



HIGH ELF RACE PACKAGE

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Contents

1. Introduction.....	6
2. History of the Race – Creation Myth.....	7
3. Racial, Cultural and Social Structure.....	10
3.1 Major Castes	11
4. High Elven Architecture.....	12
5. Life cycle/Family	13
5.1 Elven Children	13
5.2 Marriage: Paired for all Time	14
5.3 Names & Lineage:.....	16
5.4 Language:.....	17
6. Racial Nobility and Ranks	18
6.1 High Elven and Haylem Nobility.....	18
6.2 Artisans	18
6.3 The Elven Queen.....	18
7. Organizations Specific to this Race.....	19
7.1 The Queen’s Guard	19
7.2 The Guardians.....	19
7.3 The Knights	20
7.4 The Protectors	20
8. Racial Conventions and Beliefs.....	21
8.1 Death	21
8.2 Suicide.....	22

8.3 Necromancy/Chaos Magic.....	22
8.4 High Elven Superiority.....	23
9. The Role of the High Elves	23
9.1 Traditionalists	23
9.2 Patriots.....	24
10. Ceremonies.....	24
10.1 Marriage	24
11. Artifacts and Relics	24
12. The Elf-Friend	25
13. Race Changing:	25
13.1 Race Change from High Elf:	25
Involuntary Race Change/Formal Flaw or Backlash.	26
13.2 Voluntary Race Change.....	26
14. Seasonal Holidays and Festivals	27
14.1 December 31 st - January 1 st - First Night.....	27
14.2 June 21 st - Feast of the Summer Elves	27
14.3 July 15 th – Reverence of Rowans	27
14.4 October 31 st - November 1 st - Remembrance of the Dead.....	27
14.5 November 30 th -December 1 st - The Tale of Anthanese	28
15. Racial Abilities.....	28
15.1 Dignity.....	28
15.2 Fae Blood	28
16. People/Creatures of Historical Note	29

Pantherghast.....	29
The Queen, Reine Fararuil Ouessatryn.....	29
Prince Vardamir Remi-russé Tuilindo	30
Prince Armande Du Larnelle (deceased)	30
17. Opinions Towards Other Races	31
17.1 Barbarians.....	31
17.2 Biata	31
17.3 Drae.....	31
17.4 Dwarves	32
17.5 Gypsies.....	32
17.6 Ogrim	32
17.7 Half Orcs.....	32
17.8 Hobblings	33
17.9 Humans.....	33
17.10 Mystic Wood Elves.....	33
17.11 Sarr.....	33
17.12 Scavengers	33
17.13 Stone Elves.....	34
17.14 Wild Elves.....	34
17.15 Xantusa	34
17.16 Earth Guild	34
17.17 Celestial Guild	34
17.18 Kingdom.....	35

17.19 Fae.....35

18. Portraying the Race – Role-play Tips..... 35

18.1 Pomp and Circumstance36

18.2 Make-Up / Costume.....37

1. Introduction

The High Elves, or Visni as they call themselves, are one of the oldest Races of Haylem. They were here long before the coming of Men and their influence throughout the ages has been vital to guiding the world to its current state. Most people agree that the High Elves are one of the eldest of the mortal, sentient races, although many find their tendency to regard themselves as superior to non-Elves to be a bit annoying at times. To the Visni themselves, this is simply a fact. When you have lived for centuries, the actions and thoughts of someone who has lived less than 80 years should be considered those of a child, full of inexperience and youth. High Elves may live up to approximately 1000 years of age, maturing by age 80. As a High Elf, you know yourself to be superior to most others, and it is their responsibility to prove themselves your equal. Of great importance to the Visni is the use of names. All High Elves treasure their true name, and whatever House/Family to which they belong is considered an honour to announce. Only an outcast would not reveal their lineage. All High Elves have the ability to become skilled archers, with the appropriate training, and most have an affinity for Magic. The Visni are the largest in population of the Races of Elves in Haylem, and most of these live in the county of Cordoveaux in Ellisel. The Visni comprise two-thirds of Cordoveaux's entire population. They also have strong ties to the country of Kyrinen and regard it as their ancient homeland. Most of the Elven nobles in Haylem are High Elves. Many High Elves are fond of and bound by magic. Elven blood, though now thinner than in past ages, is ingrained with magical properties. The dilution of this pure blood over time has left the High Elves somewhat weaker in terms of physical strength, than other Races. The current leader of the High Elves is Prince Vardamir Remi-russë Tuilindo (Remi) who holds the title of Viscount in Haylem and resides in Tiefenau.

2. History of the Race – Creation Myth

The notion that the Elven peoples owe their origins to the Seelie Fae is more than a myth to the Visni; it is the truth. According to their own creation myth, the High Elves were the ones chosen by the Queen of the Light Fae to enter the world of Tyrra and prepare it for her eventual arrival. In order to accomplish this great feat, she created enough High Elves to forge and maintain a civilization worthy of her. To each Elf a distinct role, or caste, was given in order to fulfil a complete independent society, which could maintain itself indefinitely without need of outsiders.

To achieve this state, powerful magics were bestowed upon the progenitor Elves in order to better function as a contained society. A farmer within his caste was granted the ability to ask the earth itself for food and it would be so, without tools or conventional farming techniques. Musicians and artists would walk amongst the trees and ask them for the best wood for an instrument and so it would appear to them, ready to be crafted to the desired item. And so it was for all the castes of the Elves; each would have a gift which would allow them to fulfil their role with power, responsibility and abundance by force of their own will upon the land.

Of these ancient times little detail is remembered. It is believed that the Elven peoples prospered and spread out across the lands, meeting the challenges they faced with certainty of purpose. Over time it is rumoured large and powerful Elven cities were erected, great centres of learning where the magical arts were explored and perfected and powerful artefacts of mythic proportions were crafted. A great Elven Kingdom was born. Its name was Tarinor, which meant, in the old tongue, quite literally “The Queen’s Land”. It was a Golden Age in a time where the other races of man were only just establishing themselves in the world.

