

Avalon, Then and Now

Political History

Two hundred years have passed since the defeat of Dagoth Ur, the collapse of Red Mountain, and the vanquishing of the Ash Undead in what was to be known as the War of Ash. The heroes of that fantastic time continued to make their marks on the land, but never did they approach the magnitude of defeating that ancient and singular evil.

The kingdoms of Avalon came together to experience a collaboration not seen since the founding of the High Kingdom. The old laws and alliances were remembered, boundaries were blurred, and cooperation was rampant. The humans, elves, and dwarves fought side by side in dungeons, on battlefields, and in the skies. However, after the common threat, the division of riches and power instantly destroyed the bonds which battle had forged. It took less than a decade for old lines to be redrawn, and politics to resurface.

Northwind was rocked by the Scandal of Rimule. A beautiful and rich city, built upon an endless prairie and a riverbank, it became the economic center for the High Kingdom shortly after the Battle at Red Mountain. There was even talk of Malagant Rimule marrying Jillian Balmor, a coupling which would have rivaled the High King in power and influence. It was not to be, as Lady Sivora Bane returned to her home, exposing a vast conspiracy with Malagant at the heart, which ended in a challenge duel and ultimately the monarch's death. The Bane line took control of Rimule, adding it for a time to the kingdom of Dai-Rynn, but the king, Duncan II, had no head for economics and the strength of Rimule soon became its weakness. The great marketplace fell and when Balmor invaded to put Malagant's bastard heir on the throne, Dai-Rynn barely put up a fight.

With the focus on defense reduced during the War of Ash, the Prince Regent, Arthur Belois, moved his capital back to the center of the country to Castle Belois. One hundred years later, the towns of Pirgos and Belfort, which had played an unusually large role in the High Kingdom's destiny, were invaded by Northwind who claimed the towns had belonged within their borders all along. This redrew one of the oldest borders of the High Kingdom, and caused a fissure to form between the King of Dai-Rynn and the Queen of Northwind. By this time, Belfort was home to a tremendous city and popular center for gladiatorial combat, often re-enacting battles and dungeon crawls from the War of Ash. The leaders of Belois claimed it was a money grab and denounced the occupation, while Northwind argued it was their land by right. The elves remained mostly unconcerned as they have no particular tie to land or ownership, and the dwarves used the invasion as an opportunity to rebuild their armies and armories to unprecedented levels. Another century later, and the lands are still embittered, the borders are drawn differently depending on which country draws the map, and travelers of those towns are often taxed twice by "legitimate" collectors from each kingdom.

Two decades after the millennia, half of the Isle of Samreign was destroyed in a massive volcanic eruption on its southern coast. A great many of its mines were buried and people killed. Once a shining jewel of Avalon, the forests were razed by lava and the deserts of the north were unforgiving to those evicted from their more temperate homes. Many of the citizens fled to the mainland. The king of Samreign stayed behind, but in less than a decade, the war academy was deserted. Without a full compliment of fighting men, the line of paladins ended when Jorus IV was killed during a particularly well executed invasion by a pirate fleet. With the organized army broken, the remaining fighters honed their guerilla tactics and ousted the pirates after a twenty year rule. The line of kings was broken, and the leader of the guerillas was no politician. The kingdom remained neutral, organizing itself into barbarian clans that rarely cooperated and often fought for land, food, and spoils of war. They did retain some of the pirate fleet, and are still known to raid the shores of Avalon as far south as Dragonwing. These raids are easily repelled by the armies of Dormack.

Normally stubborn and clan-centric, the dwarves of Dormack have learned to utilize their longevity. The kingdoms of Dormack were dissolved in 2050, and Dormack closed its borders to traders and adventurers. Dwarven merchants and caravans traveled freely to continue the economic health of the kingdom, but other contact from the outside was forbidden. Once in a while, stories would come out of the darkness through sentient creatures about the great forges of dwarves building armor and weapons as far as the eye could see. Steel covered warriors roaming the land in battlegroups, keeping the peace and driving out the last non-dwarven kind from their land. The Northern border dwarves had made peace with the humans long ago, but now that relationship was rebuffed and those that consorted with Northwind were soon not heard from again. In 2185, the kingdom extended its border by force against Northwind, pushing out to include the Vontiff River by occupying parts of Vontiff and Wallar. The Northwind monarchy cried foul, but the dwarves were no longer listening. With the increase in aggression, the King of Belois anticipates attack at any moment, and is raising arms and soldiers for the event.

Once Samreign was demolished and the union of Rimule and Balmor was dissolved, the heir of McCleod was once again sought out. There were those close to the Heroes of Belfort that claimed Sir Tarin the Ranger could trace his lineage to McCleod. Married to a former rogue during a private ceremony, the kings and queens of the land were hesitant to seek the truth to this claim. They falsified the research, with none actually being completed, and ruled that Sir Tarin was not an heir to the throne. His former allies, Duncan II, Sivora, and Valestis, all condemned the ruling, but Tarin and Edea were happy with life outside of the spotlight. The former ranger publicly accepted the ruling as fact and disappeared from the political eye. Legend has it that he and Edea had only daughters, and with the unrest in Northwind and the threat from both the Barbarians of Samreign and the dwarves of Dormack, the people are more open

to the idea that Blackblade really was a McCleod, the rulers at the time covered it up, and that their true king or queen is out there, ready to take the throne.

