

City Edges

Sacred Grounds Racial Packet



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City Elves 2

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City Elves

“An ember can start a fire, but ash can only drift on the wind.”

Finnic turned his attention from the table back to the old tome. He ran his black skinned fingers over the scrawled text, flickering in the candlelight, having lost his place in the recipe. “Ah, yes. Maru petals...” he said to himself as he reached to the shelf over the small cauldron. He plucked some of the crimson fronds and dropped them into his mortar, while his other hand went for his pestle. A sudden noise made the old Elf jump, dropping the implement into the cauldron with an audible splash. Looking now at the front of his tunic the Elf cursed at the dark stains spreading across it. “What have I told you about making noise while I’m working?” he scolded. The young Crow that had just entered the room let a fearful look crawl across his face.

“I’m sorry, Master” he said, placing the box he carried on the floor. It hit the floor with a solid thud, Finnic looked at the sweat on the child’s brow as he suddenly stood at attention; he decided to be lenient this time.

“You had better be, if my recipe book is damaged the price to replace it will come from your food again! Now run upstairs and fetch my other pestle. Be quick about it!” The child hesitated, looking down at the box and began to speak before Finnic cut him off, “What? are you going to restock my supplies as I work on the potions?” The boy snapped his mouth shut and shook his head. “Pestle! Go!” The boy’s eyes went wide and he shot from the room.

Finnic stifled a sigh as he turned back to the book. The boy was far more trouble than he had ever bargained for, Finnic was never this hard on the monks. He had thought long and hard that day in the rain, staring at the helpless form crying and squirming in its soaked blanket. He was getting older and could use a set of strong legs to help move his components and supplies, the boy seemed like a good fit. The neighbors and some of his customers seemed uncomfortable about the boy’s name, but Finnic decided that the boy didn’t need one yet and when he was old enough he could choose his own; better than being named for a race he didn’t belong to. Human arrogance still reigns supreme.

Loud banging from the front door jarred Finnic back into the cellar of his store. “Boy!” he cried, “The door! Tell them we’re closed!” While Finnic thought about who would need an alchemist this time of night he listened for the stomping of the boy running overhead towards the door. Turning back to his book he once again found his place, if he was to have this order ready by morning the recipe needed to be finished within the next two hours. This order will be enough, he thought. With the money he would get from these potions he could afford to send the boy to the boarding school in Skelletport and be rid of him for two seasons, give him what Finnic never had. Maybe the wizards could beat some discipline into the boy, plus the advantages of having a mage working here. A smile began to creep across his lips.

He was interrupted again by the sounds of loud footsteps above him. “He let someone in?” He rose to his feet in a huff, “What in Kakaros’ name am I going to do with this boy?” He stormed upstairs towards the front room of the store, coming around the corner sharply almost slamming into a physically imposing human standing in the front room.

There was a lot happening in the store, there were at least six men, one holding a hand over the boy’s mouth as he struggled. The man in front of him brought a club down onto Finnic’s left knee, the crunching sound could be heard throughout the room. “We’re tired of you dirty ash in the Hand! You all shoulda left when you had the chance.” Finnic next noticed the man with the lit torch leaving the back room and the red glow coming from behind him. Pushed down to the floor, he locked eyes for a moment with the boy; tears streamed from his face onto the gruff, pink skinned hand clamped over his mouth. The boys fighting suddenly stopped as the man stabbed a dagger into his side, the color of the blood on his floor as red as Maru petals. Finnic froze as the men closed in around him, and but a single thought raced through his mind.

He had died without having a name.

They are known by many names: City Elves, ash, the soulless; they are a race of loners and malcontents, they belong to no one nation and no one place, they are forsaken and shunned by their own people and are held suspect by all those that they meet. They call themselves the Crows.

Born from Wild Elf coupling, with near human life spans, City Elves are seen by their Wild Elf parents as an affront to all things held sacred by the Wild Elf tribes. When a Wild Elf couple gives birth to a child with skin black as pitch, and hair white as bone it is considered an ill omen for the tribe that it is born into. As the elders of the tribe reach out to the spirits that watch over the Wild Elves, for forgiveness and protection from this curse on their people, the parents and family of the unsanctified birth prepare for the death of their child. In older times the story would stop there, the child would be killed and the parents would be forbidden to conceive again, but a few hundred years ago something happened in the Elven Tribes that changed this process forever. While the death ritual is carried out and the child is considered dead by its tribe, instead of actually killing the newborn, it is instead abandoned far from Elven culture, often in the cities of Man, where it is allowed to live out its existence without home or kin.

