

History of the Kingdom of Stonegate

As penned by the School of Dyllarian History at the Stonegate Academy

This is a brief historical outline of human settlement in Dyllaria and the Kingdom of Stonegate. This information is common knowledge among all the races and is written from a human perspective. The current year is 611.

For Emurian History prior to 601, see the document entitled [Emurian Pre-History](#).

525

Human adventurers exploring the territory known as Dyllaria by its Dwarven inhabitants find wealth and fame. More groups pour in from established territories to the north and east. The human population begins to grow rapidly.

528

Sir Garic Lorne and his followers construct a fort near the confluence of the Snake River and Basmar River. He announces plans to construct a castle.

532

Construction begins on Stonegate Keep.

535

An enormous army of Goblins, Orcs, Ogres and Minotaurs has formed under the direction of The Overlord. This Dark Army begins to march westward from the Fortress of Kaas to annihilate both the Dwarves and Humans. Plains Barbarians allied with the Dwarves hear of the force and warn them of their fate. King Verle I declares war and the Dwarven forces are mobilized.

536

Led by the extremely formidable Stone Giant known as Krolm, the Dark Army engages the first Dwarven forces on the Battle Plains. The Dwarves are heavily outnumbered, and over half of their troops are lost in a rout. The Goblin Wars have begun.

538

Believing the Dwarves defeated, Krolm pushes on through the Lava Gate Pass to the unfinished Stonegate Keep. Seeing that the Dark Army is simply too large to defeat, Garic decides to flee. Under the cover of darkness he and his followers float on rafts down the Basmar River. His fortress and the unfinished castle are leveled.

539

Garic enters the Beard Mounds. He and Verle I form an alliance to combat the overwhelming numbers of the Dark Army. Lacking discipline, Krolm's forces have broken down into mobs and are terrorizing outposts and villages along the Basmar River. The Dwarven/Human forces are able to isolate these mobs and eliminate them one at a time. The tides of war begin to shift in favor of the alliance.

541

A small trading post near the North Wood is attacked by the Goblin armies. Many Human women and children are slaughtered. The King of the Erlunn Elves Pylarius III, refuses to respond to pleas for help. The survivors are forced to abandon their homes and flee north of the Basmar River. The Goblins pursue them.

545

The Humans and the Dwarven allies move up the Basmar to face the main force of the Goblin army. This battle will be decisive as to the future of all races in Dyllaria, and Pylarius III is again asked to help by giving whatever assistance that he can. He does not reply. Garic and Verle I each swear an oath of indifference toward the Erlunn Elven Nation. King Pylarius III's name is entered into the Royal Book of Grudges by Verle I.

546-548

A game of cat and mouse occurs during this period in which both sides attempt to determine the relative strengths of the other. During one battle a Dwarven soldier named Aelin Goldentongue sacrifices himself to save Lord Garic's life by taking a poisoned crossbow bolt which was intended for the Human leader. Garic suggests that the reconstructed and rapidly growing outpost near the North Wood should be named the town of Aelin.

549

The two armies meet at a spot just north of the Basmar River and take part in the Battle of Basmar Fields. The confrontation lasts weeks and the Dark Army is eventually forced to retreat south across the river.

550

Construction begins anew on Stonegate Keep.

551

The town of Torrent is established as a lumbering community by survivors of the Battle of Basmar Fields. The founders are those too severely wounded to pursue the Goblins and those who are disenchanting with the Goblin Wars. Although not on terribly bad terms with Lord Garic, Lord Canus Guthenor makes it clear that the citizens of his community will not pledge allegiance to Stonegate Keep.

551-553

A period of small skirmishes occurs in which the Humans and Dwarves successfully push the Dark Army southward. Near the end of this period the Goblins enter Lava Gate Pass.

554

Krolm decides to make a stand in the Lava Gate Pass. Commander Barris Hornfist leads nearly half of the Dwarven army south through the Beard Mounds to block the southern end of the pass and effectively prevent the Dark Army's retreat. The Overlord's army is annihilated. Lord Garic's top field marshal, Rage Scenarius, meets Krolm on the field of battle and defeats him in one on one combat. Some Goblins, Ogres, and Orcs escape and flee across the Battle Plains. Barris leads a division to hunt the survivors down and exterminate them. The victorious Humans and Dwarven forces return home. The final battle is known as the Battle of Lava Gate.

556

The Free City of Mythamber is established by a group of ex-soldiers. Their main source of income is the vast reserve of amber in the area. They wish to remain independent of Stonegate and to establish their own ties with the Dwarves and the now independent Alipostos Elves. The Dwarves establish an outpost at the southern mouth of the Lava Gate. Originally founded as a guard against entrance into the pass, this outpost becomes a springboard for trade between Stonegate Keep and the barbarian tribes. The town is named Barris in honor of Barris Hornfist.

