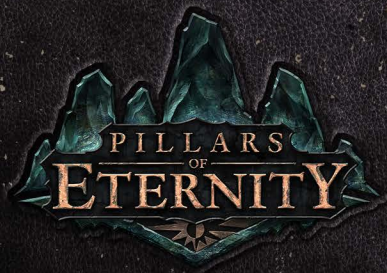


ALMANAC  
OF THE EASTERN REACH

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2823 AI



# ALMANAC Of The Eastern Reach 2823 ai

For Colonists, Explorers, and Curiosity-  
Seekers

## 32nd Edition

Painstakingly penned by Hylsman Horag  
- traveler, warrior, poet -  
on the twilight of his eighty-second year.

This volume is dedicated to all men and women who seek glory and fortune beyond the restrictive confines of the domestic. It is also dedicated to my cat, Mangestrike, without whom I would never have survived to record my worldly findings. Rest in peace, you dear terror.

The First Almanac of 2717 AI has been brought up to modern standards as a courtesy and public service of the Hand Occult. Annotations and corrections throughout, while provided on good faith, may contain outdated information and are subject to future revision. The editorial contributors are under no obligation to defend the accuracy of the subject matter, or fully disclose how much of the original text endured this latest edition.

# Introduction



o call the Eastern Reach hostile to outsiders would be an understatement. Lacking a foundation of historical context, simple-minded visitors to the Dyrwood face a significant disadvantage against locals and natives alike. The environment is such that the very elements may seek to rip incautious travelers apart. In addition to mortal dangers, cultural sensitivities have a way of complicating even the most amiable crossing of paths. Dyrwood is a country where the wrong word can identify one as a practitioner of dark arts, or stepping on the wrong cobblestone might brand them a blasphemer. Among those who call Dyrwood home, a broader than average sense of cultural know-how is a required asset. Surviving this place, and understanding its often cryptic patterns, are inextricably entwined - steeped as they are in feuds and centuries-old intolerances.

In spite of the challenges that litter the Eastern Reach, fortune without measure exists for those who know where to find it. Among other things, it is this Almanac's purpose to identify pitfalls and opportunities (with hopes that readers can judge the difference between them), and offer otherwise clueless newcomers the chance to survive the prosperous, deadly environment in which they find themselves.

## Second Introduction

This document is a partial reproduction of the First Almanac of the Eastern Reach, 2717 AI, penned by Hylsman Horag. Little is known of the author, save that he was a noted traveler in his younger years. It is clear from many of his pages that the cracks of senility started to show around the time he took it upon himself to write this book. While much of the information contained herein remains valid, much else has been edited by an esteemed coterie of like-minded scholars in the ranks of the Hand Occult. As this is the 32nd reprinting of the original text, an abundance of contributing editors put forth varying opinions concerning the content over the years.

*That would be putting it lightly*

*See:  
womanizer  
and  
plagiarist*

*Or not so like-minded, you Vaillian hack*

As all original editions of the Almanac were written by hand, editorial changes will naturally stand out within margins or scribbled among sentences, and can easily be identified by their distinctive late Readcecan script – superior in every way to Horag's shaky hand.

Pseudonymously,

= "Fyanrig," "Mabsen" and "Jynar," representing the Order of Editorial Thumbs.

### Notes on the 14<sup>th</sup> Edition

Removed: Evening Activities in Defiance Bay

Removed: The Herbal Merits of Dank Spore Cultivation

Altered: Recipe for Durgan Hardcake *-Too much cinnamon*

### Notes on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Edition

Restored: Recipe for Durgan Hardcake *-By popular demand for more cinnamon*

Removed: Recipe for "Traveler's Stew" *-Boiled boot leather*

### Notes on the 31<sup>st</sup> Edition

Removed: Recipe for Durgan Hardcake

*-Heralded as the most contentious pastry in the history of Dyrwood*

# Folklore of Eora



any scholars believe that the greatest truths are found in the stories traded across generations. Charged with mysteries of soulcraft, the intervention of the divine, and a general passion for getting in trouble, it is no wonder that the lands of Eora are fertile soil for stories to sprout. While this Almanac remains a repository of practical facts, no one would advocate drawing from the following examples for literal applications. Their lessons are often obscure or shrouded in symbolism, a tongue more universal than any other in existence. It is our hope that the stories included herein demonstrate something of the cultural character among denizens of the Eastern Reach.

*At least before we took out the cake recipe.*

## The Lady of the Storm

Across the haunted ruins of Eir Glanfath, *biaivacs* (spirit winds) swirl in deadly maelstroms that can tear the soul from living bodies. Those fortunate enough to witness this phenomenon and survive to tell of it report the same: a feeling of penetrating cold, and the hollow sound of ethereal screams reaching out from the center of the storm.

One *biaivac* was different from the others. This one swirled in languid revolutions on the Eastern moors. Instead of screaming, a mournful song – just barely audible – punctuated a woman's inconsolable sobbing. Early explorers and animancers who investigated the rogue *biaivac* inevitably grew curious about the voice in the center of the storm. Some of them strayed too close, and their souls were inevitably stripped from their living bodies and absorbed into the very chaos they sought to unravel. Shortly before his demise, the most "successful" researcher claimed that he heard the *biaivac* calling out to a lost love.

Avoided as a hopeless cause, the *biaivac* remains in a solitary location, only appearing once every few years. Popular belief holds that a woman consumed by the storm centuries ago is reaching out to her beloved, either imploring him to join or somehow put to rest the ever-growing storm of lost souls, and that her sorrow is deep enough to silence the agony of those around her.

*It was the opinion of our collective that this section should appear later. However, our superiors were determined to preserve H'orag's order of chapters. Why anyone would wish to start a practical Almanac with fairy tales is beyond our comprehension.*

Spirit minds are to be avoided at all costs. Their impersonal attacks are as mindlessly unforgiving as they are tragic. The only palpable meaning this story imparts is that an abundance of curiosity is more than enough to get an unwary traveler killed, or worse. It could also be interpreted as a greater philosophy of soulcraft: that the deepest truths of existence may never be fully realized, and the search alone will damn more than it saves. Not that this has ever stopped Dyrwoodans from trying.

### Farmer Gereth and the Adra Gourd

A farmer of the early Dyrwood settlement was working his field when his spade struck a hard object. He bent to dig it out, and retrieved a gourd of beautiful shape and colors that shifted like a crystal ornament. Marveling at his good fortune, he took the treasure back to his home workshop. With care he hollowed out its contents and secured the gourd to his belt as a water jug.

