

KST03 REV01

KNIGHTSHADE
THE LOREMASTER'S TOME
WILLIAM ANTHONY SHEA

BAD DOG PUBLISHING

KNIGHTSHADE
THE LOREMASTER'S TOME
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All Characters and events in this book are fictional and any resemblance to actual places, events, or persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

To Fergal,
For being there and listening,
Even when the nights grew long,
The words incoherent,
And the stories repetitive...

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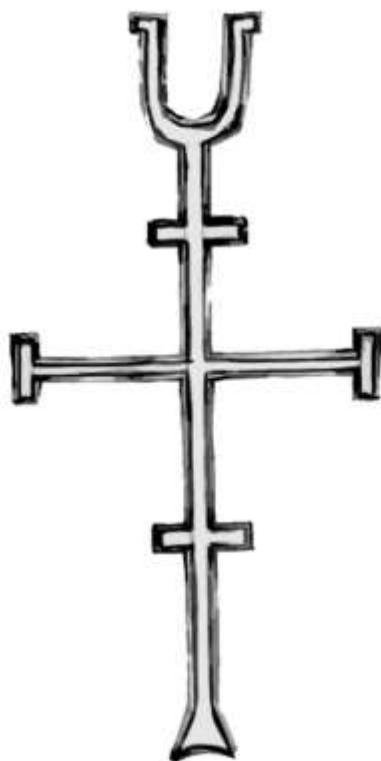
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Who wants to live a life of mediocrity? There is power in sharing adventure, in being part of an experience, and in playing a game that steps into the magic and wonder of a place that offers no limits except the imagination. Dare to dream...

FOREWORD

There is nothing better than creating a world and unveiling each nuance to Players in a game who breed life into it and make the land seem all the more real. Simple joy can be gleaned from playing Knightshade the Role Playing Game (RPG), but it is in sharing the experience that much of that wonder is realised. History in a game world comes in time. Of course, there may be many facets of the past presented in a Campaign World, but it does not become real until the Players experience that sense of history. Another facet of enjoying the game can be in creating a history for the Characters as the game progresses throughout the months and years ahead. The stories flow with structure when the world is set at the feet of the Characters and they can walk the land in the certainty that the Grandmaster (GM) knows what awaits them around every corner. It may not be possible to see every nook and cranny in a world, even in a fantasy creation, but unveiling upper-tier specifics really helps with consistency if the fundamentals are known. Where is the nearest village, town or city? Is the country of Falhurst welcoming to strangers? Is there a pass through the mountains to reach that way-stop town on the other side faster than circumventing this obstacle? Having those details at your fingertips is half the battle and it allows the stories to flow unimpeded. Again, consistency is important. Mountains always appear where they were presented. Forests and streams, farmlands, towns and a myriad of other details must not become lost in a mire of uncertainty. The world needs structure and the Characters have to be sure that the places they visit behave in a very real way. People and places must also change with the passage of time. The GM is solely responsible for that detail and for presenting the world to the Players with a consistency that is believable.

This Tome has been a huge undertaking, perhaps even more so than the two core Tomes in Knightshade RPG – KST01: The Initiate's Tome and KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome. The devil may be in the detail, but it is also in leaving things alone so that the GM can add his own flavour to a Campaign World. The thought was to present everything a GM might need; leaving no margin for personal ambience, but in time the realisation that one cannot build an entire world in one book alone hit home. What is presented herein is largely an overview. Individual stories may add more to the flavour of a place frequented by the Characters, but the GM is free to use or discard any material he deems unsuitable for his campaign or for his worldview.

Ayre is a growing, vibrant place. It is also a land in flux with many influences yet to be realised that can change the fundamental nature of the world. The detail is presented herein as a playground for the GM and for the Players to enjoy. As such, it can be tailored as required. Some elements have been left purposefully vague – providing an overview of the more notable regions. Have fun traversing the countries of Ayre, passing through the wilderland regions, walking in the ruins of past civilisations, and embracing the myriad of cultures that live in this land of political ramblings, conflict, and adventure...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My profound thanks to the Knights of Misspent Youth (KOMY) for playtesting this body of work and for the years of inspiration that led me to undertake creation of Knightshade the Role Playing Game.

My special thanks to E. Gary Gygax, whom I had the pleasure to meet, and play in one of his games. From the simple dynamics of a story to the magic of his imagination, it led me to take up this task. While the idea had always been there, Mr Gygax provided me with renewed energy and purpose.

My thanks also to Michael O'Mahony for taking on the monumental task of editing Knightshade the Role Playing Game.

A NOTE ON THE USE OF 'HE'

The author of this Tome uses 'He' and 'His' to describe the details of the Characters and Personae herein. This is used purely for ease of writing and in no way infers this game to be exclusive to the male populace. This Tome is for all who wish to play the game.