560

Lord Garic and the Dwarves sign the Treaty of Barris. In the document both sides promise to come to the other's aid in time of war. Garic grants the Dwarves farmland to the south of Stonegate Keep in return for permission to build a few Human outposts in the Beard Mounds. It is agreed that Mythamber shall remain a free city and that both sides can trade freely with them. Construction begins on Bloodhammer Forge.

563

Guildmaster Crabbet Guthenor of Aelin and his brother Canus, Lord of Torrent, form the Basmar Merchants' League. This union binds the two together as trading partners and solidifies their independence from Stonegate Keep. The league's main function is to standardize prices of all products exported by its members.

564

Bloodhammer Forge is completed.

569

Helmwood is established as a free outpost and a base of exploration into the Dragon's Fire Peaks and the southern part of the Forest of Tears. It quickly blossoms into a thriving lumbering town, supplying wood to the Dwarves as well as the Drae in the Slaver's Peaks. Stonegate Keep is finished.

570

Erlunnite Elves passing through the Lava Gate Pass encounter a Dwarven patrol. The suspicious Dwarves thoroughly interrogate them about their intentions. The Elves refuse to allow their packs to be searched by the Dwarves. The confrontation escalates into a battle in which two Elves and one Dwarf are killed, and several are wounded. The now venerable Dwarven King Verle I declares war and notifies Lord Garic that the Dwarves will march on the North Wood in two weeks. Barris is attacked by Barbarian raiders in the night. Elven arrows are found and this fuels the smoldering Dwarves' anger and they begin to march toward North Wood. Garic sends his son Palinor to Pylarius III to find out his intentions while Lord Garic himself intercepts the Dwarven army in hopes to dissuade Verle I. Both sides are determined that war is inevitable. Garic sends a messenger to Lord Elonia of the Alipostos Elves asking him to help mediate. Lord Elonia immediately sets out for the North Wood. Garic is able to delay Verle I long enough so that the Alipostasian leader can overtake the Dwarves and reach the North Wood first. With the Dwarven army standing in the shadow of the North Wood, Palinor manages to convince Pylarius III that his best option is to negotiate. Verle I agrees, but he refuses to meet face to face with the Elven leader. Though correspondence it is decided that troops from Stonegate will patrol the Lava Gate and Dwarven troops will patrol Barris. It is also decided that any Elf who should attempt to enter Barris without allowing themselves to be searched shall be barred for life. This agreement is known as the Lava Gate Pact.

572

After being snubbed by Lord Garic and learning of his father's supposed expedition to the Green Mountains, Negeon Mangus establishes a settlement near the head of the Snake River. Construction begins on a keep at this location, which is known as River's End.

579

Lord Garic passes away due to natural causes. Palinor is the new Lord of Stonegate Keep. He holds an official banquet to begin his reign. Representatives from all over Dyllaria attend the affair, including ambassadors from Erlunn. The Dwarven Kingdom receives invitations, but sends no representatives.

581

A group of Mystic Wood Elf merchants settle in the Snake River Valley and establish the town of Dollos. The area is great for vineyards and will eventually produce the famous Dollosian Brandy. Later the same year, the town of Galavast is established on the northern edge of the Valley of Bones by the Wizard Arianus.

585

Remin is established as a mining town. Much of the initial funding comes directly from Stonegate Keep.

586

Lord Palinor becomes the first Human to be invited into the North Wood. He and Pylarius III agree to trade openly and that each shall be welcome in the other's lands.

589

Cyrus Ashington, the mayor of Dollos, swears allegiance to Stonegate Keep. As a response to the new found friendship between Palinor and Pylarius III, Verle I abandons Barris leaving it virtually undefended and putting an end to the Lava Gate Pact.

590

The High Council of Barris appeals to Lord Palinor for protection. No agreement is made as details need to be ironed out. Verle I dies of natural causes. He is succeeded by his son Grell Scanna.

592

Lord Palinor is brutally murdered in his bed chamber while his guards stand watch outside. The assailant somehow gained entry and committed the murder without making a sound. His only heir, his son Balladan assumes the title of Lord of Stonegate Keep. His first action is to meet with the new Dwarven King Grell II.

594

Lord Balladan and Grell II agree to a strong trade and military alliance. As a show of unity, Lord Balladan pledges to stop minting coins and to begin using the ancient system of Dwarven currency known as Dyllars. This agreement is known as the Treaty of Steelhaven after the name of the Dwarven town in which the coins are minted.

595

Lumberton Shire is established as a taxing station between Dollos and the Free City of Mythamber. The residing noble and town founder is Lady Morgan Le Fay Scenarius. The Fractured Skull Orc Tribe under the direction of King Aug, declares war on the newly formed settlement.