His wife asked how he ever afforded such a treasure. Theirs was an arranged marriage, and seldom were their exchanges of a pleasant nature. Gereth explained that he found the gourd, but his wife believed him not, and chided him for spending their meager coin on frivolities.

The next day, he drank from the gourd as he tilled the field. He grew drowsy, and sat under a tree to rest a spell. When he got up, it was to the favorable discovery that he had completed his labors in half the time.

The next day, he drank from the gourd again. This time a powerful nausea overtook him, and strange colors whirled about his head. Gereth collapsed on the spot. When he woke up, the field was planted and watered — tasks which he had not counted on completing for days to come, and with the assistance of hired hands.

That evening, Gereth's wife caught him peering down at the gourd. When she asked him what foolishness he was up to, he told her that strange things happened after he drank its water, and that now he heard voices whispering up from the mouth of the gourd. She laughed and accused him of imbibing too much hang and went to bed, leaving Gereth to his pondering.

*A strong, frontier cider. Very nice when you can find it.*

*This is hardly a story and more an old man's fears. Horag once said he was too old to suffer editorial criticism, and omitted nothing. Oh, for such freedom.*

The next morning, Gereth stood on his porch as he readied for the day's labor.

"Gourd," he said, "with some assistance have I completed two week's toil in the span of two days. If these be your doings, let us see what we can accomplish in a third day, and I will find some way to repay the favor." The deal struck, he took a hearty swig of water.

Gereth's wife later found the gourd, but she never found Gereth. The water jug rested under the shade of her husband's favorite tree, a sip of water still sloshing in the bottom. Not only was the field plowed and seeded, but a crop had sprouted knee-high, with promise of a bountiful harvest to come.

Many have criticized this story as being singularly anticlimactic. What was the jug, and from where came its strange powers - if it had any at all? What became of Gereth?

Retellings of "Farmer Gereth and the Adra Gourd" seek to answer these questions. As the title implies, many versions suggest that the gourd sprouted from a vein of adra matter, and absorbed the soul essence of some deceased personality (or personalities). If that is to be believed, then Farmer Gereth's lesson is a warning against experimentation in the spiritual arts. He accepted the gourd's "gifts" of convenience and offered more of himself with each passing day, until naught was left but the husk.

There are also undeniable parallels between Farmer Gereth's find and the events that preceded the Broken Stone War. This would hint at greater meanings around the dangers of unearthing mysteries better left buried.

Another retelling speaks of Gereth's final act, where he bent over the stalks of his newly-sprouted crop until they spelled out a cryptic word in Hylspeak: ifygma ("finished" - in Aedyran context, the act of completing a life's work).

Perhaps the greatest mystery is the fate of Gereth himself. Either the Adra Gourd consumed him, or he abandoned hearth and home - seeking a life of excitement and unpredictability. Some have interpreted the last

*As far as Horag was concerned, everything short of a sunrise could be interpreted as a warning.*

sip of water as an invitation for Gereth's wife to join him in a strange new existence.

No matter which version, the uncertain nature of "Farmer Gereth and the Adra Gourd" makes it one of rural Dyrwood's more popular tales.

### The Injured Stranger

The tribes across Eir Glanfath worship a vanished, mythical people known as the Engwithans. This is useful for any Dyrwoodan newcomers to understand, and critical for those with any intention of setting foot beyond a populated city. While not praying to the Engwithans or defending holy sites to the death, the Glanfathans bicker and debate over which of their peoples encountered the Engwithans first, or which of them was held in highest esteem.

*Sounds familiar.*

The Fisher Crane have a version of the story seldom heard by outsiders. Many of its concepts seem alien or enigmatic to a civilized perspective, yet reflect certain Glanfathan values worthy of note. The closest translations simply call this tale "The Injured Stranger." However, the Fisher Crane dialect has multiple meanings for "injured" given in context, which may also translate as "nighttime," "glory-bound," or "nameless." *Did Horag ever cite his sources? Wapsen - remind me to check on this.*

In this tale, a young Fisher Crane warrior was hunting frogs when he came upon a figure lying prone among the reeds. He studied this person for some time before idly wondering if they were even alive. At length, the stranger roused himself and requested water. The warrior obliged. When the stranger requested food, the warrior hesitated, as the giving of food was tantamount to offering one's bed, wife, and family weapons (the Fisher Crane have queer notions of hospitality). Since the stranger seemed ignorant of local custom, the warrior obliged, and soon the man had regained his strength.

In a language the boy dimly understood, the stranger explained that he was an outsider to these lands, and one of the local predators nearly got the better of him. The stranger said that he did not expect to find

*Could have been a Vailian. When you're  
Glanfathan, everything is Engwithan.*

such generosity in the wilderness. He reached into his shirt and gifted the warrior a stone key that hung by a leather thong. Then he pointed to a bog, saying "There is a place beneath the reeds that has sat forgotten for too long. You and your family may access it as needed." He smiled and continued away, down a path that opened to accommodate his every step.

The young man related his encounter to the village, whose elders supposed that he had met one of the strange and powerful types from a foreign land, known only by legend. His story spread far and wide, achieving that highest of honors when a tale is immortalized as part of tribal history.

The Stone Bramble tribe listened to the tale with jealous hearts. They saw themselves as the chosen people, and sought to reclaim their standing by raiding the Fisher Crane village and claiming the stranger's prize.

As the first wave of Stone Bramble marauders descended upon the village, the young warrior gathered all non-combatants and fled to the ruins in the bog. He found an ancient door half-submerged in the muck. The gifted key opened the way to a labyrinthine temple beyond. The tribe took shelter there, invisible to those who sought their demise.

It is said that the Fisher Crane learned much from the submerged sanctuary, including the locations of similar ruins scattered near their ancestral grounds. Some have even used this tale to explain the source of the Fisher Crane's elusiveness and subtlety, marking them as gifts from the Engwithan stranger.

The inclusion of "The Injured Stranger" in this Almanac was hotly contested. A deciding factor was how its archetypal symbols reflect on the culture of Glanfathan tribes: a mysterious wanderer, good deeds granted with reluctance, a strange reward, and a foreshadowing of destiny. Understanding this much about the Glanfathan people could improve any chance encounters with a local tribe. For all of their natural airs, the tribes are nothing if not convinced of their own spiritual superiority. They have a close relationship to cause and effect, where seemingly insignificant boons or slights take on dire importance. Last but not least, they regard

foreigners as anomalies to be avoided and mistrusted. While it's true that the Fisher Crane tribe reaped the rewards of their generosity, they only benefited after a massacre threatened their annihilation. Most Glanfathans would avoid the risk without a second thought: either ignoring the injured stranger or cutting his throat, which makes the story particularly remarkable in their circles.