But it was not to last.

As the High Elves spread themselves throughout the known world, they spread themselves too thin. Tradition-bound, their population grew much more slowly than that of other newly arising races and the castes to which each Elf was born only reproduced itself according to strict tradition. Confident in their ability to forge the world for the waiting Queen, they continued on, heedless of the growing dangers around them. It is said the decline began with the destruction

of a powerful city known as Anthanesse, a centre of Visni culture and learning, where the magical arts were perfected and great artefacts of renown were created. Anthanesse was razed at the hands of the young marauding races, whose presence was newly felt in the world. Their savagery and thirst for destruction left the proud Elves unprepared for their onslaught. Others say they were betrayed from within; that proud and ambitious Elves used their powers to invoke the Dark Fae, and then made pacts with the marauders into attacking while leaving the cities vulnerable. The definitive truth has been lost in the annals of history, although the legend of Anthanesse as a paradise of Visni culture remains.

Unprepared for this sudden strike against their prized city, the Elders among the Visni gathered to decide upon a course of action. Given the short lived nature of these marauding creatures, it was agreed upon that like a brightly burning candle, their threat would eventually extinguish and the Visni would once again be able to expand their borders throughout the lands. Deliberations continued for many years, and even as outpost after outpost and city after city were lost, the Elders counselled their people the threat would soon come to a close.

In time the outposts that the Visni had built were either evacuated or destroyed as the maundering races in their vast numbers kept pushing the remnants of the Elves to the interior of their lands. It is in this time the magic of the castes which allowed the Visni their initial success began to fade. Elven children of all castes were being born with no sign of their magical birthright. This above all else sent a panic throughout the kingdom, for entire sections of needed castes either had too few or too many amongst their number, further weakening sections of the Kingdom against marauders.

In addition to this, entire families within castes had been killed and lands under Elven control could no longer sustain themselves without the necessary caste members to fill in the gaps left by the onslaught. Farmers were forced to become militia and scholars to become farmers and so on. The intricate structure of Elven communities was thrown into disarray and there seemed to be no solution. Many believe that it was this breakdown in castes that caused the magic to fail.

This became a cascade effect over the next few generations. The diminishment of their people and lands haunted the Visni, but they were unable to prevent it. The heady magic of their Golden Era continued to fade, degree by degree, as their people dwindled. The First

Necromantic War, and their attendant devastation, rallied the Elves against their enemies, but was a death knell to their civilization. By the time the wars ended, the decline could no longer be denied.

After the wars, the magic of the High Elves diminished yet further, those still born with it becoming treasured and protected, coming to be known as Artisans. Decade after decade, the marauding races pushed the Visni further back, and things reached a crisis a time some 750 years before Unification. The castes had lost their power, and many Elves fell to despair.

The last vestiges of Tarinor and the High Elven kingdom fell 350 years before Unification, when the lands of what was then Dividia fell to Orcs, Ogres, and Barbarians, and the Elves were pushed back into what is now Ellisel. It has only been under the rule of King Jean-Guerre Totenkampf, after the Unification, that the Elves have been given a homeland once more.

The Old Elven Kingdom of Tarinor was rumoured to have spanned the distance of what is now Ellisel, the Barbarian lands and perhaps even parts of Cambria. The true borders remain undefined to this day, as the records detailing such were lost to time and the ravages of the marauding races and the First Necromancer War. Ruins of High Elven structures can be found in and around forests and woodlands all across Haylem however, supporting the notion that whatever the borders were, Tarinor was vast with many outposts at some point in distant history.

Much of ancient High Elven history is based on speculation and myth, despite their racial longevity. Long before others set their histories to parchment, the High Elves society was already under attack from the marauding races. As their people declined and successive encroachments of the marauding races pushed the borders further and further, the High Elves retreated more and more towards what is now the duchy of Ellisel.

The First Necromancer War only made this bad situation worse. Although King Persephont successfully stemmed the tide of the Undead and rallied what was remaining of the High Elven forces, the damage was already done. With a diminished population, it was not long before the marauding races resumed their pressure, though new alliances with other Races of Man through Persephont slowed the advance.

Until the intervention of King Jean-Guerre Totemkampf and the formation of the Duchy of Ellisel, the High Elves' homeland was non-existent and their future bleak. With the recently awarded Duchy, they have slowly begun to rebuild their culture. Ellisel, with the recent addition of the county of Kyrinen sits East of Aieland and North of Cambria and the Barbarian territories. The capital city of Tiefanu lies to the Southeast of the center of the Duchy and serves as the pinnacle of High Elven architectural skill and beauty.

3. Racial, Cultural and Social Structure

High Elves have a rich and intricate society which has existed for several millennia. In some ways it has changed very little over the passage of time and in other ways it has changed drastically. The foundation of its social structure is based upon a caste system, which the High Elves believe was in place at the time of their founding. Unlike other caste societies, High Elves believe that all castes fill a vital role in society and therefore one is not superior to another.

In ancient times, a High Elf's caste distinction was clear and obvious due to the magical abilities that came with it. Now, in the modern day when the magic that once flowed through the people is all but lost, it is more of a tradition than necessarily an actual practice.

Societal class distinction is not related to one's caste. All castes are viewed with equal importance, as it is believed that each caste is a part of a whole. While the strata of one's social class may shift, it is never an issue of caste.

Most High Elves do try to find suitable roles in society that are in accordance with their caste, although the distinctive lines of what that is are often blurred. Those born to the farmer caste are more often than not farmers, but might also make a life as agricultural merchant or a land surveyor for the Kingdom. However, because of the destruction of many caste groups over the centuries, people of one particular caste are often filling roles originally intended for another. Efforts to try and rectify this situation through encouraged marriages and other conventions have been tried but have met with only minimal success.