Since their first appearance in The Age of Heresy, City Elves have permeated most of the cultures in the world of Aularia. While they are not a completely uncommon race, they widely keep to themselves and rarely congregate, it is unheard of to see more than three City Elves in the same place. A unique characteristic that binds all of the Crows is their lack of affinity with the spheres of nature, not only can the City Elves not learn the ways of the natural classes, but nature itself seems to recoil in their presence, small plants dying in their care and even domesticated an-



imals often flee from their being. While this is a strange sight for those that do not understand it, the Crows have always existed in this way and share a common disregard with the world that has shunned them. Uniquely gifted in the ways of the arcane, the same forces excommunicated by their forebears, City Elves that survive their treacherous childhoods often grow into work that is tied into the arcane schools in some way, shape, or form; some others find the life of the wandering sell-sword or the gifted crafter, but most Crows have at least rudimentary training in arcane spell casting.

While it is unknown by the masses how many City Elves there are, or how many had never survived their birth, it is a sad common knowledge that many do not survive their upbringing in the lands of man. While their age at the point of abandonment may differ from case to case, they are rarely old enough to fend for themselves and always are too young to have any memory of the Elven Tribes or where it really is that they come from. Young City Elves found in the ghettos or slums of these places are always illiterate, and rarely have been taught even basic skills, like speech.

History

The Age Before and the Incursion

Ages ago in the time before the event called the Incursion, the event that so changed the world all modern calendars still use it as their starting point thousands of years later, it is believed the Elves were a united people. While little is known about this era, there are absolutely no references to be found about Elves bearing the dark skin that the city elves are marked by; it is also known that the Elves are the race to be blamed for the Incursion itself. By discovering arcane magic, the Elves brought a time of great instability to the world. It is thought by some scholars that this is the event that corrupted the Elven bloodline, which would make all City Elves today a decedent of the elves that were present at the event itself, although more common belief is that all of the people present at the center of the Incursion were instantly killed by the blast that shook the world. Regardless of the relation between City Elves and the Incursion, the lack of knowledge on the matter only proves that there is much still to be discovered about the mysterious event and sadly the only ones likely to have the missing parts of the puzzle are the Wild Elves themselves, who are less than likely to share notes with the City Elves.

The Age of Aular and the Dawn Wars

Important to the City Elves today only by happenstance, The Age of Aular is when the Human race was taught magic the first time, including the same schools and rituals still used by them today. Much of modern day arcane magic is based off of or an attempt to emulate this time. Since the Humans are the primary teachers of City Elves, this is when their birth of understanding of the arcane came from. Lost to time, like the city itself, are the great libraries of Aular. If there was ever a place that were to have a ritual to "fix" or "cure" the City Elves, this would be the place it rested.

Following the Age of Aular was the Dawn Wars, on the order of 4000 years before the new age was another relevant moment for City Elf scholars. During the Dawn Wars the Humans of Aular and the newly formed Elven Tribes had an alliance against the Orcs of the South. This is quite simply the last time when the Humans and the Elves had an agreement that lasted any substantial duration. Most of the information they know about each other still comes from this now ancient alliance. Any knowledge that the City Elves have today about their boreal kin comes from the records and primary accounts that come from this time. While Humans of the age were usually more interested in not being killed by Orcs, some of the scholars saw the use of the alliance for more than just another regiment of troops.

The Elves during the Age of Heresy

Overshadowed by the major events of the Age of Heresy, such as the Second Crusade, the Third Crusade, the rule of the tyrant Zel-
lini in Capriana, and the war between Ostlea
and Capriana, a seemingly tame event hap-
pened in the Human lands that represented
a major change in Elven cultures, though it is
unsure even today what that change was or
its ultimate ramifications; a small Elven child
was abandoned outside of a Human city. The
Humans were undoubtedly confused by the
sudden appearance of the infant, as it had
never happened before; curiously the Elf also
had another oddity, it's skin was pitch black.
It took time for the Humans to put the pieces
together, but they soon discovered that these
infants were showing up at many Human
cities, within sometimes days of each other.
Overnight the Elves changed their ancient
death ritual from killing these children to
leaving them on the doorsteps of the unsus-
pecting Humans. To this day, no one knows
why. As the Human settlements on the edges
of the wilds began to realize that this was not

a onetime event, and that for the rest of time these Elves would be arriving a few a year, they realized that there were no people paying taxes to support these children.