A curiosity behind this story, seldom discussed, is whether the Stone Bramble would have invaded the Fisher Crane at all, had the injured stranger not appeared. In passing on the key, the stranger – whether a deity, Engwithan, or unknown third party – may have fulfilled some ulterior motive.

### **The Filth Garden of Defiance Bay**

Backalley Midden was an ooze of no discernible age, sex or personality. It congealed to life from the unsavory mixture of fluids and garbage in an alley adjacent to a brothel. Over the span of months, Backalley absorbed greater quantities of junk and biomatter, growing larger after each conquest. By the time it grew to the size of an average human, Backalley had developed a rudimentary brain – some say out of a mixing bowl, severed fish heads, and a bag of marbles. It experienced thoughts and ideas, unlike traditional oozes that cared only for sustaining their grim existence by whatever means necessary.

*Cats*

In a city full of people from around the world, Backalley immediately recognized that it was unique, and therefore in danger. It sprayed a perimeter of stench around its hidden territory, which kept the rabble from venturing too close. From this base of operations, it needed a sustainable food source. At night, Backalley crept into the city proper and stole edible plants from a municipal park. These it nested in a patch of ooze-material that sloughed off its backside. The plants flourished, growing wild colors along their petals, springing wicked thorns along their stems, and always giving off the intoxicating aroma of rotting meat.

Backalley might have continued this way for years, save that one night it heard singing from the window of its neighboring brothel. It shuffled up the brick wall and craned an aural cavity closer to listen.

The lady within recited a song in Hylspeak, learned from her younger years spent on a distant farm. Though the lyrics were somewhat ribald, Backalley did not know the difference, and came to appreciate the lady's obvious talent. It spread itself over the wall of the brothel like ivy, hiding in plain sight for the joy of her nightly song.

One evening, a man who was no gentleman visited the lady. Complaining of a smell, he closed the window leading to the alleyway garden. Backalley's haunches bristled with nails and chipped pottery. Its first real "emotion" was to feel threatened and territorial that an outside invader sought to keep it from the lady's song.

Backalley crept up the wall with care, maneuvering a thin tendril through a cracked board to reach in and quietly unlatch the window. As it did so, it caught the man who was no gentleman raising his hand to strike the lady. Backalley responded fast. It intercepted the blow with a limb of steaming pitch and broken glass. The man made a sound that was the opposite of song. To silence him, Backalley dragged him out to the garden, where the plants fed merrily.

Hardly knowing what to make of this, the lady peered out her window. Backalley picked one of its flowers and raised it to her level. This was not to pay a compliment - it simply judged that the lady looked malnourished. She smiled and waved before adjourning for the night, leaving the window open. Somewhere in the den of muck and corrosion, Blackalley smiled too.

The next day, more men showed up at the brothel. Backalley interpreted that they were seeking out the man who perished the night before. Evidently, he was a figure of some importance. The lady shrugged and kept their secret. One of the men didn't believe her, and Backalley felt a now-familiar twitch of warning. When the man returned later wearing a scowl, Backalley took the initiative to apprehend him before he reached the front door.

The lady and the ooze recognized that they were in trouble. She leaned over the windowsill and lamented that she lacked the money to flee. Backalley hated the sound of her sorrow, and presented her with an armload of shining stones and golden baubles that it had gathered

throughout the city. The lady's mood improved significantly.

From this point forward, versions of the story diverge. In one, the lady and Backalley Midden hired a garbage wagon to discreetly secret them away to parts unknown. They lived together for many years in a rural cottage, taking no visitors and filling the days with song. In another version, agents of Duncyd Row grew keen to Backalley's presence and snared it in a clever trap. They took it to one of their research centers in the Defiance Bay underground, and to this day struggle in vain to unlock its mysteries. Those who speak of Backalley think of it as the city's soul protector, and anticipate the day when it will rise to their defense.

All versions share a kernel of truth, and that is what became of Backalley's garden. After a team of horticulturalists and animancers cautiously visited the stinking alley, they studied the strange flora and made a monumental discovery: that the herbs and seeds found there made a superior restorative elixir. They transplanted the garden to a controlled greenhouse and preserved Backalley's work for cultivation. To this day, Backalley Midden is credited as revolutionizing the young science of healing medicine across the Dyrwood, and the sickly or injured give thanks to it.

# A Brief History of the Dyrwood



here is a great deal of ground to cover surrounding this topic, but for the sake of adventurers with limited imagination or attention spans, this Almanac will address the broad strokes of the matter. It is strongly recommended that readers seek out a comprehensive account of the events, see for themselves how the patterns of mortal error culminate in history repeating itself, and learn how to avoid such folly in the future.

The great mess started in 2602 AI, when an Aedyran expedition reported of mysterious ruins full of unclaimed treasure in the Eastern Reach. The Emperor ignored all warnings about the danger of native Glanfathan tribes, and sent more ships to outfit and arm his developing colony. It came to be known as Dyrwood in 2623 AI, when the first permanent settlement broke ground.

Three years into habitation, the first major confrontation with Glanfathans erupted in a conflict known as the Broken Stone war. A Dyrwood farmer destroyed a pillar of adra standing in the path of his plow, and a particularly nasty contingent of Three-Tusk Stelgaer warriors sought vengeance. Up to this point, skirmishes with the Glanfathans only took place when Dyrwood settlers encroached on ancient ruins. These early conflicts demonstrate how the Aedyran blend of ignorance and self-righteousness spoiled any opportunity for peaceful cohabitation.

Once the war came to a close, the Emperor appointed a military tactician by the name of Edrang Hadret as Dyrwood's gref. His orders were to develop a city and keep the Glanfathan tribes at bay. Edrang succeeded, but at the cost of going over the Emperor's head to make peace with the tribes. It must be emphasized that the Emperor colonized halfway across the world for riches, not allies, and he was most displeased with his agent's style of political maneuvering.

Almost three decades after Broken Stone, the Emperor's greedy incursion into ancient ruins spurred the War of Black Trees. This time Edrang Hadret's son, Admeth, was tasked with picking up the pieces. He

*Horag grew increasingly fatalistic in his later years, likely the result of too many failed expeditions. Adventurer's Malaise is a well-documented affliction in elderly former treasure hunters.*

accomplished it with an unprecedented loss of life on the Glanfathan side, but succeeded in forging a foundation for peace to come.

After decimating the native population, Admeth decided he was finished with the Emperor's underhanded ways. With the backing of his loyal erls and the cooperation of Glanfathan leaders, he launched a War of Defiance against Aedyr. The conflict spanned four years and claimed Admeth's life, but also ensured independence for the former colony, and solidified Admeth's name as a savior in cultural memory.