596

The Head Healer of Galavast, Kellimon Pree is revealed to be the Necromancer Dannacus. After imprisoning Lord Arianus in an initial attempt to gain control, Dannacus leads his undead minions to victory. Helmwood is quickly taken over as Dannacus proclaims himself king. His newly acquired lands become known as the Kingdom of Varingard. Later that year Lord Chancellor Kern Darkway and High Guildmaster Dinen Davere lead an assault on Dannacus's stronghold. The Necromancer is ousted and Lord Arianus is reinstated as the Lord High Wizard of Galavast. In the aftermath of Dannacus's defeat the people of Helmwood proclaim Lord Arianus as their new Lord.

In a brutal takeover of River's End, a conglomeration of Dyllarians and Elysian Nobles murder Lord Negeon Mangus. The takeover is unsuccessful as no strong leader steps to the forefront. Former Herald, Glenstorm assumes control under much protest.

The Lumberton Shire Orc War heats up. The town defenders are defeated handily at The Battle of Blood Mountain. Lord Balladan establishes a standing garrison at Lumberton Shire.

597

Lord Glenstorm resigns as the Lord of River's End. Within the next few months both he and his successor Lord Khabarakh are slain during a visit to Galavast. The title of Lord is next passed to Sir Fooz Coalbaron.

The Orcish hero Huntonno leads several assaults against Lumberton Shire and meets with mixed success. He joins forces with an unknown Lich and together they pose a formidable threat to the town's survival. The Lumberton Garrison under the direction of Field Marshal Urik meets the combined forces of Orcs and undead in a large clearing outside of town where the Lich is trying to form a new dimensional portal. The creatures are defeated handily at the Battle of Lich's Gate.

In Galavast, the deposed necromancer Dannacus returns seeking to reunite with Lord Arianus. He is allowed to return under much protest from the people of both Helmwood and Galavast.

By the end of the year River's End becomes cursed by a chaos being calling himself Lord Vinlar. This being uses powerful magic to taint the ground so that healing spells cannot be cast within town limits. Lord Fooz seeks aid from several sources to no avail. The economy of River's End makes a miraculous recovery despite the curse.

598

A group of necromancers and rogues led by Lofton Sargus, Kane Lee, Kage of the Blue Diamond, and Lorik Blixar attempt a takeover of River's End. After their initial assault meets with some success they are trapped within the Healing Guildhall and most of them are slain. Kage is captured and sent to Galavast to be Obliterated. Lord Arianus agrees to supervise the administration of the River's End Celestial Guild as part of a new-found unity between River's End and Galavast. Sir Gili Rockcrusher and Lord Magistrate Achee lead a group to capture Lord Vinlar in a tree in the middle of River's End, effectively ending the curse.

A large horde of mixed stock invades several parts of Dyllaria, beginning with Barris. Lord Balladan, visiting Remin to quell a minor rebellion, is cut-off from Stonegate. He is not heard from again and many believe him to be dead. Meanwhile the Dark Horde continues to attack and scores several early victories by razing Torrent, Helmwood, the Free City of Mythamber, and even Stonegate Keep itself. Lord Fooz Coalbaron resigns as the Lord of River's End and sets up a council of leaders who will rule in his place. He moves to Lumberton Shire and sets up a school for battle mages to aid in the war against the Dark Horde.

The Dark Horde attacks the Army of Stonegate east of Lumberton Shire. The army withstands the assault, but several groups of horde troops manage to slip behind the lines to attack Lumberton. Lord High Marshal Jarn Shanodin assumes control of the town's defenses personally and leads the local garrison to victory. Several of his men are proven to be traitors, and they are all either slain or captured. The advances of the Dark Horde are effectively stalled in the Lumberton area.

Using the former town of Helmwood as a base of operations, the Dark Horde begins a campaign of harassment against Galavast. A division of the Royal Army of Dyllaria under the direction of the Dwarven Prince Threll Scanna defends the town from the bulk of its attackers. After a seesaw battle

the two sides draw to a stalemate. Sir Anselm Poleho leads a group to flank the Dark Horde and create problems with the supply lines near Helmwood. He is caught in the line of retreat of the undead army of the Arch-Lich Daranak. Sir Anselm's force makes a valiant stand but is routed and its leader slain at the Battle of Daranak's Flight. Sir Jarvis Longshadow also assists the Dwarves in leading a mildly successful counter-attack that settles the region for the winter.