To the individual High Elf, their caste is more than a societal designation; it is the tie to their family history and heritage and more often than not, a matter of personal pride. While some High Elves abandon their traditional roles in society, the importance of their caste is never forgotten, especially by the rest of Elven society. Even High Elves who chose a life of adventure over a life in service to their caste often incorporate some aspect of their caste into their lives as adventurers.

3.1 Major Castes

Builder Caste: This caste creates the structures that High Elves live in. In the ancient times their Artisans could weave wood and stone by force of their own will to erect elegant structures perfectly suited to the needs of the community that would live there. In the modern era, this caste is still responsible for the maintenance of old buildings and the creation of new ones. It is said the few Artisans of this caste are still able to create structures that resemble the beautiful Elven buildings of legend.

Farmer Caste: This caste is responsible for the growing and cultivating of food for the Elven people. Unlike other societies, those of this caste are looked upon with great respect and honour for it is believed they have a close connection with Tyrra, perhaps more so than other castes. Also, the recognition that every society depends upon agriculture to grow and survive has always been known to the Visni and as such members of this caste are greatly protected and cherished.

Knight Caste: Once the great crusaders and war-time diplomats of the High Elven people, this caste is all but extinct. The few that remain in this caste are regarded with great respect and honour for they are a living reminder of what once was and what could be again. Those that are left of this caste feel the burdens of their people like no others but more often than not rise to the challenge and distinguish themselves.

Diplomat Caste: The diplomatic caste is responsible for the negotiations within High Elven society, whether it be between castes or families. In later times, they were often called upon to negotiate other Kingdoms/races as well. Many of them hold positions in High Elven court and are often attached to a noble's entourage. The need for diplomacy in a Kingdom full of different races is great and so this caste has enjoyed a renewed sense of purpose and place in modern times.

Noble Caste: The noble caste is responsible for the rule of a particular area or estate within High Elven culture. In ancient times, they were the equivalents of Lords and Ladies. With the formation of the Kingdom of Haylem, and the creation of Baronies and Duchies, the role of the High Elven Noble caste has diminished and is instead more of an honorary title that is only used within High Elven society. The select few who belong to this caste are more often than not the head of a particular estate or household and little more. They hold no real political power within the Kingdom and noble birth is recognised as a formality in High Elven society. Some High Elves believe that the old noble caste should be restored to its former position and frequently members of this cast are put forward for positions of political rank.

Castes of a darker persuasion?

It has been speculated that if Visni culture is completely based upon caste, does their exist castes of questionable profession, such as a Thief caste or Assassin caste? Whether the answer is yes or the answer is no, the Visni have not said. It is simply not discussed.

4. High Elven Architecture

High Elves are and always have been beings of the forests and the woodlands. In the old Kingdom of Tarinor, vast estates and manor houses could be found in and near forests across what is now Haylem. Unlike their Wild Elven cousins, High Elves create elegant and elaborate structures made from wood and stone that are adapted from the natural world to suit their needs. In ancient days, a caste of builders could erect structures from the ground by force of their own will.

Visni have a passionate love of beautiful things, both natural and constructed and this is no less true when it comes to their buildings and homes. The Visni boast that their own cities are the most beautiful on Tyrra, combining both the beauty of the natural world and the splendour of High Elven construction and ingenuity.

All Elven cities are either close to or inside wooded or forested areas. While High Elves are more comfortable within a city than Wild Elves, they still feel a deep connection with the wilderness. Typically a High Elven city has tall buildings that rise level upon level like natural cliffs that glimmer with shapely white columns, combined with spires, walkways and tiled roofs that are connected with balconies and pathways in such a fashion that it becomes difficult to tell where the outdoors end and indoors begin. The cities always contain at least one Elven grove, where ancient trees stand amongst the buildings. Forested areas within the city are commonly found.

High Elves, whether in cities or small dwellings almost always surround themselves with the beauty of nature. Frequently, they have exquisite gardens full of small nooks and secluded grottoes; benches and fountains are also common place. The Visni also have a love of statues of their ancestors and mythical figures and their gardens and places of ceremony often have them.

5. Life cycle/Family

5.1 Elven Children

High Elven children reach physical maturity at the same rate as humans, being fully grown at around the age of 20. Unlike humans, they remain children in the eyes of both the family and the society until they are 80 years old. By this time, a High Elf has been taught the responsibilities of their caste, their history upon Tyrra and perhaps most importantly their role in High Elven society. They are then “released” from their parents care into the world to take their birth position in society.

As a race, High Elves consider themselves an educated and enlightened people beyond all others. All High Elven children are encouraged to learn the basics of reading at writing at an early age, and are also well versed in a variety of other subjects. Education is not limited by caste, although it is adapted to each one according to its societal duties.

5.2 Marriage: Paired for all Time

By their nature, Visni mate for life. This is both a natural and cultural phenomenon. Once a pair of Elves mate and produce offspring, they will not do so again with another partner, even if their partner dies. Taking new lovers is not unheard of, but no children will come of these secondary unions. The Visni have always believed this is the will of the Fae Queen.

As early as the Visni can remember, the tradition of taking a life mate has existed. This is a marriage and much more, it is the conscious and wilful act to acknowledge another as their chosen companion, a choice which is binding both by culture and by nature.

Romantic love is but one of many reasons two Visni choose to become life partners. While this often remains the ideal, oftentimes it is for other reasons a partnering may occur. This being the case, it is not unheard of for a bound pair to have liaisons outside of the marriage. This does not carry the same social stigma as in other societies, such as Human culture.

The taking of a life partner usually begins with extensive courting rituals, although these are more often observed in traditional society. In more recent times, many younger Visni have adapted or in some cases abandoned traditional methods of courting in favour of other, more personalised rituals. The traditional period of courting can often last several decades or even centuries, for the selection and exploration of a potential life partner is considered a serious matter, even by the most lax observers of Visni tradition. Some younger Visni claim that centuries are not always required when certainty of one's life partner is clearly apparent.