Squirming out from under the Emperor's thumb gave Dyrwood the space to develop on their own, particularly in the exploration of animancy. Over the course of several incidents, amateur soulcrafters seeking knowledge found it buried in the forbidden ruins across Fir Glanfath, the very sites that their former leader and savior forbade them from trespassing. The country endured three wars culminating in independence and peace with the Glanfathan people, but they were ready to compromise all for the sake of an art that was a national menace at best. There are even whispers that a Sanitarium is being developed to treat maladies of the soul - an appropriate destination for anyone seeking to abandon their senses and engage in soulcraft.

At this point in the original document, the otherwise mild account degenerates into several scathing pages about animancy, none of which are suitable for public consumption. Since Horag penned his opus during the years of animancy's decline, notably after the Baelreach Accident, it is small wonder that he chose to dwell on the perceived evil of soulcraft. Had he lived to witness the horror of the Saint's War, he would have likely shifted more of his critical attention to the people of Readceras and the events of the conflict.

The Hand Occult developed the following addendum for the 2819 AI edition of the Almanac, which brings the historical timeline closer to the modern era. In Horag's memory, it also adopts the patronizing tone and cultural intolerance he so loved.

*After some research, we discovered that in Horag's seventieth year, a swindler masquerading as a capable animancer cheated him out of a sum of money and stole the affections of his unwed daughter. Before attentive readers take Horag's claims to heart, it would be beneficial to consider the source.*

### Historical Addendum for the 2823 AI Edition

The next great upheaval to mar the face of Dyrwood sprouted from an outside, unwelcome source. To the north, the colony of Readceras came under the control of a sharecropper named Waidwen, who claimed to be the living avatar of the god Eothas. Waidwen and his cult of worshipers led an invasion force with the intention to bring a spiritual cleansing to Dyrwood. Waidwen and his bloodthirsty pilgrims carved their way south, armed to the teeth with pitchforks and sharpened stones. In spite of their unrealistic ambition, the defenders offered little in the way of resistance. The only power capable of stopping Waidwen was the Godhammer Bomb, a device of magic and science that brought unprecedented destruction to the battlefield. Visitors to Dyrwood should take caution if they happen upon a follower of Eothas. Though Eothasians are pious and disciplined to a fault, this should not encourage a false sense of security. Theirs is a history of zealotry and bloodshed, and the burden of grief they bear for their fallen patron is heavy. It is simply a matter of time before your garden-variety Eothasian shifts his or her temperament, as a locust joining into a swarm, and heralds the second coming of their mad god.

History catches up with the present in a sensitive matter: Waidwen's Legacy. After the downfall of Eothas, children born in the Dyrwood suffered terrible defects of the soul. In an epidemic of misplaced hope, families sought the help of animancers. The false conjurers at Brackenbury Sanitarium devised a method of transplanting a healthy animal soul into the body of an afflicted child. The results came to bear only years later, when the children turned feral and attacked. Travelers be warned: packs of the ravaging, inhuman once-babes still roam the countryside. They are cowardly opportunists, attacking those who obviously lack the wherewithal to defend themselves. For these and other reasons, it is strongly advisable to hire an experienced guide when venturing beyond populated regions.

## Politics



Although Dyrwood paints itself as a merit-based, all-inclusive system of governance cut off from its former colonial roots, some traditions are slow to change. The wealthy families of pre-Defiance years still hold the most political sway. Admeth Hadret attempted to subvert this system by granting his spiritual lineage the right to rule. Anyone highborn or lowborn possessing a fragment of Admeth's soul is eligible to govern the Free Palatinate of Dyrwood.

Unfortunately, even his influence was not sufficient to deter those invested in keeping the wealthy in power. More often than not, the richest of Admeth's soul-inheritors are granted the right of rulership in an unprecedented form of spiritual nepotism. Since Admeth's heritage went out to a broad swath of citizens, Dyrwood's seven erls wrested back some control over the system. Ever since, their majority vote is the final word on a ducal elevation. Campaigning for the favor of an erl is a costly, excessive business. A commoner petitioning for the majority's esteem would have to spend several lifetimes gathering the funds for bribes alone.

The current Duc, Aevan Wolf-grin, is a possible exception to this unbalanced method of election. He originated from a frontier town and elevated to his current standing by virtue of prowess and charisma. In spite of his humble beginnings, Aevan won over the erls with his message of rugged independence and the importance he attributed to exploiting Dyrwood's potential through hunting, expansion, and the quietly-discussed opportunities of exploration.

Alongside Aevan's rise in power, so elevated the Hounds of Gialawain. The group of eccentric hunters found themselves with more members added to their ranks and more authority than they knew how to handle. Rather than guide the direction of governance or spread their religious influence, the Hounds leverage their power in commercial interests. Their most accomplished initiates station themselves around Defiance Bay, where they hire out their services as adventuring guides. In any circle, the Hounds are widely considered a default asset that guarantees the success of any exploratory venture.

*Wabsen - did your contact at Admeth's Den ever send over those disciplinary logs? There is evidence to suggest that Heras was a former Hound himself, but they ejected him for conduct infractions. I don't know what a scholar could do to make a hunter blush, but I'd like to find out.*

# Economy



nder many circumstances, recognizing the appropriate currency can prove more vital than knowing one's way or even speaking the local tongue. In addition to the well-traveled Dyrwood coinage, this Almanac records the more abundant denominations of other cultures. A capable explorer must anticipate coming into possession of unfamiliar currency from many sources. Understanding their value is critical.

The most rudimentary and accessible form of currency found in Dyrwood, and the rod by which all others are measured, is the copper pand (pahnd, "pawnd"), abbreviated as "cp." Most domestic transactions take place in terms of pands.

For significantly greater exchanges, Dyrwood also circulates the golden duc. The coin gets its name from the portrait of Duc Admeth on early printings. Every duc is worth 12 pands. Locals are wont to say of an establishment: "You wouldn't find a duc there," with the double implication that the establishment has an ill reputation in addition to attracting customers of limited means.

Coins from the Vailian Republics commonly found in Dyrwood include the silver lusce (L-U-shay, "fish"), typically worth 3 pands, and the suole (S-W-H-lay, "sun"), worth 9 pands. Rarely, wealthy people will use the oversized oble (O-H-blay, "double") worth 18 pands.

Glanfathans use relatively crude (but large) copper coins called awld (auld, "knot") worth 2 pands. They also rarely trade even larger, intricately-carved adra coins called emiach (E-H-nee-ach, "honor"). These ornamental pieces are gifted from tribal leaders to reward noteworthy deeds. They are worth about 60 pands.