KST03: LOREMASTER'S TOME DESIGN

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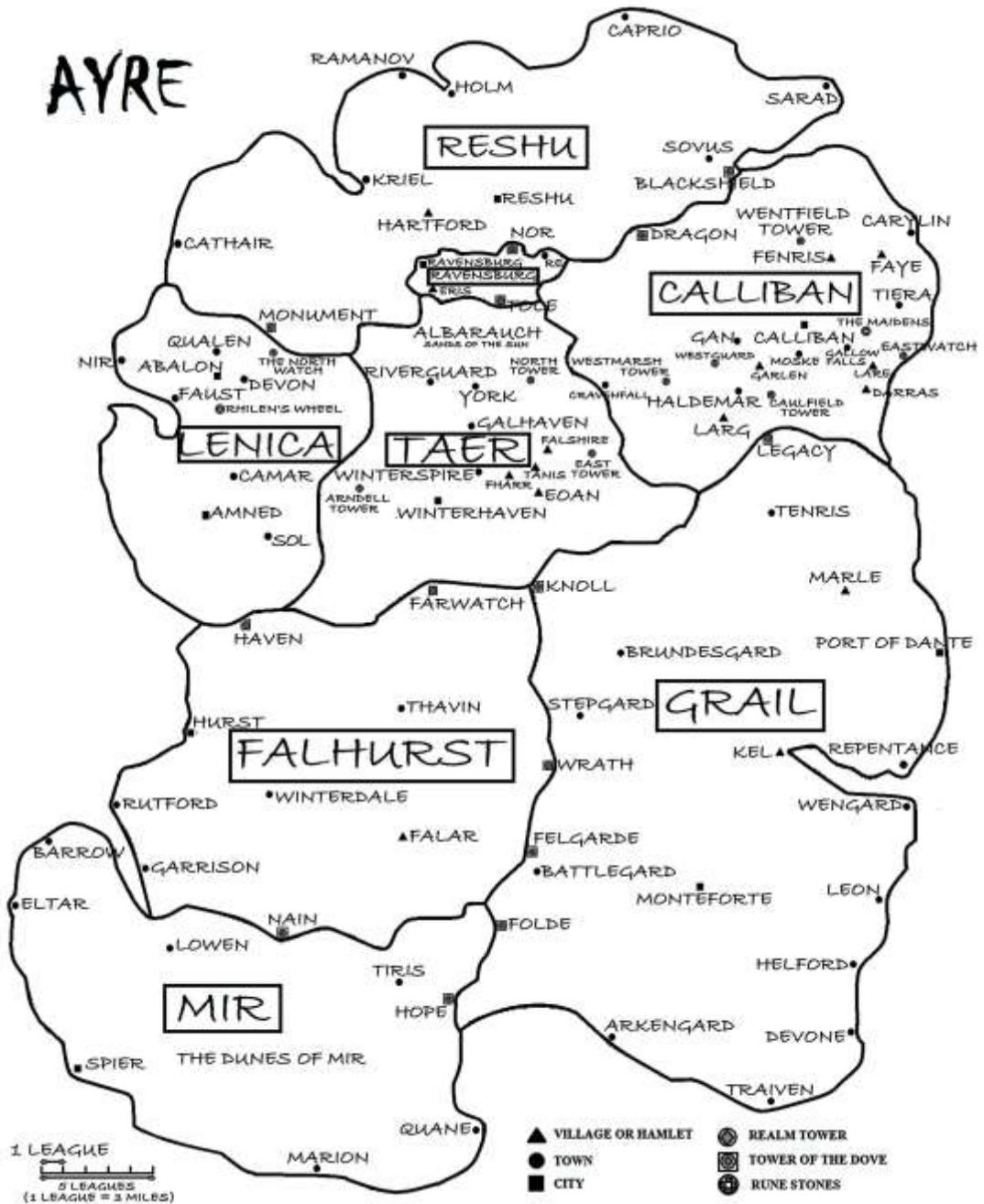
Check out the Bad Dog Publishing website (www.baddogpublishing.ie) from time to time where you will find additional game updates and downloads for use in the game, including downloadable maps of Ayre.