In 2191, the most destructive civil war in recent times broke out in Cairfawn. Mostly peopled with humans due to the deforestation in the northern part of the kingdom, the rule by a half-elf began to wear on the short sighted populace. The king was slow to change his ruling habits with the rapidly changing landscape. His heir, only $\frac{1}{4}$ elf and embracing his human side publicly, started to campaign against his father for power. He made an alliance with the king of Tamriel to increase his land in exchange for arms soldiers. It was agreed to as long as Cairfawn would again exist under the Northwind flag. An uprising began and soon it was north against south. The king of Durnoss provided refuge to King Cairfawn and allocated the northern part of his land for Cairfawn to rule. This, along with the southern forests, are all that is left of his kingdom. Both lands claim the ancient name, but they are designated by the rest of the High Kingdom as North Cairfawn (allied with Northwind) and South Cairfawn (allied with Dai-Rynn). With its distance from Dormack, their interest in the matter is limited. The fighting continues to this day, with both sides wanting to unite the land under one banner.

Racial History

Once shut off from the Avalon society, the Southern Eladrin have become more of a player on the racial stage in the last 100 years. Long hidden away in the forests of Silverbow and Argoth, these Feywild citizens were brought from their secluded homes to the light of day out of allegiance to the humans of Dai-Rynn. So secluded were the Eladrin that travelers who actually caught a glimpse of them simply thought them as elves, though now the distinction is more apparent to discerning Avalon folk. They prefer Eladrin, but will go by gray elf if called, however with the high profile of true elves in Avalon, they refuse the title high elf and will rebuke the person using it. Although they are friends and protectors of humans in the Dai-Rynn kingdom, they are rarely found outside the boundaries of Dai-Rynn unless they are escorting a citizen of the land. The ones that venture out of Feywild and into Avalon are mages or bodyguards, and all are aligned with Dai-Rynn.

During the time of peace that lasted after the War of Ash, Halflings were allowed to flourish. During the times of war and battle, the Halfling lands were often the first to be dominated by power hungry warlords. Without the time to organize or defend themselves, the Halflings were ousted at best and executed at worst. Few rulers lent a sympathetic ear to these citizens, since the new landowners often provided more able fighting men in addition to equal tax revenue. The oldest Halfling clans actually are forest dwellers and join the ranks of rangers, friendly to elves and Eladrin. The newer clans have gotten used to both urban and rural life, and some even wield respectable political power. To most humans, they are still an object of ridicule, but the tolerance has grown through many generations of co-existence.

Dwarves of this time have adopted an isolationist attitude. They are rarely found outside of Dormack unless they are a merchant, soldier, or outcast. Some dwarves have bucked against the new "all-for-Moradin" religious zealotry. These dwarves are rare, because most that have not converted have been executed for heresy. What is left is a generation of the brainwashed, now passing into the next. While there are elves that remember standing with dwarves on the slopes of Red Mountain, the tales have been twisted to make them believe they stood alone with the Heroes of Belfort and the Dragonborn, the rest of the humans and elves leaving them to their fate. While dwarves of other countries can be found in port towns, they are often mistrusted because of the recent actions of the Dormack Dwarves. Most set sail for home shortly upon arrival. The only ones safe within the borders of Dormack are Dragonborn and people who can prove a bloodline to a Hero of Belfort.

During the War of Ash, there was a movement to purge the land of all things infernal. The hero Valestis Medeva was an aasimar, pure and good, and a paladin. As his story was sung by his companion, Tamizander the Mighty, the story of Valestis vanquishing the She became as popular as any tale. It also caused an anti-Tiefling movement which saw the genocide of nearly the entire race on Avalon. Those that survived did so by mutilating their horns and disguising their tails and trying to fit in as humans. Others turned to rage and murder as a defense against the atrocities being forced upon them by humans. The elves preached tolerance, but were consumed with the war against Dagoth Ur and by the time they could react, the race was nearly extinguished. Eventually the more human looking Tieflings mated their bloodline nearly free of the infernal traits, and the more demonic left the isle, never to return. Even Tieflings simply traveling to Avalon were killed, infuriating families and associates of the victims from powerful lands across the ocean. Some still harbor hatred for all peoples of Avalon, those who acted, and those who did nothing to stop it.

The newest race to appear on this two millennia old continent is the Dragonborn. Not unusual to the rest of the known world, a legendary Dragonborn clan was summoned by the immortal Anarthus to Avalon. Although forbidden to fight Dagoth Ur himself, it was he who identified the Heroes of Belfort, equipped them to defeat Dagoth Ur, and brought the warriors to Avalon who would turn the tide of battle on the slopes of Red Mountain. Afterwards, the immortal returned to his plane after his enemy was vanquished, but the Dragonborn were invited to stay in Avalon. The clan, known as the Balasar Clan, was given the Isle of Anarthus as a gift, and free roam over Avalon. Many became traveling peacekeepers and judges, filling in the role of the monastic orders such as the Order of the Stormcloud. Still, as the years passed, their influence over matters lessened. They are still a strong player on the political landscape, as most human and elf leaders see them as their only diplomatic link to the dwarves of Dormack. The King of the Dragonborn, known only as Nevar, sits on his throne, his politics unknown. Because these creatures maintain their citizenship to their kingdom

regardless of location, and the fact that many in Avalon thought these creatures were summoned by Anarthus himself just for the War of Ash, they are referred to as Children of Anarthus as well as Dragonborn throughout Avalon.