Aedyrans use copper coins called skeyt (skayt, "wealth") worth 1 pand. They also use a large silver coin called fenning (F-E-H-nihng, "coin") worth 6 pands, and the gold scelling (S-H-E-H-ling) worth 12 pands. Given the tense history between the two cultures, it is not overlooked that Aedyran base currency has an exchange rate less forgiving in Dyrwood than it might find elsewhere.

Currency	Nom. Value	Culture of Origin
Copper Pord	1	Dyrwood
Copper Skeyt	1	Aedyr Empire
Copper Amlb	2	Eir Glanfath
Silver Lusce	3	Vailian Republics
Silver Fenning	6	Aedyr Empire
Golden Suole	9	Vailian Republic
Golden Duc	12	Dyrwood
Golden Scelling	12	Aedyr Empire
Golden Oble	18	Vailian Republics
Adra Eniach	60	Eir Glanfath

In keeping with historic precedent, Dyrwood's economy is primarily driven from exploitation of the land and livestock. Timber, wool, hide and minerals are the nation's largest output. Copper is found in particular abundance, as it is frequently found sharing the land with adra stones. However, much of its cultivation is reserved for Brackenbury and the development of elaborate machines that assist animancers in their art.

## Settlements and Landmarks



Defiance Bay is an ecosystem worthy of its own almanac. As a hub of travel and commerce, the city stands as the focal point for many of the world's most influential factions. Visitors get funneled through Admeth's Den, where capable guides from the Hounds or Knights of the Crucible are ready to plunge back into the wilderness for the right price.

Hadret House is the former manor of Duke Admeth and his father. Lady Lydis Webb, an aristocrat of great influence and eccentricity, uses the site as the locus of civil service for the greater city. Webb seldom strays from its walls, so there are few in Dyrwood who would recognize her by appearances. The house itself is a subject of controversy, honeycombed as it is with secret passages and entrances that stretch seemingly across the city. For a municipal building, it offers little in the way of transparency.

The Brackenbury Sanitarium can be found in the city's less-reputable district. A popular bit of wisdom goes that anyone who gets lost in Defiance Bay can reorient themselves by listening for the mad screams of Brackenbury's afflicted patients. It's hardly a preferred attraction for common travelers, and for anyone unfortunate enough to consider it a "destination" it will likely be their last.

Travelers to Defiance Bay may find a relaxing spot on Anslog's Compass, a sprawling beach just north of the city along the Pearlwood Gulf. In the years before the rebellion against the Aedyr Empire, a manor on Anslog's Compass was used as a summer retreat for aristocratic families to socialize away from the rabble. The house later served as a military outpost during the war, which was sacked and burned to the ground during the Aedyran invasion of 2672 A.I.

Among the rocks of Anslog's Compass sits a beachside cave, which has been used for a variety of purposes over the years. The early Aedyran settlers camped there as a temporary refuge while laying the foundations of a future colony. Smugglers conducting business during

*Added to  
the 2923  
AI  
Edition*

the War of Defiance found it a suitable waypoint for supplies entering and leaving the city. Most critical was the part it played in delivering overseas munitions to Dyrwood without the intervention of Aedyran blockades. Rumor tells that it has seen more nefarious purposes in recent years.

The southern crescent of Pearlwood Gulf has suffered its own share of dramatic upset. A spot known as Pearlwood Bluff is renowned as one of the best sightseeing vantages in all of Dyrwood, with an inspiring view of the city and the sea beyond. Its beauty is marred by a long history of deaths and maiming that stained the grass red. Aristocrats demanding satisfaction after slights or insults from their peers often choose the spot for duels to the death. Traditionally, the combatant stricken a killing blow is invited to prop themselves up, basking in the comfort of the majestic view as they die.

In the eastern territory separating Dyrwood from Eir Glanfath sits the village of Dyrford. Perched precariously on the edge of a dangerous frontier, the settlement is known for a secretive and superstitious populace. They shun Hylspeak in any form, keep rituals and practices unknown to outsiders, and may be involved in illicit activities beyond the reach of local law enforcement. Travelers on their way to Eir Glanfath have been known to vanish after spending a night in Dyrford. This reputation dubs it "Wayfarer's Bane" in some circles. Consequently, expeditions leaving Defiance Bay seldom tarry there for longer than a few hours.

A ruined castle is all that remains of Dyrford's original settlement, which was the result of collaboration between dwarven and human explorers seeking to maintain a defensive position. When no one received word from the outpost in several weeks, a search party left Defiance Bay to investigate. They found the castle abandoned, with no evidence of its prior defenders apart from several tables of half-finished dinners long since rotten.

Beyond Dyrford and on the fringes of Glanfathan territory sits Lle a Rhemen, or "the Place of Bindings." This circle of standing stones at the bottom of a deep, marshy basin has proven a deadly attraction for

*Interesting choice of words. Horag omits the popular suspicion that the castle sits atop a network of caves, and the investigators wrote the matter off by simply cursing the garrison as deserters rather than risk sending anyone below for a closer look.*

explorers. No one has ever made it within twenty paces of the outer ring before a Fisher Crane ambush party halted the perceived transgression in a wave of slaughter. Locals have suggested that magical rituals were conducted there long before Aedyrans even put their history to paper. This makes Ue a Rhemen a site of enduring interest to ambitious animancers. Since the basin sits near the broad end of Stormwall Gorge, the site is subject to flooding from heavy seasonal rainfall. Depending on what time of year an expedition party sets out for Ue a Rhemen, they may find an impressive arrangement of stone, or nothing at all.

## Local Cultures

*Here we go*



olonialism, warfare, rebellion, exploitation. History itself should provide sufficient context to understand the Dyrwoodan cultural makeup. Everything that happened in the Eastern Reach since the arrival of the Aedyrans set the foundation for the rapacious, exploitive people who settle there today.

On the whole, Dyrwoodans are single-mindedly preoccupied with making their fortune and expanding their horizons by whatever means necessary. This could mean anything from opening a business in the city to unlocking the horrible potential of their soul through reckless experimentation, and all variables in between. Some find their way by gambling on the frowned-upon expeditions into Engwithan ruins. There are simply no limits to the Dyrwoodan passion for enrichment and development.

This seemingly negative quality is not without a positive aspect. Greed and ambition set the Dyrwood people in a state of perpetual impatience. The explorers cannot wait to set out for forbidden lands, the animancers cannot help but exploit an opportunity for study, and anyone not currently engaged in improving their lot in life is considered wasting their time. Though still a young nation, Dyrwood is quickly growing into the locus of all discovery and innovation across Eora.