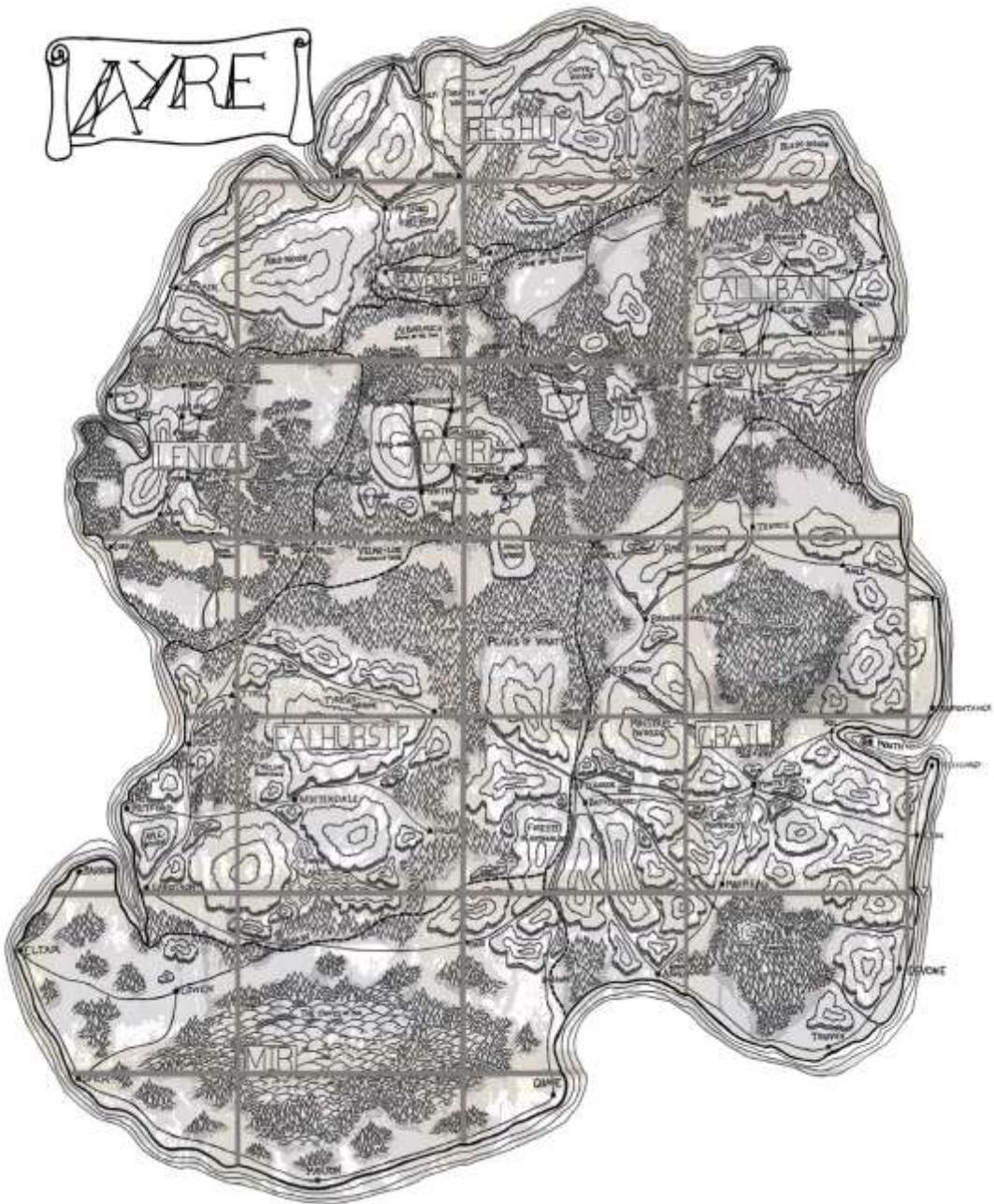
NOTE: The flora represented in this Tome is based on a fantasy setting. Such references and concoctions have little or no basis in fact. They are used to represent the magical nature of the land of Ayre.