Many smaller countries and city-states today bound by the Gethanar Pact made a decision at the time to no longer accept these children into the orphanages, instead favoring the Human orphans of wars and the like that these settlements faced so far from the civilized centers of the world; it is interesting to note that while the Gethanar Pact forbids murder, many of the same places today still are permitted by grandfathered doctrine to leave these Elves to their own devices on the streets of whichever city they wound up being left in, which is more often than not a death sentence. As some of the luckier City Elves came of age and their talents were discovered, especially with the arcane schools, a few places established themselves as safe havens for City Elf children: the orphanages of Aular City and the lands around Jaejal's Cradle, run by the dedicated of Jaejal, and as long as the children displayed the early stages of arcane potential the boarding schools of Mercurious were open to them as well, at the personal invitation of Mithos Albion. While these two opposite corners of the northern world would stand these helpless outsiders, many that were abandoned far from these places, or discovered by the apathetic, never found their way to those that would save them.

While the diffusion of City Elves into the world of Aularia was by no means a simple one, the Elves, like their Human teachers, quickly spread themselves out far and wide, searching for their destinies in every corner of the world. Viewed by those that had never met their kind before, sadly similar to the current state of affairs, they were commonly mistaken for Abyssals or some other form of malcontents. They have been known to experience problems with new cultures, not adapting as fast as their travelling Human counter-

parts, and being blamed for the crimes of their Wild cousins, even this far from their own kin, and still cursed by them.

City Elven Advancement and the Human Renaissance

Following the prosperity of the Humans of Aularia, the Age of Man was a time of great productivity by the City Elves. Now widely known and for the most part accepted, the City Elves were both partly responsible for and highly benefited by the Human advancement; as respected members of the governments and societies of Capriana and the Northern City-states that would become Gethanar, the Elves began to branch out and make a place for themselves in the Human societies. Specifically, the Elves raised by the dedicated of Jaejal had the Age of Man to attempt to spread the altruism they were brought up with in Ostlea, trying to open either neighborhoods or entire settlements that were primarily City Elf populous, though the split attitude of the City Elves from the rest of the world made it difficult for the two different groups to intermingle. With very few exceptions, these experiments in co-habitation failed outright; many of the City Elves were too driven or too untrusting to give the settlements a fair shake. The rest remained places where the rivals of arcane magic, Elves, or whatever other flavor of the week, would host their rallies, making the Elven gatherings a target for discrimination.

Elven scholarly pursuits were much more successful than social pursuits, however. The scholar Adeni seyal Danton was one of the most well written in this time, and is still held to as the City Elf grand philosopher and the author that many City Elf optimists still hope will have his writings teach their people in the modern age. His later works speak of a unique angle on City Elf culture, he writes "a race that comes from nowhere has unlimited potential to be the changing tide of the future, not

hindered by family or state, each only needs worry about the world immediately around them, changing it as they see fit." While this has been translated many ways by different people, each for their own reasons, it is mostly because of his works that the City Elves from this era on seem to openly embrace Kakaros, the lord of change and taking chances.

The Daltanic Empire and the Annexation of Ostlea

While in the lands of Capriana, or in the mage's towers of Mercurious, City Elves are greeted with open arms and smiling faces, that is in truth rarely the case. In many lands in Gethanar, and in the Daltanic provinces, City Elves are viewed with distrust or condemnation. An obvious example when Emperor Stratford took control over the Daltanic Kingdom and turned it into the Daltanic Empire. All of the City Elves in the entire nation were rounded up and sold into slavery; not only did the Daltanic government allow this, they openly endorsed and profited from it. As Daltanica spread to Kordland, Isselheim and Grinleymarn, it seemed bleak for the Elves in the north.

Meanwhile Ostlea had always been a safe place for the Crows, a place where most of them were raised and taught by the clergy how to speak, read and be part of Human society; that time is no more. Since Lord-Bishop Herzog gave Ostlea to the forces of Daltanica, the City Elves are no longer welcomed there. While the agreement states that slavery by or of Ostlea's citizens is strictly illegal the Daltanic citizens that live there parade around their City Elven slaves with alarming frequency, and the Daltanic laws enforced by the Crusaders are often a little murky when it comes to races that don't look Human. There are also rumors in the City Elven ghettos, the same ghettos created by the followers of Jaejal years ago, that in the middle of the night, after sounds of struggling, that sometimes City

Elves go missing and are never heard from again; Grand Crusader Eberhardt constantly assures people that these rumors are false and that there is nothing to fear in the streets of Ostlea.