Providing a counterpoint, some have argued that the Glanfathan tribes would be better off had the Aedyr never landed on their shores in the first place. Those who came to be called Dyrwoodans knowingly and unknowingly provoked several bloody conflicts that solidified their hold on the region while decimating the native population. This critical reflection, while not wholly inaccurate, is by no means beyond scrutiny.

It isn't as if the Glanfathans had a better system in place before the arrival of the Aedyr. In fact, the tribes were so internally knotted and conflicted that they might very well have torn themselves apart in time. The intervention of an imperial power to accept the burden on their behalf simply accelerated the decline. Even the least capable warrior of the Three-Fusk Stelgaer would rather slaughter an entire village

*Another classic example of Horag's capacity for denial. How many ruins did he plunder in his day?*

than lift a finger for them. The solitary Fisher Crane, the nihilistic Stone Bramble, or the peacemongers of the Guided Compass - none of them possess the solidity of character to hold unity together for long. If nothing else, at least the Aedyran colonists gifted them a common enemy to face off together. One could argue that Alanfathans are experiencing a renaissance of unity and brotherhood. \*

The zealots at Readceras would be hard-pressed to make a similar claim. Under the religious sway of a sharecropper, they abandoned their government, alienated their neighboring people, and led a doomed military campaign against the jewel of the Eastern Reach. They have isolated themselves as thoroughly as a nation can, or has. Whether a fitting capstone or a cruel punishment, it is no wonder that Eothas answers their prayers with silence.

Readceras' failure to achieve even a modest degree of what they set out to accomplish in the Saint's War yielded some mixed results. Culturally, they've hit a brick wall. Forward-thinking and innovation are hardly prioritized virtues in an atmosphere where the very government is a placeholder for a god. At the same time, living under a religious shadow offers the native Readceran the sense of never having completed enough, or never being prepared enough for whatever challenges destiny holds. This internalization of virtues distinguishes the people of Readceras as some of the most diligent and thorough workers. They labor over farmland as if Eothas commanded every downward strike of the spade.

Their society is closely regulated, seemingly under the principle that Eothas is watching and the people should anticipate the deity's return. As a result, the populace lacks the personal freedom found casually available in Dyrwood. Clothing, by design, is reserved and without variation, with fashion a seemingly alien concept. Marriage is not an institution of consent as much as basic utility. Where music and dance are featured at special occasions, the community places a hard stress on religious elation, which demonstrates how far Readceras goes to hamper any manifestation of fun. These edicts are almost universally embraced without protest. The people adapted to restrictions as if desiring them.

The result is a culture willing to look beyond individual desires for the good of the nation. Say what you will about Readceras, but determination of that level is a powerful force. When redirected by a higher power, those high standards and saintly work ethics manifest into something quite intimidating on the field of battle.

*\* Sometimes I wonder if Horag simply wrote the Almanac to weigh down his pockets with coin, and saturated the pages with the shortsighted criticism that any old man could spout in the space of an afternoon. Does he even believe in his own ranting? He just expended considerable effort blaming the Glanfathan people for their own decimation. If only we possessed the authority to cut away sections of the primary document altogether. Horag would wither and perish at seeing the desolation we would wreak on his eternally flawed life's work.*

## Languages and Expressions



Every traveler who crosses into Dyrwood brings their native tongue. The influx of fortune-hunters, commercial visitors, and violent engagements accelerated the development of languages into the dialects found today.

Aedyran is an evolved holdover from pre-Defiance years, when Dyrwood was under the control of the Aedyr Empire. The language fractured from its old-world roots as a result of increased exposure of overseas trade, the proximity of neighboring settlements, and a frontier culture that blossomed with Dyrwood's expansion. Most casual travelers or explorers to the Free Palatinate are expected to have a fair grasp of Aedyran. Those involved in larger-scale mercantile or military interests will find no lack of Dyrwoodan polyglots and interpreters.

Once outside of the densely-populated cities, Hylspeak grows in prominence. Though sprouting from Eld Aedyran, Hylspeak has taken on its own identity in rural Dyrwood as a language of song and folklore. Those who live in Aedyran-speaking communities can easily drop into conversational Hylspeak without even knowing it. As Hylspeak is a transitional language between Eld Aedyran and the common Aedyran spoken throughout Dyrwood, regional dialects vary in how they cleave to and from the original language. Those living within a short distance of major trade routes may sound as though they are speaking oddly-accented Aedyran. In the deep woods, some isolated communities are almost unintelligible to outsiders, Dyrwoodan and Aedyran alike.

### Expression - Translation

"I tok ye to thy sumber." – "I will take you to the fair."

"This gate is fery sik." – "This goat is very ill."

"Thy wif and y go gern, and ye in onser wag ny stander must."  
– "The lady and I will go as we please, and you needn't stand in our way."

"Hop y, that Rhym-aglac gjar even toks." — "May the Rhym-terror (Rymrgand, the Beast of Winter) take your eyes."

The tongue's infectious quality has given it something of a controversial reputation. The unfortunate sufferers of a spiritual "Awakening," haunted with the awareness of their past lives, often find themselves able to converse in fluent Hylspeak.

Casual travelers should not concern themselves with understanding the varied tongues of the Glanfathan tribes. Adventurers should hope to never catch it whispered in the wilderness, as it may be the last thing they hear before the telltale twang of a bowstring.

*I wonder if Horag took  
these examples from life.*

# Calendar of Events for 2823 AI

## 10th of Foniverno - Full Frost

The morbid celebration of the anti-harvest, marked by a donning of ritual furs and the submerging of an elder log in a frozen pond. The log is painstakingly retrieved by a team of women dubbed the Queens of Winter.

*Presumably to soak up the bitterness and misfortune of the season.*

## 19th of Tariverno - End Frost

The once-celebrated log is dragged up a hilltop and beaten relentlessly into splinters by the entire community to welcome the coming of warmth. Its shards are scattered by the oldest woman in the community, dubbed the Hag of Spring. This ritual commemorates a winter occasion when early Aedyran settlers were cutting trees to build a palisade. One of the logs rolled away and froze under the ice of a frigid lake. It didn't resurface again until the day after the Broken Stone war. The community gathered to cut it free from the ice, which they interpreted as a favorable sign.

## 3rd of Préprima - Mhavarisen's Day

Commemorating the young Guided Compass warrior who gave her life in a valiant effort to stop hostilities during the Broken Stone war.

## 18th of Majprima - Full Growth

A popular wedding day among farming communities.

## 1st of Fonprima

The day when planting for summer crops begins.

