

Forgotten Lore

Dungeons & Dragons 5th Edition Campaign Guide

The Forgotten Lore campaign is set on the divided continent of Voralis, where three kingdoms rule over territory that was once part of a great empire that collapsed almost two thousand years ago. The Mai'i Empire (pronounced *my-yee*) presided over an era of great unity and accomplishments in magic and engineering. Their collapse, when it came, was swift and almost total. The Mai'i themselves disappeared almost entirely, a mystery that remains unsolved. To this day, treasure hunters comb the land looking for Mai'i artifacts or other legacies of that lost age.

Permitted Rulebooks for Character Creation: Player's Handbook, Xanathar's Guide to Everything

Permitted Race/Class Options: all except for dragonborn, which are not present on Voralis.

Political Geography

The continent of Voralis is dominated by three kingdoms: the human kingdom of Arresh, the elvish kingdom of Tal Nadesh, and the dwarven kingdom of Ironcrest. The three kingdoms collectively control a majority of the continent on maps, but the reality is much different. Much of the territories between the three kingdoms and in the northern part of the continent are not really under direct administrative control of any state. In those regions it is common to encounter tribal groups of humanoids, hostile creatures, and bandits. Because of this separation there is little regular contact or direct trade between the three kingdoms except in a few enclaves.

Arresh

Arresh has the strongest central government of the three kingdoms. It is ruled by a monarchy; the current ruling family has been in power for over a century. King Dangren rules from Severon, the kingdom's largest city. His eldest son, Prince Dalgran, is a respected general and administrator.

While humans are the dominant race in Arresh, there are also large populations of other races scattered throughout the kingdom. Halflings and gnomes often live in mixed communities but also have their own villages and towns here and there. Elves and dwarves are found in Arresh more commonly than humans are found in either Tal Nadesh or Ironcrest. Half-elves, half-orcs, and tieflings are not common but are not unheard of; all three of those races face racial prejudice, in more or less increasing order.

Other power centers in the kingdom include the Aperiium (a powerful and independent association of wizards and other arcanists), the Aureate Council (an advisory body of

nobles), and the church of Hosrenu. Worship of Sorevas is also very common in Arresh, with a temple to that god in most small communities.

Tal Nadesh

The kingdom of the elves stretches across a vast landscape of forests, hills, and open plains. Tal Nadesh is also the name of its largest city. Nominally King Gevalaine is the equal of King Dangren of Arresh, but in practice the elvish ruler's influence is greatly circumscribed by the power of the Advisory Council. Many of the members of the Council are arcanists, and conduct their meetings from a distance via spellcasting rituals. At the center of the elvish kingdom is a vast unspoiled zone called the Reserve. The Reserve is revered as a source of elvish magic and is tended by an organization of Tenders led by a figure known as the Druid.

Non-elves have almost no formal status in Tal Nadesh. There are settlements along the fringes of the elvish kingdom where other races are permitted to live. That is where most half-elves are born, but they suffer from both formal and informal discrimination. As a result, many choose to leave when they reach adulthood.

There are few temples in Tal Nadesh, but all three gods of the Triad are worshipped. Druids are also common.

Ironcrest

Ironcrest is situated within the Iron Crag, a range of mountains that extends almost the full length of the continent. The capital actually consists of two towns: Hightown, atop the surface of a large mountain, and Underhold, which occupies a vast cavern complex within the peak. Both hill and mountain dwarves dwell within Ironcrest, the former mostly living above-ground, the latter beneath it. The dwarves are ruled by a Council of Elders who represent the various craft and trade guilds within the city. Ironcrest rules over a large territory, but most of it consists of scattered valleys within the mountains where the largest gathering of people is perhaps a large village or collection of isolated settlements. Underhold is also an access point to an endless weave of tunnels and passages that the dwarves refer to as the Sunless Realm. The Darkfall Gate that controls access to this underground land is constantly monitored by the dwarves.

Li Syval

Li Syval is the name of a prosperous city-state that dominates an archipelago off the southwestern coast of Voralis. The Syvalians are traders, and their ships travel the full length of the coastline, trading with the humans, elves, dwarves, and anyone else they find. The Syvalians do not maintain a formal navy, since none of the kingdoms are naval powers, but their merchant captains all bear a writ from the city's Ruling Council that obligate them to defend the city if it is attacked by a foreign power.

