird themselves with fine robes, documents and a short dagger before addressing the Senate or the Conclave to create a powerful persona that enhances their oratory. The magic of girding also affects any coven of guisers preparing for a play by donning costumes to assume the qualities of the dramaturgical personae.

There are stories of people who gain another's strength by girding themselves with that person's accoutrements. In some tales they may be mistaken for the person whose appearance they take on, if they have gone so far as to employ a disguise or display that person's heraldry. There are cautionary tales in which a villain masquerades as the hero to bring ruin down on their head after they carelessly left their panoply to be stolen by her foe.

Girding in Play

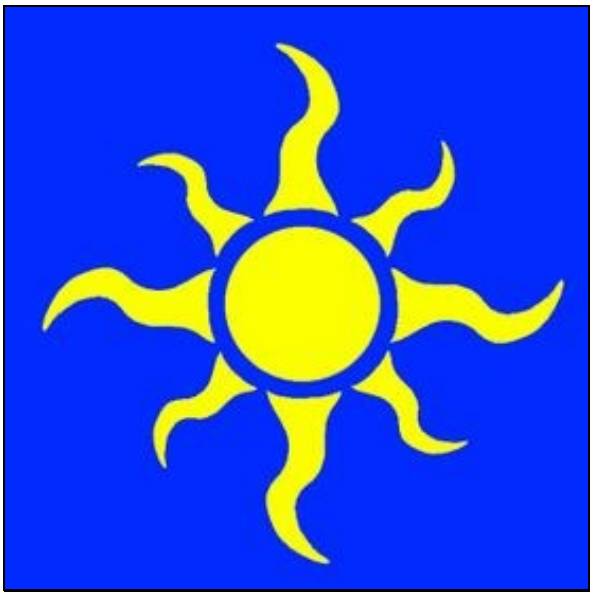
Girding is about making a performance out of getting dressed in readiness for a challenge. A group going into a dangerous situation might gird each other, taking the opportunity to reaffirm their connections to each other. Girding is also a good opportunity to demonstrate the connection between a noble and the yeofolk who attend them, building on the complex social roles within Dawnish society.

Girding gives you the perfect justification to change how you roleplay your character. If you want to psych yourself up for an important encounter of any kind, girding can be the perfect way to do that, both in-character and out-of-character. Your character might ordinarily be a calm and quiet individual but become a proud and defiant speaker or a resolute warrior when suitably girded. If you can manage it, girding can allow you to switch between two completely different characterisations, like having a super hero identity and a mundane alter ego.

If you're aware that someone has girded themselves it can be fun to lean into the roleplaying and act as if that person has changed in some way. Treating someone differently, or not recognising them at all, because they have donned a helm with a faceplate and the surcote of a knight errant can add to the drama of the situation, and help to make the Empire world more real for everyone involved.

5.4 Heraldry

Each noble house has its own unique heraldry - and wearing that symbol provides members with a common strength that can be equally empowering on the battlefield and in politics. Shared heraldry can make it easier for members of a house to work together - which can be crucial given the competitive nature of Dawnish society. Individual nobles often develop their own personal heraldry, perhaps even incorporating it into their house coat of arms as a way of emphasising their own accomplishments, or to give themselves lofty ambitions to aim for.



The majestic royal blue banner with the blazing golden sun is associated with the knight-errant.
The symbols used in heraldry are crucial and usually involve the use of legendary beasts in the designs. These powerful creatures are known to represent glorious ideals and carrying a shield, a surcote, or similar emblazoned with their image allows a noble to draw on those strengths. Many of these beasts have commonly understood qualities which serve as the basis for heraldic magic; a Dawnish house will often use a beast that exemplifies one or more of the traits that their members aspire to.

Like all yeofolk Knights-errant require explicit permission to carry a house's heraldry, but the majestic royal blue-and-gold-sun national banner is available to all. This device may also be used by a noble who wishes to conceal their identity or house affiliation. The sun has associations with indomitable strength, nobility, competition, and ambition. Dawnish folk who raise the banner aloft do so hoping that the glorious power of the sun will infuse them.

Dawnish nobles and knights-errant will sometimes echo the black knights who fought against Empress Richilde in her tourney to claim the mantle of Queen of Dawn. They obscure their heraldry with black cloth and cover their faces to hide their identity. The hearth magic of heraldry makes it harder for people to recognise anyone who adopts the identity of the "black knight" in this fashion. There is a potential downside; the black knight's heraldry replaces any that the noble is wearing and makes it harder for them to work with people who aren't also black knights. The concealment it brings can be useful in other ways though - especially in dealings with eternals many of whom appear unable to penetrate such a disguise.

Heraldry in Play

When designing the heraldry for your character or your noble house, it is a good idea to look at the associations of magical and legendary beasts detailed in heraldic magic. Selecting one of the beasts listed creates a starting point for communicating something about the nature of your group or character. You can strive to embody those qualities in your roleplaying when wearing your heraldry - especially if you have been girded. You can add nuance to these qualities by using colours, or by showing the animal in one pose or another. A Pegasus with their wings furled and head bowed communicates a very different flavour to one rearing with wings spread; likewise a red-and-gold colour scheme may suggest a more passionate house

or individual that the same image in silver-and-blue.

While you don't need to memorise the heraldic beasts, it is worth bearing in mind that the designs people have chosen for their heraldry are telling you something about them or their house. Roleplaying suspicion of a character who adopts a minotaur or chimera is entirely appropriate, even to the point of intentionally casting their deeds in a certain light when talking about them. If that character is also playing up to the idea of their heraldic beast, the entire setting can be brought to life in a nuanced way by players cooperating a little out of character. It can also be fun to play up the idea that a black knight is difficult to identify. The heroic stories in which someone is unrecognisable because they have covered their heraldry and face may seem foolish but in Empire this can be a magical consequence of donning a disguise of this nature.



Love has a power all its own

5.5 Love and Flowers

True love is a powerful force, whether romantic, platonic, or filial. Dawnish tales talk of lovers or shades who return from death for a short time to offer comfort, to protect their loved ones, or to urge them to seek vengeance on their behalf. Love is believed to be the one force that can bind souls together in the Labyrinth, and bonds of love may mean that two souls are reborn and driven to seek one another out through multiple incarnations.

Flowers are used as a symbol of love, and are often given as favours. While every house has their own codes of what flowers mean yellow flowers - especially roses - are commonly used as a representation of affection and respect devoid of romantic feelings. Golden flowers are a common element of jewellery given as a gift to a very close friend. In some cases, a Dawnish suitor will present the object of their affection with a flower representing their feelings. If those feelings are not reciprocated, a traditional way to show this is responding with a gift of yellow flowers - yeomen in particular favour a poesy of buttercups to express fondness without passionate love. During the Night of Flowers flowers are given as gifts to strengthen feelings of love, respect, hatred, filial affection, and other emotional ties.

The hearth magic of love can bind people together but it can prove dangerous if betrayed. People whose love proves false may bring a curse on their head. The most common such curse is a malady that causes the betrayer to feel painful burns and welts whenever flower petals touch their skin. People whose love is betrayed sometimes learn of that treachery through symbolic visions or dreams, often involving symbols associated with their relationship withering or burning.

Love in Play

Love can be tricky to employ in play, but provides lots of opportunities for drama. Roleplaying that the touch of a loved one can calm you when you're angry, or subtly altering how you are responding to a roleplaying effect in the presence of someone you love can help bring out this hearth magic or add depth to your character. It's important to remember that love does not need to be romantic - filial and platonic love create bonds between individuals which are just as powerful.

It is essential to keep appropriate boundaries in mind when roleplaying issues of emotion and passion. Nobody should feel they *have* to roleplay with feelings of love if they don't want to or they are finding it out-of-character awkward. It is very important when demonstrating this hearth magic to remember the importance of our conduct rules, and ensuring that everyone involved is comfortable with where the relationship is going. You can find additional guidance around this hearth magic, and love in general, on the page Love in Dawn.

5.6 Further Reading

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6 Dawn history

6.1 Before the Empire



Dawn's forebears came from overseas, seeking to carve out a kingdom. Their early history is full of glorious battles, as noble houses fought against the orcs and drove them out of the fertile lands to found the kingdom. Rather than quarrel amongst themselves, the noble houses agreed to settle the throne's succession by tourney. The death of any ruling monarch would be followed by a grand tourney with the Earl of the winning house taking the crown.

In the years that followed the founding of the Kingdom, a group of disaffected Yeofolk chose to leave their lord's lands. They marched across the country, heading for the western borders and the fertile plains beyond. Their numbers swelled as they journeyed west and they became known as the Marches. They had no real weapons or armour, and the nobility fully expected them to be slaughtered by orcs or die of starvation. Instead, the Marchers slaughtered the orcs they encountered and created a nation for themselves; the Marches, a patchwork of cleared lands controlled by a score of fractious households.

There were frequent but sporadic conflicts with the Marches in the centuries that followed. Occasionally one or the other would attempt to expand into the neighbouring nation's territory. To this day the westernmost parts of Dawn and the easternmost parts of the Marches are scattered with battlefields and castles that are largely abandoned since the formation of the Empire. Armed conflict is a thing of the past, with both the Marches and Dawn holding equal status within the Empire, but Dawnish who question the validity of their ancient traditions are often gently reminded that they *could* go and live in the Marches if they don't like it.

6.2 Joining the Empire

The story of Dawn's admittance to the Empire is considered one of the great romantic epics. Numerous songs, poems, stories and plays are written about it. The actual events have probably been blurred by the passage of time and the pens of the troubadours, but all agree that it hinged on the marriage of the First Empress to the former King of Dawn, Rodric of Astolat, called the Lame, a powerful Enchanter.



According to the troubadours, Rodric was a bachelor with unreasonably high standards who looked destined to die unwed. When Cien, a naga yeoman with aspirations to be troubadour, came to Rodric for the Test of Mettle, he was challenged to find the king a suitable bride. The task seemed impossible but with the assistance of a Navarr guide, Cien returned with news of a Highguard woman who was the match for any Dawnish noble. Impressed by stories of the woman's prowess and fiery passion and smitten by Cien's description of her beauty, King Rodric vowed to make her his wife.

Acting on Cien's advice, the King ordered a splendid tourney in Astolat and invited all the powerful nobles of Dawn. The Empress arrived at the tourney in the company of Earl Elayne de Cervise but bearing the flag of Dawn, the traditional arms for a knight-errant. The king and everyone present was entranced by her power and bearing. Only nobles may enter the tourney, but before the assembled host, the Empress demanded a test of Mettle from Earl Cervise.

The Empress was challenged to make an impossible leap across the deep river that runs alongside the Castle of Thorns, a traditional response for yeomen whose demands for a Test of Mettle were unwelcome. The Empress readily agreed; still wearing her armour she mounted her horse and together they jumped the river. The sight was so impressive - the more so for horses were practically unknown in Dawn - that it was impossible for any to deny her claim and she was accepted into the house of Cervise.

Cien urged his king to declare his ardour for the Empress before any other noble had chance to pledge a troth. Rodric declared his love for her and demanded the Test of Ardour from Earl Cervise. Before the assembled crowd, the Lady demanded the unthinkable - to prove his love for the new scion of the House Cervise, he must give up his throne - and granted Rodric until the start of the tourney to decide his response. The next morning, following a night of discourse with the Empress, Rodric agreed to abdicate his throne. In doing so he won the Test of Ardour and entered House Cervise as the Empress' husband, whereupon she declared her intention to enter the grand tourney to become Queen of Dawn.

In the tourney that followed, Rodric and his bride rallied Earls who favoured entry to the Empire to their side to oppose those Earls who resisted the idea. It was made clear to all that the tourney was not just for the throne but for the fate of Dawn. The battle was fierce, but the Empress' forces claimed the field, and she was crowned Queen.

In the weeks that followed she moved quickly to secure Dawn's place in the Empire, her victory in the grand tourney meant that even those Earls who had opposed her could not deny that she had followed the customs and traditions of Dawn and beaten them fairly.

Dawn has prospered under Imperial rule and grown in strength, gaining land as the barbarians have been driven back. When the Empire began to stagnate, the nation's emphasis on military strength meant that it was able to repulse the invaders. It is a source of enormous pride to the Dawnish that theirs is the only nation that has never lost a territory to the barbarians.

Dawn has often struggled to gain political support in the Senate. When Dawn armies successfully defeated the forces of the city of Holberg, League politicians were able to convince the Senate to assign the territory to League control. Despite support for Dawn from Wintermark and Varushka, a strong coalition of League and Marcher senators were able to convince Urizen and Highguard that the best thing for the Empire would be to allow Holberg to become part of the League.

While this defeat happened over two hundred years ago, it has not been forgotten. Centuries later, when the territory was lost to the barbarians, the loss was in no small part due to the political divisions the territory still evokes. Dawnish politicians know that Holberg is seen by many as a challenge to their claim to never have lost a territory to the barbarians. When celebrated League wit Gisel van Holberg said "*Dawn has never lost territory to the barbarians, but it has lost territory to the civilised*" during a tense debate in the Senate, she provoked Earl Jofre de Culwich so badly, the Speaker had to order him to leave the chamber.

6.3 Historical Reading

- Dawn monarchy - A discussion of the monarchy. See also Dawn monarchy update.
- The life of Penni the White - Historical research into the infamous King of Dawn.

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7 Dawn leadership



The noble houses dominate Dawn.

7.1 Overview

Dawn is dominated by powerful noble houses. The houses manage their great estates and raise soldiers to fight for the Empire. Membership of a noble house is achieved by passing the house's Test of Mettle, although a degree of status is assumed by those children who have been raised in a house (who are technically yeofolk until they pass their test).

Each house sets its own test and only the behaviour of those who have passed the test reflects on the house. As a result a house must keep the tests difficult to maintain its reputation. Those houses that make the tests too easy face the very real risk of having no children placed with them by other nobles - no Dawn parent would want to place their child with a house that is tarnished by mediocrity.

Houses are led by an earl who is selected from among the members of that house. Earls usually dedicate themselves to the advancement of their noble house. It is the responsibility of the earl to set tests such as the Test of Mettle and the Test of Ardour. The accomplishments of a house reflect directly on its earl, an acknowledgement of the role that the earl plays in ensuring that every member of the house is given the support they need to triumph. Likewise the bearing with which an earl comports themselves reflects on the whole house, so earls are expected to take their responsibilities seriously, to conduct themselves with gravitas, and to expect and receive respect from their fellow Dawnish.

Some houses also choose to appoint an heir-presumptive, an individual who the house agrees will take over the earlship if the current earl is no longer able to perform their duties. The heir-presumptive is often a staunch ally of the earl, someone chosen to bolster their control of the house. But the role can just as easily serve the opposite function, some nobles choose an heir-presumptive to signal the limitation of the earl's power and what might happen if they overstretch their authority.

Only nobles become senators or generals, although Imperial law prevents this being mandatory. While it is theoretically possible for a yeofolk to be chosen for high office, a yeofolk who showed the qualities that made them eligible for such a position would almost certainly be approached by Dawnish noble houses keen to attract a rising star whose glory would reflect well on them.

The political battlefield of the Senate is one that is difficult for many nobles to master. Dawnish senators are often supported by an advocate - a yeofolk who makes a study of the Senate and the history of the Empire. While the nobles make impassioned speeches on the Senate floor, it is their retainers who help them prepare those speeches and work hard to ensure that the political realities of Imperial life do not scupper the nobles' plans.

The Synod and the Conclave, by contrast, are open to both yeofolk and noble alike, although again a yeofolk who rose to prominence in one of these structures would likely attract a great deal of attention from the Dawnish nobility.

By contrast, it is considered demeaning for nobles to involve themselves in the business of the Bourse. Making money is simply not considered glorious in Dawn, it is the business of yeofolk and not something that nobles should be worrying about. A noble who spent too much time in the Bourse might cause others to question their commitment to glory and to the furtherance of their house's goals.



Many citizens of Dawn expect that their senators will be the most most glorious nobles in the nation.

7.2 Leading a territory

Like every Imperial nation, Dawn holds elections to choose which Dawnish citizen should become the senator for a territory. But where many other nations handle their elections quickly and with relatively little fuss, in Dawn they are intended to be moments of pomp and ceremony, the better to reflect the glory of those involved. Crucially, only those who have become nobles may partake directly in the Dawnish elections.

The mechanism for choosing a senator has changed recently, reflecting a growing need, recognised by the Dawnish egregores, to ensure the fairest representation of the people of a territory while still giving an opportunity for spectacle.

The senators for each Imperial territory are re-elected at specific equinoxes and solstices during the year. The senators for Astolat, the Barrens, Weirwater, and Semmerholm are elected at the Winter, Spring, Summer, and Autumn summits, respectively. Each election takes place immediately after the grand tourney so that nobles can also choose to make their support contingent on the glory of those who have competed in the tourney, if they wish.

Once the tourney is complete, the egregore or their spokesperson will present the available candidates to the assembled nation in the Glory Square. There is no chance for speeches: the inglorious, but inevitable, acts of politics that always accompany any election are assumed to have already taken place. Once the candidates have been announced, the egregore will invite the assembled houses from the territory being contested to enter the Glory Square in turn.

As each house enters the Glory Square they can have a single member announce how many nobles they have present and whom they are supporting. The earl may make the announcement themselves, or have their troubadour or whoever is the best public speaker available do so. There is some license for a house to boast of any recent accomplishments that have won them glory at this point, although anyone who takes more than a few moments to state their house's pledges is likely to be heckled by the crowd if they grow bored. A house can support a single candidate but they do not have to: the earl can announce some equivalent of "House de Vedeur pledges the support of four of our nobles for Earl Vedeur and two of our nobles for the jumped-up yeofolk, Simon the Weaver," if they wish to do so. The nobles from that house *must* then move to stand with their chosen candidate - and the pledges continue to the next house.

7.2.1 Accessibility

To pledge their support for a candidate, a noble must be physically present in the Glory Square. If there are accessibility reasons that make that challenging, then let the team know, either the civil servants or the egregores, and they will make accommodations for you. You must still be available in the Dawn camp however, you can't take part in the election if you are off engaged in other in-character activities elsewhere in Anvil or through the Sentinel Gate.

When a noble house pledged their support for someone in the distant past, it was traditional for them to deploy the house banner or standard while making the pledge. Doing so sent a powerful political message - that the house was prepared to take the field of battle in support of their cause if needed. The Dawnish no longer fight a tourney to decide these matters, but the egregores have confirmed that they will still allow houses to pledge support by planting their banner in the ground behind their chosen candidate if they wish to do so.

Only Dawnish nobles whose personal resource is located in the territory and who have not voted in another Dawnish senatorial election in the past year may participate in the vote. The civil service maintains lists of which nobles dwell in which territories, so they can check a noble's eligibility if that appears to be needed. Citizens may not change their mind after they have announced their support; once they have pledged their support for a candidate they must remain by their side until the end or lose their vote. Whichever candidate has the most nobles standing behind them when houses have finished entering the Glory Square is declared the winner.

7.2.2 Incumbent

The current senators of Dawn are listed below - see the individual territory pages for a full election history for each position.

- Astolat - Éamon Ashenmourn de Cordraco
- The Barrens - Lady Gwendoloena de Ordraig
- Weirwater - Tristan duLac
- Semmerholm - Aurianna du Meravon

7.3 Dawnish houses

A list of well-known noble houses who have attended Anvil in recent years can be found on the Dawn groups page.

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8 Dawn economic interests

8.1 Overview

Money is a frequent challenge in Dawn, especially for the noble houses. There is no glory in making money; an obsession with money is seen as tawdry, something that is beneath those who have proven themselves, so most nobility express a very public disinterest for it. As a result merchants and those who handle money are almost always yeofolk.

This can lead to unfortunate circumstances - many nobles are so used to the idea of having enough money for whatever diversion they turn their thoughts to that they have little concept of what something is actually worth. Their unworldliness is one of the reasons that they have difficulty maintaining support in the Senate, which (as far as many nobles can tell) spends more time worrying about budgets than it does about glorious battle against the enemies of the Empire.

Common to Dawn is the establishment of a *fayre*. A fayre is a gathering of Dawnishfolk (and sometimes members of other nations) that comes together to trade, socialise, and enjoy a variety of entertainments. They are often held at regular intervals - monthly or annually - and they are marked out by the pageantry and diversions as much as the opportunity to trade. Nobles and yeofolk alike attend fayres, and the largest and most prestigious draw visitors from across the territory or nation. A *market-fayre* by contrast lacks pageantry, and focuses much more on matters of trade. As such it is very rare for a noble to attend a market-fayre; these are gatherings for yeofolk and much more focused on matters of trade. Organisation of a fayre or market-fayre is often left to a noble house's seneschal, or when it is not connected to a noble house, by a reeve.

8.2 Seneschal

Still, the bills must still be paid, so most houses employ at least one seneschal. Seneschals are a broad class of yeofolk retainers who include chamberlains who organise and oversee the day-to-day household affairs of the nobility and castellans who see to the care and maintenance of castles. Regardless of their specific duties, seneschals are generally responsible for handling the finances of a noble house. A seneschal runs the house's affairs on behalf of the nobility and can be one of the most powerful individuals in the house.

There is also an element of "problem solving" about the duties of a seneschal. Many nobles do not want to be troubled with the mundane details of a task, and it is common for a noble to announce a tourney with only a few days notice, or expect their trusted retainer to make a problem go away without offering any suggestions or guidance as to how such a task might take place. Occasionally, this trust may be abused - a seneschal might go too far in the service of their noble house, and bring shame to their house.

Seneschals tend to work on behalf of a noble house, and usually have a close relationship with the earl of that house. The system works so well that a few nobles are attended by a yeofolk, called a retainer, who acts in a similar but much more personal capacity. Dawnish retainers combine various elements of valet, maid, personal assistant and servant in one person. They attend and assist a noble, seeing to the day-to-day support of their patron. By necessity, there is usually a deep bond of trust between a noble and their retainer and they are often close friends. It is common for a seneschal to begin their career as the retainer of a noble who later becomes Earl of their noble house.

A *reeve* is a common term for a more specialised role - a yeofolk who oversees a fayre or market. They often don't support a specific noble house; rather than have a degree of independence to organise trade and merchant affairs, working with other yeofolk and rarely coming into direct contact with nobles.



Costumes by White Rose Apparel

8.3 Merchants and Artisans

Dawnish merchants are almost invariably yeofolk, but skilled crafters are more likely to be members of the nobility. The ability to make beautiful - and often magical - objects for the use of their fellow nobles is seen as a noble calling it its own right, and few nobles want to see a yeoman with such power over other nobles.

Noble crafters prefer to dedicate their time to making glorious weapons that can be wielded by great heroes, rather than producing a dozen breastplates for a unit of yeofolk soldiers. Because of this most houses struggle to find ways to equip their soldiers, being forced to rely on seneschals to provide the weapons and armour their troops need. Seneschals, in turn, are forced to look to the more prosperous nations such as the Brass Coast or the League to equip their forces, a situation that their neighbours are never slow to point out whenever they want to irritate their Dawn neighbours.

8.4 Game Design: Opportunities

Some economic opportunities presented for Dawn deal with the creation of titles titles intended for yeofolk characters. Among the Dawnish, matters of money and commerce are commonly left to the yeofolk to oversee. Dealing with money is not a glorious pursuit and nobles who are overly concerned about it risk losing the respect of their peers. In each case, the benefits provided by these titles are reduced or removed if they are held by a noble character. If you are a noble appointed to one of these titles, or pass a Test of Mettle after being appointed, you must email plot@profounddecisions.co.uk so that we can adjust the options available via the title. Similarly, some titles that deal explicitly with the pursuit of glory may be presented as intended for noble characters, and the same rules would apply (if you are not a noble, you need to let us know, and it is likely to effect the kinds of benefits the title provides).

This isn't done to punish the players of noble characters. Rather, it reflects the stratified nature of life in Dawn, and supports the existence of important roles in the setting that are explicitly for people choosing to play the less prestigious, lower status role of yeofolk characters.

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9 Dawn military concerns



Those who actively pursue glory, especially on the battlefield, are often referred to as knights.