## 19th of Tarprima - Slow Cotton's Day

In honor of a popular fable. The rabbit, Slow Cotton, spent the month enjoying the lazy spring days, never even spitting a seed in the direction of his farm. As a harsh summer descended upon him with no crops to show for it, the community banded together to solve the problem of their friend. They sent him to an Engwithan ruin to recover an imagined artifact that would help crops grow. Meanwhile, they sold his land to an enterprising badger. Slow Cotton never returned to the farm in this life.

*No doubt Horag appreciated the dual warnings against negligence and curiosity, and their cruel lesson.*

### **10th of Prëestu - Come What May**

A rural celebration of sunlight and warmth, where all cares for the approaching autumn are set aside. Marked by day-long songs recited in their original Hylspeak.

### **20th of Tarestu - Changeling's Day, aka Curing**

A day reserved for aggressive hunting in praise of Galawain. This is also considered a day of preparation, as the meat is traditionally salted or smoked for long-term storage.

### **1st - 3rd of Inauton**

Early preparations are made for the harvest festival. The traditional archetypal roles are selected from among women (the Starling Maid, the Mother Crane and the Crow Queen). Men draw lots to determine their standing (the Knight of Prosperity, the Badger Prince, and the King of Fools). Volunteers organize games and contests for the festival to come.

### **19th of Majauton - Night of Smiling Gourdlight, aka the Small Harvest**

Candles and torches line the roads between neighboring villages, and children are invited to take the short journey at night. Along the way, they visit makeshift shrines dedicated to Gaun (an aspect of Eothas), leaving offerings of corn husk dolls.

*A practice all but eradicated since Waidwen's Legacy.*

### **11th of Fonauton - The Final Hour, aka Harvest Festival**

Every ritual is different in detail, but the essential elements remain the same. Mother Crane presides over the event, dictating the order of appearances. The Crow Queen passes judgment on the Badger Prince's Court of Beasts. The Starling Maid and the Knight of Prosperity hide in the village, and the local children track them down before the Babe of Tomorrow is born. The King of Fools, always last to appear, arrives on a palanquin drawn by goats. He drunkenly bestows his favor on the Harvest Successor, a girl of flowering age dubbed most likely to be wedded that year. The blessings of good harvest are recited in Hylspeak, and a hearty dinner is shared by all.

*A glorified  
petting zoo.*

### **18th of Tarauton - End of Reap**

Prior to the standard three days of prayer and preparation between seasons, a final song of thanks is delivered in a public square. Appeals are made to Gaun to protect against misfortune, though the implied understanding is that not all may survive the winter to come.

### **15th - 16th of Präiverno - The Stiff Harvest**

Bells are rung throughout places of worship to mark the end of easier times, and herald the inevitable decline. Though the ground itself may freeze, this is a day for burying the dead.

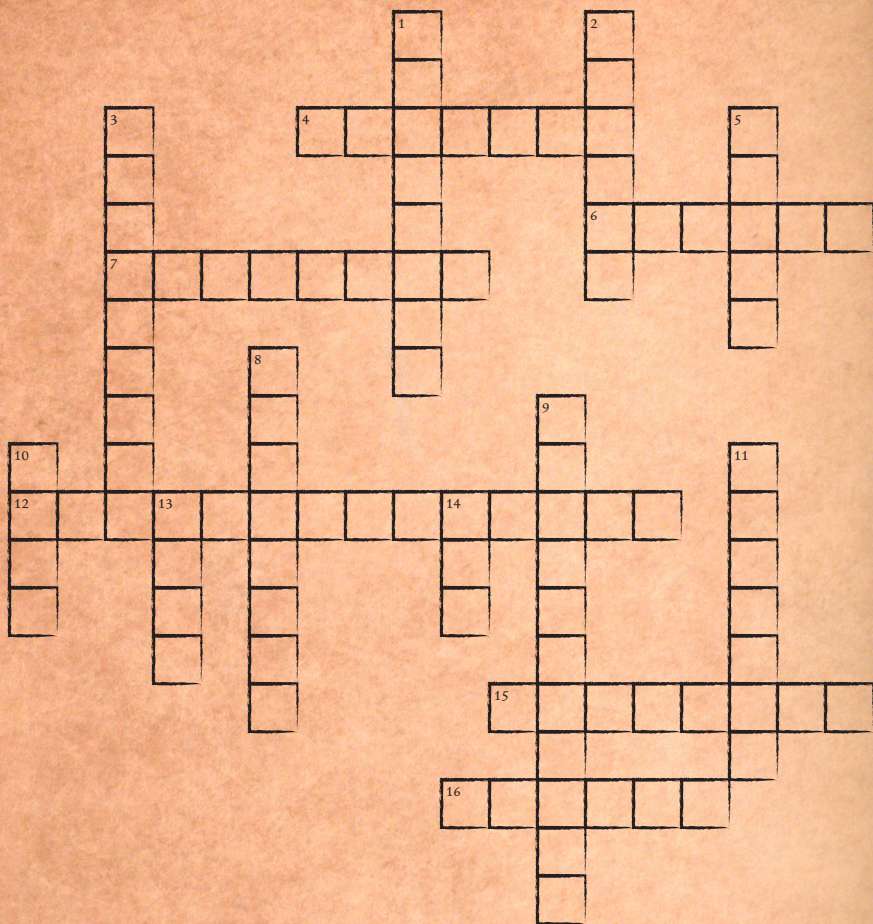
### **10th of Majiverno - The Wake of Rymrgand**

At the peak of the season, fires are lit with resin and the community gathers in the central hall for a storytelling competition. It is expected that the Beast of Winter has taken his fill, and moved on for the year.

*This practice has fallen out of favor since the Saint's War, though some keep it alive for tradition's sake.*

## Puzzle Page

1. On his way to the Isce Len River, Galven Rēgd killed ten Aedyran soldiers. His three officers killed seven, his twenty soldiers killed eight, and his delemgan killed five. How many Glanfathans crossed the river that day?
2. In the Engwithan catacombs, a Hound of Galamain found a stone dagger, a copper ring, and a silver helmet. As she explored further, she eventually came upon a puzzle box seated on a pedestal. She rotated its facets ten times before opening a hidden panel. A mad spirit emerged and assaulted her, shouting in Hylspeak. No sooner had it struck her than it dispersed into smoke. What saved the Hound's life that day?
3. A man visited the Brackenbury Sanitarium complaining of headaches. The animancers there studied him and discovered that he suffered from multiple fractured souls, each fighting for control over his fate. Using a device of lenses and wires, they got to work cleaning up his spiritual essence. First they cut away a number of souls equal to the years between the collapse of Grand Vailia and the War of Defiance. Their next cut doubled that number, then added to it the number of Woedica's aliases. At the end of the day, after the animancers wiped the sweat off their brows, the man left Brackenbury with 7 soul fragments remaining. How many did he have at the beginning of the day?