City Elves in the New Age

While their faithful and their philosophers have each struggled in their own way to unite the City Elves, that day has not yet come. They are a scattered race, still identified only by their physical differences and their capabilities with arcane magic. Seen as inferior by the Daltanic Empire, and without their own political body to back them, Daltanic influence has spread far; more and more of the world sees City Elves as dangerous and uncontrolled with each passing year. Even with this near impending doom on the horizon, City Elves individually are doing as much as they always have, a driven and highly capable people often content with living in the current moment and thinking on the individual scale as opposed to the Human's "world view." City Elves have no culture or past of their own and tend to see the world through the eyes of their adopted homes or the nation they live in at the time.

As always the City Elves stay in their urban sprawls, feeling completely out of place in the wilds or even in sparsely populated areas, having lived as parts of cities since their early childhoods, they often know no other way. Highly respected, and sometimes feared, as mages, if the City Elves set their minds to a certain task, and are given enough time, it seems there is nothing they cannot accomplish.

Important Figures

Adeni seyal Danton, Grand Scholar and Historian

A famous author from the Age of Man, Adeni was found as an infant in the settlement of Danton in northern Gethanar. Discovered by a Human named Radroth, a trapper that

was used to safely travelling the Beastglades, he was brought to one of the orphanages in Jaejal's Cradle. Radroth did not trust larger settlements and preferred the quaint bread-basket structure of the cradle as opposed to the bustling and overcrowded orphanages in Aular City. Here in the Verdant Grove Orphanage, is where Adeni had his humble beginnings. While most of the children at the orphanage were expected to help plow and till the rolling fields and farmlands surrounding the grove, the few City Elf children there were instead asked to not go near the farmlands, fearing their presence would hinder crop production; instead Adeni and the other City Elf children there were taught academia by the priests and were expected to help the illiterate members of town by recording or reading letters for them. Adeni was skilled with a quill and found his way to work in the local lord's manor, assisting in the dissemination of decrees and orders of the Lord-Bishop.

While he was working in Ostlea's government, he spent most of his free time in libraries. As a child and a follower of Jaejal he always loved when the dedicated would tell the old stories: those of Jaejal saving the Humans from the Incursion, or the Gods teaching the Aularei about magic and the cosmos around them, but was always disappointed when they didn't know where City Elves came from, or which of the Gods watched over his people. As a youth he would pour over every history book he could get his hands on looking for clues or hints that would tell him about his own past. Years passed and he had learned nothing about his own race. After a time Adeni felt had outgrown working under the Lord-Bishop and went out into the world to learn about his people.

Travelling through En's Hand, Adeni stopped at many libraries and repositories compiling notes as he went on the City Elf as a race, there wasn't much. He returned to Danton to meet Radroth's family and learn what

he could of his own origins. Sadly the hunter had no tale for him, he had simply been sleeping wrapped in a rough blanket near the door to Radroth's cabin. While many may have stopped searching there, the burning need to learn took over Adeni's life. He returned to En's Hand, spending time in the ancient libraries and pulling all that he could from the oldest texts he found there; accounts of the Incursion, Elven Culture studies from the alliance during the Dawn Wars, the magical lore scrolls of the Aularei, he became a common sight and a known person among the educated people of the Hand. Convinced by the priests of Jaejal to share what knowledge he had gained there, he published a book about the possible origins of the City Elves. It quickly became a favorite of the curious and the learned; whatever coin he gathered from the collection he gave to Radroth's family, a "small thanks for his chance at life."

Adeni became a prolific historic writer. After Radroth's death, the loss of any family he had ever known, he left the faith of Jaejal and embraced Kakaros as his new deity. His work took a new direction at this point, it became much darker and spoke of how the City Elves would have to unite to change the suffering of their people. One of his most famous quotes was spoken while he was the sole attendant at a mass funeral for a collection of City Elf children that were not found in time to save, or had died feral in the streets; "We can no longer allow the phantoms of the past to plague our people, we are kindred folk no matter what we are taught by the other races. We are not the products of the past, but the heralds of the changing future."