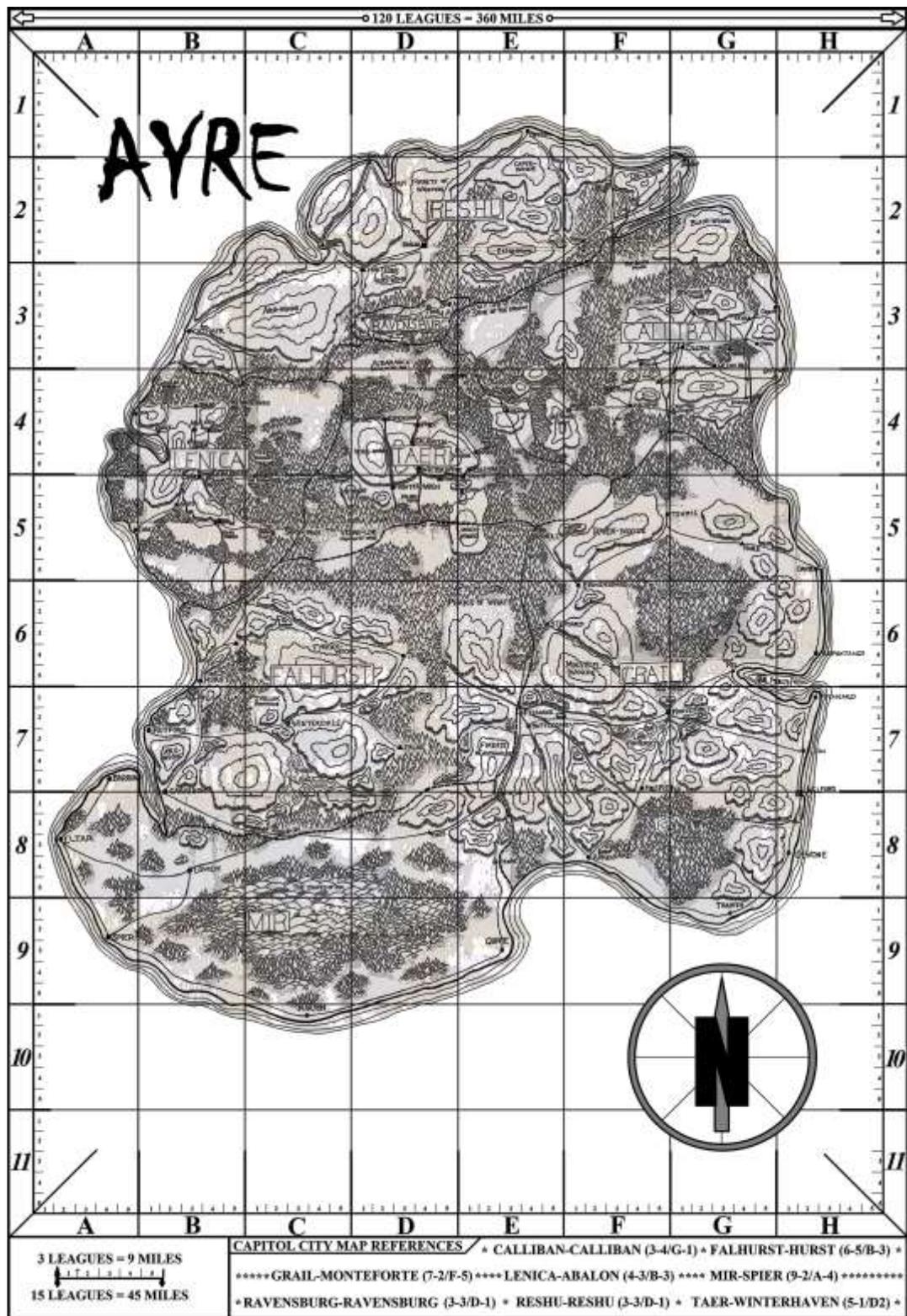
AYRE



AYRE







CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION – AYRE

Ayre is a land in conflict, with struggles that are not limited to the unrest between its countries, factions or confined to racial entanglements between *Humans* and *Elves*. Beyond all this tension, there are creatures and events in the land that may yet change the future of Ayre. Perhaps the only souls to stand in the way of such nefarious influences are those exceptional few who will rise to the call of a land in dire need, to be hailed as *heroes* or *villains*; but whatever the outcome, they will not soon be forgotten.

Ayre comprises eight countries under human control: Calliban, Falhurst, Grail, Lenica, Mir, Taer, Ravensburg, and Reshu. Other races live far away from a civilisation wrought by humanity. Ayre is believed to be the ancestral home of the *Elves* and that ancient race still struggles against the tide of human influence and avarice. They may from time to time cross paths with humans, but more often than not; *Elves* avoid conflict with those who occupy their former domain. They are considered dissidents by humans and are nothing more than an annoyance to some. To others, they are a sad recollection of the past, to be ignored and pitied. There are many opportunities for adventure in Ayre and just as many pitfalls that might see an adventurer undone. There are also creatures and other races to contend with in Ayre but they (like the *Elves*) are in decline, clinging in desperation to those regions that are currently outside human influence, the true wilderlands beyond the remit of the countries that border territories seldom walked by the dominant race.

In this cauldron of conflict and strife, the Characters begin life, walking paths that require structure as time passes – a consistency that will evolve as each story is presented. Traversing the countries from point A to point B may not require a great level of detail, but returning by the same path sometime later will call for a modicum of uniformity to show the Players, and their respective Characters, that the world does not change at a whim. Prolonged exposure to villages, towns and cities will necessitate greater and more reliable detail. Travelling the lands presented by the Grandmaster (GM) becomes an inevitable part of the stories in the Campaign World as a whole. As such, this Tome should not be used by the Players unless expressly sanctioned by the person running the game. There may be portions of the book that the GM will reveal to the Characters in a story, and there may be parts that he deems they already know, such as the locale around where they come from or now reside. There may also be portions of the book that the GM needs to keep off-limits until the time is right to know such detail. As with each of the Tomes, the GM has the final word in all matters regarding this book and access to its contents.

Play fair. Consult with the GM and read no further if he puts this Tome off-limits until the details herein are presented in the stories he has planned. If you want to know more about where your Character comes from, ask the GM to provide you with those details, but for now, sit back and enjoy the world of Ayre...

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LAND

History is written by the victor and not all that follows may be considered true when put before a vanquished foe. Tales linger that do not coincide with the accounts of the past. Legends persist to be dismissed, denied, or consigned to fanciful stories to fill an evening by the fire in those long winter months. What follows is a brief 'human' history of the land. There may be other accounts that differ or contradict this perception of the past.

Over 1000 years ago the *Elves* began an exodus from a land that was then known as *Eirú*. It is a testament to the enduring influence of the *Elves*, that while so much has changed, humans still cling to a propensity to adopt ancient names for places, though some appellations have been corrupted over time. Why did the *Elves* leave their ancestral home? This is a matter of much conjecture, but the truth is probably only known to the ancient folk who fled Ayre (or *Eirú*) at that time. There was a great disaster or upheaval, that much is certain, but the nature of this catastrophe varies from story to story. The predominant legend probably has some elements of truth – some demonic upsurge rendered Ayre uninhabitable for centuries, though the theory that a plague swept across the land seems a more likely influence for the exodus, in whatever form it took. However it came about, the *Elves* have been reduced to indigent dissidents, barely clinging to existence. There are few births among *Elves* now and this, along with greatly reduced numbers, seems to spell the end for the ancient race that once dominated Ayre, in a time when they rivalled and transcended humanity in every way. There seems little hope that the *Elven* heart will ever rise to such a position of power again. While the focus here is on the *Elves* in decline, other races in Ayre face a similar contraction of their species. Whether the calamity of the past influenced this depreciation in population is unknown, but it is largely suspected that the exodus of the *Elves* and the decline in all indigenous species coincided with some event that is now lost in the mire of an uncertain history or it is denied to prevent humanity from knowing the truth.

Ayre is predominantly a human land now. They have a foothold measured in centuries, but it is humanity's proclivity to propagate that will see it outlast any attempt to turn the tide. A little over 800 years ago, humans came to Ayre, though the true instigation of civilisation as it appears today did not occur for some time after. The first land to be settled was that of Lenica (*Len-ees-ha*) but as word of this bountiful island spread, others were quick to follow. Settlements spread to Falhurst, Taer and Grail. In time the expansion of human influence in the land formed Calliban, Reshu and Mir. While Calliban is believed to have been colonised not long after Lenica, it was nearly a century later before it became noted as a territory within Ayre. Ravensburg's history is equally ambiguous. This kingdom came into being sometime between the rise of Lenica and the formation of Calliban.