## Across

4. Helper of lost souls
6. Mountain dwarves
7. Dyrwoodan tongue
12. Controversial pastry
15. Soulcrafter's trade
16. Galawain's hunters

## Down

1. Horrific spider people
2. Purple dye plant
3. Deity slayer: \_\_\_\_ Bomb
5. Young dragon, mature wurm
8. Mlanfathan city
9. Popular sanitarium
10. Spirit-channeling material
11. Readceras leadership: \_\_\_\_ Council
13. Defiance Bay district: Ondra's \_\_\_\_
14. Aevar's title

# Historical Rainfall



uch of Dyrwood's weather is dictated by its proximity to the ocean. Coastal regions are mild, but the regular humidity makes the summers hotter and winters colder. The territories inland are generally cool, but the mountains and shorter warm seasons contribute to some challenging winters.

Other areas are less moderate. Stonewall (at Stonewall Gorge) recently took the brunt of a deluge, and its halls were flooded for several weeks. Sites of previous Engwithian habitation sometimes exhibit meteorological anomalies, but the general lack of access to those regions hampers any definitive study.

## Average Annual Precipitation

Days	Location	Inches
116	Pearlwood Gulf	23.9
145	Bael Marsh	46.7
120	Loghme	32.3
130	Cold Morn	28.7
104	Thein Bog	32.8

## Historical Planting and Harvesting Dates



In a rural context, a community's survival can depend upon following the correct planting and harvesting dates for specific crops. Every region handles the process with some variation, whether based on tradition, commerce, or sheer practicality.

A team of census takers once set out from Defiance Bay with the goal of interviewing farmers and homesteaders on the fringes of Dyrwood to collect this information. Maintaining records of which plants thrive under the right circumstances could prove essential to the survival of future settlements, and the task of compiling this information had never been attempted. Unsubstantiated rumors speak of the group leaving the road to exploit a perceived shortcut. They were never seen again, and the project was scrapped.

The team could have disappeared for any number of reasons. However, two pieces of evidence suggest the truth of their fate. As they set out, the team leader hired a pair of Knights of the Crucible from Admeth's Den. This might not seem damning, but a journal recovered from the leader's quarters cryptically hinted at a "profitable venture along journey's way." Therefore it is assumed, if not outwardly discussed, that the census takers found themselves on the wrong side of an Engwithan ruin, and their fate all but sealed.

Consequently, the information recorded below does not come from a unified source. It is the result of stories, studies, historical texts and personal experience.

Plant	Best Planting Dates (2815-2821)	Days to Harvest (2818-2821)	Soil	Sun Exposure	Depth (Inches)	Spacing
Athmod	Préprima 15th	25=50	Sand or Loam	Full	1"	2 1/2"
Beets	Majprima 10th	40=60	Sand or Loam	Full or Partial	1/2"	1=2"
Beans	Majprima 7th	45=55	Loam	Full	1"	2"
Carrots	Préprima 8th	55=70	Sand	Full	1/2"	3 1/2"
Corn	Fonprima 3rd	55=85	Loam	Full	1"	5"
Cucumbers	Farprima 17th	35=45	Loam	Full	3/4"	12"
Dunlan	Préprima 1st	70=80	Any	Full or Partial	1/2"	2"
Nyra's Squash	Fonprima 11th	60=95	Sand or Loam	Full	3/4"	24"
Onions	Fonprima 3rd	70=100	Any	Full	1"	4"
Peas	Préprima 1st	50=70	Loam	Full or Partial	1"	2"
Peppers	Inestu 1st	50=70	Loam	Full	1/4"	12=24"
Radishes	Fonprima 3rd	20=50	Any	Full	1/2"	1"
Summer Squash	Préestu 3rd	40=60	Loam	Full	1"	30"
Tomatoes	Farprima 13th	55=75	Loam	Full	1/8"	24"
Wandering Beans	Majprima 17th	50=70	Sand or Loam	Partial	1/2"	6"
Winter Squash	Farprima 10th	50=85	Loam	Full	1"	30"

## Afterword



It is not the opinion of this Almanac (or its contributors) that adventuring, fortune hunting, or exploration can be made "safer" for having read these pages. The very nature of exploration demands that not every contingency be found in a manual. Rather, that intrepid adventurers who elect to study these pages might approach their task better informed, and may find themselves better equipped to make intelligent choices when the unexpected inevitably occurs.

These pages represent the collaboration of a retired explorer and several scholars of the Hand Occult, many of whom know each other solely through editorial disagreement. The Almanac of the Eastern Reach makes no claims regarding the authenticity of its content or contributors. While much of the information contained herein can be easily validated, much else is apocryphal, subjective, or outdated, and therefore not to be taken at face value. The reader is expected to take no action as a result of reading these pages.

### Recipe for Durgan Hardcake

- 2 1/2 cups cornflour (Readceran gold preferred)
- 2 tsp Old Mortimer baking solution
- 2 tsp powdered cuttlebone (for texture)
- 1/4 cup cinnamon (preferably Rauatai, which is a finer grain)
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup butter (aurochs)
- 2 eggs (any source)

Mix the dry ingredients together, and then add wet ingredients. Mold the mixture into the shape of Durgan's Battery and cry out: "For the March!" before flattening violently with both hands (note: this is a critical step). Leave the mixture wedged between two stones for a full day. Flavor may vary depending on region. The result will be as hard as untilled earth, but will never spoil. Perhaps more importantly: no creature has ever raided a camp at night for want of Durgan Hardcake.

*The Hand doesn't know that I slipped the classical recipe back into their precious Almanac. It's a DELICACY, easily baked during travel, and with longevity that has been known to outlive those who make it. ~ A Friend*

### Puzzle answers:

1. Only one: Rēgd, as a prisoner of war. The others were burned alive in the War of Black Trees.
2. The copper ring, as copper is frequently used to bind or harness soul energy.
3. The War of Defiance (2668 AI) minus the War of Black Trees (2652 AI) equals 16.

16 times 2 equals 32.

Plus the number of Woedica's aliases (5: The Eried Queen, The Burned Queen, The Queen That Was, Oathbinder, The Strangler) = 37.

37 plus 7 equals 44 souls.

### Crossword answers:

**Across:** matcher, aptapo, hylspeak, durganhardcake, animancy, hounds

**Down:** vithrack, vorlas, godhammer, drake, twinelms, brackenbury, adra, morning, gift, duc

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