Enris Undray

Enris is an arch-mage from the Gethanar city of Mercurious; among the higher echelons of the city's elite mages, she is by far the most boisterous. While she holds no title nor rank besides her status as arch-mage, Enris' voice

and anti-Daltanic writings have reached far and wide throughout Gethanar. She is widely viewed, even among signatories of the Gethanar Pact, to be the most outspoken on the atrocities of Daltanica's influence on the once holy lands of En's Hand. She is one of the rare City Elves involved in politics and has been invited to speak numerous times at forums in Capriana and in Getharia City about her studies and research about the military and political ramifications of the Daltanic procession onto the mainland of Aularia.

A follower of Kakaros, like many of the Crows, Enris often speaks on her interpretations of Adeni seyral Danton's writings. She does not stand for permanent unification, but instead that the City Elves must raise their heads from their books and their writings and acknowledge the threat that faces their people. Once the Daltanic Empire accepts them as equals and frees their Elven slaves, the Elves can go back to their work and separate lives.

Enris has been the target of multiple assassination attempts, presumably organized by the machinations of Daltanica but never confirmed, her mastery of the arcane schools has proven sharper than the assassin blades each time so far, but she shows no signs of stopping, and there are some that believe her death may cause a larger political issue than her speeches.

Isirt seyral Bellaroux

Isirt is just a simple City Elf. He does not care about politics, or the economy, or the Sacred Grounds Pact. He was found by the son of a governor on the outskirts of Bellaroux. The boy wanted a friend unlike any of the other boys had, and Isirt was quickly cleaned up and taught how to act proper when in the presence of his betters. For years Isirt had mostly anything he asked for, as the governor's son was doted on and belonged to a wealthy family. One day, now a young man, the governor's son grew tired of Isirt and had

him removed from the manor. On the streets Isirt quickly relearned much of what he needed to survive. Never having any training in arcane magic Isirt had few skills to call on, besides the fencing he learned in the manor. Making a name for himself in Bajiira as a sellsword, an assassin, and a master of disguise, Isirt now lives outside the law, but in the busy port city it is difficult to keep tabs on every City Elf; besides Isirt is just a simple City Elf, when he needs to be.

Oron Rynen

Some City Elves are content with finding a single home and settling there for life, Oron instead is a world traveler. He had a powerful mage find and adopt him as an apprentice when he was a boy. Taught magic by a master, Oron learned he had natural skill working with metals from the outside cosmos. Inheriting his master's fortune, Oron convinced the Dwarves of Mag'duar to train him in smithing and then learned the craft of trading in the arid port of Julios. Bringing together his new wealth of knowledge, Oron has opened up shop in Gallia as a crafter of fine magical arms and armor. The Sacred Grounds Pact is of no matter to him, but the islands themselves are something completely different, abundant with the metals his craft needs he must decide how to get his hands on the precious materials there.

Important Locations

The Verdant Grove Orphanage

City Elves, unlike the other races, have no homeland. There is no place for them to go when they are homesick and there is no family to support them. Many of them that survived until adulthood were raised in orphanages and boarding schools by people that often think of them as lesser races or as insignificant beings; only slightly better than their biological parents who have already mourned their deaths and are forbidden to see them.

The Verdant Grove Orphanage is an orphanage in Jaejal's Cradle, amidst the farmlands of Ostlea, and is a place where the devoted of Jaejal raise the abandoned youths of all races and teach them of the blessings of the Church of En. The orphanage is old now, as most things in Ostlea are, and it is long since past its prime. Built hundreds of years ago the building has seen untold youths travel through it, one of which became a spiritual leader and philosopher for the Crows spread across the world.

The Verdant Grove Orphanage was the early home of Adeni seyal Danton, the most prolific writer on what could be called the life and times of City Elf culture. He died hundreds of years ago, but still has quite a following amongst socially active City Elves; most, if not all, City Elves have read at least one of his books trying to answer the "where do I come from" question. To wit, some of his followers have actually organized into either murders or into larger political groups, many of which either held meetings at or pilgrimages to the humble orphanage. A number of successful City Elves, through having either funded or leaving inheritance to this orphanage in the past, have guaranteed that the orphanage remain as it was in the times of Adeni, and that it stay open for a long time.