NOTE: The calendar of Ayre begins 740 years ago. The first story in Knightshade the Role Playing Game (RPG), presented in KST02: The Grandmaster's Tome –

Appendix 1: KS00 Stepping Stones, marks the beginning of the game calendar at Restday, 30th Day of Septar, 740 Ayre Reckoning (AR). Of course, the Grandmaster (GM) is free to select an alternate starting date for his story or Campaign if desired. However, when following the stories presented for the Campaign World of Ayre, the calendar has been set throughout each scenario to complement the opening date outlined above. Time & Seasons, first noted in KST01: The Initiate's Tome is also provided in this Tome for your convenience, with some added details not hitherto presented in the other Tomes.

Conflict always existed between each of the human factions who arrived on the island of Ayre. These conflicts ranged from religious entanglements to territorial disputes. The old world brought humans to this new world who did not deign fit to leave the discords of the past behind. However, with Ayre, there was an opportunity to put distances and a greater deal of wilderland between those conflicts. Human expansion was inevitable. They were like a proverbial plague setting out across Ayre seeking autonomy from all that had been left behind.

In time, each country came into being and old alliances formed against those who had once been in conflict. The territories between the countries diminished and this new world became little more than a reflection of the old one. Petty rivalries and outright wars stirred up from time to time and few were above the influences of a past that have now been consigned to a muddied perception of history. Grail and Falhurst in particular have been in conflict throughout their history on Ayre. Calliban too has proffered aggressive overtures against its neighbours but has not singled out any one country in that regard. Recurring skirmishes with the *Elves* have long plagued Reshu, who it seems have retained footholds in the wilder regions to the north of Ayre, where their influence is strongest. Only Mir has remained largely untouched. Some conflicts have occurred with Grail, but they have not faced the same intensity of aggression as the animosity which arises between Falhurst and that kingdom. Still, Mir was inclined to intervene when the possibility of outright war affected trade and the precarious stability of the region.

For the last 500 years, the land of Ayre has been plagued with recurring conflicts and outright war. These did little to settle the differences between the warring countries on this troubled isle. The rivalries between Grail, Falhurst, Reshu and Mir in particular depleted resources and cost lives. Calliban remained largely neutral in this conflict but often stood on the verge of support for one country or another, like a predator waiting to see who would rise to dominance. Lenica frequently offered her misguided alliance to Grail. The armies of Taer joined Reshu, forcing an unlikely alliance between Mir and Falhurst. All the while, the borders of Ravensburg remained closed. Two hundred years ago, one man stood out against the constant struggles between the countries of Ayre. Sir Anton Greye, a Knight from Falhurst (his mother was from Grail) forged a treaty between the four primary warring countries in 502 Ayre Reckoning (AR), extending this to all countries in

Ayre by 513 AR. This became known as the Greye Accord and brought about a cessation of violence as well as the foundation of the Order of the Knights of the Dove. Sixteen towers were built on the borders between the eight countries. Six thousand Knights were gathered from the youth of Ayre to patrol these neutral zones. They are dedicated to the preservation of peace and safe passage for all within the remit of their influence. The roads and trails guarded by the Order are free for all to travel. They are protected by the Knights of this Order. The Towers of the Order provide way-stops on journeys between the countries of Ayre, but they are not to be mistaken for habitats. The Order of the Dove will permit a man to rest his weary bones and that of his mounts in the safety of one of its strongholds but not to linger. Of late, the influence of the Order has begun to wane, and old conflicts have arisen. The land seems poised against greater darkness and few deign to travel abroad in Ayre without purpose. Conflict has always been a part of the history of Ayre. Perhaps, such will always be the case.

TIME & SEASONS IN AYRE

The GM is free to use whatever method he chooses to track time in his Campaign World. Time and seasons in Ayre are noted below should the GM choose this method. A greater level of detail (including the Feast Days, Spiritual Days and Festival Days for the Factions, Faiths and Countries of Ayre) are provided in this Tome under each respective chapter, noting Fairs, Feast and Festival Days where appropriate. A year in Ayre is 10 Calendar Months long, with each month lasting 3 Tendays, or 30 days, and each year lasting 300 days. Each day like those in the real world lasts 24 hours, each hour is 60 minutes, and each minute has 60 seconds. This is the measure of time, but Knightshade also uses Action Rounds and Combat Action Rounds (that last 6 seconds) when resolving any direct interaction by the Characters (See KST01: The Initiate's Tome). These are less a reflection of real-time and more an abstract method for resolving situations in Knightshade RPG. The chart below shows the names of the days, months, and seasons.

DAYS	MONTHS	SEASONS	FESTIVAL
Moonday	Janar	Winter	Festival of Decay
Tollday	Marc	Winter	Feast of Faith
Warday	Apry	Spring	Festival of Life
Thirstday	Juin	Spring	Feast of Renewal
Fireday	Jules	Summer	Feast of the Sun
Marketday	Augus	Summer	Festival of Growth
Starday	Septar	Summer	Feast of the Harvest
Sunday	Octar	Autumn	Feast of the Moon
Worshipday	Novar	Autumn	Festival of Provision
Restday	Decar	Winter	Festival of Death

The first day of the year is always Moonday. Thus, the first day of the current year

would be Moonday, 1st Janar, 740 Ayre Reckoning (AR). This calendar of Ayre marks the rise of humans to dominance in the land and is the first universally adopted calendar of the peoples of Ayre.