9.1 Overview

Dawn currently maintains four armies to fight in the Imperial wars but when Imperial fortunes have not permitted, that number has been reduced. Very few endeavours provide as many opportunities for glory as warfare. Drawn to glory as it is, it is unsurprising that Dawn prides itself on its martial traditions. Not all nobles deck themselves in a harness of plate, but every noble looks for opportunities to fight their foes toe-to-toe. Not for the Dawnish noble is the cowardly ambush or the subversive flank - they seek to face their opponents directly.

The rank and file soldiers are eager yeofolk, seeking opportunities for glory. They are led by the most capable nobles available who share their soldiers ambitions. Few Dawnish generals will lead from the rear. While there is some glory in a well-planned battle, little compares to the glory of a lord or lady who leads their troops to victory. As such most yeofolk have an abiding respect for their military leaders, born of shared ambitions and shared dangers.

Shields are highly popular in Dawn, as much for their decoration as their ability to protect. Heater shields are the favoured shape, decorated with personal or household devices. Missile weapons are rare, and regarded with some suspicion. Despite their obvious uses, it's difficult to see anything glorious in shooting an enemy at thirty paces. Archery is seen as a fitting contest of skill, rather than a glorious weapon of war.

Dawnish of any gender in the active pursuit of glory, particularly those risking their lives to do so, are often referred to simply as knights. Knightly behaviour on the battlefield is expected of nobles and yeofolk alike. Those who identify themselves as knights are stating openly that they will act gloriously. The military strength of a noble house in battle is usually expressed as the number of knights they can field.

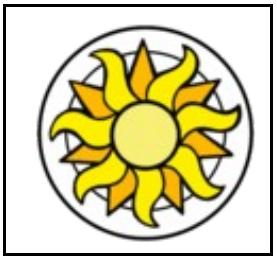
Those engaged upon a Test of Mettle, seeking to prove their glory, are called knights-errant. The term is used equally to describe anyone looking to prove themselves by seeking danger and adventure. Most often they are the children of noble houses, but groups of yeofolk who wish to attract the attention of the noble houses may also become knights-errant.

Some knights-errant enjoy the life of high adventure so much that they continue the lifestyle after passing their Test of Mettle, declining the political life of a noble house. Questing knights, as they are usually known, usually form a tight-knit group with other, similarly minded knights, and often dedicate themselves to some great quest or higher cause that they know can never be completed. If such groups are perpetuated through the generations as newly ennobled knights join the ranks to replace losses, they usually become a recognized knightly order. Such groups are usually distinctive, perhaps with a unique code of honour that every member must swear or an eternal patron to whom they swear loyalty.

Bands of knights-errant and questing knights usually include a troubadour where possible, to inspire them to glory and to record their accomplishments for posterity.

9.2 Imperial Armies

Dawn currently fields four armies: the *Golden Sun*, the *Eastern Sky*, the *Gryphon's Pride*, and the *Lions of Adelmar*. Since the Winter Solstice 382YE, no Dawnish general can issue their army with an order to Give Ground or make a Cautious Advance thanks to a mandate enacted by **Pelleas Thorn** and supported by the Dawnish Assembly committing the soldiers of Dawn to seek victory and glory on the battlefield whatever the cost.



9.2.1 The Golden Sun

When people think of Dawn their first thought is usually the nation's knights, arrayed in mail, swords gleaming, ready for battle. As befits a nation with such an emphasis on heavy armour, the soldiers who fight under the Golden Sun banner are especially resilient, known for their implacable, barely resistible, advances through enemy territory. There is some friendly rivalry between soldiers of the Golden Sun and the Hounds of Glory, and when their soldiers meet they often engage in contests of strength and martial might.

Towards the end of 382YE, inspired by the recent victories and urged to seek glory through service to Dawn, thousands more yeofolk requested to join the Dawnish armies. The Golden Sun, one of the oldest armies of Dawn, was their first choice, probably because its general is sometimes referred to as the First General of Dawn. The Imperial Senate approved of this course of action, and the Golden Sun is now on track to become the first large army in Dawnish history. .

The first Dawnish general leads the Golden Sun army, and is appointed (or re-appointed) at the Summer Solstice each year.

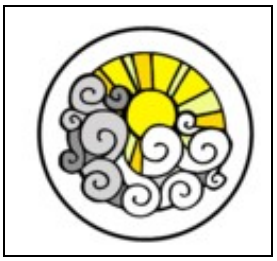


9.2.2 The Hounds of Glory (Destroyed)

The Hounds of Glory very publicly strove to be the most glorious army in the Empire; while few were so gauche as to say it openly that came with the clear understanding of every Hound that that meant they were the greatest army in the Empire. The soldiers who fought beneath the banners of the Hounds of Glory prided themselves on their unstoppable nature since the army was founded. The core of the army was battle-hardened knights arrayed in gleaming armour, their shields proudly displaying their house and personal sigils. They were supported by cadres of archers and witches, but what long made them unique in the Empire was the Courage and the conviction that they drew from their surety of purpose and their commitment to glory above all other things. In battle they went where the glory was found, where the fighting was thickest, where legends were written.

Driven by the need to prove themselves first among equals, and capitalising on the enthusiasm generated by the Dawnish victories, they recruited knights from all over Dawn and challenged each to prove their glory in ever more demanding ways. Few could have doubted their absolute commitment to their ideals, and their indomitable spirit made them a formidable force on the battlefield capable of truly remarkable feats

There was some friendly rivalry between the Hounds of Glory and the Golden Sun, and when their soldiers met they would often engage in contests of strength and martial might.



9.2.3 The Eastern Sky

Fighting beneath an emerald green banner bearing the golden image of the rising sun, before the Gryphon's Pride was reformed the Eastern Sky was the youngest of the Dawnish armies. It has a long and proud tradition of defending the Dawnish heartlands from orcish aggression. They once received regular supplies from the people of Dawn; both civilians and soldiers alike possess a great deal of pride in the Eastern Sky and the families and descendants of those who have fought beneath the banner are fierce in their support. This meant that the Eastern Sky could recover quickly even while on campaign. More recently, the army enjoys the patronage of several Summer eternals who grant favours when the general of the Eastern Sky calls upon them. Many of the soldiers of the Eastern Sky have a particular hatred for the Druj barbarians; traditionally they are first to see the carnage the cruel orcs leave behind when they manage to gain access to an Imperial village.

The second Dawnish general leads the Eastern Sky, and is appointed (or re-appointed) at the Autumn Equinox each year.



9.2.4 The Gryphon's Pride

The first army to bear this name of the Gryphon's Pride met a tragic end during a doomed attempt to capture the Barrens in 276YE. In 378YE, the Imperial Senate commissioned the restoration of the army. It was completed shortly before the Spring Equinox 380YE. The core of the army is made up of knights descended from the soldiers of the first army, including almost the entire fighting force of House Lionsgate, but almost every noble house in Dawn has provided stout yeofolk, noble knights, and war witches to take up arms under its banner. It is committed to glorious conquest of new territory for the people of Dawn.

The third Dawnish general leads the Gryphon's Pride army, and is appointed (or re-appointed) at the Spring Equinox each year.



9.2.5 The Lions of Adelmar

The Lions of Adelmar were raised by Senate motion during the Summer Solstice 385YE. Mustering completed shortly before the Spring Equinox 387YE. **Éamon Ashenmourn de Cordraco**, senator for Astolat, named the army after the exemplar Adelmar the Lion and endorsed the army's focus on love.

The fourth Dawnish general leads the Lions of Adelmar army, and is appointed (or re-appointed) at the Winter Solstice each year.

9.3 Army Orders

Since the Autumn Equinox 382YE, the Dawnish armies have maintained their commitment to Glory. **Pelleas Thorn** enacted a mandate that encouraged every Dawnish soldier to commit themselves body and soul to glory in the service of Dawn.

Dawnish armies are unable to take the Cautious Advance or Give Ground orders. Any order by a Dawnish general to make a cautious advance will instead default to a Balanced Attack, and an attempt to issue an order to give ground will instead result in the army making a Solid Defence instead.

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10 Dawn religious beliefs



The Dawnish adopted the Way with gusto, but continue to hold glory as the greatest calling.
The Dawnish have little interest in impersonal sermons. They believe that a priest should move their congregation, to inspire them to greatness. Most noble houses desire to have a troubadour, who can perform tales and poems of the great Dawn legends. No Dawn inhabitant, yeofolk or noble, can fail to be stirred to action when hearing the glorious tales of the heroes of the past. Troubadours provide moral guidance, filling the role of priests, as well as acting as historians, bards and keepers of legend.

The Dawn Assembly of the Imperial Synod is somewhat notorious for its competing troubadours seeking to use the Synod to validate and immortalise the subjects of their tales in fame - or sometimes in infamy. While some troubadours engage in the other business of the Synod, the majority put the interests of their own house ahead of any other duty or responsibility.

Embodiment is an important tradition for pious nobles of all kinds. A pious noble seeks to be recognised as a champion of virtue, embodying one of the Virtues to its greatest extent. Most nobles who aspire to be a champion of virtue are knights, especially questing knights. Each year during summer, aspirants who seek to be acknowledged as a champion of virtue meet with other aspirant champions and the troubadours to share tales of their exploits.

The assembled troubadours award the accolade to the nobles who they feel best embody the Imperial Virtues - a position of great honour in Dawn. If they do not identify a fitting candidate for a virtue then they do not appoint anyone as the champion. Lists are kept by the troubadours, who make a special point to repeat the tales of these pious individuals and encourage them to exemplify the Virtues not only to the people of Dawn but also to the rest of the Empire. Several Exemplars are known to have come from among the Dawnish champions of virtue, and at least one Paragon.



Troubadours are priests who celebrate the glory of their noble house.
As with many positions of honour in Dawn, yeofolk are not considered as aspiring champions. If they had it in them to become honoured in this manner, they would be part of a noble house.

As far as the Imperial Synod is concerned, Dawn is one step away from being a hotbed of heresy. The people have adopted the Imperial Faith with gusto, but they continue to hold glory as the greatest calling, and often see virtue merely as a means to that end.

I write as one burdened by failure and shame. The Dawnish
embrace their immortality far more readily than they do the Seven Paths
of Virtue. Time and again, I have told them: Passion is not a Virtue;
Glory is not a Virtue; Greatness is the product of Virtue, not its purpose.

Yet, for all my efforts, many still see virtue as a means to an end,
not an end in itself. The Dawnish may aspire to match or exceed
the Paragons? deeds, but only for the sake of their own Legends.

I am returning to the Chapter, but I bring with me a score of
Troubadours who would have their living knights recognised as
Exemplars, and pretty much all the dead ones as Paragons.

Simeon the Wayfarer, taken from Epistles to the Winds of Virtue, 14BE

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11 Dawn magical traditions



Skilled war witches are respected nobles.
Those who study magic are called witches in Dawn. Witches can be any gender, and cover several traditions - war witches, witch weavers and guisers.

Of all the nations of the Empire, Dawn seems to be the most closely affected by the magic of the eternals. Heralds, the faithful servants of the eternals, are a much more common sight here than anywhere else, and Dawn legends are replete with personal encounters between nobles and powerful eternals. What is clear is that for better or worse, some eternals take a particular interest in the Dawnish people, particularly in the nobility.

11.1 War witches

War witches are magicians who master useful incantations and take the battlefield. Those that are part of a noble house are expected to fight with the rest of the household. War witches train alongside a house's warriors, using their magical skills to deliver aid at the most pivotal moments of battle. Some are skilled with weapons, but all are drilled so that they can keep their wits in the thick of battle, and skilled war witches are highly prized by their house.

While a war witch may master any spells, two popular incantations are empower and heal. The former allows a war witch to support their fellow by driving them to feats of heroism, while the latter is a potent battlefield healing spell that can be applied in the thick of the fray with some additional effort.

Most war witches are either a noble or a knight-errant. Dawnish yeofolk who study magic but have disavowed the pursuit of glory are usually weavers or guisers.

11.2 Weavers

Those who emphasise the study of ritual magic are usually referred to as witch weavers. They are named for their habit of focusing on weaving as part of their magic, but the term is used for anyone who uses ritual magic in Dawn. The glorious and forthright nature of Dawn means that they can be a little sceptical of the more group-oriented practice of ritual magic. Many noble magicians compensate for this by striving to be a powerful war witch as well, the two traditions being by no means exclusive.



Girding is an important hearth magic in Dawn

While it is uncommon for a noble house to include an entire team of witch weavers, it is very rare for houses to be formed only of weavers, none of whom have any experience as war witches. More common are the weaver cabals, groups of witch weavers drawn from all elements of Dawnish society, who stand outside the direct control of the noble houses.

The first weaving cabals began as a place for noble magicians to trade skills and cultivate magical and crafting techniques, but eventually they found it more effective to leave their houses to work magic together. Over time, the cabals became independent of the Dawn houses, choosing their own heads and even adopting their own children. As the cabals cannot set Tests of Mettle, they include yeofolk amongst their numbers. It is not uncommon for a noble to forsake their noble house when they join a weaving cabal, as a form of self-imposed exile or retirement.

Much of their time is spent weaving cloth, embroidering banners and engaging in similar arts. As well as being beautiful and practical works of art, the items the weaver cabals produce tend to have protective charms woven into them. Some cabals now practice other forms of ritual magic, but Summer magic remains closely tied up to the making and embroidering of cloth. A properly witch-woven banner from Dawn is the envy of every military unit in the empire.

Many weaver cabals perform magics to bring good fortune to villages, fertile harvests and good weather. As a result, they tend to be more popular with Dawnish yeofolk than the war witches prized by the noble houses. The popularity of the weaver cabals has translated into considerable political clout. As a result, few noble houses will refuse a request by a noble witch to study with a weaver's cabal even if they harbour a fear that the student may not return to their house.

Although secretive, and rarely acknowledged, some weavers specialise in curses. Several famous tales (including the song Weaver's Curse speak of knights who jilted their magical lovers, only to find their enchanted banner a curse that ensured their inglorious defeat.



11.3 Guisers

In Dawn, some yeofolk practice dramaturgy as a way to create ritual magic, rather than become a weaver. They are often compared to the Mummers of the Marches, and the two groups share several traditions and a common ancestor. They tend to be itinerants, travelling from place to place around Dawn and visiting fairs, tourneys and banquets to offer their services or perform for a few coins. They offer their magical services primarily to the yeofolk, but it is not uncommon for a seneschal to employ a band of guisers to perform a ritual on behalf of their Earl. Their peripatetic nature, and the fact that they practice ritual magic, means that they are sometimes viewed with suspicion - while the entertainments and services they provide are appreciated, they are rarely entirely trusted. Bands of guisers are regularly assumed to contain spies who enhance the profits they earn from magic and drama with the sale of interesting titbits they gather as they meander around Dawn. There is generally little affection between bands of guisers and weaver cabals - guisers practice their magic openly, and more than one weaver cabal has ended up blamed for rituals actually performed by a band of guisers who have since left the area.

Like the mummers, guisers tend to have a smattering of lore in several realms but unlike their Marcher counterparts, they have a marked tendency towards magic from the realm of Night. Being able to create a magical disguise, divine significant events, uncover hidden secrets and provide magical entertainments such as The Chamber of Delights are all valuable services guisers are known to provide.

Guisers tend to weave formal dramatic conceits into their rituals. Their performances sometimes appear 'stagy' to observers from the League; characters in a guiser production are much more likely to declaim a speech than they are to engage in natural conversation with each other. Stories are almost invariably tragic in nature, and the most popular entertainments - and rituals - involve the rise and heroic death of the protagonist. Many rituals and performances involve strong, obvious elements of romance - the greatest guisers pride themselves on being able to make their audience weep with their art.

When working dramaturgy a guiser is more likely to have a sumptuous costume than they are to have a beautiful mask. When masks are used they are often understated, practical and minimalist, allowing the ritualist to express their character's inner conflicts through facial expressions. Guisers use their beautifully crafted costumes to draw in hearth magic to 'gird' themselves in the trappings of the persona they will assume.

Guiser performances often involve music of some sort, and some guiser bands work with a Troubadour as fellow-entertainers or supporters. By working with a priest, the guisers gain a measure of respectability. Likewise, while guising is generally seen as a yeofolk pursuit, this does not prevent nobles serving as patrons for such groups, employing their magical or entertainment services, or indulging in dramatic pursuits.



11.4 Heraldic Magic

A common Dawnish alternative to dramaturgy is the use of legendary beasts to create powerful magical effects. Both spellcasters and ritualists may evoke the spirit or qualities of a legendary beast when performing magic, a traditional form of aspect magic.

11.5 Enchanters

The apogee of magical power in Dawn is the tradition of the Enchanter, a witch who becomes Earl of a house. Wielding both the magic of incantation and ritual, enchanters are viewed as mystical powerhouses regardless of their actual abilities, not least because they often have the resources of their entire house at their command. Many make pacts with the eternals to further enhance their arcane powers, and deal with eternals on a more-or-less equal footing, backing up their magical might with political clout. Enchanters have played a key role in the history of the Dawn, and in stories are often portrayed as patrons and paramours of famous knights.

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12 Dawn territories

Dawn is relatively flat, dotted with expanses of largely untamed forest and rocky crags. The forests are maintained by the noble houses of Dawn as part hunting preserve and part training ground. They are home to wild animals, bandits, monsters and ruins, and occasionally these inhabitants cause trouble for nearby villages.

12.1 Territories

- Astolat
- Weirwater
- Semmerholm
- The Barrens

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13 Dawn children



Dawnish children are allowed a great deal of freedom to play -and to get into mischief.
Despite - or perhaps because of - the warlike nature of life in Dawn, the children of yeofolk and nobles alike are sheltered, indulged and encouraged to make the very most of their childhood. They are not expected to undertake apprenticeships or work for their parents until they are of age, but instead are allowed a great deal of freedom to play. It is a parent's responsibility to educate their children to a reasonable standard, and most can read, write, perform arithmetic and understand imperial and national history by adulthood.

Play, however, is not unstructured, and children are encouraged to participate in games which develop skills they may need later in life. Particularly popular amongst the noble houses are games of war, where children learn how to correctly handle weapons, fight individually and in groups and learn to command troops in miniature. Minstrels often teach such things, using the tales of great heroes to inspire and structure the games.

Children born into or adopted into noble houses are often given positions of responsibility as squires.

13.1 Things every child should know

- **A challenge lost makes you a better opponent next time** - Do not be afraid of failing, as long as you learn from it.
- **Follow your heart but use your head.** - Be true to yourself but make sure you think things through and ask the advice of those who can help.
- **Learn from heroes, do not copy them** - Heroes past and present have much to respect, but make sure you know how and why they accomplished their great deeds, not just that they did.
- **There is no honour in letting someone win** - Giving away your victory dishonours both you and your opponent. Once the glory fades, they will not thank you.
- **Be proud of your achievements, however small** - A small deed done today may lead to a greater one tomorrow.
- **Know what your name means** - Who are you named after? Be ready to tell anyone who asks a story about your namesake.

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14 Dawn music

14.1 The Music of Dawn

14.1.1 Style summary

Arthurian high medieval, chivalric, courtly, 'high' culture, battle anthems, tales of love, glory, and tragedy.

Dawn draws on the more formal folk and classical traditions of Shakespearean/Elizabethan period, for example madrigals, as well as fantastical folk tales from the English or Irish tradition.

14.1.2 Commonly known songs

Dawn Songbooks, Songs and Signposts A player collated list of songs, recordings and songbooks that are available for other players to use. Suggestions are welcome. The songs listed on the wiki are to be considered the most commonly known songs in the nation. This document is to provide further resources and signposting to songbooks of interest to Dawnish performers and singers.

- Sweet Kate - medium difficulty madrigal for 3 female voices
- Dawnish War Song - medieval song with drums and other instruments
- Britta's Glory - Verse-chorus war song

14.1.2.1 A musical tradition

All sensible knights understand that for their glory to continue after death, you rely on the skill and conviction of minstrels and storytellers. What better way to earn glory and reputation than to let them see your deeds for themselves? Therefore it is not uncommon for questing knights to invite along the best minstrel they can find to accompany them on a quest - it goes without saying that the safety of the minstrel is paramount. The best singers and storytellers have a song or tale ready for the victory feast the same evening, and direct retellings of glorious battles and the valour of Dawnish knights in either victory or death are always enthusiastically received!

14.1.2.2 One for the kids

- Five Little Ploughboys
- Chants for naughty children



14.1.2.3 Funeral Songs

- Dirge for Fidele
- When I Am Laid

14.1.2.4 Wedding Music

- Wedding Air

14.1.2.5 Songs about notable people/entities in Dawn

- The Ballad of Sir Alain - written for a knight killed in glorious battle
- Sir Isobel - a traditional Dawnish song which has had a recent rise in popularity
- The Novarion Phoenix - written about a Dawnish house
- Sir Colwyn - a recently-written song about a Dawnish knight.
- Onward to Glory I Go - an adaptable song of glory, popular amongst questing knights.
- The Flowers of Auvanne - an old song written by Elayne Silverlark for which the original tune has been lost.

14.1.3 Further examples

14.1.3.1 Songs

- Come my pretty one - Dawnish song about life
- Sweet Kate - medium difficulty madrigal for 3 female voices
- April is in my mistress' face - difficult madrigal set for SATB
- Annan Water - gloomy ballad about drowning, medium

- Though Philomena Lost Her Love - medium difficulty madrigal, 3 female voices.
- My Bonny Lass She Smileth - SATB madrigal
- Weep O Mine Eyes - SATB madrigal, hardish
- Tanner's Hill - fantastical ballad, easy
- The Moon's Only Daughter - wistful ballad, easy
- His Banner's Not Mine - Love song, easy



- Weaver's Curse - cautionary tale, easy
- Spinning Song - tragic love song, easy
- The Rose Garden - Tragic love song, easy
- Sweet, Stay Awhile - Elizabethan love song, medium
- And they were singing "The Flowers of Auvanne"

14.1.3.2 Instrumentation and tunes

- Anything vaguely courtly using recorders, plucked strings, single drums, harps, autoharp, or similar.
- Elizabethan recorder music - very appropriate for Dawn, especially if played on recorders or harp with a single drum.

14.1.3.3 Other performance traditions

- Courtly dances.

14.1.4 How to adapt your repertoire

- Sing in a formal rather than bawdy style. Up the properness and pathos of your words. Strum your guitar like a lute. Roll your rrrrs!

14.1.5 Our sources

Thomas Morley, Kate Rusby, Bill Jones, Glasgow Madrigirls, the other Madrigirls who actually sing more madrigals,

Here is a youtube playlist to get you in the mood!

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15 Category:Archetype

15.1 The Brass Coast

Dhomiro	A dhomiro is a member of a Freeborn family who is chosen by the family to be their representative to the wider world; sometimes as a leader, sometimes as an emissary.
Kohan	Kohan are groups of volunteer and outcast warriors-without-family, who traditionally pledge loyalty to a group of hakima.
Sutannir	Sutannir perform inspiring religious ceremonies for the Freeborn, and encourage people to exemplify and celebrate Virtue.
Hakima	Hakima are highly-organised groups of magic-users whose loyalty is to the nation, not their family. They are taken to be wise.
Corsair	Freeborn corsairs are traders and privateers who deal with - and raid - barbarian shipping in the Bay of Catazar.
Scrivener	Scriveners are Freeborn contract-writers who help traders frame the terms of their deals, and then decorate them with artwork and calligraphy.