To signify a bonding, the pair must acquire or craft a chalice that will be a physical representation of their bond. This chalice is often referred to as the Family Chalice which then will forever be used in future customs of the newly formed family. In ancient times, a member of the Noble caste would oversee the union of two, but over time this has changed due to the sundering of the castes. Now, an Elder Visni of the area, preferably a relative to one of the paired, is most often called upon to oversee and make valid a bonding.

The rituals that follow are complex and time honoured, involving ritualised speech that traces both family lineages and castes of both partners back to the beginning when the first Elves set foot on Tyrra. The chalice is filled with a beverage of the pair's choice, which must have significance to them, and then both drink from it, sealing the bond and forever becoming life mates.

Once a pair has become bonded, it is a common belief that it is their responsibility to have children for the future of the High Elven people and most importantly the continuation of their respective castes. Unlike other races, Visni have the ability to choose when to conceive. This is a mutual decision by both parents. Along with this ability, the gender of each child can also be chosen at the time of conception.

Tradition dictates that to each pair of High Elves bonded, two children will be born to ensure that each parent will have a replacement for their roles when they pass on. As such, a male child will belong to the caste of the male parent, as will a female child belong to the caste of the female parent. This tradition is absolute, and even if an individual considers themselves of another caste, society as a whole will always consider them of the same caste as the same gender parent, without exception.

With the decline of the Elven peoples, many bonded High Elves have begun to conceive more than two children. This is a challenge both physically and socially, for it seems nature itself enforces low birth rates amongst the High Elves and the normal societal traditions do not currently incorporate having more than two offspring. Regardless, many High Elven families have taken to having more children and opinions of this phenomenon are varied. There is also a growing debate over what happens with a High Elf whose mate dies before children are born – do they remarry or are they still bound by the traditions.

It does not matter which caste each partner was born to, for there are no limitations to the binding. Intermarriage between vastly different castes is not uncommon. Upon occasion a Visni may choose to pair with an Amani Elf instead of a Visni. These unions have existed throughout history and garner no social stigma for either parent or children born from such a union. The first child borne of the same gender as the Visini parent is considered Visini and of that parent's caste.

Even more rarely, a Visni may choose to mate with another Race of Man. Such relationships are exceedingly rare and can reap great social repercussions for the High Elf in question. Within the culture, great cautionary tales are spread to deter and openly discourage such unions, claiming that other Races of Man lack the necessary understanding to know the importance of such a union.

5.3 Names & Lineage:

The High Elven family structure is traditionally based on the union of one female and one male High Elf having one female and one male child over the course of their entire lives. The High Elven naming convention is based on this phenomenon. A Visni who is yet to find a life mate and reproduce has three names: their First name, their Child name and their Family name (*e.g. Idran Fallow Vikken is an Elf with no children. Idran is his First name, Fallow is his Child name and Vikken is his Family name*). When a High Elven couple has children, the male parent gives the male the Child name as their First name, then chooses a new Child name for them and passes on their Family name which stays the same. The parent then no longer carries the Child name once they have passed it on. Lacking a Child name is also a social signifier that a High Elf has chosen a life mate and mated.

Example: Idran Fallow Vikken and Alley Sarkah Vikken are an High Elven couple. They choose to have a female child. Alley, the mother, names the child Sarkah as its first name. Then she makes up a Child name for Sarkah, which she will use for daughter. She chooses the name Halley. Lastly,

the Family name Vikken is also passed on. So the child is named Sarkah Halley Vikken. The mother is now Alley Vikken to signify that she has had a child and given her Child name to it.

High Elves believe that is inherent power in both names and naming and thus take the concept of names and naming seriously. Many High Elves use partial names (known as their traveling names) when greeting non-Elves. However to any other Elves, announcing the full name and their lineage name is often expected. Upon greeting other elves for the first time, each Elf is expected to recite their full name, their family name, and the noble house (if any).

This naming convention began to wane even before the First Necromancer war, but has enjoyed a renewal among Traditionalists along with the Old Elven language.

5.4 Language:

High Elven culture has two languages, an Old and a New. Old or Ancient Elven is seldom used as a spoken language but is often seen in the names of people, places or things. Much of the old language has been lost to time and disuse, especially after King Persephont's widespread dissemination of the Common tongue.

However, in recent times Old Elvish has enjoyed something of a renewal, as newer generations of High Elves seek to re-establish its use. As such, many younger High Elves bear names in the Old tongue which are thought to have significant power and meanings.

New Elven is much more common place and actively used than Old Elven. It is both the courtly and everyday language used by the majority of Elves. It is also the Elven that is more commonly taught to and spoken by other Races of Man. Most Elves have adopted use of this language in the interactions of their daily lives. Many places and names in the modern era of Elven history have New Elven as their linguistic basis.

The In-game language for Old Elven is Tolkien Elven, and French for New Elven.

6. Racial Nobility and Ranks

6.1 High Elven and Haylem Nobility

High Elven nobility are either nobles by Haylem law (Knights, Barons, etc.), or nobles by token of their birth, being born or married into one of the existing Noble castes of the High Elven peoples. Unlike their Haylem counterparts, Elven nobility do not grow in rank or stature and take no new titles within Elven society. Instead, their positions are fixed and often times they are similar to the role a Lord, or a Lady of Haylem would perform, that being the head of a particular geography area or sometimes a large estate.

6.2 Artisans

On very rare occasions, the old magic of a caste manifests itself in a child. A High Elf who possesses the magic of their ancestral caste – to make things grow, to create art, to lead – is known as an Artisan, and is one of the most treasured members of High Elven society. The Protectors of the Queen’s Guard exist to defend them and keep them safe, and most are in service to the Visni people in cities such as Tiefanu or Ardales.