NOTE: The Feasts and Festivals noted above may not be practised everywhere in Ayre. The GM is free to add or exclude Feasts and Festivals as required. Please refer to the detail in each Country or Habitat for any differences.

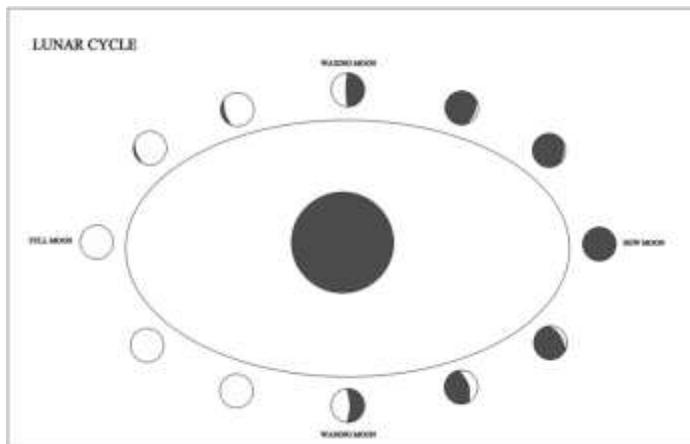
LUNAR CYCLE

The cycles of the Moon in Ayre are important only insofar as gauging aspects or brightness. For those who follow a Faith, it serves to signify the time of certain Spiritual events and Feast Days. People abroad in the land who are familiar with *Werewolves* and other such creatures watch the cycles of the moon, knowing these creatures are inclined to be more active during the peak Lunar cycle. Ayre has a 10-Month Calendar Year. The Cycle of the moon has been adapted for its significance within the Campaign World. However, the GM is free to make whatever changes he wishes. The details of the Lunar Cycle are provided here. The cycle lasts for 30 Days.

In any calendar month, the following applies:

DAY OF THE MONTH	MOON CYCLE
Day 1	New Moon
Day 5	Waxing Crescent Moon
Day 8	First Quarter
Day 11	Waxing Gibbous
Day 15	Full Moon
Day 19	Waning Gibbous
Day 23	Last Quarter
Day 27	Waning Crescent Moon

The Aspects of the Moon are as shown in the chart below:



PERSONALITY IN PERSONAS

Work to give your Craftsmen and personas a personality. If it's a minor encounter, the scene may be satisfied by a simple dialogue exchange without the requirement for too much effort. However, if the persona is likely to be recurring, add a touch of drama to the role, but most of all, remember any details you added to the encounter for the next time. Keep notes if possible. Players remember such acting nuances, and most will applaud the effort if a GM holds to the character of a persona. If a Craftsman is presented in the same old clothes, with the same jaded rhetoric over and over again, the personality will be dismissed as insignificant, even when they truly matter. If the same lack of detail is offered for a Craftsman who is superfluous to the ongoing story, Players might begin to sense a pattern, picking out that important individual the GM is trying to insert into a scene only because effort was applied to the persona. One solution is to offer a consistent level of detail for all personas being presented but this can, in turn, lead to a great deal of redundant work on the part of the GM. The best solution may be a happy medium between the two. Bring the important personalities to the fore with a practised regularity and then, when an intrinsic individual is needed, his appearance will not seem contrived for the sake of getting closer to the Characters in a story.

Of course, there is nothing to stop a GM from switching the villain, antagonist, or plot device to another persona if this should prove necessary. Be ready to sacrifice a long time trusted associate if

such serves the story. It will certainly keep the Players, and their respective Characters, on their toes. *'But... that can't be true – Arthur the Blacksmith was in the village for years. He fixed the shoes on my horses many times and used to give me the old ones to play with as a boy...'*

Players will try to outwit a GM, especially if they are on the lookout for some deviation in the way a persona is presented. Inject personality into Craftsmen from time to time. Make them more than just a cardboard cut-out, a convenience of an encounter or a vapid dalliance. Look to movies and books to add personality details to an individual, but most of all, remember any quirks added to a persona so that he remains consistent in an ongoing story.

A GM controls the scene, story and Campaign World. Who is to say that a personality was not seeded since the start to be unveiled as a villain when the moment presented the right opportunity for such a revelation?

Craftsmen are needed to instil a sense of order into a Campaign World. They make a Player's Character work to find the right specialist to fashion that piece of armour, shoe his horse or provide a required service. They also aid the GM in getting Characters to part with some of that hard-earned treasure they picked up on the road. Craftsmen providing services require payment, but in doing so, a Player will get the sense of a real world revolving around him, one that holds enough substance to make the story and the role playing experience worthwhile.

CHAPTER TWO: WILDERNESS REGIONS

There are regions in Ayre so wild that civilisation has thus far proved unable to push back the boundaries of those last bastions of a land that resists human attempts to bring the unbridled under its sway. These are the places that the Characters will inevitably traverse between what is viewed as the civilised world. There are very real reasons not to travel in these regions as some harbour dangers that are older than the coming of humans to Ayre, and perhaps

even older than the coming of the *Elves*. There are also the fringes where creatures dwell away from the attentions of humans, avoiding humanity's expansion until it can no longer be circumvented, and conflict becomes inescapable. Humans do not know when to leave very much alone that which eludes understanding. The world is a dangerous place but no more so than in the wilderness regions outside of human influence.