15.1.1 Dawn

Earl	The Earl of a Dawnish Noble House is the House's leader, who leads the House in all its great achievements and who sets its conditions of membership.
Knight-errant	Knights-Errant are engaged in their Test of Mettle. Still technically yeofolk they are expected - and are questing - to prove themselves glorious.
Questing knight	Questing Knights are those Knights who have proved themselves worthy in their Test of Mettle and have chosen to keep on questing for ever-greater glory.
Troubadour	A Troubadour is a priest who learns all the stories of their Noble House, past and present, and tells them in poetry and song to inspire their people to greatness.
Witch	Witches are Dawnish magic-users. In noble houses, they fight alongside the House's warriors. Most others belong to Weaver Cabals, independent groups of ritual witches which accept both yeofolk and noble members.
Guiser	Itinerant entertainers who often combine magic with their performances and practice dramaturgy. They are often (sometimes justly) accused of being spies, tricksters and mountebanks as well as performers.
Enchanter	Some Earls who have studied magic choose the title "Earl-Enchanter" or simply "Enchanter". Most learn ritual magic to benefit their people; some build relationships with powerful Summer Eternals.
Seneschal	A Noble House's Seneschal is a trusted yeofolk who oversees its financial affairs, arranging deals and trades and keeping the House solvent.
Advocate	Dawnish Advocates are yeofolk politicians who navigate the murky waters of Senate politics for their noble masters.
Retainer	A yeofolk Retainer is a Dawnish Noble's most trusted attendant, who works closely with a particular Noble, or sometimes for the whole House.

15.1.2 Highguard

Exarch	The Exarch, or Exarchs, are those who are appointed by a Highguard Chapter as their leader(s) as determined by the Chapter's creed, or by embodying its principles.
Guardian	Guardians form the core of Highborn military, taking on a range of roles in defence of their Chapters, and in prosecuting vigilant warfare.
Unconquered	The Unconquered are Highguard's elite guerrilla troops. They are prone to using ruthless tactics, even operating behind enemy lines, to destroy the enemy's capacity to make war.
Cataphract	Cataphracts are Highguard's elite heavy warriors, who once rode horses into battle but who, in modern times, represent a resolute and unbreakable wall of steel.
Wayfarer	Wayfarers are Highborn priests with a long-standing tradition of teaching the truth of The Way to the ignorant, and seeking out Exemplars and Paragons born in other lands.
Inquisitor	Highborn Inquisitors are zealous defenders of The Way from those that would threaten it, whether mortal or supernatural.
Steward of the Dead	Stewards of the Dead dedicate their lives to preserving the legacies of the worthy. This includes the interring of remains as well as the preservation of legacies and tales.
Magister	Magisters are the master magicians of Highguard, often with an affinity for Winter Magic. They shape magic using movement, sound and the chime of bells.
Benefactor	Benefactors are affluent Highborn merchants and tradesfolk who do not pursue wealth for its own sake, but who sponsor individuals, great works and endeavours.

Archivist	Archivists are a unique class of Highborn scholar dedicated to preserving the essence, or truth, of history, over and above accounts and evidence that may seek to undermine that truth.
Grey pilgrim	Grey pilgrims are a recent phenomenon. They walk the trods in a crusade to free the souls believed to be trapped between life and death by the vallorn, but they also oppose heresy and idolatry, convert foreigners to the Way, and seek to guide the other human nations of the Empire toward enlightenment.

15.1.3 Imperial Orcs

Warlord	Legions chose their own commanders, called warlords, with individuals chosen for their ability to provide clear effective leadership in battle, according to the traditions of the individual legion
Pitfighter	Professional fighters of the Pits in which the Orcs hone their combat skills; trading on the reputation for skill and strength that they have built up in previous fights, pitfighters build their careers until their notoriety means that other orcs begin to seek them out and actively challenge them.
Shaman	Most orcs only experience communion with the ancestors when battle is upon them but a few individuals - called shamans - are able to hear the voices more frequently; they are almost incessantly surrounded by the constant input of ancestral advice much of it bearing a contradictory or even hostile message.
Preacher	Those Imperial Orcs who embrace the Way and become priests.
Warcaster	The highly physical traditions of the Wintermark runesmiths has appealed to some orcs who adopt a similar approach and become Warcasters.
Oathwright	Oathwrights believe that the bond between an item and a person affects them both, items may gain worth by being owned and bonded to the right person and the right item affects an individual?s hopes of becoming an ancestor.
Bonesetter	Usually trained apothecaries, physicks or both, Bonesetters are expected to attend to the physical needs of the legion, but their remit runs well beyond this.
Thief-taker	Working closely with Imperial Magistrates, Thief-takers earn their income by collecting bounties on criminals who have fled the law and more rarely by taking payments from private individuals looking to identify perpetrators of crimes.
Reaver	Soldiers of the Legions who become dedicated to raiding and mercenary work.

15.1.4 The League

Merchant Prince	A Merchant Prince is the head of a Guild, the tight-knit mercantile organisations which define the shape of League society.
Bravo	Bravos are the members of the mercenary Free Companies, as rough and rowdy off the battlefield as they are disciplined and professional on it, and immensely proud of their Companies.
Bishop	The Bishops of the League are its high priests, who provide Virtuous guidance to any who can afford it, and who compete using the size and influence of their congregations.
Troupe Magician	Troupes are bands of actors who often go masked while performing, and when performing ritual magic. To them, magic is a commodity like any other.
Mountebank	Mountebanks are street magicians whose tricks may be sleight of hand or genuine magic, many of whom skirt the edges of the law playing short-cons and rigging street games.
Cicisbeo	A Cicisbeo is an expensive professional paramour, the only exception to League culture's absolute prohibition on extramarital relations.

15.1.5 The Marches

Steward	A steward is the chosen head of a Marcher household. However a steward leads their household only with the consent of the other yeoman.
Beater	Beaters are a roaming informal police force, learning every part of the land, watching for thieves, vagrants and other ne?er-do-wells. Beaters are often instrumental in settling land disputes between neighbours and they have a vital role in the tradition of beating the bounds. Most are skilled foresters or hunters.
Yeoman	The yeoman is to many the archetypal inhabitant of the Marches. They are a hard people, who own their own land and are well accustomed to a long day working it. Military service is a proud tradition in the Marches, and the majority of yeomen are also soldiers.
Monk	Monks minister to the spiritual welfare of the folk around their monastery, largely ignoring household boundaries. They divide their time between study of the Imperial Faith and working the farmlands claimed by the monastery.
Friar	Friars work their own land and provide spiritual advice and counsel to their fellow yeomen in their household. Many also serve as scholars for their community, acting as a chirurgeon, and teaching letters and history to young children.
Landskeeper	

	A landskeeper is a figure from the Marches magical tradition, who supports the territories or the nation as a whole. Landskeepers can use a variety of methods, from hearth magics and good practical advice to rituals.
Mummer	Itinerant entertainers who combine theatrical performance with magic using the techniques of dramaturgy. They attend fairs, markets and other regular gatherings performing plays and feats of skill but are often greeted with suspicion and (sometimes unfairly) accused of being tricksters and mountebanks.
Alder	Alders are the appointed leaders of market towns, and are the rough equivalent of the yeomen. In most cases these are wealthy merchants of the town, but often they include prominent town folk such as a friar or blacksmith who lives in the village.
Smith	A skilled crafter who has used a lifetime's experience selling their wares to become a canny trader and experienced negotiator.
Thresher	A thresher dedicates their life to tracking down those who use magic for nefarious purposes and finding ways to punish them.

15.1.6 Navarr

Brand	Navarri who have dedicated themselves to the service of the community, who work tirelessly to aid others without fee. They might be from any profession - Thorn, Vate, blacksmith, tanner, it doesn't matter. They are named for the brand burned into the skin on their left cheekbone.
Dreamspeaker	Philosophers, visionaries, and activists who aspire to make dreams into reality.
Thorn	A Navarri sworn to service in battle - usually, but not necessarily, a warrior. Always tattooed, they often wear warpaint into battle.
Guide	A Navarri who follows the path of the Virtues, and takes it upon themselves to ensure that members of the Empire have found the place in society that they are best suited to.
Broker	A Navarri who serves as an intermediary between a buyer and a seller, usually claiming some sort of payment from the deal.
Vate	The magical practitioners of Navarr. Often called upon to perform rituals in service of the nation and the Empire, they are the Navarri most trusted to meet with eternals or their heralds.
Vine	A Navarr who has dedicated themselves to healing the wounds caused by the vallorn.

15.1.7 Urizen

Arbiter	An arbiter is the elected leader of the spires, citadels, and temples of Urizen. They are often called on to resolve disputes within a community or to represent it to outsiders.
Architect	Architects are interested in economics and how money moves around and the influence it exerts on the world.
Illuminate	Illuminates use their understanding of the Net of the Heavens to perfect the world; focusing on building up the virtuous... and removing the unvirtuous from prominence.
Mage	Mages are magicians motivated by politics. Ambitious and potentially ruthless, a mage understands that all magic is inherently political.
Seer	Seers believe that perfect understanding is they key to unlocking the Net of the Heavens. They seek out opportunities to get the right information to the right people so they can make the right decisions.
Sentinel	Sentinels study the art of war with dedication and commitment that matches that of any magician.
Stargazer	Stargazers are scholars of magical lore who love magic in all its forms; they are the theoreticians and debaters who push knowledge to its limit.
Sword scholar	Sword scholars are warrior priests with a passionate commitment to reason and wisdom. They exhort others to test what they have learnt.
Torchbearer	Torchbearers are dedicated to ensuring that as many people as possible know the truth. They work to keep fellow citizens informed about current events and abhor falsehoods and secrets.
Questor	Questors consider the Way of Virtue to be an unfinished work and the Doctrines of the Faith as incomplete. Questors are radical priests who are willing to tear apart the Way in their quest for perfection.

15.1.8 Varushka

Boyar	A Varushkan Boyar is the hard heart of a Varushkan community, whose first duty is as a strong protector of their people. Second to that, they arbitrate and govern their vale in council with their Wise Ones.
Warden	The Warden brotherhoods are heroic warriors who employ magical protection along with their armour and weapons to hunt down the terrors of the Varushkan wilderness, and to uphold Imperial Law.
Schlacta	The Schlacta are Varushka's well-organised bands of soldiery, who provide defence to a place or an employer.
Wise One	Wise Ones are the true hearts of Varushkan communities. They are the thinkers who deal with those problems which cannot be dealt with by strength, and who look through the appearance of things to discover the threats lurking beneath.
Volhov	A Volhov is a Varushkan who studies magic, particularly warding magic (so necessary to Varushka's safety) and divination, to uncover threats before they grow too great to deal with. They often find it necessary to deal with Eternals, and sometimes even to pacify

	Varushka's deadly Sovereigns with rituals or bargains.
Cabalists	Cabals are teams of ritual magic users, who often act as individual groups, independent of their vales. Each Cabal is different from each other, but their magical might grants them considerable influence.
Storytellers	Varushkan Storytellers are the nation's ragged priests, often itinerant, around whom entire communities will gather to hear news, entertaining tales, and spiritual messages told well.
Stzena	The inheritors of a tradition of night sentries, Stzena are bands of musicians who perform at local events.
Wagon raider	Opportunists who seek their fortunes by launching forays into barbarian lands to grab whatever riches can be found.

15.1.9 Wintermark

Thane	The leader of a Hall in Wintermark, a Thane settles disputes that lie outside the law and provides civic and military leadership.
Banner-Bearer?	Warriors whose purpose is to raise the morale and fighting spirit of their companions. Banner-bearers often literally carry their warband's banner.
Stormcrow	The ragged priests of Wintermark, who act as guides, witnesses and confessors, and who provide spiritual and moral inspiration and guidance for the Winterfolk.
Runesmith	Artisans who specialise in the magic of the old runes of Wintermark, who create engraved weapons and armour, or scribe warding marks to protect people or places.
Icewalker	The cunning mages of the Suaq, who use their magical skills and their knowledge of the Ice as part of their hunting tradition.
Mediator	A Wintermark merchant who specialises in negotiating weregild between aggrieved parties.
Maggot	A scavenger, a looter on the battlefield; "Maggots" are seen as scum by most Winterfolk.
Mystic	Deeply spiritual Kallavesi who make predictions about the future and advise their fellows on the wisest course of action. Often a magician, but some do it with hearth magic and intellect.
Scop	The professional entertainers of Wintermark, Scops are known for their mastery of saga and song, and their skill with alliterative poetry. They are responsible for granting an adult name to a child coming to adulthood.
Grimnir	The battlefield doctors and healers of Wintermark, Grimnir swear an oath to stay clear of the front lines.

16 Dawn groups

16.1 Overview

There are many important noble houses, knightly orders, and weaver cabals in Dawn. Despite the number, only a comparative handful are involved in the affairs of the Empire (that is, attend the seasonal summits at Anvil). Their influence can wax and wane, and involvement in Imperial affairs is not always a reflection of their prominence within the nation itself. This page presents in-character information about the groups that attend, or have attended, Anvil ? the kind of thing that someone who asked about them might uncover from talking to their peers. In each case, the information is provided by the players and edited before being put on the wiki.

The majority of groups listed here are made up of player-characters. You should not create a character who is part of a group, or has personal history with one, without first clearing it with the appropriate players. You should also check before including other players' groups in your background. The background team are unlikely to approve a background that significantly impacts or involves another player character group without their permission. There are also a handful of prominent NPC groups included for completeness, but they are not intended for use by player characters.

16.2 Noble Houses

The noble houses of Dawn represent the best - and occasionally the worst - of what the nation has to offer.

16.2.1 Houses of Astolat



House Asterion

16.2.1.1 House Asterion

- **Location:** Winterbourne, east of Boar's Hollow
- **Heraldry:** A magpie reaching out to pluck a star from the sky on a field of blue and white
- **Colours:** Black, royal blue and white - with gold accents
- **Earl:** Enchantress Rosalynn Asterion

A young house, Asterion was founded in 383YE by Kyriel Asterion. It takes in those who are alone or lost, no matter their story, and gives them a chance to rise above the hand they have been dealt. Its yeofolk are prosperous, if a little chaotic, and its nobles are highly ambitious. Many of both ranks are artists and weavers specialising in Spring and Winter magic, with an emphasis on the cycle of life and death.

Its heart is known as Brambling Keep, built upon forested mountains near Boar?s Hollow. In the warmer months it bustles with activity, hosting weaver cabals and training magpies drawn there by the mana crystals growing in its natural hot spring caverns. During long winters, it is a place of refuge, where snow-dusted pines soften the noise of the world, and one may find tranquillity.

The death of the enchanter in 384YE, saw the house spend several years being maintained by its yeofolk and knights-errant. In 385YE, with the yeofolks blessing, Ser Rosalynn Redgrave sought a Test of Mettle from the Knight of Roses, and created a great feat of Imperial art within the Keep?s great hall. The Enchantress continues Asterion?s traditions of hospitality, prosperity, and second chances.

?*From Dust, Become Stars.*?



House Caerleon

16.2.1.2 House Caerleon

- **Location:** Winterbourne, southwest of Weaving
- **Heraldry:** Two white dragons eating each other's tails creating a circle on a navy blue background with a gold chevron.
- **Colours:** Navy blue and white, accented with gold
- **Earl:** Lady Guinevere Caerleon

House Caerleon is a recent addition to Dawn's history, being founded in 307YE when the knight-errant Arthur Caerleon split from his adopted family after passing his Test of Mettle fighting and protecting a town from "draconic" beasts with other knights-errant, taking one of the beast's heads as a reward. Lord Caerleon travelled for miles trying to find the perfect location to settle, before finally coming across a hill with beautiful views, flanked by babbling brooks and overlooking the Hamlet of Strathmoor. It is here where he buried the beast's head on top of the hill and restored and expanded an old manor house close to the Hamlet and began to call it home.

Over the years the Caerleon grounds have grown to include Strathmoor, and it has developed into a thriving farming town well known for its apple orchards, and because of these, desserts such apple pie have become a town and house specialty. The hill, named Dragon?s Garden, that overlooks the manor and town has also become well known, for it grows a variety of colourful flowers and berries upon it almost all year round. Atop, it has grown a single large apple tree with bark that looks like scales, producing the sweetest apples around, apples are normally reserved only for the Earl or their honoured guests.

House Caerleon prides itself on being a found family and uses the virtues of loyalty, wisdom, and courage to resist hardships and assist members in pursuing goals in whatever path they walk.

16.2.1.3 House de Coeurdefer



House Coeurdefer

- **Location:** Plains of Teeth, Houndsgate
- **Heraldry:** Black, a gauntlet silver grasping a crescent moon, two crescent moons silver
- **Colours:** Black and silver
- **Earl:** Lady Rosalind de Coeurdefer

House de Coeurdefer predates the Empire; memory of its forming has fallen into a legend. It is claimed that a knightly band gathered to destroy a nest of Winter-touched drakes, with their leader giving her heart's blood and her life to seal a twisted regio. Troubadours sometimes say Castle Ironheart, their principal seat, was created magically out of dragon bones and her steel cestus to stand guard against the threat returning. Since the founding of the House, the Earls have traditionally been of Winter lineage, with a strong line of naga from the weaver cabal that lives and works with them, the Coven of Ouroboros Twining.

The House is known for Loyalty, Ambition, and Pride. Over the centuries, the House declined - numbers fell, as the dour draughir stayed at home with their packs of wolfhounds. They have a strong tie to their cousins in House de Rondell, and supported them at Anvil following the death of Empress Britta. In recent years, the house has undergone great change, and Earl Rosalind strives to ensure the Glory of her house, abandoning their ancient seat in Weaving to reside at Houndsgate to tend to the memorials and tombs set there and ensure that for as long as she draws breath, where the Druj have sown fear, Dawn will make flowers grow.

16.2.1.4 House Cordraco



House Cordraco

- **Location:** Withy, north of Oldheart
- **Heraldry:** Twinned Dragons on a field of purple and gold
- **Colours:** Purple and gold
- **Earl:** Logan Olivier De Havilland Cordraco

House Cordraco was founded in 378 by a conglomeration of the ancient and venerable houses Arwood, Boscombe, Loriel and Martel. To do this they were set the test of slaying a dragon. They managed to fell a mighty drake but not before the beast feasted upon their first Earl; Johann Rookwood Martel Cordraco.

House Cordraco have been a great supporter of the arts and hospitality since its founding. The house most closely associates with the virtues of Ambition, Pride and Prosperity. The motto, "*Not for us the straight and narrow*" is taken from the house oath, read by nobles once they have been judged to have completed their tests of mettle. It epitomises the beliefs of the house; that there is no one path to Glory. House Cordraco aspires to great acts of Prosperity and Pride within Dawn and the Empire. After a tumultuous reorganisation following the deaths of multiple earls, House Cordraco looks to step back into the world of Anvil politics intent on having its name echo through the ages. The house is known to encourage civility, respect and cooperation between its members.

16.2.1.5 House Elyan



House Elyan

- **Location:** Withy, on the banks of the River of Sighs
- **Heraldry:** Purpure, a plough share points downwards or on the sinister side; a chief embattled gules; over all a drop spindle palewise or threaded proper, entwined by an Amphiptere argent.
- **Colours:** Red, purple, and gold
- **Earl:** Earl Marianne Dominique

Traditionally a martial house, most of Elyan died in the disastrous battle of Skarsind in 376YE. Becoming Earl by virtue of there being nobody else, Marianne sought to turn around Elyan's traditional ideas about what constitutes Glory.

Today, while Elyan does not disdain martial conflict, the House supports those whose glory can be found in all kinds of actions. Earl Marianne has adapted Elyan's traditional test of mettle to allow for multiple possible paths towards its completion. Likewise, the house's heraldry has replaced the sword with the ploughshare and the pike with the drop spindle.

Elyan aims to provide for guests, whether they like it or not: at Anvil, they have developed the motto "Aggressive Hospitality". As well as offering food and company at all hours, the members of Elyan consider it their duty to help out those who are new, shy or afraid.

The house is found on the banks of the River of Sighs in Withy, Astolat. With its pale stone and distinctive conical blue turret roofs, the Elyan castle is a striking sight. No moat exists to keep people out, and no guards stand beside the archways. The rusting portcullis on each entrance is a token towards defensibility. The road runs through the outer courtyard, and travellers often stop to share the news and enjoy a simple meal provided by Elyan's kitchens.

As the winged serpent on the heraldry suggests, many Elyan members have an interest in Night magic. Most of those are members of the Neidr y Nos coven, with which the house enjoys a close relationship. As befits this subtle form of magic, Elyan trade in secrets, and value them just as much as other, more tangible, resources.

16.2.1.6 House de Gauvain



House de Gauvain

- **Location:** Caer Faucon
- **Heraldry:** Golden phoenix on flames; nobles often have their own personal heraldry
- **Colours:** Orange and black with red trim
- **Earl:** Earl Rillian De Gauvain

Ser Edric de Gauvain is perhaps one of the most famous names in Dawn, thanks to a recent curse which befell the territory of Weirwater; but what of his House? Nestled in the bucolic Astolat countryside, the de Gauvains (pronounced *gor-van*) reside in the pleasant market town of Caer Faucon. It is far from the front lines of the Empire at war. Few monsters stalk their lands. Their keep looks out over sheep scudded hills, drooping orchards, and peace. Wealth breeds prosperity, and hospitality. Noble and yeofolk rub shoulders, and do so gladly; bloody experiences during the Marcher revolt taught them the error of their older, haughtier ways. The de Gauvains? door is always open for travellers and wanderers, but one should never mistake warmth and generosity for placidity or cowardice. They have glorious deeds to match.

The house is best known for its weavers. Rich supplies of textiles, and a deep-seated love of glory, have led to a great interest in the Summer realm. This power in magic and realm-wisdom is matched on the battlefield; the House?s knights and war-witches march as part of the famous Winged Lion lance.

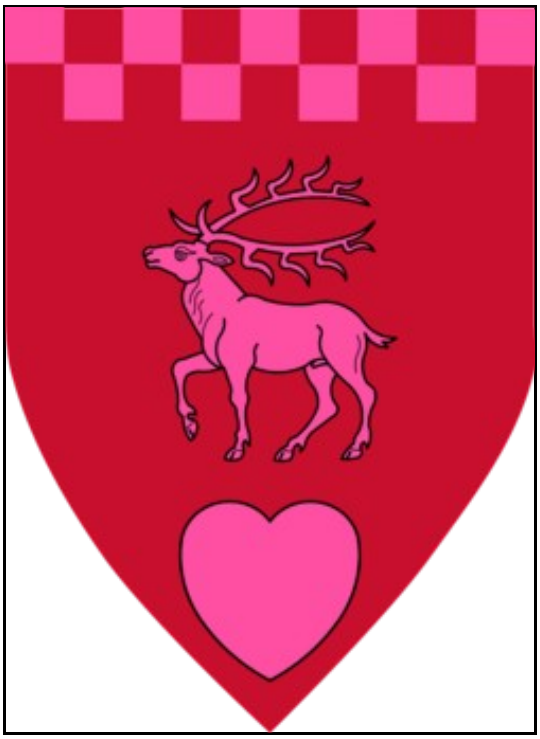


House Goldvein
16.2.1.7 House Goldvein

- **Location:** Stryxstone Keep, north of Weaving
- **Heraldry:** A golden mandowla on an emerald field
- **Colours:** Emerald and gold
- **Earl:** Enchantress Lilian Goldvein

Originally founded by a former guide of Navarr who found true love and her place in the great dance beside a knight-errant, House Goldvein has a long-held tradition of recording and sharing tales of love and glory. After the tragedy that ended the reign of Nicovar, this mission broadened to include the foundation of the Stryxstone Library as a repository of knowledge to protect against a similar loss of information. After more than 150 years of bad luck, sabotage and unexplained misfortune, the House finally found itself succeeding in this quest, but becoming more insular and cutting itself off from the wider Empire. Now with a new Earl in their ascendance, House Goldvein makes it return to Anvil, and the centres of learning and research across the Empire.

House Goldvein prides itself on the diversity of talent and knowledge it recruits and fosters, with artisans, warriors, troubadours, witches and physicks all held in equal prominence within the ranks of the House's nobles and yeofolk, and all who can share a tale or unrecorded knowledge will find a warm welcome to the estates surrounding the Stryxstone Keep.



House Hart
16.2.1.8 House Hart

- **Location:** Boar's Hollow
- **Heraldry:** Hot pink hart and heart on crimson
- **Earl:** Enchanter Barbus Hart

House Hart is a newly founded noble house of Astolat, formed in the name of love, prosperity, and the celebration of beauty in all its forms. Though young, the Harts have gained a reputation for lavish hospitality, artistic patronage, and the belief that glory is achieved not only through war, but through the flourishing of culture, craft, and prosperity. Their words - "*No Glory in Want*" - capture this conviction: that splendour, not deprivation, is the truest measure of a great house.