The worship of Hosrenu is not sanctioned in Li Syval; most of the islanders worship Laesil in her aspect as Lady Fortune. There are few dwarves in Li Syval, as their dense bodies makes it very difficult for them to swim. Tieflings are more common in Li Syval than they are elsewhere on the continent.

Weltarin

Weltarin is a second continent on the far side of the Blue Deep. When ships from Li Syval first arrived there about eight hundred years ago they found a land of dense jungles and forests. They also found deposits of electrum and ancient ruins that suggested there had once been a civilization here that might even predate the Mai'i. However, their explorations were complicated by indigenous populations of intelligent creatures that bore the traits of both animals and men, some of which proved to be quite dangerous. The Syvalians set up a series of colonies and outposts in Weltarin, but in the centuries since most of them have been abandoned due to the distance and difficulties of trade across the Blue Deep. In the current day there are only a handful of captains willing to risk the long and dangerous journey across the ocean to the few remaining bases in the new land.

Religion

All three kingdoms worship the same set of gods, known collectively as the Triad. Each has a different preferred domain in each. However, members of any race may worship the Triad in any of their aspects.

The Triad: Preferred Cleric Domain by Race

Deity	Humans	Elves	Dwarves
Sorevas	Light	Grave	Life
Hosrenu	Knowledge	Nature	Forge
Laesil	Trickery	Tempest	War

Each god has many other names that tie into the preferred domain. For example, Laesil is known as “Lady Fortune” in Arresh, the “Wild Maiden” in Tal Nadesh, and the “Fatespinner” in Ironcrest. Members of other races also usually worship the Triad, although sometimes under other names. A common faith among intelligent humanoids is that of Umbra, a sinister entity that grants its clerics the powers of the Death domain. There are also cults in Li Syval and elsewhere who pay homage to planar entities summoned through powerful magic. As a result, tieflings are more common in Li Syval than they are in the three kingdoms.

The symbols of Sorevas are a torch, flame, or blazing sun. The symbols of Hosrenu are a book or scroll, sometimes blank, sometimes inscribed with runes. The symbols of Laesil are most diverse, and include a set of dice or cards, a collection of clashing weapons, or a thundercloud.

Each faith has paladins that support its doctrine. Paladins of Sorevas are known as Lightbringers, and focus their efforts on defeating evil, monsters, and the undead. Paladins of Hosrenu are known as Preservers, and often work with libraries or universities to gather and protect historical knowledge and magical lore. Paladins of Laesil are known as Rulebinders, and hunt swindlers, grifters, corrupt politicians, and others who cheat Lady Fortune of her due.

Monastic orders are not typically directly linked to organized churches, though there are a number of monasteries shared by the two (see Crosspath, below). Some monks claim to follow philosophical paths that date back to the days of the Mai'i Empire, but given the lack of reputable sources from that era such claims are usually considered apocryphal.

History

Everyone in the three kingdoms knows of the Mai'i Empire, which at its peak ruled over most of the continent of Voralis. All accounts reference the Empire's great lore and wealth, but the sudden and calamitous nature of its collapse has resulted in the loss of most of the specific knowledge of that era. Scholars agree that the Mai'i were in decline even before Tivolus became the last ruler to sit on the Sapphire Throne, but the exact reason and timing of its collapse remain a mystery. There is even debate as to whether the rulers of the Empire were humans, elves, or dwarves, or perhaps even another race entirely. However, there is a consensus that the ruling class of the Empire was either consumed in the collapse or otherwise just disappeared.

The fall of the Empire was followed by a period of crisis and disunity that lasted for several centuries before the rise of the three kingdoms. For a time the three races attempted to extend their control over as much of the former territory of the Empire as they could, but ultimately they realized that this was just not possible. Large swathes of territory that were once part of the Empire remain barren and unpopulated, suggesting that environmental destruction had been part of the reason for the collapse of the Mai'i. Occasionally expeditions into these wilderness regions uncover ancient ruins or other remnants of Mai'i history. Because so much of the lore of this era focuses on the great power of the Empire, artifacts are in great demand.