Albarauch – Sands of the Sun

'I have never walked a more inhospitable place in all my travels. The very moisture seemed to evaporate from my tongue the moment I passed into Albarauch. My skin dried and cracked within three days under that cruel sun. The heat was so dry, even the breeze caused discomfort, as it offered little to soothe my body. It sapped my strength and forced the caravan train to retreat as those who sought my protection fared equally poor under the punishing sun. The very sand seemed to augment the heat. It was like no place I have ever known and even those from Mir, who are accustomed to living in an arid land, are known to avoid this place. They say the sand is not natural. It shifts without warning and is black in places where disturbed, not the customary light brown 'sandy' colour. I do not envy you undertaking such a journey but if you are determined to pursue that path – May the faiths guide you with great care.'

- Pharan Caltaeran – Former Swordarm and Innkeeper of the Caltaeran Inn in the way-stop village of Cravenfall.

The Sands of the Sun is unusual in that the desert is only briefly mentioned in vague histories left behind by the *Elves*. Albarauch is said to have been formed unnaturally under the fiery sway of a great wyrm war, but this is just conjecture. Other legends tell that it harbours a gateway to the Plane of Fire which fuels the relentless heat, like a furnace set beneath scorched ground. Whatever the truth, Albarauch is truly a place at odds with the living. The edges of the desert are more akin to what one

would expect in the heart of the Dunes of Mir, terribly hot during the day and cold at night. Further in, the heat lingers after the sun goes down and dangerous creatures roam the sand dunes, such as Voles the size of a horse, Black Sand Worms that sweep up from below when they detect movement on the sands and other sinister creatures more at home in the Plane of Fire. The heart of the desert is believed to be an inferno – too hot to reach without the aid of powerful magic. Mounts will fare equally poor in

Albarauch, and water will evaporate if left uncovered. Even meat, dried and preserved as rations for such a journey will dehydrate to the point of becoming unpleasantly hard. In every way, Albarauch works against moisture, even that which is contained within the body, to boil a trespasser from the inside out. The night offers no relief from the heat. It is invasive, relentless, and wholly unforgiving. There is no respite here. The best course of action is to travel as quickly as one can through this damnable place or to avoid transgressing into Albarauch altogether.

There are no plants or vegetation in Albarauch. However, the vast wasteland expanse is known for a variety of desert Vole that is particularly hardy. It is the only known type of that species with chitinous armour to protect it from the intense heat. Desert Vole meat is particularly hard to consume. It is edible but will require prolonged chewing that can in itself be exhausting. Still, if treated with water or immersed in a stewy broth, it can be both appetising and a good source of nutrients. It will also

outlast other hardy rations by several days.

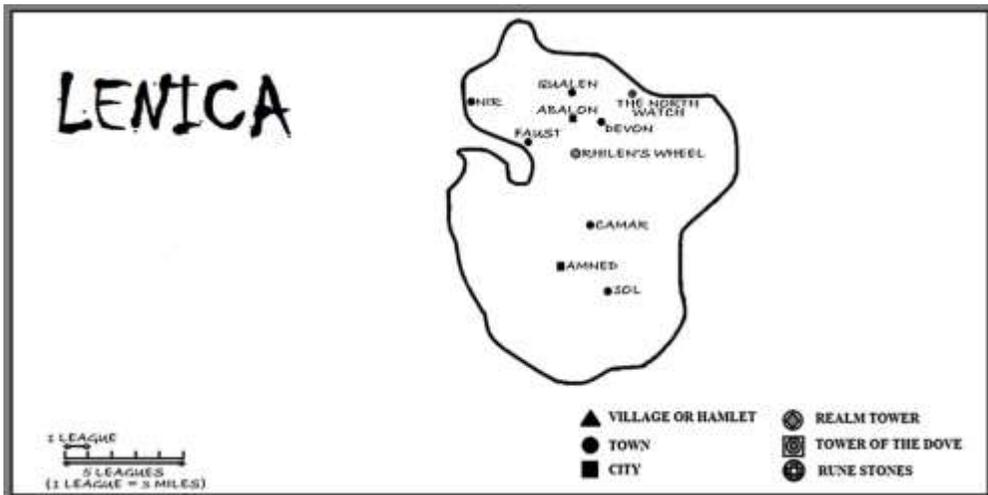
Fatigue in Albarauch is a paramount hazard, and one is likely to tire quicker and require longer periods of rest as the desert saps the strength and resolve of any individual at twice the normal rate. The Endurance Talent will help, and so too will the Desert Survival Talent, but the deeper one ventures within Albarauch, the worse things will become, increasing fatigue, the need for excessive amounts of water and long periods of rest. If one ventures too far into the desert, there may in truth be no coming back. Those who have returned from this place will be reluctant to venture within Albarauch again.

The unforgiving desert of Albarauch lies to the north of Taer and to the south of Ravensburg. It provides a seemingly natural boundary between these two regions, though there is nothing normal about the Sands of the Sun, even in its location between these two richly fertile lands. Crossing into the desert should not be done lightly.