Hart Hall welcomes weary travellers, merchants, and wandering musicians alike. Music, poetry, fine craftsmanship, and grand feasts are woven into the house's identity, and its yeofolk are renowned as craftspeople, performers, and artisans. To the Harts, prosperity is cultivation, and the denial of beauty, comfort, or joy is considered vulgar.

The house prizes the bond between creator and patron. While yeofolk create, the nobility prove themselves through patronage - funding great endeavours and ensuring beauty may flourish. A common Test of Mettle is not personal glory alone, but the ability to elevate others. To become a noble of House Hart is to take responsibility for the flourishing of others.



House Larmallevés

16.2.1.9 House Larmallevés

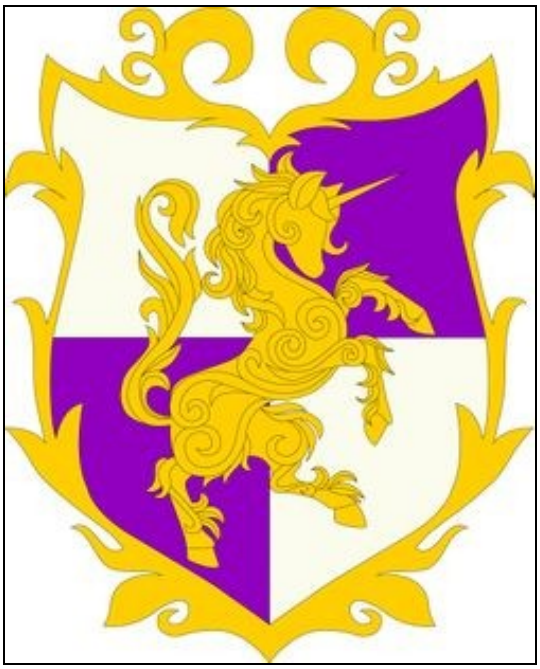
- **Location**: Brightway, west of the De Warrenne Way, Grovesyard
- **Heraldry:** Crowned Phoenix in Gold on Field of Purple
- **Colours:** Gold and Purple
- **Earl:** Enchantress Areloe Larmallevés

The noble House Larmallevés (pronounced Lar-mell-e-vee) traces its lineage to an age before the Empire?s founding, its legacy ignited by King Bréanainn?s triumph in the Grand Tourney, clad in arms and armour of his own masterful design. Ever since that fateful victory, the House has embraced those who embody excellence?whether on the battlefield or in the forge. Thus, it upholds a proud tradition of setting Tests of Mettle tailored to the strengths and aspirations of each knight-errant who dares seek the House?s banner.

The House?s heraldry speaks of an unyielding cycle?glorious ascension, an inevitable fall, and the inexorable rise from the ashes?encapsulated in its motto: "*From Fire, To Ash, To Flame*." True to this ethos, two members of the House first set foot in Anvil in the closing days of 383YE, and since that moment, they have met every challenge with undaunted ambition. Most notably, the Enchantress of the House was honoured by Meraud with an opportunity befitting one of her puissance. Seizing this with characteristic fervour, she undertook the construction of the sinecure, funding all but two crowns of its completion.

The House dwells within the chateau known as the Second Dawn, named for the great ceremonial fire pit upon its grounds, which casts the illusion of a second sunrise as dusk falls. This spectacle is made all the more resplendent by the Flame of the Phoenix, standing just beyond the estate?s bounds. More than mere ornamentation, this flame serves as both a mark of the nation?s bond with the Summer realm and a testament to the Enchantress? own standing as a master of magic.

House Larmallevés welcomes all aspiring knights-errant and nobles who embody Ambition and Loyalty, ever urging them to leave behind a legacy worthy of remembrance. The current Enchantress, a cambion of cunning intellect, eagerly receives requests for Tests of Mettle. As is her nature, her trials do not test brute strength or skill alone, but reward those who can meet them with keen wit and daring ingenuity.



House Meliora

16.2.1.10 House Meliora

- **Location**: The Chase, south of Laroc
- **Heraldry:** A golden unicorn facing left on a quartered cream and purple field
- **Colours:** Purple, Cream and Gold
- **Earl:** Earl Torag Meliora

House Meliora is a relatively young house, formed in the mist of 383YE, when a number of both nobles and yeofolk alike chose to break away from their previous house in the pursuit of a more virtuous and glorious life.

They built a house dedicated to achieving glory on and off the battlefield, their members split equally between both martial and magical pursuits. The house has since grown in size, welcoming members from other nations and magicians representing five of the six realms. The Earl of Meliora is committed to forming a place for his house to thrive wherever they choose to find themselves upon the quest for glory.



House de Rondell
16.2.1.11 House de Rondell

- **Location:** Laroc
- **Colours:** Blue and silver
- **Heraldry:** Three crescent moons around a gryphon
- **Earl:** Martin De Rondell

An ancient house existing from before the founding of the Empire, its fortunes have risen and fallen many times over the centuries. Proximity to the Castle of Thorns in Astolat has always kept them near to the political heart of Dawn. There is evidence that the castle was designed by a de Rondell in the earliest days of the Dawnish presence on the Bay of Catazar.

This house has returned senators, generals and cardinals again and again over the centuries. As such the household places an ongoing emphasis on questing in other parts of the Empire and gaining the regard of others in this way, long after many houses expect their members to focus in other areas.

The House uses virtues as inspiration, immortalised in the three silver crescent moons in the house heraldry. They represent Pride in one's own worth and that which the House has won; Ambition to constantly reach out and grasp every opportunity, and Courage to always step forwards into the fray or into the unknown.

?*We have been there from the beginning of the Empire, we will be there at the ascension. Until that day we shall steer it towards greatness and Glory*?
Bohemond de Rondell

House de Rondell's martial tests of mettle are quite difficult and can easily result in the death of the unwary; the other theme that runs through their tests is an emphasis on political acumen and the ability to influence others to act for the good of the Empire.



House de Rosier
16.2.1.12 House de Rosier

- **Location:** Winterbourne
- **Colours:** Red, gold and white
- **Heraldry:** A snake coiled inside a rose, surrounded by a radiant golden halo.
- **Earl:** Cerys de Rosier

Long before the founding of the Empire, House De Rosier was forged amidst a cataclysmic event. Their home in the lowlands of the mountains in northern Astolat was threatened by a devastating landslide. House de Rosier rallied their kin and fled up the mountain, desperately seeking refuge from the relentless fury of the storm. They traversed the treacherous mountain until they arrived at a plateau, apparently guided by a mysterious snake that appeared amidst the chaos. There, the snake halted, its gaze fixed upon a radiant rose blooming amidst the mountain peaks. To the amazement of House de Rosier, the snake curled around the rose, protecting it from the surrounding chaos. Sensing the serenity emanating from this extraordinary

flower, they realised it was a sign. The survivors had found their new home?a sanctuary upon the mountaintop that became the foundation of House de Rosier. Their ancestral crest, a majestic rose entwined with a serpent, is a symbol of their resilience and the eternal bond between their house and the land that sheltered them.

House de Rosier offers any citizen who wishes to join their ranks a test that has remained unchanged since its foundation. Knights are called to venture to a place hitherto unexplored. They are instructed to return with three significant elements?an extraordinary tale, a tangible souvenir, and a scar etched upon their body. It is a test that unites the house, binding generations together through shared experiences and a deep reverence for the unknown.

The land continues to be fertile and the house is famed for its beautiful gardens, overgrowing with strange blooms often brought back by questing knights. These rare flowers are distilled into perfumes which keep the estate, and its inhabitants, fragrant.



House Sepulchre

16.2.1.13 House Sepulchre

- **Location:** Winterbourne
- **Colours:** Red, gold and black
- **Heraldry:** Black hound
- **Earl:** Loria Sepulchre

House Sepulchre traces its roots to Mira (later Rolande), a warden of Varushka who came to Dawn to bury her family and, eventually, the magician who killed them. Her bloodthirsty quest won her glory and land where she could mourn and remember in quiet contemplation. Over the years the graves and gardens spread further and further as House Sepulchre sought to collect tales and songs of the glorious dead as well as providing them with a fitting resting place (sometimes as statues stationed around the gardens and grounds). It suffered something of a decline when it was revealed that a heretical cult of Hope had spread throughout the ranks of the nobility. It was only thanks to the swift action of a newly ennobled knight that Sepulchre endured.

The house is known for having a string of draughir earls and healers among its ranks. Sepulchre nobles and yeofolk alike seek to find glory in its every aspect and live life to the full; living by their motto, 'forever sanguine'. Sepulchre accepts knights-errant from every walk of life, and its Tests of Mettle are often designed to encourage imaginative thinking, to test resolve, and to crush any lingering shreds of optimism in the aspiring noble. Particularly of note is the Sepulchre graveyard, upon which when a knight-errant passes their Test of Mettle, they dig their own grave, a symbolic burying of their old life to start anew.



House Videre

16.2.1.14 House Videre

- **Location:** The Chase, southeast of Laroc, near Rosered Woods
- **Heraldry:** A golden gryphon passant, on a parted field of red and green
- **Colours:** Bottle Green, Burgundy Red and Pale Gold
- **Earl:** Vacant

House Videre traces its lineage back to royal retainers of ancient times, who served with distinction before the Empire's founding. Over the centuries, the name Videre has weathered trials and triumphs, enduring near destruction in 276YE during a failed campaign to capture the Barrens. Again in 330YE, the house faced internal strife with the split of House de Carsenere, casting doubt on its future. Despite these challenges, House Videre endures - steadfast in reclaiming its legacy and honouring the noble traditions it upholds.

Known for their strong affinity for magic, the Videres have long been led by powerful Enchanters, each devoted to the principles of Love and Loyalty above all. Their Tests of Mettle are famed for pushing loyalty to its limits, earning both respect and caution from peers. Though faithful to the Way, relations with the Imperial Synod have often been strained due to their tradition of challenging both parties during Tests of Ardour, even when one of their own nobles leaves for another house.

The seat of House Videre is a small hillside fortress on the border of the Chase and Elvette, not far from a potent regio aligned with night magic. Once a strategic outpost during the Semmerholm conquest, it now stands watch over the Hall of Blooms?a sprawling floral maze cultivated over generations. The Hall contains rare plants from across the Empire: blossoms gifted by allies, specimens won through duels, and seeds gathered on long-forgotten quests. Some say it reflects the emotional temperament of the house?s Earl; flourishing in joy, withering in grief. In Spring 385YE, it suffered severe damage from the uncontrolled growth caused by the Hallow of the Green World, collapsing paths and choking rare specimens. Under the care of the Castellan, much of it has since been restored. Though some corners remain wild, the Hall now blooms again?an emblem of mystery, memory, and resilience.

Following the disappearance of Lord Colborn Videre, the last Earl of the house, leadership remains in transition. Since Spring 386YE, they have been guided by Ludwig Barbadoro as seneschal and acting head of House Videre. The house now awaits the knight-errant who will complete their Test of Mettle and carry the legacy forward.



House Volucer

16.2.1.15 House Volucer

- **Location:** Winterbourne
- **Heraldry:** A winged dog, atop a bed of pink and purple roses
- **Colours:** Pink, purple, red, and silver
- **Earl:** Lady Lamri de Volucer

Fighting for family, as has always been Lady Lamri?s way, House Volucer was conceived to avenge the untimely death of a brother with a dream and has grown to find itself a safe house and place of comfort for many in Winterbourne. Its founding represented not only the ambition to continue the quest of those you love but also the importance to take unto yourself the qualities that you cherish of those around you.

Due to the alarming threat of vallorn upon the border, hospitality was more needed than ever, and the Lady could not be more inspired to provide as such. House Volucer is a font of life and health for any and all that suffer and prides itself on allowing people to achieve and overcome any fear or ailment that may prevent such.

16.2.2 Houses of Semmerholm

16.2.2.1 House d?Abeille



House D'Abeille

- **Location:** Estmure
- **Heraldry:** A Flower Crowned Bee on a Blue and Yellow field, parted with Black.
- **Colours:** Black, Yellow and Blue
- **Earl:** Earl Tarsus

A seemingly new House, only recently rising to prominence. House d?Abeille (pronounced da-bay) prides itself on Prosperity, Ambition and Loyalty to one another. Taking the heraldry of a bee, the house has a close, tight knit community, with each working for the good of the hive. Its members are easily recognised by the flower crowns which are staples of their outfits.

Situated in Semmerholm, to the north of the Adamant Gate, House d?Abeille focuses its efforts on reclaiming the Barrens. Since its founding, its members are always the first to take the fight to the Druj therein.

On the field, the House specialises in fighting on the front lines and battlefield support, cutting down Druj and ensuring everyone makes it home to tell the glorious story. The motto and battlecry on the lips of its members is ?Si sapis, sis apis? - If you are wise, be a bee.

16.2.2.2 House d?Acier



House d'Acier

- **Location:** Estmure
- **Heraldry:** Black Tower before a Golden Sun on a Green field
- **Colours:** Green and Gold
- **Earl:** Enchantress Vivienne d?Acier

An older, weathered House in the process of rebuilding itself, greater than ever. Following a recent period of unstable leadership that saw the House verging on collapse, a new Enchantress was chosen through the trials of the Iron Duke, bringing renewed Glory and purpose. Deeply Pride-aligned, House d?Acier draws from the life and lessons of Paragon Richilde to guide its way. Its members eschew direct martial might, instead leveraging their magical, medical, and diplomatic talents to steer the course of Dawnish politics.

D?Acier nobles and yeofolk are found on the fringes of great tourneys, elections, and other gatherings of note. They foster connections between Houses, provide healing and magical assistance, and help elevate those they believe will bring the most Glory to Dawn. Theirs is a Pride that speaks softly but looms large. Located near the Adamant Gate, House d?Acier?s once mighty stronghold was ravaged by recent Druj incursions and, much like the House itself, is currently being rebuilt. The House?s history is intimately tied to Dawn?s claim to the Barrens, and they work tirelessly so that one day, the Dawnish banner may fly over those lands. They are also heavily involved in the politics of the Summer realm, helping to foster positive relations between Dawn and the eternals of Summer, particularly the Iron Duke. In recent years, the House has garnered a reputation as one of the historian Houses of Dawn and are currently the custodians of a great relic of Richilde.

16.2.2.3 House de Bois Gilbert



House De Bois Gilbert

- **Location:** Lacuve
- **Heraldry:** A black Sea Dragon surrounded by 3 silver suns (top left, top right, bottom middle) on a per pile red, gold and green (golden V on halved red and green)
- **Colours:** Gold, red and green
- **Earl:** Enchanter Morgan De Bois Gilbert

House de Bois Gilbert was formed in 52YE during the conquest of Semmerholm by a Knight Errant of House De Rondell as a reward for their glorious deeds.

In the early days of the house, its reputation became one of staunch protectors and defenders of the people from marauding beasts and barbarians, and of those who have heard of the house today, that reputation still stands, and the words of the house are "We are the shield." However the downsides of

their zeal were clear - casualties were high and the house never grew much beyond a few dozen nobles, slowly declining in strength and influence over time. During the Druj invasion of 381YE the remaining nobles of the house were slain.

In 384YE, a knight-errant whose Loyalty to his house was unsurpassed succeeded at his quest to reinstate the nobility of the house and select a new Earl who now brings some selected retainers to Anvil to rebuild the glories of old.

16.2.2.4 House Cadwalon

- **Location:** Axmure
- **Heraldry:** A rampant golden unicorn with a green mane and tail, under a starry moonlit sky tinted gold against a violet field.
- **Colours:** Violet, gold, and green
- **Earl:** Lady Aneira 'Mawr' Harper Cadwalon

House Cadwalon is an ancient house, tasked with the protection of a parcel of land on the edge of the forest of Axmure. The house makes extensive use of heraldic magic in its girding, particularly invoking the unicorn in the house heraldry which lends its nobles a reputation for fierce passion for life and a strong protective streak resulting in the house motto "Passionate Hearts, Fearless Souls.". Fittingly enough, Cadwalon's tests of mettle often evoke one or both of those themes.

House Cadwalon is rather (in)famous for the close relationship its nobles share with the yeofolk under their care, often eschewing formality unless it is of the utmost importance. This bond was born in the house's earliest days, with knights often ordered to accompany yeo forresters into the woods to protect them from the barbarians, beasts, and bandits that stalk the glades of Axmure.

In the house's heyday, it was not uncommon to see their knights helping with manual labour - particularly where yeofolk had struggled mightily or even hurt themselves. More recently, the house has fallen on hard times, when the Druj invaded Semmerholm in 381YE, the knights and knights-errant of House Cadwalon fought a desperate rearguard action to buy precious time for their non-combatants and wounded to escape.

Bloodied, but unbowed, and with a small cadre of Ambitious young nobles at its core Cadwalon's Glory will burn bright, and its lands will know Prosperity once more.

16.2.2.5 House de Cendres



House de Cendres

- **Location:** Axmure
- **Heraldry:** Solid gold chevron on black behind a dragon resplendent on a tower
- **Colours:** Black and Gold
- **Earl:** Earl Feroce Lupo de Cendres

House de Cendres was formed when the Ashen Tower, a military company from the League city of Holberg emigrated to Dawn, in 381YE. They claimed lands in Axmure in the wake of the Druj invasion and retreat from that province in the same year. Under the dynamic leadership of their changeling Earl Lupo, they have attracted new yeofolk and knights to their banner and rebuilt their lands. Their estates are a wide valley on the Drycastle road, with several villages and fortified manors, sometimes called the Hearthhold. Their primary concern is prosecuting the war with the Druj, and as such they are

a martial and aggressive House. Most recently, their knights and companies have marched deep into Druj territory with the Dawnish armies invading Ossium and the Forest of Ulnak.

16.2.2.6 House de Courtenay



House de Courtenay

- **Location:** Semmer's Rose
- **Heraldry:** Rampant Fox with a bee on its nose, Azure and Gold per chevron
- **Colours:** Blue, Dark Teal and Gold
- **Earl:** Earl Aodhán de Courtenay

The House de Courtenay was almost wiped out when the Hounds of Glory fell, with Earl Jules being on their last breaths as they issued a test of mettle to the now Earl Aodhán. The house now prides itself on helping the lost find their place in the Empire - with all the current members of the House having been displaced or unsure where they were before becoming Dawnish. The House live by the words "*Nobody Left Alone*" - to be a guiding light for those who have no clear way forward, and to support those who otherwise might find themselves alone.

16.2.2.7 House D'Fauntine



House D'Fauntine

- **Location:** Highgrove, Axmure
- **Heraldry:** A white faun dancing within a circle of flowers on a field of green
- **Colours:** Green and White
- **Earl:** Enchantress Aurelia D?Fauntine

Apparently founded by vintners during the reign of the Sun Queen, stories claim that the house was created after the vineyards in the forest were blessed by an entity resembling a faun when the early settlers rescued one of its offspring. Historians argue over the creature's identity; many theorising it may have been a herald from the Summer realm, others suggesting it was a tulpa of some kind. With the establishment of the vineyards, the settlement became known as Highgrove.

To protect its wealth, a local militia was formed and the first Highgrove Keep was constructed, replaced by the current structure named Highgrove Hall during the reign of the Mariner. Due to its secretive location within thick woodlands, Highgrove avoided most conflicts, but fell to the attack of the Freedom Rebellion, an outcome blamed on the leadership at the time. A new earl arose and drove out the heretics, but left the house in financial ruin. It took generations for the house to rebuild its former strength and wealth, and House D?Fauntine began attending summits at Anvil in 385YE.

16.2.2.8 House Kendaii



House Kendaii

- **Location:** The Spire, a keep in Lacuve
- **Heraldry:** The moon intersected by a black spike on a royal purple field with rising sky blue.
- **Colours:** Royal purple and sky blue
- **Earl:** Earl Seidon Kendaii

Founded in the summer of 387YE, House Kendaii was created to be an open door for newcomers, a welcoming sight and a friendly face. The house motto, "*Honour for All*", informs the decisions and practices of the house. As such, a noble of House Kendaii does not sit back and rest upon completing a test of mettle. They instead take on the responsibility to uplift and support others, regardless of their station or standing.

The home of House Kendaii lies along the banks of the Semmerlak estuary. The deep and fast-running hazardous water on one side and dark forest on the other, create a safe glade where residents of the nearby settlement live and work. Ships belonging to the house sail from a sturdy dock at the side of the keep and travel far across the known world, gathering stories, goods and treasures.

16.2.2.9 House du Maurisol



House du Maurisol

- **Location:** Forests of Elvette
- **Heraldry:** Three entwined bright blue calla lilies within a golden sun
- **Colours:** Cream, gold, and bright blue
- **Earl:** Currently undetermined

Dedicated to Loyalty, the nobles of House du Maurisol are frequently priests and occasionally mages, but always warriors beneath it. They see it as their task to safeguard the Virtuous from dangers that might threaten to damage or shake their Loyalties, be this by the clever wordplay needed to encourage and guide, or a certain judicious application of a challenge to those involved. Most of the House's nobles fell with Britta, but it has recently been revived and hopes to stand in glory once again.

16.2.2.10 House Medwood



House Medwood

- **Location:** Axmure, Medwood Hall
- **Heraldry:** A white tree on red and a black and white checked field
- **Colours:** Red, black and white
- **Earl:** Earl Harlow

House Medwood are a new house which wasn?t established until 381YE when the Druj swept through Axmure. Taking in the devastation of Medwood's lands the nobles of the House realised a need to visit Anvil to truly establish themselves. The house values itself on its Loyalty and gaining their friendship is gaining a steadfast ally.

16.2.2.11 House Du Meravon



House Du Meravon

- **Location:** Ulvenholm
- **Heraldry:** A white kelpie on a split field of blue and warm orange
- **Colours:** River blue and bronze
- **Earl:** Earl Aurianna du Meravon

Originally formed as an order of questing knights who helped take Semmerholm during 52YE by holding a strategic point on the river Ulvenwater. The order became a House not long after, and settled the land outside of Arnet. The original name of the group was lost to time, taking on the new name meaning ?where the river meets the sea (lake)?.

More than three centuries later, the House still holds true to the spirit of Ambition held by that first band of questing knights; pursuing glory and adventures in all its forms. In 385YE the house attended their first Anvil summit in almost 80 years, and the House has formed a close alliance with several other houses of Semmerholm and founded a political alliance called ?The Lavender Court? so named for the fields of wild lavender that stretch between their estates.

16.2.2.12 House de Rhys



House de Rhya

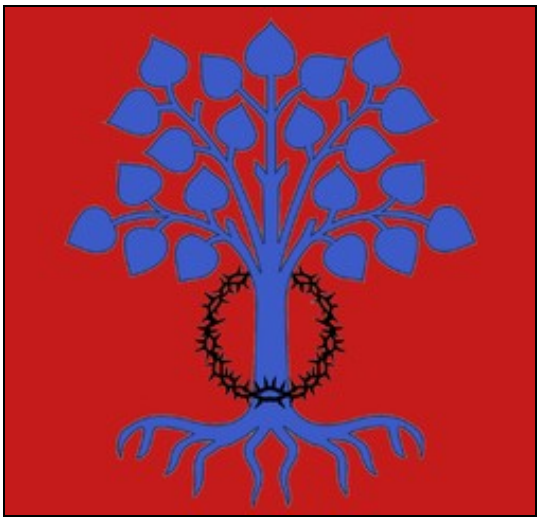
- **Location:** Ferrond
- **Heraldry:** A firebird on green and blue.
- **Colours:** Green, blue, black, and white
- **Earl:** Earl-Enchanter Ciagan de Rhys

An elder house refounded in Autumn 385YE after a powerful Empire-wide Day enchantment returned it to attention, House de Rhys was originally known for its powerful Night witches, before a sudden stop in Anvil attendance. Rumour has said the challenge of becoming Earl is often literally finding Castle de Rhys using riddles and puzzles left by the last Earl, with each making it more testing than the last. The difficulty in locating the castle may actually be based on its small size, but it is certainly home to many secrets that can be found in unexpected places.