Since the Daltanic annexation of Ostlea, visiting the orphanage is a daunting and dangerous task, while many have given up on it, some still feel the needs to walk within its walls; some of them that travel freely into Ostlea are either found beaten, dead, or simply never heard from again.



First Perch

Like the Crows that they name themselves after City Elves are removed from their nests at usually only a few days old. The place where the Elf was first abandoned is usually a place far detached from the life of the Elf, neither the place where they were born, and rarely the place they were raised. Some find it comforting to think of their First Perch as a home, even though they might not have never been there in any capacity that they can remember. It is common practice for City Elves, who have no Elven name or heritage to be given one or two Human names by their rescuers, or the home they are adopted into; as this practice sometimes gives no true sense of belonging, Elves that are seeking a place to call home use their First Perch as part of their name, separated by the Old Elven word "seyal" meaning "comes from," to have that missing piece of their lives or to attempt to narrow down

which Wild Elven tribe abandoned them. For example, the writer Adeni seyral Danton hails from the Gethanar township of Danton, he was neither born there, nor lived there for any length of time, but often identified with the people from that town as kin.

Each different City Elf has their own First Perch, and there are still more that do not know where they were found, never having a First Perch to call home. Sometimes meeting another Elf with the same First Perch breeds a friendship or bond between two Elves, but City Elves are their own creatures and some have no attachment to some imaginary home that they know doesn't exist for them.

Role-playing a City Elf

City Elves are always outsiders, they belong nowhere but can often be found in the strangest of places. They are shunned by nature and frequently have a mutual attitude for the wilderness, leaving it to those who are better suited. City Elves are adept at their magic, their crafts and their studies. They usually have powerful intellects but have been scorned so many times by others that they have stunted social graces and can be difficult to really get along with. Their lives are often filled with hardship and loss, driving them to often be seen as others as brooding or excessively moody. Every time there has been a City Elf that stood out, or spoke loudest in a group, there have been those that tried to kill that Elf; many Elves have learned this lesson and are content to blend into the crowds or mix into the urban sprawls that they live in to stay from the public eye.

City Elves are often a product of their upbringing, most of the time emulating the culture or region that they were raised in, attaching to the morals and beliefs of whatever group saved them from the nameless death that so many of their kind find before they age a year. Because most City Elves are raised by Humans, they have a roughly Human out-

look on life, albeit one that faces prejudice and intolerance on a regular basis. Many Elves abandoned whatever Gods they were raised with and find worship in Kakaros, specifically over the Church of En; many of the hardships that the Elves face today are because of people that follow En's church, though all Elves realize that even surviving their childhood was against the odds and the god of chance must have been with them. While the Elves collectively follow all religions, the Two Worlds religion has the least following amongst the City Dwellers, as the other followers of the faith have done nothing for the City Elves recently.

Opinions of Other Races

Bara'kaa: The Rune Sages are capable arcanists, and certainly have access to some arcane knowledge that the rest of the world have not come to understand yet. Because of the unique relationship between the Wild Elves and the Bara'kaa, City Elves are rarely left in Bara'kaa settlements, the few that are being raised by a culture stranger still than those of the Humans.

Dwarves: The Dwarves of Aularia are steeped in ritual and tradition, something that City Elves have neither of. Dwarves and City Elves rarely understand each other, though both races are very capable and talented at their crafts.

Fae: The Fae are probably the only race on Aularia that has more secrets than the Wild Elves. There is much to learn from them, but the odds that they will share them with individual outsiders is unlikely.

Grobs: Civilized in their own strange way. Each one should be judged on their own, but most of them are monsters, plain and simple. If they trade with you, they are probably ok. If they try to murder you, that's another story.

Humans: Often the adopted parents of City Elves, Humans often represent both the best and worst things that happen in a City Elf's life. Like the Elves themselves, they are capa-

ble of much variety, and while Humans probably pose the biggest threat to the City Elves as a people, they are probably also their last chance for salvation.

Seraphim: A race most common in Ostlea, the Seraphim used to symbolize safety and security to the Crows living in the holy lands, though today that visage is replaced by marching armies and crippling slavery.

Orcs: A race from what were once mindless beasts, Orcs are outsiders much like the City Elves. While the commonality is plain, the Orcs are far less intellectual than the City Elves and frequently are more inclined to get their hands dirty.

Sideshow: Not enough is known about them yet, but they are likely to be outcasts, much the way City Elves are.