Artisans are High Elves of great magic and represent the last link to the Golden Age of the Elves. When an Artisan is discovered, the Queen’s Guard is notified and the nearest Guardians bring them to the Protectors in Ellisel. It is understood by all Artisans their lives belong to more than just themselves – they belong to all Visni. They are very, very few in number. **A PC may not play an Artisan. For more detail consult the Current Plot Team**

6.3 The Elven Queen

The Visni believe, as a people, that they are here to prepare the land for the coming of the Fae Queen. In her absence, there is a Queen in Waiting – a High Elf who is the embodiment of these hopes. She does not rule the High Elves, nor does she hold any official political sway, but is rather a spiritual leader. Although she is known as The Elven Queen, her existence is no threat

or defiance of Haylem's King Totenkampf, or his Queen. She resides in Tiefanu. When a Queen in Waiting dies, the Queen's Guard search throughout the kingdom for her replacement and the choosing of candidates is an elaborate and mysterious ritual.

Once the new Queen is discovered, Protectors are bonded to her. These members of the Queen's Guard, who have trained for centuries for the task, are brought in to her presence once, and then ritually blinded. They will be at the Queen's side constantly until their death, and thus her privacy is protected. Their training, and their connection to the Queen, is such that their lack of sight appears to have no effect on their skill as protectors and bodyguards.

The Queen never bears a female child; hers is the one role in Visni society that is not handed down through her line. Her sons, if she has any, are Princes of the High Elven people, respected and looked to for leadership and example. The current Queen is a new born less than a year old and has only recently come to the palace.

7. Organizations Specific to this Race

7.1 The Queen's Guard

The Queen's Guard is an ancient order of High Elves believed to date back to the First Coming of Elves to Tyrra. Joining the Queen's Guard is the traditional avenue open to a High Elf who believes their path lies elsewhere than in their caste; the Queen's Guard serves to protect all castes, and all High Elves. The Guard is divided into three categories.

7.2 The Guardians

In the days of Tarinor, the Guardians were the militia and the defenders of Elven cities. They patrolled the settled areas, and most of them came from the Warrior caste, although, as noted, some came from elsewhere to serve with them. As the times grew more violent, and the Elven people under greater threat, more and more Elves left their caste to take up arms.

Since the fall of the Elven Kingdom, the Guardians form a series of outposts and guard stations throughout Ellisel and reaching into Taleria, Cambria, and Aieland. These guard stations keep

track of local High Elven communities and protect them when necessary. The Guardians also watch for Artisans born into Elven communities, and are responsible for their care until a Protector can arrive.

7.3 The Knights

The Knights were the crusaders and defenders of the Elves under the Kingdom of Tarinor. They also served, in a limited degree, as diplomats to other races. It was they would be sent in to situations where the greatest dangers were to be faced – quests such as defeating Drakes or hordes of Orcs. The Knights were a caste of their own.

In modern times, the Knights are almost extinct. Some few of those who remain have taken up noble titles among the humans, although some renounced even their Knight title when the last vestiges of the Elven Kingdom fell.

7.4 The Protectors

The Protectors were those who originally had the care of the Queen in Waiting. They served as her guard and her household. The very best among them were the Queen’s bonded Protectors – blinded warriors who protected her person at all times, from the time of their bonding until their death or hers.

As the caste magic began to diminish, the role of the Protectors expanded. They began to serve to protect the Artisans – those few Elves who still possessed the old magic. In modern times, this is the bulk of their duty. It is their task to bring Artisans safely to Tiefanu or where among the High Elves they are needed, and to guard the Artisans with their life’s blood.

8. Racial Conventions and Beliefs

8.1 Death

When a Visni dies permanently, a close friend or family member wraps the body in a light shroud. To be named in an Elf's will as the person to wrap the body is considered a reflection of love and trust and conveys honour on that person. During sunset of that day, or the next day if the death occurred close to sunset, the body is cremated on a pyre instead of being buried. The ashes are either buried in an unmarked grave, or scattered.

During the cremation, close friends and family gather to remember the deceased in a bittersweet celebration involving togetherness and stories honouring the finally dead comrade. Those who grieve usually do so for one phase of the moon, and then it is time to say a last goodbye and focus on life to come. Without death, there could be no birth, and life would stagnate. Life must always go on.

Hauntings occur only rarely among the Visni, for they take great care to ensure that the proper passing of the spirit is done. Elven folklore tells of Undead known as Banshees, the Ghosts of Elf maidens who haunt the area of their death. Many such cautionary tales exist in High Elven culture, warning of the dark possibilities and heinous acts of Necromancy.

Upon seeing a former comrade as an Undead, High Elves will destroy the body if possible in order to free the spirit, although to them, it is simply an Undead – a creature, in no way linked to their former friend. Greater Undead are seen as completely dishonourable, vile monsters to be destroyed, especially if they are Undead by choice. High Elves will always hunt down High Elves that have turned into Greater Undead.

The ritual known as a Spirit Farewell is considered distasteful; it is viewed as a self indulgence of the grieving to recall a spirit back when it is already travelling to where it belongs. Visni believe that sprits find their way back to their true ancestral homeland, Arcadia, where they continue in service to the Queen of the Light Fae.

8.2 Suicide

High Elves at their core believe intrinsically that they have a role and a duty to fulfil during their lives in their own way. To end their lives due to self-indulgence, depression or low self-esteem is considered one of the more abhorrent acts possible for it leaves a gap in what is viewed as a critical role to the community. This value has become almost fanatic in the face of their dwindling culture.

8.3 Necromancy/Chaos Magic

High Elves believe strongly in their connection to Tyrra and their purpose of preparing it for the arrival of their Queen. Necromancy is and always will be regarded as a scourge that needs to be cleansed from the land so that the Queen is safe from its corruption. The Visni have long memories and have never forgotten the atrocities of the First Necromancer Wars and its further devastation on their dwindling peoples.

In the past, when a Visni is found to be practising Necromancy within Elven society, they are immediately taken out of society and imprisoned. There then begins a process in which the guilty party are convinced of the errors of their ways and every attempt to rehabilitated the individual is attempted. These periods of redemptive reasoning lasted until the subject was deemed ready, whether it took months, years, decades or even centuries in extreme cases. High Elven life was considered too precious to throw away, and rehabilitation was always attempted before any other course of action. If a subject was found to be beyond redemption, they were put to final death and their name erased amongst their own people. In the modern era, the Visni are bound to the King's law in all things and the judgements of the proper representatives of the Crown.