House de Rhys is best known for its focus on glorious pursuits across every part of Anvil, encouraging the Loyalty to one's own heart and Ambitions. Whether this is to rise to a life in battles or the Synod, in an art studio or apothecary, or do something entirely new, House de Rhys is always prepared to offer support and guidance for the yeofolk and nobles that are part of it, and 'Rise', as their motto highlights, like a firebird from the ash.

House de Rhys is also now well known for its championing of Love. Many of the most popular songs performed by the troubadours of the house are focused on the topic. The castle is visited by people of all nations who wish to read the fantastic collection of love stories and poems, and often guests will sit in the hall until morning speaking of love. The castle's grounds are used for weddings and celebrations so the house is able to have a first-hand view of love in all its forms.

16.2.2.13 House Summerstrong



House Summerstrong

- **Location:** The Summerhold, Southern Elvette
- **Heraldry:** A blue tree on a field of red, wrapped in a wreath of blackthorns
- **Colours:** Red and Blue, often with black accenting
- **Earl:** Lord Percival Summerstrong

House Summerstrong is an old house of Semmerholm, one that has regularly occupied the strange position of being one of the wealthiest of the least important houses of the territory. In recent history, the house has grown due to the marriage of the ex-earl Lord Gawain Summerstrong and his ex-Navarri wife Lady Penelope Summerstrong. With their marriage bringing many members of Penelope's striding to Dawn, House Summerstrong became known as a house with deep roots in both Dawn and Navarr. Their home, The Summerhold, is a physical representation of their ties to Navarr, resting along the trod that cuts through Elvette and serving as a stop-off point for those venturing south into Brocéliande. The Summerhold is instantly recognisable for its red stone walls, covered in an array of wild moss and flowers that give the illusion that the hamlet itself is a part of the woods around it. From their position in The Summerhold, House Summerstrong have pursued their ambition to fuel the mission against the vallorn that occupy the areas so close to their home ? with their tests of mettle often featuring a glorious hunt into Brocéliande or a face-off with a dryad or marsh walker. The vallorn is, in the eyes of House Summerstrong, the most dangerous threat to the empire and its members are driven by the tragedies that surround their house to remove it. It is a house built upon surviving tragedy, but their roots are deep and they stand strong against the storm - as captured in their motto, "Our Roots are Deep and Glorious".

16.2.2.14 House Syrenus



House Syrenus

- **Location:** Estmure, Stonecrest keep
- **Heraldry:** A yellow crescent moon on a blue banner with a sword crossing a white rose
- **Colours:** Blue, yellow and white
- **Earl:** Enchanter Perrin Syrenus

House Syrenus was re-founded by members of a knightly order after the completion of their quest. Their stronghold, Stonecrest Keep, stands along the mountain pass along the border between Semmerholm and Holberg. Both the house name and the keep trace their name back to a time before Imperial rule. Believed to have been established around the death of King Tristane the Golden as a bulwark against the pre-Imperial burghers of Holberg. During the reign of Emperor Nicovar, the house and its keep were destroyed by fire, and with them, much of their ancient history was lost.

When the house was restored by the knightly order, the name Syrenus and its heraldry were reclaimed, along with its place in Estmure. Today, the house regularly sends questing parties into Brocéliande and the Barrens in search of glory and to rebuild its chronicles. In recent years, they have also sent a delegation to Anvil to forge alliances and recover fragments of the history they once lost.

16.2.2.15 House Tamerlaine



House Tamerlaine

- **Location:** Near the town of Semmer's Rose, on the edge of the Semmerlak
- **Heraldry:** A Silver Unicorn rearing on a Green and Black saltire field

- **Colours:** Viridian Green, Silver and Sable Black
- **Earl:** Earl Ailsa Tamerlaine

An older, weathered House in the process of rebuilding itself, greater than ever. Following a recent period of unstable leadership that saw the House verging on collapse, a new Enchantress was chosen through the trials of the Iron Duke, bringing renewed Glory and purpose. Deeply Pride-aligned, House d?Acier draws from the life and lessons of Paragon Richilde to guide its way. Its members eschew direct martial might, instead leveraging their magical, medical, and diplomatic talents to steer the course of Dawnish politics.

With their main estate lying near a sleepy hamlet to the south of Semmer's Rose, House Tamerlaine is an old and small Dawnish house once thought faded, that is slowly and steadily blooming once more. Castle Tamerlaine and its accompanying grounds are a sprawling affair, with wild floral gardens, deep ponds, hot houses, and a large barn that has been turned into a studio for the inhabitants of the House. There is much pastoral and wild beauty to be found here.

The House is mainly concerned with arts of pen and plectrum as well as weaponry and the art of war. When not ensconced in their compound, developing their crafts, noble members are often questing across the Empire, researching their arts. While not bound under one singular Virtue, the House troubadours are often troubadours of the Way. There is a heavy emphasis to seek out new information, new stories, but bring this back to share with all of the House, and with their fellow Dawnish. Travellers are always welcome in these halls, especially if they bring with them news.

With the upheaval of the last decade, Tamerlaine have re-thought their isolated ways and begun to reach out at Anvil. This having been said, it would be foolish to assume that a focus on the arts would mean ignorance of defence and fighting. The House motto defines the steely determination of its members: "If the bird does not sing, we shall make it sing."

16.2.2.16 House Vexille



House Vexille

- **Location:** Semmerholm, previously Barrens
- **Heraldry:** Dagger crossing a key
- **Colours:** Green, Gold & Black
- **Earl:** Guissart Vexille

A centuries old house, previously based in the Barrens until the Druj forced them to flee in defeat, House Vexille have a reputation for their hard-line attitudes, extensive use of Night magic and a penchant for luxury and excess. Their methods in achieving Glory have often been questioned, especially actions which saw them declared as sorcerers for a time for their suggested abuse of magics?a measure which was only recently overturned.

House Vexille proudly declares that they "Hold the key to Glory" - considered metaphorical by many, they believe that their extensive pushing of boundaries is the key to true Glory. The Tests of Mettle set by the Vexille earls are notoriously difficult; the current earl, Guissart Vexille, takes great

pride in the fact that dozens of those wishing to join his house have failed to meet the exacting demands he places upon them. To this end, the house supports a larger than average number of yeofolk who spend years testing themselves personally before attempting to bring their requests to the earl to join the household. Those nobles who have passed their test are usually arrogant as a result; inevitably embittered, grizzled individuals who display extreme character traits, their outlook on life influenced by the necessity of life on the Barrens' borders.

Most recently, several knights of the house have formed a band of questing knights, dedicated to the destruction of vallorn as a great and glorious quest, under interpretation of the Synod?s statements on these creatures - urging knights from other houses to join them.

16.2.2.17 House Verdantié



House Verdantié

- **Location:** Ferrond
- **Heraldry:** A white crystal decanter embraced by a grape vine, rested on a blue and purple base
- **Colours:** Navy blue, royal purple, and white
- **Earl:** Earl Kaillum Verdantié

With a focus on the virtue of Prosperity, the nobles of House Verdantié consist primarily of physicks and magical healers alongside the support of front-line knights. Members of the house believe that every life saved results in another opportunity to fight for glory; whether this is by offering services within the hospital, taking the field and healing those in need, or taking the frontline and lending extra hands to those alongside them. House Verdantié is a noble house formed after they grew within House De Sarroi, which sparked their desire to lead and assist.

In aid, there's glory

16.2.3 Houses of Weirwater



House de Bastion

16.2.3.1 House de Bastion

- **Location:** Sandling
- **Colours:** Blue and green
- **Earl:** Enchantress Dyota de Bastion

To be House de Bastion is to live by two principles. To assist all in living virtuously and by Dawnish values and traditions. But also the enforcement of those virtues and values. This is clearly shown by the house words "*open to all, yielding to none.*" The house strives for the welcoming side of the duality to always be more visible and prominent. De Bastion will endeavour to provide hospitality, arms, and armour to those in need. None are turned away.

The house strongly believes in the tradition of giving a test of mettle to any who ask. That being said, when granted such opportunity, the house expects its members and allies to take it. Not all are worthy, and such worth must be proven through action. De Bastion is quick to hold its allies accountable for their choices and deeds. Dawnish traditions are deeply embedded in the house; breaking or disrespecting them is deemed unacceptable and will be met with harsh judgement or even inquisition.

House De Bastion has a tradition of any who wish to join the house, even as yeofolk: standing guard. They are tested in their competency and understanding of the house's culture. This tradition dates back to the founding of the house and pays respect to the manner of its founding in which a lone knight valiantly fought and defended the keep for a day and night. Tests of mettle from House De Bastion are considered deliberately difficult.



House Berinore

16.2.3.2 House Berinore

- **Location:** Weirmoor
- **Heraldry:** Two perytons, rampant before a gold chevron on a red field
- **Colours:** Red and gold, with black.
- **Earl:** Lady Tegwen Berinore

Those who dwell within Castle Gristimere's walls claim it to be one of the oldest castles in the Weirmoor, raised not long after the Dawnish first arrived in these lands, laying claim to the dangerous forests and mastering them. Despite their ancient claim, the House held no one of note until recently. House Berinore attended Anvil for the first time at the end of 383YE to pull itself from obscurity with the thought of true glory at the forefront, but since then, the House has been beset by tragedy after tragedy. From their very first attendance at Anvil, long beloved friends have fallen to barbarian blades, time and again.

This culminated in Spring 385YE, with all nobles of the House deceased, fallen in battle to reclaim either Zenith or the Barrens. A pair of knights-errant remained; one was able to pass her tests, calling a fallen Earl back through the Black Gate to confirm this. The newly minted Earl has sworn to learn from this and never leave the House in such a situation again, and the House has since focused on healing, on repair and unity. Alongside their allies in the Amber Lance, Berinore fights on the battlefield to ensure as many glorious heroes make the return to Anvil as possible, and works within Anvil with a focus on the same unity. True glory for those of House Berinore acknowledges the contributions of nobles and yeofolk alike, each bringing glory in their way.



House du Charlataine

16.2.3.3 House du Charlataine

- **Location:** Sandling
- **Heraldry:** A two-headed magenta hydra in a river of silver, beneath a crescent moon
- **Colours:** Magenta, silver, gold, and black
- **Earl:** Lyr du Charlataine

House du Charlataine was forged from the merging of a noble house and a nearby Night coven. These two groups have been at odds since their concurrent founding after the Druj invasion of Weirwater. In 278YE, the flooding of the river separating them devastated the surrounding farmland. In order to survive, the coven and the house put aside their differences and agreed to work together as one.

Ascending to nobility is a transformative process. Peculiarly, prospective nobles of the house are given two tests of mettle: one which calls on who they are now and a second which calls on who they wish to become. The house is fairly diverse in skill set and interests. The study of Night lore is still a common pursuit of many in the house, though over time, this has diminished.

House du Charlataine welcomes those willing to face change without trepidation ? those who turn away from the status quo, seek new beginnings, or else take the path less travelled.



House Castellan

16.2.3.4 House Castellan

- **Location:** Highwater Keep, Western Weirwater Vale
- **Heraldry:** A white Hippocampus on a field of blue, with red accents.
- **Colours:** Blue with red and white trim, and a red chevron, in various configurations.
- **Earl:** Enchanter Baldwin Castellan

House Castellan was founded in the dim and distant past, at the foundation of Dawn as a nation in the pre-Imperial age. The first Earl, Lord Kaldwin Castellan, sought to bring law and safety to the wild frontier of Weirwater, and so established the Castellan Hunt, an order of questing knights, knights-errant, and yeofolk intended to travel and patrol the territory to keep honest people safe from monsters, bandits, orcs, and the trials of life in a wild land.

From the seat of Highwater Keep the house and the Hunt have kept to this duty diligently, striving to embody the very concept of knighthood and nobility in their deeds, but never previously taking an interest in Anvil, slowly sliding into forgotten obscurity as a result. Now, that isolation has ended. House Castellan looks from the deeds of the past toward the glories promised by the future, and its people step from the mists of Weirwater into the light of Anvil. The house is noteworthy for its extremely large numbers of knights-errant, resulting from a combination of challenging Tests of Mettle and strong dedication to the Hunt?s duties as wandering protectors of all that is virtuous and right. House Castellan?s nobles, knights-errant, and yeofolk are expected to bring virtue, determination, and skill to all they do, and match their deeds with honesty, kindness, and respect.



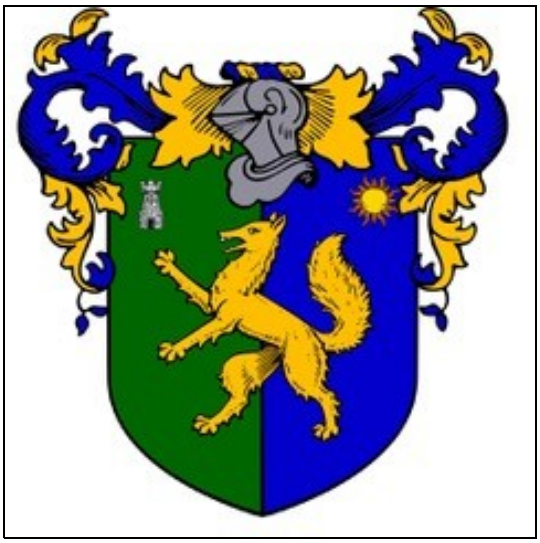
House de Clément

16.2.3.5 House de Clément

- **Location:** Weirmoor
- **Heraldry:** A golden Jackalope on a green field
- **Colours:** Green and gold
- **Earl:** Earl Percival de Clément

House de Clément is a pre-Imperial house founded by Ser Gwendolyn the Good. In recent years the house has withdrawn from the goings on of the nation and the Empire at large. Following the appointment of a new earl, however, the house has returned to Anvil in an attempt to re-join the fold. They pride themselves on producing fine healers, and on providing warm hospitality to any and all that cross their threshold.

The Clément estate is centred around Castle Brighthearth on the Weirmoor and is notable for the large glasshouse in its central court that allows them to grow a diverse range of exotic plant life.



House duLac

16.2.3.6 House duLac

- **Location:** Culwich
- **Heraldry:** A golden fox on a blue and green field
- **Colours:** Blue and green
- **Earl:** Earl Tristan duLac

House duLac is one dedicated to watching the borders of Dawn, a bulwark that stands as the first line of defence of this Glorious nation, ever watchful particularly against the threat of Druj incursions across the Semmerlak and Varushkan monsters from across the northern border. Their motto of "*Stand Fast, Stand Ready*" stands as evidence of their commitment.

The people of this house are often more subdued in their appearance compared to other Dawnish, in part due to their long distance from the rest of their people, and also due to their focus on military preparation. It is rumoured that the members of House duLac never go unarmed, lest they be unprepared. They hold the Virtue of Vigilance close to their core, aiding them on their watch, and they greatly utilise the magic of Spring in their work, the trappings of which can be found all over their ancestral seat, The Hightower.

House Gladewarden

16.2.3.7 House Gladewarden

- **Location:** Weirmoor
- **Heraldry:** A golden crest on a green field. The crest contains three swords pointed upwards, becoming trees whose boughs interweave.
- **Colours:** Emerald and gold.
- **Earl:** Earl Fintan Blackrock

Steadfast in their ideals of Loyalty, Courage, and Pride, members of House Gladewarden devote themselves to the study of the sword. Taking the words of their motto "*Many trees, one forest*", to heart, they are willing to face any threat or challenge for the good of their allies. House Gladewarden trains to master their specific sword forms, developed by the first earl Liam Gladewarden. In recent years knights-errant have been offered one of three paths when requesting a test of mettle from the current earl.



House Lucentia

16.2.3.8 House Lucentia

- **Location**: The most southwestern tip of Weirmoor, on the border with Astolat
- **Heraldry:** An outstretched hand, gently holding a star with a background of navy blue and purple
- **Colours:** Blue, Purple and Silver
- **Earl:** Enchanter Vesper Lucentia

A young house created by Enchanter Vesper upon passing their test of mettle in Summer 385YE. The house is known for its distinct approach to the Virtue of Wisdom. The house has a focus on welcoming all comers, including many who have joined Dawn later in their lives from other nations. It is also a house of travellers and wanderers; those who seek new horizons and greater understanding. It has gained something of a reputation as a house of "chain breakers", as many of its members have fought hard to save people under the yoke of oppressors.



House Mortére

16.2.3.9 House Mortére

- **Location:** Weirmoor
- **Heraldry:** A black rose inside a golden hourglass on a split field of red & black.
- **Colours:** Black (Primary), Red and Gold.
- **Earl:** Enchantress Morrigan Mortére

Founded by Vaela Mortére in the reign of Empress Varkula during the Druj invasion of Weirwater, House Mortére has been reclusive and quiet for many years since. House Mortére is an unusual noble house, but those who do meet and interact with them often claim them to be friendly and hospitable, if a little unsettling. Their estate is often called *The Black Garden* as many poisonous and dangerous plants and herbs are grown there, along with numerous natural black roses. House Mortére seems especially concerned with the concept of death. The house seems to yield many weavers talented in Winter magic, and many of the nobles and yeofolk of the house seem to be very comfortable around the dead or dying. Often the house members appear to help with funerals, the terminally ill, or sick, but also to help the living with matters of great joy and sorrow.

16.2.3.10 House Novarion



House Novarion

- **Location:** Applefell, Garthmoor
- **Heraldry:** A phoenix in flames
- **Colours:** Red and gold
- **Earl:** Earl D'Eon Novarion

Formed in 52YE by a young warrior named Novaria, she gathered like-minded warriors to her banner during battles around Semmerholm. In recognition of this feat she was granted land and many of her warriors remained by her side and pledged to form a new house. Using the wealth and slaves rescued from the orcs they built a fortress on one of the highest hills in Applefell and were charged with its defence. House Novarion were popular with the troubadours of the time and several of their deeds are remembered in traditional folk songs such as Sir Isobel and The Novarion Phoenix which are still sung today.

Years later, a large portion of the house died in a great fire following a strange magical event caused by their insular nature and only a handful escaped. The house's wealth and reputation were in ruins. The earl began the slow process of rebuilding the house, swearing to never again let those of his household grow to be weak closeted individuals.

From then on, tests of mettle were always written so that extensive foreign travel was required. Insulation and clannishness was dangerous and should be avoided at all costs by prompting its members to seek glory from distant lands. Any person seeking entry into the house is often set difficult tasks that require extensive travel and perseverance to complete, thus encouraging them to grow into headstrong individuals with allies in unusual places.



House Olor

16.2.3.11 House Olor

- **Location:** North Sandling
- **Heraldry:** A glorious swan adorned by 2 roses upon a blue and red background with a red chevron.
- **Colours:** Blue, white and red
- **Earl:** Earl Adrahil Olor

House Olor was rekindled by Earl Adrahil Olor and his 2 brothers. Nobles of Olor pride themselves on being furious to their enemies and bringing Glory to the House, Dawn, and the Empire and they adorn the sigil of the swan for this reason. The tales of House Olor often have mention of a swan offering assistance, often in a similar manner to the aspect_magic#Beast Magic in the Varushkan sense.

Housed in woods north of Sandling and nestled alongside a river flowing into the Semmerlak. Many swans call this place home and any person keen on taking a feather home for the house would find many in abundance here.

Keen to remain true to their motto, the House is keen on front line combat, holding a glorious shield and a weapon of fury.



House Orzel

16.2.3.12 House Orzel

- **Location:** Belletain Vale (Sandling)
- **Heraldry:** The white eagle of Gnijezdo and Primroses of Zoria
- **Colours:** Red and Black
- **Earl:** Valentin Ivarovich Severyan Orzel

House Orzel is a union of two migrations from Varushka, blending bloodlines and customs but embracing martial culture with the great traditions of the Empress Richilde?s most noble people. Favouring tests and trials involving quest and strange adventure, House Orzel finds a natural home in Dawn and has welcomed an increasing number of native Dawnish knights-errant into its nobility through great deeds of mettle and achievement. The Orzel have always measured and tested themselves against competence and skill, giving respect to Pride earned and laughing at pomposity, false claims, and weak authority in equal measure.

Generous with praise and friendship for the accomplished, the Orzel care more for talent and achievement than they do for name or family history alone. In youth children are encouraged to demand their elders "prove" their claims of skill or knowledge rather than taking anything on faith alone. Orzel children are wild and reckless with tales of the youngest laughing at the snarls of invading wolves and hurling stones and chanting "Prove It!" to call the bluffs of ancient evil and bestial threat alike.

Though wilful boldness and challenge mark daytime traditions, the Orzel consider guest-right sacred when the sun goes down. Music, song, and storytelling are great pleasures of hearth and home, and all should be welcomed, and none mistreated, when it is accepted. Darkness is a time for kindness and tales, Wisdom and preparing for the hard battles to come. Though sardonic humour runs strong through the Orzel, none should be denied hospitality or chased out into the night.



House Rion

16.2.3.13 House Rion

- **Location:** Wickmoor (Near the Weirwater Vales)
- **Heraldry:** Gilded White Stag Rampant, emblazoned upon a blue field
- **Colours:** Main colour royal blue, secondary colours silver and white, tertiary colour black
- **Earl:** Andred Rion

House Rion is a moderately young house in comparison to the more established houses of Dawn. Founded during the reign of Empress Brannan by the first Lord Rion, a questing knight who had found his true love. Settling in Wickmoor, not far from the Weirwood Vales, Castle Rion was built, and the house grew around its foundations. Since then, most of House Rion?s Earls have been enchanters (including the ?Mad Earl Rion?) specialising in Summer magic. The proximity of Castle Rion to the haunted Weirwood trees is to blame for many of the strange occurrences and events which seem to be commonplace on the House? land.

During the re-taking of the Barrens, almost all of the houses? Nobles and a sizeable force of the yeofolk under their command were slain by the Druj in a surprise attack, in which the previous Earl died. House Rion are most notable for having a higher-than-average number of war witches and enchanters in their house. Almost all their nobles are Summer mages, and more than half are battle mages. On campaign and in battles, House Rion are usually deployed as skirmish lances to support houses with heavier lances.

In recent years, the House has begun the brewing of ales and the distillation of fine wines and spirits.



House Stonecall

16.2.3.14 House Stonecall

- **Location:** Weirwater
- **Heraldry:** Green field, grey stone, red triskelion
- **Colours:** Green, red, with highlight silver
- **Earl:** Ser Dune du Vale

House Stonecall is one of relative obscurity; an old house in truth, though it never rose to the lofty heights of its contemporaries. A collection of minor noble houses and yeofolk from Weirwater, the enduring stubbornness and determination of those that ally themselves under the red triskelion is testament to the longevity of the house. With the "*Sweetglade Massacre*" and the appointment of a new earl, House Stonecall strives to make a name for itself within Dawn and the Empire as a whole. No longer willing to just focus on surviving, they wish to claim glory, to grab with both hands the renown that has been out of their reach for so long, to prove to themselves and to others that they are worthy of standing shoulder to shoulder with the great houses of Dawn, and to be celebrated by bards and troubadours across the land due to their deeds.

To be remembered in song, is to be written in stone.

16.2.3.15 House Tallstag

- **Location:** The Aldergate, Wickmoor
- **Heraldry:** A silver stag set in a field of green
- **Colours:** Green and silver
- **Earl:** Logan Tallstag

?Prepare for all, Yield to none? - The motto of House Tallstag sings to the Ambition and Pride that all Tallstags aspire to. Founded in 380YE, House Tallstag was originally founded as a knightly order by Lord Logan, with the simple aim of becoming the most reputable monster hunters in Anvil. This desire was quickly outgrown as their ambitions of hunting greater monsters rose to tackling the greatest challenges they could find.

House Tallstag prides itself on a reputation as one of the fiercest lances Dawn has. They reside in a once forgotten stronghold known as The Aldergate and they have tasked themselves with the complete destruction of the vallorn in its entirety, and work closely with Navarr stridings and steadings to achieve this great feat.