Totemic: A culture brought up by those that abandoned the City Elves, the Totemic are the favorite race of the Wild Elves. Many City Elves hold malevolent jealousy against the Totemic, for stealing the love from their parents and culture that should be their own.

Vaniiri: Vaniiri have been nothing but kind to the City Elves, more often than not preaching acceptance and tolerance of other peoples, and making City Elves a more common sight Capriana than most other places across Aularia.

Wild Elves: The progenitors of the Crows, and those that despise them the most, Wild Elves deny City Elves whenever they have the opportunity. While some City Elves have dreams of finding their original tribe and meeting their parents, many have nothing left but bitterness for their parent race, and still others do whatever they can to separate themselves from the negative stigma that most races associate with the backwards people from the woods.

Lexicon

Ash, or The Ashen: A derogatory term dreamt up by the Wild Elves, but now used by most of the other races, it not only is an obvious remark about the color of the Elf's skin,

but about the ash being all that is left of the dead City Elves from the ages before the City Elves would survive their own births, or the ashes that remain of the countless City Elves that die in the streets every year. To be called an ash, or one of the ashen, is to call someone a residue of a corpse, it is highly offensive and is never used by City Elves, or used lightly by others in front of a City Elf.

Crow: A term used by the City Elves to identify themselves, some prefer the term to Elf. The saying stems from the Elven death ritual that the Wild Elves perform upon the birth of a City Elf. The ritual acts as though the child was stillborn and removes the child from the tribe, casting it out forever into the world away from the parents that brought it forth. The Crow is a wildly intelligent creature that walks among the dead and is often associated with death, much like the City Elves themselves.

Greenie: A term used to refer to the Wild Elf race, or a specific Wild Elf individual. The term is based on both the forests they cling to, and how the Wild Elves are considered backwards and new, or green, at living in the modern world when compared to practically any other race.

Murder: An expression referring to a number of City Elves in a group, a group as small as two City Elves in the same place would apply, named in response to the City Elves calling themselves Crows. While this term may not have had malicious origin, it is now used by Human supremacists often to denote the danger of the gathering of a "lesser" race, or what they intend to inflict on the members of the group. While City Elves still use this term, as the City Elven numbers seem to be dwindling there are fewer and fewer Elves each year to gather.

Perch: A place where the City Elf lives for a time. It is possible for a Crow to perch for just a short time while travelling, or to perch for decades in the same place. A "First Perch"

is the place where the City Elf was found as a child, some wear their First Perch with pride, but to some Elves, it is simply another settlement in Aularia.

Roots: A race terrible at planting and farming, when a City Elf refers to his "root" or "roots" he usually means the Wild Elf tribe or region that he or she most likely hails from. The practice is a hobby of some City Elves, to track or pay special attention to their native tribe, they do it for different reasons, but there have been scholars known to track the tribes to learn more about the City Elf "condition."

seyal: Originating sometime in the Age of Heresy or the Age of Man, the City Elves started using this term to affix a surname to themselves to help them assimilate further

into Human culture. The term was popularized by the author Adeni seyal Danton, who is held as an idol by a number of City Elves still today. It was thought at the time to be a word from the original forms of Elven that meant "comes from," or "belonging to." While that exact translation is considered debunked by today's linguists the City Elves have a short tradition, and the term has been in use long enough where it is still widely used today.

Pop-Culture / Inspirations: While many fantasy settings have their own interpretations of dark-skinned Elves, only a few of them align with the Sacred Grounds' version. A good example would be the Dunmer, from the Elder Scrolls games (such as Skyrim, Oblivion, Mor-



rowind, etc) who are ousted from their homelands and face prejudice and bigotry from the other races every day of their lives. The bigotry seen by the City Elves of Aularia is similar to the prejudice seen by the City Elves from the Dragon Age games from EA; while they do not share skin coloration the Elves of Dragon Age have been stripped of their homeland and are often kept as servants or slaves by the Humans. While the potency of the magic of the City Elves is comparable to the Drow from the Forgotten Realms fantasy setting (games and novels), the Drow have a homeland, a strong heritage, and a culture deeply set in tradition, things that the City Elves have not at all. Another race that you should specifically not use for inspiration would be the Night Elves, from the Blizzard games Warcraft III and World of Warcraft; with a background in nature magic and an entire continent that they hail from, they are a polar opposite of the City Elves.