8.4 High Elven Superiority

It is very common for the other Races of Man to consider the High Elves as having a serious superiority complex. There is some truth to this perception. The founding factor of this common attitude is the long life and special purpose that every High Elf has in their society. The High Elves all believe that have been placed on Tyrra by the Queen of the Light Fae for a specific goal. They were fashioned to create an independent society and as such believe they need to be beautiful, intelligent, refined, cultured, artistic and highly skilled in order to accomplish this. High Elves believe that if the other races would listen to them, they would be able to sculpt the ideal society. This “we know better” attitude is at the core of the High Elven perspective.

9. The Role of the High Elves

Visni culture has undergone vast changes over the past few centuries. As such, different ideas and notions have arisen in order to address the fears, concerns and hopes of the High Elven people. Two major “camps” of thought have arisen, the Traditionalist and the Patriot. Many High Elves have opinions that belong to both camps of thought and it is not uncommon for an individual to sit somewhere in the middle.

9.1 Traditionalists

Traditionalist Elves believe that the only way for the Elven people to return to grace is in maintaining the caste structure and working diligently to fulfill their roles within it. It is only through this there is a hope of reclaiming the lost magic of their people. Traditionalists usually follow the classical family structure, maintain the naming traditions, and teach their children to do the same. It is a patient outlook, believing that given time and devotion to their path, Elves will regain ascendance.

Traditionalist Elves are perhaps the most protective of Elven traditions and practices. They usually remain within the Elven communities, and if they are granted titles in the Kingdom they rule over their people according to Elven tradition in addition to performing the duties a Human noble title demands.

9.2 Patriots

The Elven Patriot is a stark contrast to the Traditionalist. Patriots seek to revive the Elven peoples through change and action, embracing the adaptation of their ways this can demand of them. Patriots respect the old ways but feel they are outdated to the realities of the times. Elves must adapt as the Humans do, and then change things into their image of what should be.

Patriots are often Elves of the younger generation. They often have more than two children, and name them with ancient and powerful names in Old Elven. They adapt themselves to what is needed in their community, rather than seek to serve in their traditional caste role; this is perhaps the greatest difference between the beliefs of a Traditionalist and a Patriot.

Patriots are often active in politics, seeking title and Guild positions in the Kingdom. Theirs is not the patient approach of the Traditionalist; they seek to change things in decades or centuries, not millennia. As such, they are on occasion rash in their actions to achieve this. They actively believe they are making the land ready for the Queen, and believe that the initial castes are simply not adequate for the realities of the world now.

10. Ceremonies

10.1 Marriage

The Marriage between two High Elves is an important event among the families and society as a whole. It is a joining of life and an affirmation of the Elven ways. For more details see the Life cycle /Family section in this supplement, or consult The Current Plot Team.

11. Artifacts and Relics

Countless legends and stories tell of magical objects of great power being created at the hands of High Elves throughout their history and to a people as ancient and as proficient with the

magical arts as they, few disclaim the possibility of this. The fabled city of Anthanese in particular is said to be the birthplace of the most powerful magical objects in all Elven history.

Arguably the most popular stories surround the lost artefacts, the Bows of Tarinor. These longbows are said to have been crafted by the Seelie Fae themselves and bestowed with their potent magic. They were also said to be gifts from the Queen of the Light Fae herself, given only to those of the Knight caste as gifts to aid their people. The bows were said to be indestructible and each had unique abilities of mythic proportions. The bows, along with the majority of the Knights that wielded them, have since been lost to wars, theft and the destruction of Elven cities. Many attempts have been made by historians and adventurers alike to find them but none have so far been successful.

12. The Elf-Friend

Over the course of their long history, the High Elves have had allies who have proven themselves to be loyal and trustworthy enough to be known as an Elf-Friend. These individuals are from other Races of Men and have proven themselves in the eyes of the High Elven people by providing special aid. This title is seldom given out and is considered a great honour for those who are given it. The current King, his majesty Jean-Guerre Totemkampf who is considered an Elf-Friend in recorded history. He is the only recorded Race of Man other than a High Elf who has been in the presence of the previous Queen not once, but twice. First when the Ellisel was made a Duchy and again when Prince Armand Du Larnelle died.

13. Race Changing:

13.1 Race Change from High Elf:

High Elven society is based on individuals filling the roles they were born to fill within the community. Anyone who race changes from a High Elf to anything else is abandoning their role

and their responsibility. At the very least, the former High Elf will be treated as a deserter and a coward for abandoning their rightful position. It is not unknown for such an individual to be banished, or treated as a pariah. In rare occasions, if the role left empty was of great importance, an individual might be hunted and killed for failing in their duty to the Queen. It is a fundamental belief that each Visni has a role, and that abandoning it creates a void in the community that leads to the diminishment of the High Elves as a people.

Involuntary Race Change/Formal Flaw or Backlash.

These individuals are High Elves not by choice but by circumstance. It is the responsibility of the individual and the Elder of the High Elven community to find a way to change the individual back into whatever race they were, as soon as possible.

13.2 Voluntary Race Change.

If an individual wishes to become a High Elf, they must appeal to the Elder High Elves of the community, and demonstrate a true wish to learn of the High Elven people, and an understanding that they will be treated as a child by the High Elves regardless of their age or standing with their previous race. They must also understand that, regardless of how much they may wish it, their request will probably be denied. If they race change without the permission of the High Elves, they can expect to be forcibly changed back to their original race. If it is discovered that an evil individual has race changed for the extended life span, the dire insult must be answered and the individual is sought out and destroyed.

Those who race change to High Elf are casteless. They have no place in High Elven society, no role in the traditional community. They are bereft of lineage and line. Even if they work diligently to learn the ways of the Visni, and spend decades accepting their place as a child and student, they will still be, to any Traditionalist, an outsider.