House Tower de Risbanke

16.2.3.16 House Tower de Risbanke

- **Location:** Hawksmoor (northwest of Hawthorn)
- **Heraldry:** Argent Wolf on Azure field with Golden sun blazing in third quarter
- **Colours:** Blue and yellow
- **Earl:** Vacant

The Tower De Risbanke stands at the peak of a bleak & wild hillside near the border of Varushka within the Weirmoor forests. Surrounded by wolves, falcons and wild game this small household is a sanctuary for those needing food, drink, and a place to rest with a warm welcome. The house was founded with hospitality at its core, often believed to be due to its proximity of Varushka. The division between yeofolk & nobles can sometimes be quite blurred in this small household where both warriors and weavers seek out new alliances and friendships. Boisterous songs can often be heard in the Weavers Rest tea house with the motto *In Vino Veritas* - In wine is truth. Tests of mettle are as often be artistic or culinary banquets in the field. Tests of ardour also often focus on the expression in the food of love.



House of the Twisted Rose

16.2.3.17 House of the Twisted Rose

- **Location:** Weirmoor
- **Heraldry:** A white rose/roses with twisted stems, The runes Rhyv and Lann flanking it.
- **Colours:** Purple
- **Earl:** Enchantress Mirella of the Twisted Rose

The House of the Twisted Rose was founded during 383YE. The Keep of the House, itself named Keepsake, was built out in the ruins of a fallen House, its name forgotten to time, its foundations nestled atop the peak of one the mountains near Delev. Though around the estate still sit statues of various nobles and in various states of disrepair, those within the House have a habit of asking these still forms for advice though they do not speak back.

Members of the House have a reputation of self-sacrifice and knowledge of costs to be paid, owing to The Twisted Rose? ties to both the Autumn and Winter realm, of contracts and oaths. As well as raw passion. This led to the House?s motto being ?Ma Vie; Par Amour? (My Life; For Love in Asavean). Much of the House?s Tests have been based around the ideals of Love and Loyalty, often seeking to teach as much as test the one undergoing it; to bring them deeper in line with the House?s beliefs.

16.2.3.18 House de Vere



House de Vere

- **Location:** North Hawksmoor
- **Heraldry:** A silver owl displayed on a split field of wine red and gold.
- **Colours:** Primarily wine red and gold, with silver secondary.
- **Earl:** Enchanter Alistair de Vere

House de Vere was founded in pre-Imperial times by a noble of a now-forgotten house who completed a seemingly impossible Test of Mettle using a boon from the Lord of the Crossroads. House de Vere?s heraldry is a silver owl in honour of Barien and the story of the founder, and the house motto ?In Blood Anointed? draws its origins from the story of the House?s founding. The house's estate sits at the border of Karov and Weirwater; where the forest meets the hills.

The house is dedicated to investigating and destroying supernatural threats to Dawn, primarily monsters from beyond the border that threaten Hawksmoor, and other malignant foes of a magical nature.

In 375YE the castle was left in ruins and the house was believed to have been wiped out following an attack from some unknown foe. In 385YE a knightly order made up of members of House de Vere that left the Empire shortly before the attack returned from questing in Asavea to find their house destroyed. The surviving members have since begun rebuilding the house, reaffirming the house's purpose as a bulwark against esoteric threats to Dawn.

16.2.4 Houses of the Barrens

16.2.4.1 House Angleberr



House Angleberr

- **Location:** South-west of Hope's Rest
- **Heraldry:** Golden displayed dragon above antlers, placed above a broken chevron that is supported by a golden sun
- **Colours:** Purple, red, and black
- **Earl:** Earl Englebert Angleberr

A new house to Anvil that originates in the south-west of the Barrens, the house welcomes those who seek to prove themselves to the long-established heritage claimed by the Earl. Found amongst the estate, there are herbalists, weavers of Summer and Autumn magic and knights practising.

From the surviving records, the original earl of the house first came to the Barrens to seek his fortune. Bringing with him a cadre of loyal retainers and yeofolk, the outpost had a small but steady population.

16.2.4.2 House Chasseur



House Chasseur

- **Location:** South of Hope's Rest
- **Heraldry:** A red and yellow sun supported by a pegasus and a griffon on a checkerboard shield of yellow and blue

- **Colours:** Blue, yellow, and red
- **Earl:** Earl Arthur Chasseur

"*Pride in Every Step*", words that every member of House Chasseur strives to embody. First founded by the Earl Lancel Chasseur, he dedicated the house almost entirely to the support of Dawnish armies in the Barrens until he fell to the Druj in Therunin during an Imperial withdrawal. He handed his nobility to his knight errant, ward, and squire, Arthur. Arthur swore that House Chasseur would live on and, in time, name his own successor.

House Chasseur teaches its members to take pride in every action they take and to be proud of their history and heritage. House Chasseur is a home to all who are lost or found wanting, a place where everyone is encouraged to be the best they can achieve and, in turn, offer that encouragement to those they encounter. House Chasseur is a harbour in the storm, a shield against the terror, a sword to slay the beast.

16.2.4.3 House Du Fae



House Du Fae
"*Betwixt Gloam & Glory*"

Words of House Du Fae

- **Location:** The Eaves of Peytaht
- **Heraldry:** A field of per pale, argent and purpure, in dexter a comic sun or, & in sinister tragic moon argent
- **Colours:** White, purple, silver & gold
- **Earl:** Enchantress Circe Du Fae IV

The House Du Fae claims itself as an ancient family with roots stemming back to old Asavea. Pointedly, they allege that they descend from the daughter of Tristane the Golden - the Lady Circe. It is not uncommon to find one of their name within the old tales of Dawn.

Their ancestral home of Evenfall is a venerable keep erected from white marble and old wisteria, with deep gashes strewn in stone from constant Druj assaults later gilded to serve as a message to their attackers, and mana caves fuelling their arcane obsession. The castle sits along the golden edge of Peytaht, assembled initially to study the wonders of the wood and its inhabitants, and below it rests the town of Duskton. Its citizens take particular pride in the Du Fae's love of tourneycrafting & dramaturgy.

Their words are "Betwixt Gloam & Glory" and reflect the true nature of their kin; a house ingrained in Summer & Night magic, with great war weavers, witches and mage-knights crafting archaic arcane wonders. Glorious deeds sought in such a mystical way have led to a reputation for wicked oddity, and rumours have long circulated that the House often makes deals with Eternals to ensure their prosperity. Even the most wizened of enchanters treads wearily around them.

This historic house has been out of the limelight since the death of Britta. Now a new generation has taken up the mantle with an intent to return to the high politics of Anvil with all the might & magic of their forebears.

16.2.4.4 House Fawnwood



House Fawnwood

- **Location:** Fallow's Keep, Dawnguard
- **Heraldry:** A Golden Fawn on a field of green grass
- **Colours:** Green, Gold and Purple
- **Earl:** Earl Sebastián Fawnwood

House Fawnwood was formed in Autumn 385YE, founded shortly after Dawn's triumph in the Barrens. As Dawn established its control of the territory, House Fawnwood made their home in the forests of western Dawnguard ? taking the estate of Fallow?s Keep as their seat.

A fawn of a fallow deer adorns the House heraldry, and whilst perhaps perceived by some as a symbol of peace and being a docile creature, it also symbolises a young, new house that will soon come of age.

Priding themselves on their Loyalty and Courage, House Fawnwood boasts an array of heavy fighters, often found at the forefront of any battle, as well as powerful mages calling upon both the realms of Summer and Autumn. Both yeofolk and nobles alike are pushed to bring glory to the House in an attempt for the House to become more known within Dawn, and the Empire as a whole.

Looking ahead to its future, House Fawnwood is ever loyal to the people of the Barrens, helping maintain Dawn's hold over the territory and furthering its development.

16.2.4.5 House De Forteair



House De Forteair

- **Location:** Carmine Fields, coast of the Barrens Sea
- **Heraldry:** A silver manticore on a red and blue field looking left at a white star
- **Earl:** Earl Aenar De Forteair

Earl Aenar formed the house out of duty and loyalty to the wandering yeofolk of Dawn, and specifically those in the Barrens. The majority of the house is made up of survivors of houses that were destroyed or scattered during the destruction of Dawnguard, and a few survivors of the Hounds of Glory. This has led to the house being highly militaristic, as none will allow a repeat of what happened to their old homes.

The house lives in and around the Beacon, a stout keep. The militaristic thinking has led to them being of the mindset of practicality over everything. It's been said they chase glory like a lion, its prey; they have also been described as not unreasonable but incredibly stubborn. But their most prominent virtue is loyalty, to the house, to their allies and to Dawn.

16.2.4.6 House du Froste



House du Froste

- **Location:**
- **Heraldry:** Golden jackalope on a field of black and red
- **Colours:** Red, Gold & Black
- **Earl:** Earl Gaston Wayfinder

The history of House du Froste stretches back to before the conquest and settling of Dawnguard.When Dawnguard fell the Earl Panthos Du Froste rushed to the aid of the civilians fleeing to Semmerholm. Ever since then waifs and strays looking to reclaim their homeland have flocked to their banner and their estate in the foothills of Estmure.

In Anvil they are known for their standard bearing the jackalope that often serves as a rallying point through the Sentinel Gate, and the round table that the nobles of Dawn occasionally gather around for Earls Council.

?*Our words have weight*" is the house motto; being a house who believe wholeheartedly that actions are worth more than any number of words. Once a member has said something, they believe it should be binding to the core of their being.

16.2.4.7 House Gryphontale



House Gryphontale

- **Location:** South-west of Hope's Rest
- **Heraldry:** Gryphon flying out of a book with a green magic swirl
- **Colours:** Purple and Teal with accents of gold and green
- **Earl:** Unknown

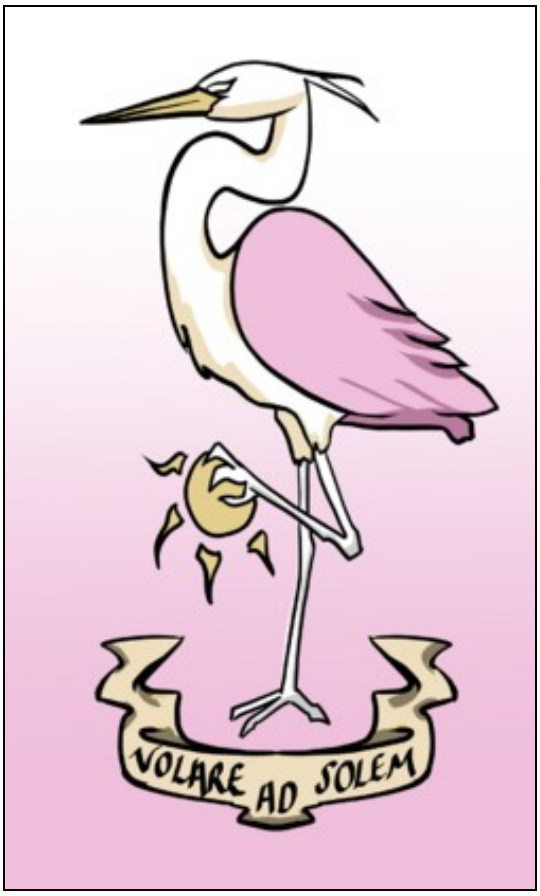
House Gryphontale is a house of stories and wisdom, which seeks to learn from history forgotten to time and Nicovar. The house claims to be able to trace its roots back to before the Empire, beginning in Highguard.

Early on in the house's history, a proclamation was made stating that the house would forever adapt as its story continues, and that its name would change with each new chapter. The house name is believed to have changed several times since.

There have been periods in the house's existence when it was fraught with disaster, attention from malevolent entities and forces that would rally against it. The house grew just like the original proclamation asked of them. The current chapter of the house is House Gryphontale, renamed in 385YE.

It wasn?t until recent years that the house made its first steps into Anvil, where it put its skills of finding information and telling stories to good use, helping to bring down the Deadwood Knight.

16.2.4.8 House de Lagriffe



House de Lagriffe

- **Location:** Eastern edge of the Untrod Groves
- **Heraldry:** A pink and white heron clutching a golden sun
- **Colours:** Blush Pink, White, and Gold
- **Earl:** Renata de Lagriffe

House de Lagriffe stands as a fierce beacon of Virtue on the eastern border of the Barrens. Sharp and tenacious, they claim an unbroken tie to these lands, believing it their sacred duty to see the Barrens restored to the Empire and the Way.

Almost every member of the house is sworn to Ambition, their zeal bordering on the fanatical. They measure their worth by the magnitude of their dreams and the ferocity with which they chase them. Taking to the Untrod Groves armed with nothing but a dagger is a common Test of Mettle among their scions, a bloody echo of the first earl who thus armed slew the eponymous gryphon that once ravaged the lands.

House de Lagriffe takes fierce pride in its appearance. The pink and white of their heraldry is not a symbol of softness but a reminder of flesh and bone ? the sacrifices of their glorious dead and the price of Ambition. Past earls, less steadfast in Virtue, squandered the House's wealth on importing fine materials and luxuries, forgetting the brutal meaning behind their splendid colours. Under the current earl, money is now fiercely guarded and redirected into Ambitious projects to tame the Barrens, though preoccupation with outward appearance remains. Their words, Volare ad Solem ? Grasp the Sun ? reference the ambition of the paragon Tian, and are etched into every heart and blade.

Though Ambition drives them, hospitality and Loyalty remain paramount among the de Lagriffe. The harshness of the Barrens has taught them that no soul endures alone. They welcome the Virtuous and the daring to their halls with camaraderie, sharing hard-won bread, songs, and dreams by firelight. Those who join them must be ready to fight, suffer, and rise again ? for peace will not be given; it must be taken.

16.2.4.9 House Leohart



House Leohart

- **Location:** Pointed Mane, south of Dawnsguard
- **Heraldry:** A rampant lion with antlers on a shield of red
- **Colours:** Red, white, and black
- **Earl:** Earl Clint Leohart

The house, originally founded in 350YE, sadly fell to disease in 365YE. Lord Clint Leohart, after a year?s term as Knight-protector of Spring, rebuilt the house in Winter 387YE. The house is formed with just one requirement: that each person within, whether they are noble or yeofolk, brings with them an ambition to strive for, constantly challenging the house to be ambitious as a whole and challenge ambition throughout Dawn.

The house prides itself on Honour and Courage; honour to each other and the courage for ambition. The house hopes to prosper for many years, rebuilding itself stronger than before and making a mark within the nation, working with many houses and building an honourable and courageous house filled with the ambitious.

16.2.4.10 House de la Montagne



House de la Montagne

- **Location:** Hope's Rest
- **Heraldry:** Black hammer and claw over a mountain flanked by two purple roses
- **Colours:** Purple and Black
- **Earl:** Viktor Montagne

House de la Montagne has survived through harsh landscapes for generations. The house moved to the Barrens following its conquest in 385YE, to bring them closer to the Druj front. Preferring the terrain, House de la Montagne settled in Hope's Rest.

Relocating the noble house took a toll on the former earl, and his body was laid to rest in late Winter 385YE. The earl's second son, Viktor Montagne, travelled to find the heir-presumptive, to inform him of the death. Unfortunately, Viktor was only hours too late to find his older brother had been slain in battle, fighting for the Serrated Claws under House Du Hyre.

Life in House de la Montagne can be described as very disciplined, with military drills as a regular practice, always keeping blades sharp and soldiers focused. According to the house, life in the Barrens accepts nothing less.

16.2.4.11 House Primevère



House Primevère

- **Location:** Dawnguard
- **Heraldry:** A mandowla surrounded by golden flames on a field of emerald green with a dusty light pink chevron.
- **Colours:** Emerald Green, Dusty Light Pink, Gold
- **Earl:** Enchantress Amelie Primevère

After the glorious death of her husband, the enchantress took her retainer and military unit to find her late husband?s ancestral home in the Barrens, to lay his body to rest. While there, she decided to complete his ambition by rebuilding the castle to its former glory and founding the new house in his honour.

The founders of House Primevère are powerful spring mages and briars, therefore they encourage their fellow house members to be prideful but vigilant in all that they do. House Primevère requires its members to be well educated in politics and the arts, as they know well that the gentle power of words and culture can bring just as much glory as martial might.

16.2.4.12 House de Renard



House de Renard

- **Location:** Gatehouse of Drycastle, Dawnguard
- **Heraldry:** A sanguine field. Fox rampant, orange, below it a gatehouse, gold.
- **Colours:** Red, gold, burgundy, orange
- **Earl:** Caladain de Renard

House Renard was once known as the sole guardians of the Barrenberry vineyards, whose grapes produce one of the rarest and most sought-after vintages in the Empire. A minor house, they took Pride in their role as Stewards of Drycastle and oathsworn knights of House Aurelius. Many a questing knight's first steps into the Barrens were across the bountiful golden fields of House Renard, whose hall and watchtowers were a last place of refuge before the vastness of the Barrens. Following a long decline, House Renard lost its keep and lands when Dawnguard was lost to the Druj in 381YE. Its last remaining noble made the fateful choice to exchange the Barrenberries for food to sustain his displaced yeofolk.

Since the reconquest of Dawnguard, de Renard has experienced a resurgence befitting its motto, "*From Ashes, We Rise*". They come to Anvil determined to make the Barrens as prosperous as Astolat; a beacon of loyal ambition, and remove any suggestion that its houses are ignored. Citizens might recognise members of the house by their strict adherence to ancient custom - such as the tradition wherein favours from the house can be redeemed for their help in a time of need, or the parting exchange ?Return to me friend / I shall return!?

Having finally reclaimed the Barrenberries in 386YE, the house has rebuilt its ancestral home - the Gatehouse of Drycastle, commonly referred to as "the Den" - to watch over its flourishing vineyards. Once again, the golden fields of de Renard serve as a gateway to adventure.

16.2.4.13 House Solrené



House Solrené

- **Location:** Stonefire Keep, South of the Plains of Teeth
- **Heraldry:** A golden phoenix rising from flame against a field of red and white.
- **Colours:** Red, white, and gold
- **Earl:** Earl Wulfrich Solrené

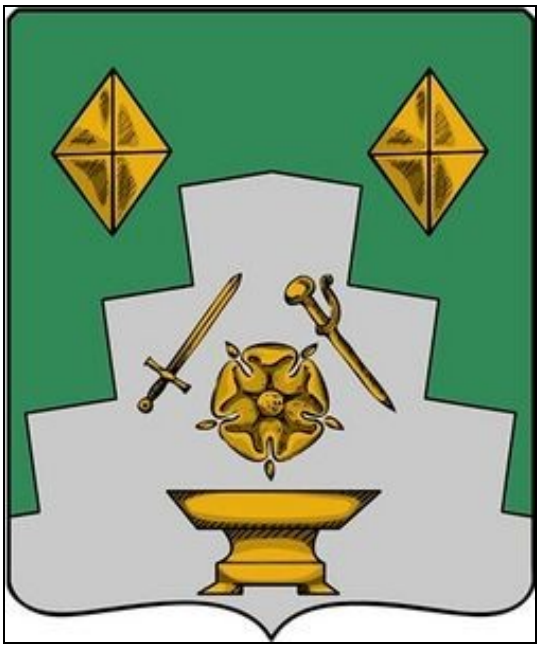
During the reign of Empress Varkula a fringe group of heretics, driven by the old claims of Abraxus Whitespire, attempted to manufacture true liao through unknown means in an attempt to communicate with their past and future selves. In their hubris, the resulting concoctions drove them into a crazed bloodlust, putting ?nonbelievers? to the sword en masse. Foreseeing the coming bloodshed, a handful of virtuous Dawnish laid plans in secret for escape. When the killing began, they fled.

Scattered and hunted, they travelled across the Barrens, seeking refuge in the desolate reaches of the Plains of Teeth. There, driven by desperation, they forced their way through a narrow pass in the cliffs?and beyond, hidden among the crags, they found salvation; a ruined keep lay nestled in the rock.

Atop its highest tower, they lit a great beacon, a fire to call others who fled the heretics? wrath. When their pursuers came, they held the pass?one at a time the enemy came, and one at a time they fell. That night, the virtuous stood unbroken.

Here, they made their stand. The ruined keep became their home, the fire upon the tower their defiance. They named it Stonefire Keep, and from those exiles, a new house was born. House Solrené (pronounced Sol-ren-ay), sworn to the virtue of Ambition, would stand as a sanctuary for all who fled the shadow of heresy, and a thorn in the side of those who would see them burn.

16.2.4.14 House Tonberry



House Tonberry

- **Location:** Dawnguard
- **Heraldry:** Shield with two gold lozenges resting in a Vert field, Argent tiered foreground with a golden sword, staff, anvil. and rose.
- **Colours:** Green, white and gold
- **Earl:** Don Tonberry

House Tonberry was once an established noble house in Dawnguard, east of Drycastle that was destroyed by the Druj. The House was known for its seven lords known to each other as siblings whilst being represented by an Earl and their partner, known as the "Thegn" of the house, the Thegn acts as the Earl?s second but also as a source of Wisdom, advice and comfort to the nobles and yeofolk of the house. The last pair were Earl Kairon Tonberry and their spouse Thegn Lianna Tonberry, who were both killed in defence of their home, along with most of House Tonberry. The surviving members of the house have split, believing themselves to be the last remaining. Each hopes to begin bringing glory back to their name and to eventually rebuild their house to what it once was.

Following a number of tests of resolve, Lord Don Tonberry was named Earl of the house, and alongside the rebuilding of Drycastle, Tonberry Keep has now also been rebuilt, and the House has returned to its ancestral home for the first time since the Druj destroyed it years prior.

16.2.4.15 House Torawyr



House Torawyr

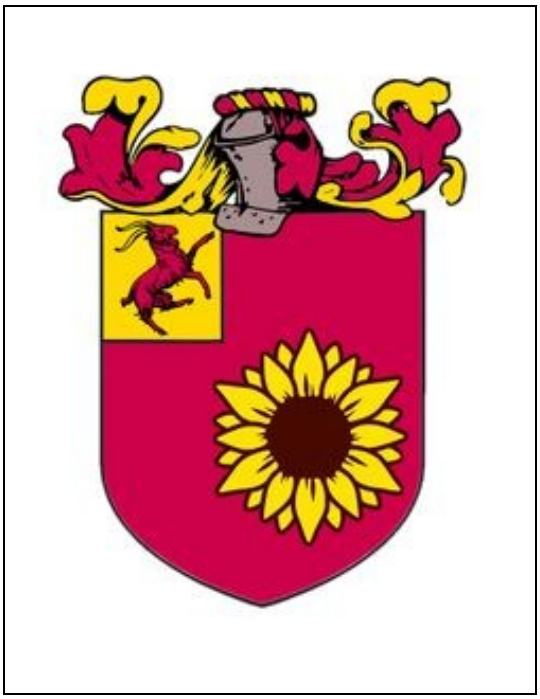
- **Location:** Ruins of House Torawyr, Dawnguard
- **Heraldry:** Blue and White quartering with a red gauntleted fist with cynogriffon wings in the centre.
- **Colours:** Blue and White.
- **Earl:** Enchanter Edmund Torawyr

House Torawyr was originally founded in southern Dawnguard near Murderdale. The house was primarily made up of apothecaries and fighters who tended and harvested their gardens to help Dawn fight the Druj and defend Dawnguard. When the Druj invaded in Summer 381YE, breaking the treaty, the fighters of House Torawyr were loyal until the last drop, laying down their lives to hold back the orcs as long as they could to allow as many people to flee as possible. In doing so all nobles of House Torawyr died or were taken as slaves.

The house reformed at the end of 382YE, as a group of loyal yeofolk ventured back into the Barrens on a Test of Mettle to retrieve the banner of their house. The group saw their beautiful gardens wrecked with a blight, their herbs picked clean to supply the Druj with poisons. With caution they were successful in retrieving their banner, reforming the house under a new Earl, Enchanter Edmund Torawyr.

After considerable effort, In 385YE House Torawyr returned to the Barrens with newfound loyal allies, resources, and magical might. The house with allies from the Amber Lance attacked the Spires of Dusk with the Hounds of Glory. Bringing with them over a hundred grim legionnaires of the eternal Kaela. Now the house has returned to its ruined land it must rebuild the gardens it once held with pride, and return the help given by those who helped take back Dawnguard.