About five hundred years ago, the three kingdoms joined together in a war against a monstrous entity known as the Dead King. This being, which crafted a vast army of undead creatures, briefly threatened to overwhelm the entire continent before he was defeated by an allied army under the leadership of King Alephron of Arresh. Sadly, after their victory the coalition fell apart and the three kingdoms withdrew back into a separation that continues to the present day.

Economy

While there is currently little in the way of direct long-distance trade between the three kingdoms, each has a dynamic agricultural and manufacturing economy. To some

extent Li Syval serves as the glue that connects the kingdoms, as their ships trade with the three kingdoms and all of the other smaller polities spread across the continent. When the colonies in Weltarin were first opened there was something of a “gold rush” (actually an electrum rush, as the exotic metal was found there in quantity), but that has since cooled as initial expectations of vast wealth were not realized. Most of the outposts there have been abandoned.

In Arresh, copper pieces are called “commons,” silver pieces “nobles,” and gold pieces “royals.” Platinum pieces are called “imperials” but they are not currently being minted.

In Tal Nadesh, silver pieces are called “moons” and gold pieces “suns.” Copper is not in common use as a currency but some local communities use carved pieces of rare wood as a medium of exchange.

In Ironcrest, gemstones are commonly used as currency, with a complex system of valuation based on size, purity, and cut. The dwarves also use coins, but for larger transactions trade bars in varying sizes stamped with a guild house’s mark are common.

Coins from Li Syval are accepted almost everywhere. In addition to copper, silver, and gold, the Syvalians use oval electrum coins called “obots” and platinum squares known as Trade Marks. Electrum coins were rare when the first colonies in Weltarin were established, but now they are at least broadly recognized and accepted, if not common.

Magic

Magic is practiced in each of the three kingdoms, though it is hardly common. The consensus among scholars is that magical talent and skill reached its peak during the height of the Mai’i Empire, and the magic practiced today is just a shadow of what was lost during that era. Organizations such as the Apernium in Arresh and the Advisory Council in Tal Nadesh retain some oversight of the practice of magic, though most spellcasters who limit themselves to cantrips or simple spells can escape their notice. In the countryside, even such limited magic can evoke wary looks or superstitious gestures from the common folk. Spellcasters capable of using third-level or higher spells are extremely rare, and to most people feats like resurrection are just fables.

The wizards of Arresh and Tal Nadesh have long maintained a network of teleportation circles within their realms, though there is only one approved link for transportation between the two kingdoms. The existence of this link is not broadly publicized. The dwarves of Ironcrest do not permit teleportation into their kingdom, and they maintain a series of wards designed to prevent intrusive magic such as scrying into their realm. They also prohibit magic that masks or conceals one’s features within Underhold, the legacy of an attempted invasion by shapeshifters from the Sunless Realm that took place almost a millennia past.

Crosspath

The campaign begins in the town of Crosspath, a community of roughly a thousand people in the northern wilderness of Arresh. Crosspath is named for the crossroads it straddles. A busy commerce once passed through the region, although these days there is little in the way of long-distance trade; the town mostly presides over the commerce of half a dozen villages located within a day's travel to the east, west, and south. Crosspath has also served as the jumping off point for expeditions into the Dry Hills, a broad expanse of unfriendly territory that extends for over a hundred miles to the north. Treasure hunters and adventurers have long sought out Mai'i artifacts in that region, and in fact there has been the occasional cache of ancient coins or lost lore uncovered over the centuries. Most of the time, however, groups of wealth-seekers return with nothing save for empty pockets and ragged clothes, or merely disappear into the hills, never to return. To the west of the Dry Hills stands the Silent Wood, though it is well known that the wood elves that dwell there do not welcome visitors.

Crosspath has a well-stocked general store, half a dozen inns and taverns, and an assortment of basic crafts and services. A monastery stands on the eastern edge of town. A temple dedicated to Hosrenu is located there, along with a decent-sized library. Scholars and monks sometimes visit, seeking ancient wisdom or other lore. The King's authority comes with a light touch; tax collectors come out this far only once or twice a year, and patrols by the King's Lancers are hardly more frequent. The town lacks a baron or governor, just a mayor who is selected by the town's landholders in an election held every three years. It is an open secret that the list of candidates is vetted by the King's representative, who pays a visit to the town when an election is upcoming. But as long as the taxes are paid and there is no unrest in the region, Crosspath and its surrounding villages are left to go their own way.