14. Seasonal Holidays and Festivals

The Visni are a people rich with festivals and celebrations, mostly in accordance to the passing of the seasons and in the remembrance of times past. Such celebrations and ceremonies are viewed with both reverence and eagerness. Unique celebrations to certain castes are also common, although all members of castes observe the following:

14.1 December 31st - January 1st - First Night

Storytellers and bards recount the events of the year. A toast is made at midnight, with each family drinking from their Family Chalice. By drinking it, High Elves accept all they have done and all that has happened in the past year.

14.2 June 21st - Feast of the Summer Elves

High Elves that have grown to maturity are recognized as adults on this day. The now-adult High Elves enjoy all the privileges of adulthood and are encouraged and expected to take on their roles within their castes. Part of this ritual also reaffirms the connection to the Seelie Fae that all High Elves share.

14.3 July 15th – Reverence of Rowans

Rowan trees are revered for their traits of knowledge and protection. It is said that trinkets made from this wood specifically taken on this day hold extra potential in magic.

14.4 October 31st - November 1st - Remembrance of the Dead

Those who have gone forever, during the past year, are remembered in reserved celebration. Their actions and lives are recounted in song and story, poem and prose. At midnight, a toast is made in their honour.

14.5 November 30th-December 1st- The Tale of Anthanesse

On this day it is believed the fabled city of Anthanesse fell to marauding forces. In quiet reflection, tales of the great city are told amongst the Visni. The tales often range from the morose to the magical.

15. Racial Abilities

15.1 Dignity

Three times per logistics period the character may resist Feeblemind, Berserk or Fear. In addition the RP portion of Feeblemind, Fear and Intoxicant effects may be ignored by the character, leaving them free to act in any manner they choose. The game mechanic portion of an effect still occurs. Examples - If a High-Elf was struck by "Feeble Mind" they would not be able to communicate properly or use game skills, but they would not act like they had lost their faculties (i.e. they wouldn't act like a gibbering idiot). If a character was "Feared" they would still attempt to remove themselves from battle as quickly as possible, but they would not have to yell or scream

15.2 Fae Blood

The character may use either a 1x/day Resist Mind Affecting or 1x/day Magic Sleep.

16. People/Creatures of Historical Note

Pantherghast

The Pantherghast is arguably the most feared and hated enemy of the High Elven peoples. Most believe it is a Dark Fae creature, whose sole purpose is to prevent the Queen of the Light Fae's entrance into Tyrra and to wreak havoc and destruction upon Elves everywhere.

Young Elves grow up hearing tales of the bane of their existence. A horrific spined humanoid, this ravager is believed to be a being caused in ancient times when Elves were first 'created' as an offshoot of the Fae. It is theorized that somehow, when many Elves gather in one area, their hated enemy seeks them out. The Pantherghast can destroy the very spirits of Elves with either a touch or at range. In the eons past some have blamed this beast on other races that are jealous of the inherent nobility and advancement of Elves, but most Elves believe it to instead an enemy of their Queen from Arcadia. Other tales whisper that a group of Elves of old betrayed their own people and summoned forth the creature for their own corrupt ends which resulted in aiding the decline of Tarinor.

The Queen, Reine Fararuil Ouessatryn

Queen Reine was born the morning of All Hallows Eve AU 25 after one of the longest searches in recorded history with the High Elven people being without a Queen for over a year. Even stranger was that she was born outside of a High Elven city in the town of Thrush Peake. Unlike previous Queens she was not delivered by members of the Queen's Guard but instead by a Gypsy woman, Natalya Pucci Rofenski. Some high Elves see this as a sign that the new Queen will further relations with the other races of man others see it as a sign that their culture has further eroded.

Prince Vardamir Remi-russë Tuilindo:

He is the stoic, proud and arrogant Prince of the Elorn forest and Baron of the city of Gauttier in Ellisel. He has a fine understanding of what it means to be a High Elf – superior in every way. He is one of the best and the brightest warriors and statesmen in memory. He takes great steps to try to ensure his race's purity and upholds the noble reputation and honour of Elves everywhere.

He greatly frowns upon those who race-change into High Elves, as they may then 'pollute' his True People – especially as the lineage's and name custom becomes interspersed with non-Elven families. He does not trust Formal magics enough to believe that they can truly turn a Half Orc into a High Elf. He is very much a pro-Elven noble in all areas of concern, and does not care for making concessions to other races if it can be helped. He has spearheaded some of the most drastic attempts to rekindle the Old Ways and is known to be a staunch Traditionalist, but his efforts have been unsuccessful. Some say he rushes the process, seeking quick results rather than the patient approach. He is famous for being one of the few in history to have been able to train and ride wyverns.

Prince Armande Du Larnelle (deceased)

Elder (by only a few decades) and brother to Prince Remy, Armande was the Prince of Shadowwood and the Baron of the city of Tiefenau. His views differed significantly from Remy's on how the High Elves should conduct themselves in the world and be governed. The Du Larnelle approach was much more open and tolerant of other people and their ways and beliefs, though no less a staunch supporter of the rights and freedoms of elves and of citizens of Haylem. While also concerned deeply about the future of the People, the Du Larnelle line tries to gently foster understanding of nature, to try to rediscover their former ways and prosperity using wisdom, patience and understanding. Sadly, Prince Armande and his trusted court fell before a Pantherghast in Thrush Peake, leaving a power vacuum in the High Elven courts for several years. His son, Lecroix Du Larnelle has stepped in to take his responsibilities and currently resides in Ardales holding the rank of Viscount.

17. Opinions Towards Other Races

The following is the general opinion that most High Elves have of other races. It should be noted however, that adventurers are usually (but not always) more tolerant and open minded than the rest of their race.

17.1 Barbarians

The war won against these people but there is still concern they have not learned the error of their ways. We know there are still those who follow the dark ways. The King has decreed them our allies and we will honour his decree.