16.2.4.16 House De Tournesol



House De Tournesol

- **Location:** Dawnguard
- **Heraldry:** A shield of dark pink with a large sunflower emblazoned in the bottom right corner, a small square of yellow emblazoned with a pink yale sits in the top left corner of the shield
- **Colours:** Pink and Yellow
- **Earl:** Brahmms De Tournesol

Founded after the 385YE Summer Solstice from the ruins of a keep on the edges of Dawnguard, the high walls of the De Tournesol estate defend its residents from the wilds of the Barrens whilst also offering a place of respite for the injured and the weary. Enclosed within is a rich garden of cultivated medicinal herbs littered with the house sunflower which grows determined in every corner of the keep. Its small but safe keep act as a basis for the house?s operations whilst also accommodating a space of respite for any traveller or wayward soul of the Empire.

House De Tournesol consists mainly of those who can aid or heal, be it through surgery or magic, however will happily welcome all those who share in their ambitions to see Dawn and the Empire prosper through providing protection and rejuvenation to all those who may need it. Although their tests of mettle are tailored to those who partake in them, they contain two key themes in their task, which are to stand out gloriously and to make a stand in the

face of danger.

16.2.4.17 House Veridaine



House Veridaine

- **Location:** Dawnguard
- **Heraldry:** A black dagger, pointing downwards, with a black snake on either side, facing outward, all on a field of red.
- **Colours:** Black and Red
- **Earl:** Earl Cain Veridaine

House Veridaine stands in the Barrens with a reputation for brutality. Its estate, Blackrattle, and the surrounding village of Addering are located just east of Drycastle in Dawnguard. Founded by Lord Toriith ?The Reckless? Veridaine, the House is known for its resolve and an uncompromising dedication to the protection of the Empire?s frontiers, especially against the Druj. The Veridaines are a martial house. Every member, from its earl to its newest yeofolk, understands that their place is on the front line, whether wielding a blade or supporting those who do.

Proud, Loyal, and fiercely Ambitious, the Veridaines are conquerors at heart and Vigilant defenders of the Imperial citizens within their domain. They believe their methods to be effective, if unforgiving at times; ?Glory Unbound?, the House?s words, keep that belief close to their heart.

16.2.4.18 House Vortekar



House Vortekar

- **Location:** Murderdale

- **Heraldry:** A blue winged serpent on a black shield
- **Colours:** Black, blue, and silver
- **Earl:** Enchantress Aiva Vortekar

House Vortekar is an ancient and secretive house, formed by Viola van Vortekar in Murderdale. Citadel Nocturnum was chosen as a home and place of studying the Night realm. When the Empire formed, the house joined with the rest of Dawn. When the Druj claimed Murderdale, the house survived by using Night magic until Dawn's return.

After the reclamation of the Barrens in 385YE, the house has thrown itself into raising its influence through politics and wealth, driven to never again go into hiding. Vortekar pride themselves on their Ambition, often pushing moral, legal, and religious limits in pursuit of Glory.

Life within the house is unpredictable, since the tests are often warped by nepotism or so harsh that many knights-errant fall, or vanish, depending upon the Earl?s mood. Most members are witches and weavers who are dedicated to perfecting their magical arts, backed up by an order of knights charged with guarding the Citadel. Advocates and retainers work in the shadows, gathering secrets in an attempt to curry favour among the nobility.

The abode of the house, Citadel Nocturnum, lies in Murderdale. Constructed from black stone and pale marble, it falls into the shadow of Hope?s Rest mountains. Inside are great libraries, ritual halls, gardens, and training grounds.

16.3 Orders and Cabals

16.3.1 Knightly Orders

The knightly orders dedicate themselves to the pursuit of glory over all other considerations.

16.3.1.1 Order of the Amber Lance



Order of the Amber Lance

- **Location:** Welkin?s Weald, Weirmoor, Weirwater
- **Heraldry:** a field, tawny, charged with a teardrop, amber, upon which is emblazoned the Blood rune, Rhyv, in sable.
- **Knight-Captain:** Ser Guy Wooder

This proud young order was founded in the Autumn of 383YE by the briar Czernobog Stanislaus when he became a knight errant of House Castellan. A healer and steward of a herb garden, this first Captain's Ambition was to set Dawn on a par with other Imperial nations by founding a dedicated corps of combat physicks. In so doing, the Lance quickly managed to gain the Loyalty of several Weirwater houses, as well as questing knights and refugees from the Barrens.

The knights maintain a permanent presence in the waterlogged hamlet of Welkin?s Weald, at the heart of a carefully coppiced forest of willow. It is from the ambergelt cultivated here that they draw their heraldry ? a substance that hardens and strengthens but also promotes healing and mending, running

like blood when first drawn, tough and crystalline when set. This duality is echoed in their motto: to take blood from stone (to do the impossible) is a common aphorism amongst these knights.

In the first years of the Lance's existence, these Knights of Amber have committed themselves wholly to the Empire's war against the wretched Druj. They have sustained heavy losses in liberating Zenith and the Barrens, but remain steadfast in their commitment to preserve Imperial lives and bring succour and healing to all who need it. Bloodied though they may be, they proudly bear the rune of sacrifice upon their banners as they fight for a better world.

16.3.1.2 Order of the Birdsong



Order of the Birdsong

- **Location:** North Culwich, Weirwater
- **Heraldry:** A golden goose on a green shield
- **Colors:** Green and gold
- **Knight-Marshal:** Ser Gwynn Weaver

Founded in 387YE, the Order of the Birdsong is the remaining ember of a former house that fell, leaving no nobles behind to keep its status.

What little remained of the yeofolk of the house decided to remain loyal to their fallen earl, and band together from the rubble, to try and restore and reclaim the glory of the fallen house, taking in new allies, friends, and those in need under their wing along the way.

The Order of the Birdsong leads these yeofolk on their tests of mettle in a quest for nobility and protection! Having seen the fall of their nobles, they seek to do what they can to protect as many people as they can and prevent further death and despair.

All swear the oath of the Birdsong: ?*Friends of Dawn will hear us sing, and be safe ?neath our wing*?.

16.3.1.3 Order of the Blazing Dawn



Order of the Blazing Dawn

- **Location:** The Rose and Thorn tavern, Culwich, Weirwater
- **Heraldry:** A blue field a yellow sun and orange rays beneath a winged sword supported
- **Motto:** As Dawn Rises, the Sun Shall Set
- **Knight-Commander:** Earl Tristan duLac

Founded in the wake of the armies of the Cold Sun invading the Empire in 385YE, the Order of the Blazing Dawn retired following the *scions* of the eternal being driven out from the Empire. However, following its return to the material plane, the order has risen once again. Driven by a love for all things that make the Empire the centre for love and beauty that it is, the order strives to protect all nations from this threat. The order is primarily made up martial knights and war witches to engage the Cold Sun as a physical threat.

16.3.1.4 Knights of the Golden Mane

- **Location:** South of Culwich, Sandling, Weirwater
- **Heraldry:** A shield of azure with a white chief triangular. In the azure portion, a gold lion head facing forward within a gold wild rose. In the White portion the Jotra rune in azure.
- **Lord Commander:** Lady Morrigan Gildaryn

The Knights of the Golden Mane are dedicated to upholding Virtuous acts and aim to record and share stories of Virtue from around the Empire. The quests they undertake, individually or together, all lend towards telling the tale of the knightly order and how they pursue Glory through virtuous acts. The grand quest of the order is to aid and preserve stories of Virtue. The order hall sits within the Lionskeep, the seat of power of House Gildaryn in Lionsholme, a town in Weirwater south of Culwich.



Knights of the Golden Mane
The order structure is very loose, with two commanding individuals. The Lord Commander oversees the order, while a Knight-Captain serves to advise and act as the leader of its lance through the Sentinel Gate. Under this structure, knights often are bestowed a title by the Lord Commander befitting of their skills, such as Knight-Magus. These are not enforced as roles of leadership, but a way for the Lord Commander to classify where they believe the skills of a knight could be best applied. Strangely yeofolk and knights-errant are welcomed as equals rather than apprentices, and have equivalent say and reach in the order?s quest.

The main tradition the Knights of the Golden Mane hold is of the *Night of Hallows*. Each Winter Solstice, the knights come together to receive hallowings of Virtue which best tell their stories, and to have the provided aura aid them in their next year. The knights share stories of their achievements throughout the year in Anvil and beyond, and pledge their quest for the following year to the Lord Commander.

16.3.1.5 The Order of the Lance Restored



Order of the Lance Restored

- **Location:** Roaming, though with a chapel near Kethry's Grove in Astolat
- **Heraldry:** argent, a lion sable sejant upon which rests a lance gules
- **Knight-Marshal:** Ser Dindrane de Cantharos

The Order of the Lance Restored are - after a fashion - the remnants of an ancient order known as the Knights of the Feathered Spear, who are said to have guarded Kethry's Grove in the distant past. The original order fell into disgrace in 209YE when they aided Emperor Nicovar in destroying the libraries of the Empire, for reasons now forgotten to history. Following Nicovar's death, the Knights of the Feathered Spear disbanded, supposedly because during the chaos they lost a relic that they were sworn to protect - a spear believed to have been that of Makin the Red, a prominent figure in the story of the paragon Kethry. Two of their number were sentenced to death by penal military service; they fought in numerous battles thereafter, surviving and triumphing against all odds, and eventually attracted a cadre of questing knights who sought to redeem themselves of past dishonour. These knights eventually banded together under the banner of the Order of the Lance Restored.

Since then, the order has become something of a refuge for the disgraced, the outcast, and those who simply do not fit in with their Houses. Sworn to roam the Empire until the Feathered Spear is recovered - though most doubt that it ever will be - the knights of the order seek to overcome their past failings by taking on difficult, open-ended, and sometimes nigh-impossible quests.

16.3.1.6 The Order of Seasons

- **Heraldry:** A golden tree on azure field
- **Colours:** Blue and gold
- **Knight-Marshal:** Ser Florian Fleurir

The Order of Seasons is a knightly order that dedicates itself to supporting the knight-protectors of Dawn. They swear to support the knight-protectors in their trials against creatures of the realms of Autumn, Spring, Summer, and Winter.

The order aims to create and hunt artefacts; provide potions and resources; cast rituals; and provide other magical and spiritual services to the knight-protectors. Noble knights and knights-errant are welcome to join the order, provided they are willing to dedicate their lives to supporting the knight-protectors.

16.3.2 Weaver Cabals

The weaver cabals master magic, maintaining a studied neutrality in the politics of the nation.



Golden Leaf

16.3.2.1 Golden Leaf

Founded in 384YE, the Golden Leaf Cabal find their specialism in the realm of Autumn. Whilst their roots lie with yeofolk from across Dawn, many nobles have since flocked to join their ranks. Formed of a union of Noble Houses, they cast their sights towards the bigger picture, the cabal is operated by a council, where every bonded member has an equal vote in its work and goals.

The Golden Leaf does not operate in the shadows - their aims are clear and open, aiming to bolster the Prosperity of Dawn by enchanting both its people and territories. In turn, they try to further what they believe to be the Empire?s ambitions through engaging the complex relationships between Imperial bodies and the Autumn eternals operating under amity.



Moon and Stars Cabal

16.3.2.2 Moon and Stars

The Moons and Stars cabal was formed in 377YE as an ambitious attempt to create a cross-house Dawnish Night coven. The cabal aims to bring together Night mages from across the nation of Dawn to both aid the Empire and bring Glory to the individual weavers within the cabal. The cabal is named after the heraldic devices used by the Houses who were present at the founding of the endeavour. The cabal was originally formed, primarily, by mages belonging to House De Rondell and a house that has since fallen.

The members of the Moons and Stars cabal are active participants in the business of the Conclave. Weavers from the cabal have held many important positions in the Conclave. The Moons and Stars cabal are celebrated for using their arcane powers to gather information, provide protection, break curses, and deliver curses. They are also widely known to regularly employ a range of novel and innovative rituals to achieve unusual and original results. They often use heraldic magic in their rituals although individual styles are encouraged.

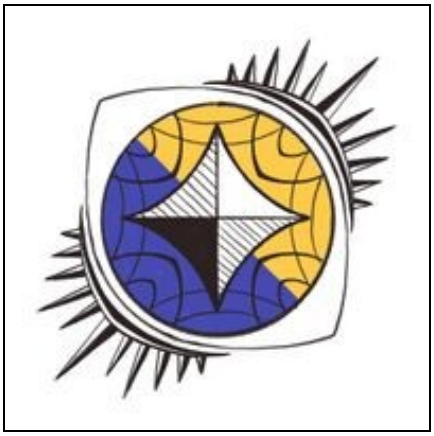


The Phoenix Flame

16.3.2.3 The Phoenix Flame

The Phoenix Flame cabal were previously called the Chain-Sworn Scales, however after the commission of the Flame of the Phoenix near the Cabal?s home in 386YE, the cabal agreed to change their name in support of the magician who holds the title. The Phoenix Flame is an Autumn focused weaver cabal with members from across the noble houses of Dawn. At the end of 383YE they began to attend Anvil along with House Larmallevés, eagerly recruiting new members and quickly becoming one of the largest covens in Dawn. The Enchantress of House Larmallevés often organises the cabal along with other realm castings. However, all members have an equal say on the rituals the coven casts as the cabal operates as an equal union of yeofolk and nobility, with nobility often requested to gird into simpler attire for rituals.

Though initially founded with a focus on enchantments for businesses, fleets, and farms the focus has shifted with the growth of the cabal's influence and power, and now they also support the congregations, military units and armies of Dawn. The coven most notably casting the last enchantment on the Hounds of Glory during the conquest of the Barrens. They aim to study the arcane and make new rituals through arcane projections, with members of the cabal encouraged to join an order and actively participate in the Conclave.



The Scrying Pool

16.3.2.4 The Scrying Pool

This mysterious weaver cabal was founded when a Day mage and a Night mage, under the influence of Bright Eyes Gleam in the Depths in 385YE, discovered a placid lake hidden in the bloody tatters of the Barrens. Inspired by the clear, dark water untouched by the poisonous chaos left behind by the Druj, the two forged a bond there and then. They called themselves the Scrying Pool after their secret home.

Since then, the Scrying Pool has welcomed yeofolk and weavers who seek to know - and to obfuscate - the truth. Though sometimes eccentric, and often obscure, the cabal works effectively - as equals - in their weaving. After all, balancing the velvet darkness of Night and the ringing light of Day is no easy feat, nor is negotiating with Noble houses as an ignoble cabal, nor treating directly with mercurial eternals. But why would any Dawnish cabal relish an easy feat?

16.4 Other Groups

16.4.1 Other Player Groups

16.4.1.1 Band of the Guising Hand



Band of the Guising Hand

- **Location:** Wickmoor, Weirwater
- **Heraldry:** Sentinel Gate filled with stars and a white open hand in its centre, draped in Stage curtains

The Band of the Guising Hand are a mysterious group of guisers that hail from no town, and have ties to no house. Claiming to have spent the last ten years honing their craft at a regio turned whimsical theatre deep in the woods of Wickmoor. Only performing for those lucky few who chanced upon them.

Now, finally content with their practice, they tour the towns and noble estates of Weirwater, growing their name and seeking to entertain those they come across with lavish plays often interwoven with Night rituals and heraldic costuming.

On occasions still, they can be found within their amphitheatre, entertaining wayward bands of questing knights.

16.4.1.2 The Emerald Lance



The Emerald Lance

- **Heraldry:** An emerald on field of blue, with gold accents
- **Colours:** Green and blue, gold accents

The Emerald Lance is a military and battlefield-focused union of houses from across Dawn. Its member houses publicly demonstrate their loyalty to the lance by seeking the right to display their house's favour on the lance banner.

While the Emerald Lance formally recognises entire houses as members, individuals are also welcome to join the lance as independent members or supporters.

In 387YE, following the betrayal of Dawn's champion from the tale of the Deadwood Knight, the Emerald Lance went through a period of reformation in which the core political group of the Emerald Alliance was disbanded, leaving just the Emerald Lance as a dedicated military force with no central political goals or affiliations.

The favour-bearing Houses of the Emerald Lance are: House Caerleon, House de Bastion, House Gryphontale, House de Vere, House Syrenus, and House Solrené.

16.4.1.3 The Iris Covenant

- **Location:** The Chase, Astolat
- **Heraldry:** A golden iris flower encircled by a ring of interlocking silver leaves
- **Colours:** Gold and silver, with accents of purple and blue

The Iris Covenant is a coalition of noble houses in Dawn, founded in Spring 386YE. It aims to foster collaboration and strength among its members, ensuring each house thrives both individually and collectively. The Covenant's "prosperity pact" centres around economic growth, mutual aid, and the cultivation of shared prosperity both within and outside of Anvil.

The Hall of Bloom, House Videre's most prized possession, was chosen as the central meeting place for its symbolic golden iris, reflecting the Covenant's commitment to renewal and beauty. This hall now serves as a vibrant centre for meetings and celebrations.

The Iris Covenant leverages its combined resources and talents to navigate political and economic challenges, remaining steadfast in its focus on the prosperity of its members without endorsing any external political agendas.



The Order of the Gryphon's Quill

16.4.1.4 The Order of the Gryphon?s Quill

- **Location:** The Chase, Astolat
- **Heraldry:** Golden Gryphon rampant clutching a Quill on a Red and Blue split field with crenulated black border at top displaying a gilded Quill
- **Colours:** Gold, Red, Blue

The Order of the Gryphons Quill is a school and residence for troubadours and those wishing to further Dawnish arts and culture, led by Lady Kaywenn du Launcet and Lord Romande Remys. Located between the famous tourney ground of Laroc and the Kethry?s Grove it seeks to promote pride in Dawnish culture amongst its citizens and ensure that the most glorious tales are formed. Those of the order that attend anvil tend to be pride troubadours, performers or mages who specialise in magic to nudge stories in glorious directions. Order members whether noble or yeofolk seek to support each other in their endeavours to ensure Dawn weaves a glorious history. Those who wish to join the order can be from any house or any lineage as long as they are willing to ensure great legends last forever.

16.4.1.5 Phoenix Rising



Phoenix Rising

- **Location:** Caer Faucon, Astolat
- **Heraldry:** On a Field Gules, a Phoenix Aflame Or, Chief a Dawnish Sun rising Or. Supporters Dexter and Sinister, a Phoenix Aflame Or with a Label Gules. A Crest, cloth Or and Argent, with three books atop each other Gules and Or
- **Colours:** Gold, Red, Blue
- **Coven Master:** Lord Tobias de Gauvain

Born out of the need for a versatile Summer coven for Dawn, House De Gauvain decided to find a magical way of working that could benefit the Empire as a whole while also providing magical aid to Dawnish groups, without compromising either.

The group is not a traditional Weaver coven; instead, it accepts members of any house willing to pursue Glory for the coven, and Glory for its own sake.

16.4.2 NPC Groups

These groups are made up of non-player characters; their members are portrayed by Profound Decisions NPC crew.

16.4.2.1 House de Casillon

- **Location:** Castle Spiral, on Weirmoor, in Weirwater
- **Heraldry:** A hand with fingers spread marked with a spiral
- **Colours:** Azure, Gold, and Violet

The de Casillon are an old house who hail from Spiral Castle, a pre-Imperial keep that stands at the heart of a powerful Summer regio. Their estates lie in Weirmoor in the territory of Weirwater, and until very recently they lived in voluntary internal exile protected from the outside world by a wall of swirling magical mists.



House de Casillon
Many of the nobles of the de Casillon family claim descent from Empress Richilde, and are said to cultivate their bloodline in the way a vintner might cultivate a strain of fine grapes. They are usually possessed of a strong changeling lineage - it is very rare for anyone who is not a changeling to seek the Test of Mettle from the house and even rarer for them to succeed. Much of their business in the outside world is handled through the Castellan of Spiral Castle, an Imperial title re-established in Spring 380YE.

Almost all the de Casillon nobles are witches, and their earls have always been potent enchanters. Their yeofolk are likewise trained in magical arts, although many of them choose to embrace the path of the artisan. Even before their seclusion behind their wall of mist, they were known for hedonism

and self-indulgence and it seems that several decades isolated in a Summer regio have merely heightened these tendencies - left to their own devices they would while away their lives in tourneys, in hunting, in feasting, and in other diverse amusements. There may be some weight to the concerns of some troubadours who worry that the de Casillon have become more like the inhabitants of the Summer realm than citizens of Dawn.

16.4.2.2 House De Ledure

- **Location:** Weirwater
- **Heraldry:** A gold star on an argent field
- **Colours:** Silver and Gold
- **Earl:** Enchanter Geoffrey de Ledure

A relatively new house that was once part of House de Rousillon, they split from that house in 358YE, ten years after Hugh de Rousillon took the Throne. Several knights of House de Rousillon and other knights who were after more action rather than tournaments joined the house. The house?s estates are based in Weirwater, and under Earl Hugh?s reign, the house was successful in having a senator twice - whilst they were at the peak of their power. Today the house is led by the Enchanter Geoffrey de Ledure, who is from a line of powerful summer witches. It is believed that the house has won some powerful boons from the eternal Hayaak, and they generally refuse to deal with other eternals.

In 378YE a marriage between House de Ledure and the rival House Blyrale was disrupted when the youths involved ran off to join the Navarr. This act ultimately cemented a union between the two houses and House Blyrale joined House de Ledure. According to gossip, the two houses are partially united by their anger at the Dawnish nobles who encouraged their scions to abandon their duty and flee the nation.

16.4.2.3 House Lionsgate



House Lionsgate

- **Location:** The Chase, Astolat
- **Heraldry:** Two red lions facing each other before a black gate
- **Colours:** White, Red, and Black

House Lionsgate was founded in 283YE by descendants of the disgraced House Lyongate, who disbanded shortly after the disastrous loss of the original Gryphon's Pride army in a failed attempt to capture the Barrens. The founders attracted a number of knights-errant and questing knights, and slowly rebuilt their house - although they never again enjoyed the prominence they had lost along with the army.

The Lionsgate estates in Astolat are small but well maintained, and lie in The Chase. In recent years, the House has reclaimed some of its prominence as it has forged closer ties with a number of smaller noble houses - especially the cunning de Coyne of Dawnguard and the proud de Helios of Astolat. In 379E, then earl Lady Cassandra contacted several Dawnish nobles active in Imperial politics and offered aid in the re-establishment of the Gryphon's Pride. The loose coalition of smaller houses managed to secure a number of wains of mithril to help with the mustering of the fourth Dawnish army, seeing in this endeavour an opportunity to reclaim some of the pride they had lost over a century before. it remains to be seen if, now the army has been completed, they will continue to involve themselves in Dawnish politics or retreat to their estates.

16.5 Contributing

Any player character group in Dawn can submit an entry for this page. The entry should come from the out-of-character group leader and be emailed to plot@profounddecisions.co.uk.

It should contain the following information:

- Group archetype (noble house, weaver cabal, knightly order). If your group doesn't have one of these archetypes, it will be listed in the "other" section.
- Territory and region where the groups lands are physically located. Noble houses have estates, but both knightly orders and weaver cabals will be tied to a physical location that serves as their base of operations. If you are a group in exile that has fled the Barrens you can mention that
- A description of your groups heraldry, with an image if desired. All noble houses have heraldry, as do most knightly orders and weaver cabals.
- If your group has specific colours, you can mention them here.
- If your knightly order has a publicly known oath you can include it in this section, bearing in mind that the best oaths of this nature are short and pithy
- The name of your earl if you are a noble house. If there is someone in your knightly order or weaver cabal that serves as the in-character leader of the group, you can mention them and their title here

You should also include up to 250 words of description, detailing the kind of things that other characters might know about your group. Have a look at the description for a noble house, or at the archetype pages for weaver cabals and questing knights for ideas on the kind of information that is useful. You must also include a few sentences of history, especially around the circumstances of the house's formation or origin.