CHAPTER SIX: LENICA

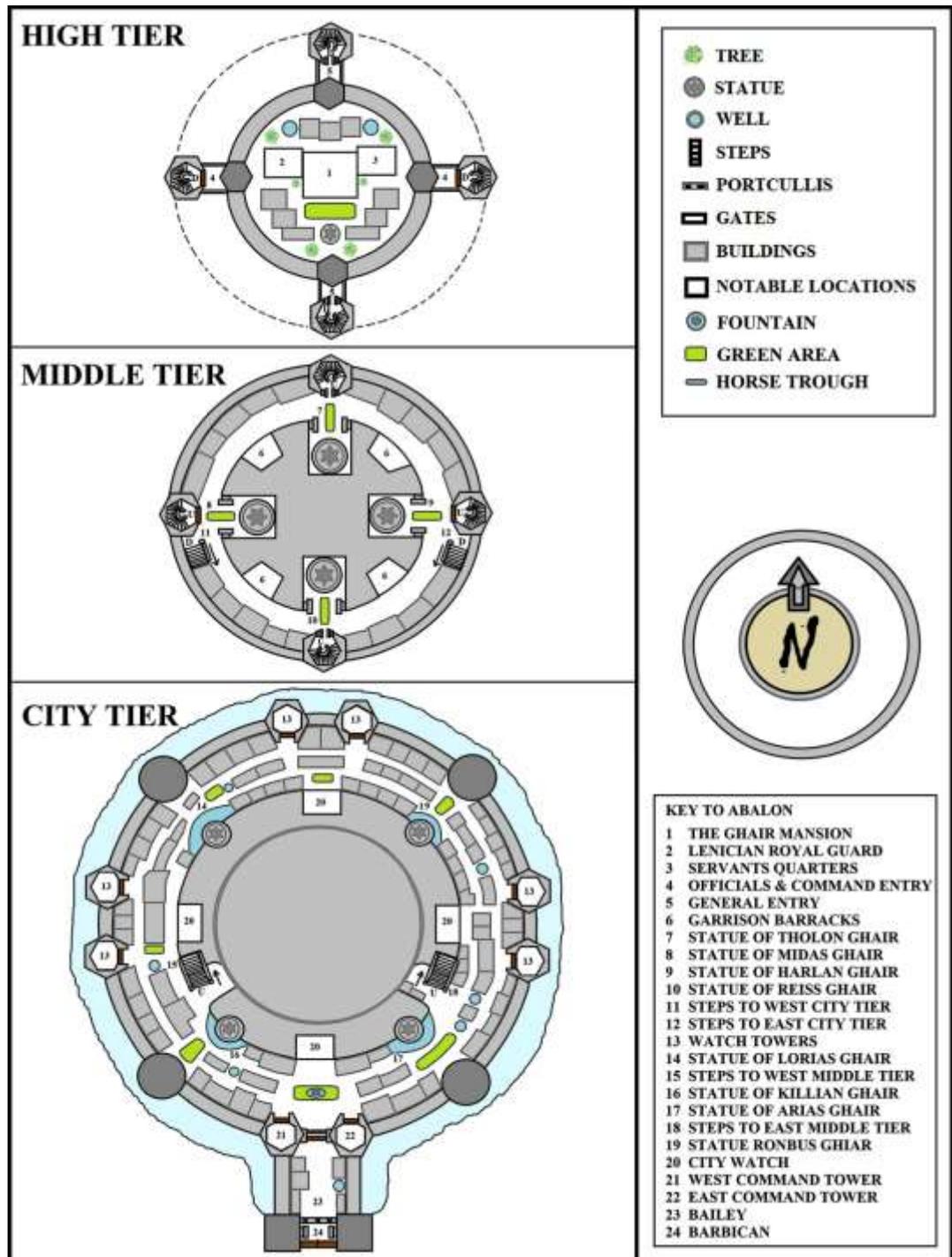
Lenica was the first kingdom settled in Ayre by humans, and from the success of this country's colonisation, all others stemmed. Lenica is a Monarchy ruled by King Miron Ghair, the last of the line of the House of Ghair, though he does so under the guidance of his council of Knights – the Lenician Guard. Lenica had once been the most benevolent and thriving country in all of Ayre, where the King was renowned for having the true wellbeing of his people in mind, both in the practice of law and in opening trade routes to ensure the future of the land. Ghair was considered fair and just and his Knights were known to be truly above reproach in practising the edicts of the Knightly Code of Honour. Lenica's borders are closed now as an unknown darkness consumes the land. Before the advent of this misfortune, Lenica was a country that welcomed visitors and shared in keeping the peace in Ayre. King Miron Ghair, known among the people as '*Ghair the fair*' because of his benevolence and unblemished head of golden hair that never greyed despite the years that hang heavy on his shoulders. Ghair is a soldier, a Knight, a King, a skilled diplomat, and a man of keen intellect. Alas, his wife, Alicia, died some years ago and left him without an heir. He has not felt the inclination to remarry, for she was the love of his life and he has vowed to know no other in that way. If King Ghair dies without an heir, then it will fall to the Lenician Guard to choose his successor from suitable contenders.



Abalon

Abalon is the first human city established in Ayre. This habitat is one of the most unusual in that it follows a circular pattern in three tiers, rising several hundred feet to its upper level on which stands the Ghair Mansion and the garrison of the Lenician Royal Guard in this secure bastion overlooking the surrounding territories of Lenica and the city below. Abalon is made up of the City Tier at ground level, the Middle Tier rising to 200 feet above the first, and the High Tier standing above

all. This habitat was built to provide security and a vantage point from which to take in the wonder of Lenica. In times of trouble, the people flocked to the city and were sequestered within, swelling its numbers from 20,000 to almost twice that



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The Loremaster's Tome is a Handbook or Guide to the Land of Ayre, the Campaign World in Knightshade the Role Playing Game. This book includes all necessary details to play in that world, outlining every country and region of note. Included are new Talents, additional rules, major political influences, and detailed maps to enrich the Role Playing experience.

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