17.2 Biata

These strange beings have walked Tyrra since the ancient days but where they come from, we are unsure. Like us, they live long lives in comparison to others and for this we have much in common. They know many secrets of the ancient times; listen to them with careful ears and benefit from their insights but be wary as their fanaticism often tempers their words with bias.

17.3 Drae

It is said the Drae were once a part of us before they delved into the earth. Since, they have found their path elsewhere in a strict code of honour and barely resemble us. Treat them with respect and courtesy, as you would any estranged Kinfolk; they are still perhaps a part of us.

17.4 Dwarves

We have never shared much in common with this disagreeable people. They see only what glitters and shines and place importance on nothing more. They would look upon an ancient forest and wish a strip mine in its place. History has taught us they are best left in their mountains and far from our forests.

17.5 Gypsies

These colourful folk come into conflict with the law of the Kingdom on a regular basis. It is a shame, because their songs and stories have a vivid beauty that other Humans seem to lack. Things do seem to go missing wherever they go, though, so it is always best to be alert.

17.6 Ogrim

There are tales of Ogrim wandering Tyrra and those tales are varied. Some say they have always been warriors who prize honour above all, others say they are a fallen people, what is left of a once powerful Kingdom. Whatever the case may be, our people never took much notice of them until now.

17.7 Half Orcs

It is difficult to say which we feel for these people. They wear the faces of those that killed our people and burned our homes. Many of them roam in bands, giving themselves names like the 'horde'. Naturally, this makes us wary. Yet some of them have risen to great heights of heroism, and their battlefield loyalty to one another is unquestionable.

17.8 Hobblings

A friendly people whose attention to pubs is like our attention to our forests. Many of them seem to garner themselves bad reputations through their natural talents, but do not let that dissuade you from their friendship.

17.9 Humans

They saved our people and respected our lineage. If they were not so short lived and short sighted we would think of them as our equals.

17.10 Mystic Wood Elves

Are these beings related to us? They seem to walk in two worlds all the time, and we would give much to know more of their connection to the Fae. But over the centuries, we have learned little. Treat them as Kinfolk, for their true nature lies buried deep in the Mystic Woods.

17.11 Sarr

Our history with this race has been a troubled one. Once Sarr hunted our kin for sport. Hunters above all, they are every bit as beautiful and every bit as predatory as the great hunting cats they resemble.

17.12 Scavengers

These must be the saddest creatures on Tyrra. To not know one's place and purpose must be a terrible curse to bear. There is nothing we can do for them; perhaps they will find a purpose of their own.

17.13 Stone Elves

They are our brothers and sisters. They have chosen to give up emotion to see the truth of our joined destiny. I wonder when they will know our path back to glory. Their wisdom is the wisdom of the First Elves.

17.14 Wild Elves

They are our brothers and sisters. They walk a different path, but it is never far from our own. We are two different trees of the same grove, and the struggles of our people have been similar.

17.15 Xantusa

The Xantusa claim to be a long lost race returned, but even our memories do not extend so far. We know little of them, beyond the use they have been to the Celestial Towers. Time will tell what their place is.

17.16 Earth Guild

The Earth Guild's mandate to protect Tyrra from the ravages of Necromancy and Chaos is one we entirely agree with. Working within the Earthen Towers allows High Elves to help foster and disseminate our views of our connection with Tyrra within a civilized hierarchy. It is a valuable institution that both Patriots and Traditionalists support.

17.17 Celestial Guild

Even more than the Earth Guild, the Celestial Guild speaks to our people. We have long held interest in the stars above and thus harnessed, practised and perfected the Celestial magics. Long ago our scholars and astrologers explored the night sky and used that knowledge of its

workings to craft powerful rituals and artefacts. We have since used that knowledge within the Celestial Towers and to this day our people stand as some of its finest wizards. For our people, membership within the Celestial Towers not only speaks to our talents but it is also expedient. The Celestial Towers are often those who explore the unknown, so where better to be placed in order to know what arcane threats may yet face our people?

17.18 Kingdom

We honour King Jean-Guerre as an Elf-Friend who has helped save our people from destruction, but for many of us it is strange indeed to serve under a short-lived human Lord or Baron. To our eyes, the Kingdom is very young, and many of our kind seek to help guide it, attaining positions and titles that they know they will hold for hundreds of years – long after a human of the same rank has died. The Traditionalists tend to take a more hands-off approach, preferring to follow our own ways amongst our own people, while Patriots actively seek the advancement of our people within Kingdom society.

17.19 Fae

We live to serve the Queen and make true her Kingdom in this realm. Beware the Dark Fae, for they are devious and corrupting in their ways.

18. Portraying the Race – Role-play Tips

High Elves are required to:

- Dress in well maintained nature-based colours and materials.
- Be respectful to nature, particularly Elven Glades.

- Respect the King's laws and revere the Queen in Waiting.
- High Elves actively believe (and often make a point of showing) that they are the first and most superior race. They often strive to prove themselves to be so.

High Elves are recommended to:

- Be vain and make an effort to maintain proper grooming. (Clean shaven, hair is perfect, shine your boots, etc.)
- Try to maintain a regal, arrogant, or superior bearing over other Races.
- Hold grudges for long times.
- Place importance on societal events, such as High Tea, or Marriages
- Be pompous or stuck up amongst other Races
- They prefer luxury and fine surroundings, and appreciate beautiful things, be they natural or crafted.
- They actively dislike and distrust Orcs and other 'marauding' races.

18.1 Pomp and Circumstance

All High Elves have certain expectations about them in terms of dress, etiquette and their role in society. You should openly consider yourself superior to the other Races, and place value on appearance and thing of quality. While the Other Races try to create things of greatness and beauty, you should consider these attempts 'quaint' or 'colonial'. It is important to be accepted into the highest level of society, because you deserve no less.

18.2 Make-Up / Costume

High Elves must wear Prosthetic Elf Ears at all times. High Elves dress in finery that is both attractive and functional. Make an effort to wear fancy clothes that can include fine fabric like silk or velvet or high-weave cotton.