Some other questions to consider include:

- If you are a noble house, do you have a particular Test of Mettle for which they are known, or a noteworthy method of choosing their earl?
- Are there one or more particular archetypes the group is particularly associated with, either noble of yeofolk? Obviously knightly orders will contain questing knights, and weaver cabals are expected to have weavers among their number, but is there a noteworthy archetype that might be unexpected or has a special role?
- Does your group have a particular ambition which helps unify your members?
- Is there anything notable about the lands you claim, or about the physical buildings that serve as your home?

Things to avoid include:

- Too much worldbuilding detail ? this represents information other characters may know about your house. It's not a place to define elements of the game world
- Lists of character names ? this isn't a place for getting your name on the wiki
- Too much emphasis on the past ? while it's useful to have a few lines of history, what matters in Empire is what your house does on the field at events

It's possible to update the information on this page over time (for example if your earl changes) with an e-mail to plot@profounddecisions.co.uk.

-public/images/thumb/a/a6/House_du_Soleil.jpg/250px-House_du_Soleil.jpg" decoding="async" width="250" height="252" srcset="/mediawiki-public/images/thumb/a/a6/House_du_Soleil.jpg/375px-House_du_Soleil.jpg 1.5x, /mediawiki-public/images/thumb/a/a6/House_du_Soleil.jpg/500px-House_du_Soleil.jpg 2x" />

House du Soleil

House Colours: Orange and blue
House Heraldry: Black tower against rising sun
Location: Astolat, Oldheart

Du Soleil is an ancient house pre-dating the Empire. Ancient records show members active within the ancient order of the Venatores Illustres Hunters, indeed the first earl, Alberic, may have been partly responsible for the formation of the order.

Based in Castle Soleil near Oldheart in Astolat, with extensive vineyards and orchards, du Soleil is famed for its red wine and calvados.

Earl Roger is rebuilding the house to its former glory, following the death of most of the house?s warriors in a surprise ambush by the Druj during a defence of the Towers of Dawn. A tower was added to the house sigil to commemorate the deaths of those brave folk.

Currently the house holds nobles and yeofolk of all ilk but battlefield skills are highly prized in House du Soleil.

16.5.1 House Vandale

House Colours: Purple and black

House Heraldry: Rampant wolf on argent
Location: Astolat,

A proud and ancient house of historic influence, formally found at the vanguard of every major military campaign that Dawn has taken part in.

The Vandale star burned brightly for centuries only to wane in the rule of Empress Britta; where their most prominent Nobles and finest soldiers were all but wiped out in Britta's final stand.

Unbowed in the face of adversity the remaining Vandale swore to rebuild. Fiercely proud of their ancient Glory, this process is a slow one as any test set will be sure to drive the knight-errant to surpass their limits.

16.6 Houses of Semmerholm

Becoming part of the Empire during the reign of Empress Richilde, after a protracted war against the orcs, Semmerholm has always had a fiercely martial aspect.

16.6.1 House Dromond

House Colours: Sea-green, silver and gold
House Heraldry: A silver sea serpent beneath a golden chalice, on sea-green.
Location: Semmerholm, Causse

The keep of House Dromond is a well defended harbour and shipyard, it is sometimes known as the Anchorage by the far-flung ships of the Dromond nobles. Looking to the Semmerlak and the seas beyond, this house are either naval enthusiasts or brutal raiders, depending on your point of view.

Traders and enchanters, wanderers and privateers, the Dromonds have a tendency to search beyond the horizon, finding trouble and riches in equal measure.

They invested heavily in the fleets of Emperor Barabbas, and were almost ruined with them. An unusual attitude to money and a house dedicated to Prosperity have seen a recent rise in their fortunes, and the current earl, Argent has ruled the house since 378YE and is set on balancing Glory and Prosperity for his house and nation.

16.6.2 House Devereux

House Colours: Emerald green and silver
House Heraldry: A silver tree on green field
Location: Semmerholm, Semmer's Rose

House Devereux is a small noble house which was established in the reign of Emperor Nicovar. Its main seat of residence is a medium size, moated castle near the banks of the Semmerlak, surrounded by a couple of hamlets. It?s just slightly north of Semmer?s Rose.

Since the death of the current Earl?s wife, the House has been rather reclusive. The Earl has remarried twice, but never recovered from the death of his first love, leaving him to be exceedingly over protective of his house. Perhaps this is because, unusually, a lot of its members are related by blood, and are either children or assorted relatives of the current Earl. The house has a long standing rivalry with a bandit clan, led by the disgraced Mariot Devereux, who lost a test of resolve with her sister, the former Earl, many years ago. The bandits have somehow managed to evade capture, and continue to plague the House relentlessly.

Despite the earl?s misgivings, the younger members of the house are eager for glory, and in 379YE House Devereux forged an alliance with House Cordraco, and for the first time in years, sent representatives to the summit at Anvil.

16.6.3 House de Lusignan

House Colours: Black and red
House Heraldry: Bare White Tree
Location: Semmerholm, Axmure

A cabal of magicians, primarily practitioners of Winter magic, the house was founded in the pre-Imperial past by the legendary Gui I, an enchantress. Many years later, Gui II fought alongside Empress Richilde in the conquest of Semmerholm. She was rewarded with ample lands in the dark forests of

Axmure.

They may not have been virtuous, but you cannot say they were not glorious.

Anon
The house tended to remain quiet and involved in its own affairs - its proximity to the Barrens mean that although many tried to make it a "last friendly house" on their journey - they have never found it particularly friendly.

The most recent enchantress, Isolde, a draughir, was known for setting particularly difficult tests and being insular and spiteful. She did not make many friends, and was not particularly successful in making fostering agreements with other houses either. Her son Gui IX succeeded her following her death in 378YE and led the house out from the darkness of Axmure. However, it came to light in 380YE that Gui and most of his house were Freedom heretics, who had been working against the Empire for some time, cursing much of the Empire and almost bringing the Empire?s war efforts to its knees with famine.

The leaders of the house took their own lives at the Spring Equinox of 380YE ? their name now looked on with disdain by most of the Dawnish. As a consequence, the status of the house is somewhat unclear.

16.6.4 House Ossienne



House Ossienne
House Colours: Orange,gold and white
House Heraldry: A crowned skull and golden rose with thorns
Location: Semmerholm, Ulvenholm,

Ossienne's home used to be in Astolat, but following Empress Richilde's conquests, moved to the forests of Ulvenholm near Arnet where they dwell in the Castle of Bones.

There has always been a Castle of Bones, said to be built from the golden, gilded bones of their enemies. There has always been a family in the colours of the dawn who resided there. In their blood and bearing flows the riches of royalty. Their ranks of nobles made up of dread knights and beautiful but terrible witches.

Glory crown the skull and glory pluck the rose
And let none call an enemy ?friend?

They have always offered assistance to those in emotional turmoil, and provided great and terrible challenges to those seeking to prove their worth. To capture a golden rose from the Ossienne garden or a gilded bone from their art collection is to be sung in a tale that will live forever.

16.6.5 House Rylas

House Colours: Red and blue
House Heraldry: Gold boar's head surrounded by silver flowers, on red halved with blue.
Location: Semmerholm, Axmure

Located deep in the wilds of Axmure, House Rylas has always had a reputation for stubborn eccentricity, combined with great loyalty to their lands and people. The nobles of the house can as often be found patrolling the roads and trails of the region for threats and checking on the wellbeing of villages and settlements such as the great grey towers of Boar's Pike. Passing travellers can always find shelter at the castle and a quirky house tradition means that anyone travelling alone will receive an escort to their next stop - whether they want it or not.

However in recent years the House suffered a great setback - a vicious combination of disease and barbarian raiders further complicated by dire winter weather wiped out much of their fighting strength, including the earl and many brave knights. As a result the new earl has ordered the temporary relocation of all non-essential, non-combatants. The children have been fostered to other noble houses in Semmerholm and many adults have taken the opportunity to visit friends and relatives in other parts of the Empire. Where Boar's Pike was once a peaceful place full of families, it is now a stern garrison, looking south to the Barrens and the looming threat of the Druj.

16.6.6 House Tamerlaine



House Tamerlaine
House Colours: Green, black and silver
House Heraldry: Silver unicorn on black and green field
Location: Semmerholm, Semmer's Rose

Their lands lying near a sleepy hamlet to the south of Semmer?s Rose, House Tamerlaine is an old and small Dawnish house that faded and became more inactive over time. Both nobles and yeofolk of the House are very much focused on learning and perfecting their various arts, but have not much shared what they have learnt with the rest of the nation. When not ensconced in their compound, noble members tend to be travelling across the Empire, researching their arts.

"If the bird will not sing, we shall make it sing?

House Motto

They are currently lead by an Earl named Thérèse. While the house is not made up of the strictest of traditionalists, challenges must always be met. Tamerlaine are prominent in encouraging that not every duel is settled by sword, but by words, brushes or songs as well. The relations between yeofolk and nobles is more relaxed than many - nobles are expected to take the lead and act as instructors to the yeofolk, helping them develop their craft.

With the upheaval of the past decade, Tamerlaine have begun to re-think their isolating ways and slowly reaching out. There has been a disinclination

towards the martial in the past, the House motto defines the steely determination of its members.

16.7 Houses of Weirwater

The craggy hills of Weirwater are home of many weavers, and the noble houses here seem to have more than their fair share of witches.

16.7.1 House de Celeste



House de Celeste
House Colours: Purple and silver
House Heraldry: Silver star on purple background
Location: Weirwater, Culwich

House De Céleste is a relatively young Dawnish house, having existed for 87 years. It was formed by a splinter faction of the House Grotte, which was ruled with an iron fist by the so called tyrant, Enchanter Dorian Grotte.

His younger brother (and heir apparent) Alinar defied his brother, set forth with the a few loyal vassals, his new Urizen bride, and her family; who had come to settle in Dawn, thus House De Céleste was born, under the stars for all to see. Over the following years many in House Grotte defied Dorian's tyranny, and sought to join the rising House De Céleste. House Grotte, however, still clung to life. Forcing the young Earl Alinar to face Dorian in single combat. Though he lamented the act, Alinar slew his brother, ending his reign, and the House Grotte along with it.

Since that time House De Céleste has lacked an enchanter, but it is tradition for the ruling Earl to seek guidance from a witch, known to the house as 'Counsellor of Stars'.

House De Céleste had remained stable in the years since. Seeking the glory and adventure befitting a House of Dawn. However, in recent times the De Céleste finds itself again destabilised. A series of events saw leadership of the House change in recent years, and currently Earl Hannasmyth has stepped up to rule, vowing to strengthen her faltering House

16.7.2 House Griffinsbane



House Griffinsbane
House Colours: Red and Black
House Heraldry: A red Griffin rampant on a Gold field
Location: Weirwater, Weirmoor

House Griffinsbane are an old house, from the region of Weirmoor in Weirwater. It is thought by many that the house?s name comes from the tradition of the house where yeofolk, wishing to perform their test of mettle, must travel up the Weirmoor Mountains and slay one of the many griffins that dwell in its peaks on the Karov border. This is an important duty, for otherwise they will grow too large and be a danger to livestock and maybe children.

There are stories of the creation of the house, where a young noble of House de Casillon bested a herald of the eternal Hayaak to protect his cousin, Richelle. He formed his own house to the north of Spiral Castle.

House Griffinsbane has been small and not very politically active for a long time.

16.7.3 House De Ledure

House Colours: Silver and Gold
House Heraldry: A gold star on an argent field
Location: Weirwater

A relatively new house that was once part of House de Rousillion, they split from that house in in 358YE, ten years after Hugh de Rousillion took the Throne. Several knights of House de Rousillion and other knights who were after more action rather than tournaments joined the house.

The house?s estates are based in Weirwater, and under Earl Hugh?s reign, the house was successful in having a senator twice - whilst they were at the peak of their power. Today the house is led by the Enchanter Geoffrey de Ledure, who is from a line of powerful summer witches. It is believed that the house has won some powerful boons from the eternal Hayaak, and they generally refuse to deal with other eternals.

In 378YE a marriage between House de Ledure and House Blyrale was disrupted when the youths involved ran off to join the Navarr. This act cemented a union between the two houses and House Blyrale joined House de Ledure. According to gossip, the two houses are partially united by their anger at the Dawnish nobles who encouraged their scions to abandon their duty and flee the nation.

OOC Note: House de Ledure is an NPC noble house.

16.7.4 House Orzel



House Orzel
House Colours: Red and Black
House Heraldry: Eagle and Primroses
Location: Weirwater, Sandling

House Orzel is a union of two migrations from Varushka to Dawn, blending bloodlines and customs but embracing the martial culture with great traditions of the Empress Richilde?s most noble people. With focus on martial training, warlike preparation and enthusiastic adoption of tests and trials which involve quest and adventure, House Orzel finds a natural home in Dawn and has welcomed an increasing number of native Dawnish knights-errant into its nobility through trials of mettle and achievement.

The Orzel have always measured and tested themselves against competence and skill, giving respect where earned and laughing at pomposity, false claims and weak authority in equal measure. Generous with praise and friendship for the accomplished - the Orzel care more for talent and achievement than they do for name or family history alone. In youth children are encouraged to demand their elders "prove" their claims of skill or knowledge rather than taking such claims on trust or simple faith. A teacher is only respected if their knowledge is valuable, a tutor at arms needs to demonstrate superiority with blade to be worthy of attention. Orzel children are wild and reckless with tales of the youngest laughing at the snarls of invading wolves and hurling stones and chanting "Prove It!" to call the bluffs of ancient evil and bestial threat alike. Orzel youngsters grow up with battle-scars experience and confidence if they grow up at all.

Though sardonic humour and jokes still run strong with Orzel,
none should be denied hospitality or chased out into the night.

Though wilful boldness, irreverence and challenge mark daytime traditions, Orzel hold hospitality and guest rights sacred when the sun sets, and friends gather to eat, drink and share tales of exploits and adventure. Music and song and storytelling are great pleasures of the hearth and all should be offered hospitality in the household of Orzel and none mistreated when it is accepted. This includes those of a monstrous disposition and the Orzel of northern descent remember well the tales of mora and wolves with mortal guise and though the house is bound by sacred oath to oppose the influence of Winter and volodny alike, darkness is a time for tales, wisdom and preparing for the hard battles to come.

16.7.5 House Rakshasa



House Rakshasa
House Colours: Black and Teal
House Heraldry: A Silver Rakshasa on a field of black, edged with teal
Location: Weirwood, Weirwater

A new house formed by Grave Enchantress Rheged Rakshasa at the Spring Equinox, 382YE, following a test set by the late Dread Enchantress Orlene de Ossienne, House Rakshasa calls a decrepit, but functional manor in Weirwater their home.

Formed from a group of Saker from Wintermark who travelled to Dawn, they helped to cleanse the land of an infestation of husks. House Rakshasa is a house strong in weaver magic, with a focus in the realm of Winter, though its character and interests are diverse.

With a burgeoning reputation for implacability, and a growing interest in the ancient weaver and guiser arts, the people of House Rakshasa are keen to make their mark and burn their glory across the skies.

16.7.6 House de Roche

House Colours: Blue, green and grey
House Heraldry: A grey mountain overlooking a blue river, backed by green
Location: Weirwater, Weirmoor

House de Roche is an old and inward-looking Weirwater house. Proud of their motto ?Roche Solide?, de Roche?s nobles are as stalwart ? and sometimes as sombre ? as the crags that surround the family?s stony castle. In the past they have tended to rely on their own children to take Tests of Mettle and join the house, caring little for expansion beyond the occasional Test of Ardour.

The House was ravaged in the recent battles against husks in Weirwater. Many of its yeomanry perished, as did the Earl?s heir apparent, her son Raymond de Roche. Rumours that Raymond?s corpse was later seen marching with the army of the dead chilled the once proud and haughty Earl to the bone. She has retreated into her library, leaving her daughter Segoline de Roche to look after the houses affairs.

Segoline now seeks to rebuild the House, looking beyond the walls of its dour fortress. To aid in this endeavour, she has sent a delegation to Anvil to support her interests - but as de Roche nobles are in short supply, the House is currently represented by its somewhat down-at-heel (but never downhearted) yeofolk.

16.7.7 House Novarion

House Colours: Red and gold
House Heraldry: Phoenix in flames

Location: Weirwater, Applefel A house that fell to ruin four generations ago and now encourages its members to accomplish great deeds in distant lands or other parts of the Empire as an important part of its tests of mettle.

Formed in YE 52 by a young warrior named Novaria, she gathered like-minded warriors to her banner during battles around Semmerholm. In recognition of this feat she was granted land and many of her warriors remained by her side and pledged to form a new house. Using the wealth and slaves rescued from the orcs they built a fortress on one of the highest hills in Applefell and were charged with its defence. The Novarion were popular with the troubadours of the time and several of their deeds are remembered in traditional folk songs such as Sir Isobel and The Novarion Phoenix which are still sung today.

Years later, a large portion of the house died in a great fire following a strange magical event caused by their insular nature and only a handful escaped. The house's wealth and reputation were in ruins. The earl began the slow process of rebuilding the house, swearing to never again let those of his household grow to be weak closeted individuals.

From then on, tests of mettle were always written so that extensive foreign travel was required. Insulation and clannishness was dangerous and should be avoided at all costs by prompting its members to seek glory from distant lands. Any person seeking entry into the house is often set difficult tasks that require extensive travel and perseverance to complete, thus encouraging them to grow into headstrong individuals with allies in unusual places.

16.7.8 House Tallstag

House Colours: Green and Silver
House Heraldry: Silver stag's head on green background
Location: Weirwater, Weirwoods

In 380YE the house was formed by a young Dawnish nobleman, Earl Logan Tallstag, soon after his test of mettle. Choosing Weirwater as their home, he and his yeofolk built Keep Tallstag among the most infested woods in Dawn.

The people of House Tallstag work tirelessly to purge the Empire of vile beasts in courageous and challenging tests of mettle, taming the lands with an iron will, hunting beasts as close as their front door to monsters dwelling in the Weirwater Mountains. They take great pride in expanding their house's treasured bestiary and battling stronger and more vicious creatures.

Though young, the house already has sturdy traditions surrounding their hunts. The great halls of Tallstag are adorned by all manner of beast's heads, each one a trophy from a great hunt. Hung upon the walls surrounding the great hearth, many stories are told and drinks shared under their hollow eyes.

House Tallstag aims to bring all the people of Dawn the opportunity to rise and be heard among the older noble names.

16.8 Houses of the Barrens

The noble houses of Drycastle in the Barrens have been overrun by the Druj. Those few who remain must use magical means to prevent themselves being overrun by the orcs, and many have relocated to other Dawnish territories.

16.8.1 House Aurelius



House Aurelius
House Colours: Azure and Gold
House Heraldry: A Golden, antlered, crowned maned lion's head.
Location: Barrens, Dawnguard

An old house of Dawn, bordering on the Barrens, this house has been worn from its battles with the Empire's Barren foes. Now with a penchant for the old ways and traditions, this house is said to have a close affiliation with the eternal Eleonaris. The house's main seat within its Drycastle estates is festooned with flags, and called *The House of Pennants*.

Much repaired after ceaseless attacks, the old traditions of Dawn can be seen in the abundant - albeit threadbare - heirlooms and adornments that bedeck the members of its house, their demesne, and their properties.

The house has a plenitude of changelings and is known for its impulsive, temperamental, playful and often haughty nature. Even more so than most Dawnish, they are known to never refuse a challenge.

16.8.2 House de Carsenere

House Colours: Royal Blue and Silver
House Heraldry: Silver Chimera
Location: Barrens, Dawnguard

A young noble house having been formed in 330YE when a charismatic cambion named Aramis split from House Videre and convinced several knights of the house that the his ambition of conquering the Barrens could be realised. The house claimed estates in Drycastle, and engaged in eight years of bloody campaigns - with little gain being made - culminating in the earl's death in 338YE.

Aramis was succeeded by Hagan, a changeling woman, who led the house to glory. She worked on coordinating with the Navarr, and defending Drycastle from the orcs. Passing away in 373YE she was replaced by Tristram de Carsenere who once again began pursuing more aggressive tactics.

Following the appointment of Empress Britta to the Throne the house began making preparations for a full campaign in the Barrens. Tragically the young Empress died before such a campaign could properly begin so Carsenere made their political movements to Anvil to push the agenda. They have been successful so far, providing a senator to the Empire twice since Britta?s death.

Following a mortal wound dealt to Earl Tristram, Lady Vivienne de Carsenere took up the mantle of enchantress. She was succeeded in her turn by the current Earl, Lord Escalados.

16.9 Location Unclear

16.9.1 House Akella

House Colours: White and Gold
House Heraldry: Wolf's Head
House Akella, a comparatively recent addition to the noble houses of Dawn, was formed in the winter of 379YE. Previously led by Soldier, a militaristic draughir knight with a vague and mysterious past he is reluctant to discuss, who fell in battle recently. They consist mostly of knights and yeofolk who were present at Drycastle in Dawnguard during the early months of the Barrens crusade.

They are a small, but ruthlessly aggressive house. Though the currently have no lands to call their own, they follow the Gryphon?s Pride banner into the Barrens to conquer fresh territory to call home.

16.9.2 House Martel



House Martel
House Colours: White and black
House Heraldy: Three white stars on a black field
Location: Barrens, Murderdale

House Martel are an old house; they claim to have settled in the Barrens as the forebears of the other Dawnish houses were still traveling across land from overseas. They are composed of several families, including the Rookwood, who?s own family motto is "keep it in the family." They live in the Murderdale, on the edge of the forest of Peytaht, in a fortified estate called "the Rookery". The estate is said to be impenetrable, and has had many Druj adorn its trees. Rookwood and Martel fought against the Freedom Heresy, concerned about the threat posed by Montane. It was seen as a matter of pride to take arms in this matter.

Rookwood and Martel joined as one house on the fateful night of the Battle of Sisters Causeway, whereby a wedding party, held by House Martel and guests, were ambushed by Druj. This wedding was an acknowledgement by Dawn of House Martel?s great import in fighting against the Freedom Heresy, and therefore the union was of politics as well as passion. However, all were slaughtered on that dread-filled gathering, including children. After this, Martel?s swore to never marry. Their heraldry also stands a reminder of this event, which strengthened union through blood. Nothing motivates this house more than securing the Barrens, avenging their forebears and covering themselves?in glory. -->

17 Dawn egregore

17.1 The Knight of Roses

The Egregore of Dawn is the **Knight of Roses**, and it embodies both the nations quest for glory and their tumultuous passions. While it often choosesto bond with a noble, it almost always has a host chosen from among the yeofolk. Despite its name, it is as likely to bond with a troubadour, a witch, or an enchanter, or a trusted retainer as with a more martial individual. The egregore does not confine its attentions to the nobility, and is a vocal supporter of yeofolk. It both encourages those who are ready to seek out a Test of Mettle, and supports those who choose a quieter life. Noble and yeofolk alike, both are Dawnish.

The Knight of Roses strives to remind the Dawnish of their glorious history, and the greatness that is theirs for the taking. Glory and Love are equally important to the spirit; often much more important than the seven Virtues. While it does not usually initiate or set tests and challenges itself, it offers advice and guidance on the subject and may prove critical of those who misuse or abuse these traditions. Likewise, it has been known to intervene on behalf of lovers who are in need of its aid, encouraging them to follow the call of their hearts over any other consideration.

There has been friction in the past between the Knight of Roses and Jack-of-the-Marches, reflecting the ebb and flow of tension between the two nations. Some scholars and historians speculate that this rivalry may draw more from the spirit of the host than from the egregore itself, however.

17.2 Current Hosts



Lady Griffinsbain



Trystan Tanner

17.3 Former Hosts



Lady Odile de Griffinsbain



Milton, a Seneschal of House Gauvain

17.4 Further Reading

Core Brief

- Introduction
- The people
- Culture and customs
- Look and feel
- Hearth magic

Additional Information

- History
- Leadership
- Economic interests
- Military concerns
- Religious beliefs
- Magical traditions
- Territories
- Children
- Music
- Archetypes
- Groups
- Egregore