In River's End the council falls apart due to the death of some key members, and Sir Gili Rockcrusher claims the title of Lord of River's End. A nobleman from western lands named Alarian Oakmore supports him. Lord Gili's reign begins shakily when he slays a woman and her unborn child at the direction of Vala Gurth and a few others from Galavast. The woman's protectors claim that she carried Lord Balladan's unborn heir. Sensing that all is not well, Lord Gili sets out on a quest to reclaim the child's life force.

Sir Fooz Coalbaron returns to River's End with a group of his companions to help defend the town. In Lord Gili's absence the Chaos Lord Vinlar is freed and begins to harass the town once again. Little more than six months since Sir Coalbaron resigned his position as lord, River's End seems on the brink of collapse.

599

The year begins with the death of Lord Gili Rockcrusher of River's End at the hands of an unknown assassin. Without any true heir apparent to the lordship of the land, things seem close to civil war. The Dark Horde continues to attack the town, and the intensity of the assault is raised to sap the will of the people. The morale at River's End sinks to an all-time low.

As things worsen in River's End, Lord High Marshal Jarn Shanodin of Stonegate Keep, acting in the King's name, sends a small army to defend the lands and the people from the threat of the Dark Horde. Lord Diplomat Artemis Silvertree is also sent to calm the political environment and assess the situation. While inspecting Lord Gili's private belongings, Lord Silvertree uncovers proof of an alliance between the deceased lord and the western nobleman Lord Alarian Oakmore of the Free City of Ashton. Lord High Marshal Shanodin declares this union to be valid, and Lord Oakmore is appointed as the new Lord of River's End. Within the first few months of his reign Lord Oakmore successfully defeats the Chaos Lord Vinlar. He assigns Lord Dakota Ironbane as the Lord of River's End under him, and continues to rule both Ashton and River's End. One of Lord Ironbane's first acts as lord is to rename the town Rockcrusher Forge in memory of the sacrifice made to the town by Lord Gili Rockcrusher. Lord Oakmore claims the lands in between Ashton and Rockcrusher Forge as his own holding. He calls this territory the land of Oakwood.

In Lumberton Shire, the Horde War has left its mark. The town proper barely stands in a shell of its former glory. The last lord in charge of these lands, Lady Scenarios received her final death at the razing of Stonegate Keep, and the local garrison has ruled in a state of marshal law ever since that time. The Hobbling King of Dyllaria, the Great Old Guy takes over in a dual role as King and Lord of Lumberton Shire. The Great Old Guy proves to be too old and weak for such taxing responsibilities, and he eventually dies. Attendance at Shire market days continues to fall.

Dark Horde assaults continue to wear away at the will of the Dyllarians. In Galavast, this once proud town becomes disheartened and many of its leaders fall to infighting. Paranoia and mistrust run

rampant through the streets of Galavast, and eventually the Lord Chancellor, Kern Darkway resigns his position in the face of unfounded accusations of treason.

During this darkest time the Dwarven Royal Army of Dyllaria and the badly battered Army of Stonegate begin to mount some victories against the Dark Horde in a two-pronged assault. In the south, the noted healer Ezeakeal Zeldarious leads a force of adventurers to a successful recapturing of Helmwood. The Dwarves and a force of Black Robe Knights under the leadership of Sir Jarvis Longshadow orchestrate an all-out frontal attack on the Dark Horde, while Zeldarious's force attacks the town proper. The attack is a success, but not without cost. Sir Jarvis and his entire order of knights are annihilated during the fighting, and the Dwarven forces suffer heavy casualties as well. The confrontation is known officially as the Liberation of Helmwood. For his part in the engagement, Ezeakeal Zeldarious is named Lord of Helmwood by Lord Arianus.

Meanwhile, Lord High Marshal Jarn Shanodin declares the realm of Stonegate to be a Kingdom, and begins to organize a ruling hierarchy that will include baronies and counties. He refuses to accept any new title, and declares Lord Balladan to be the rightful King of Stonegate.

While the recapturing of Helmwood is taking place, a group of heroes secretly makes an attempt to rescue King Balladan from the clutches of The Overlord, Tilicaf. Led by the former necromancer Dannacus, and consisting of Squire Malikie of Oakwood, Goodman Falcone of Rockcrusher Forge, Lord Merchant Garrett Starlen of Oakwood, Sir David Thorne of Oakwood, Sir Thain Ironhelm of Rockcrusher Forge, Battle Master Foz Coalbaron of Lumberton Shire, Lord Vala Gurth of Galavast, Lord Ashe of Galavast, Sheriff Fluffy of Galavast, Goodman John of Galavast, Goodman Kane Lee of Galavast, and Goodman Kage of Galavast, this group succeeds at a high cost. Over half of the group are slain during the attempt, and both Dannacus and Foz Coalbaron are believed to have received their final death at the hands of dark forces. The leaders of the Army of Stonegate use the return of the king as a battle cry, and morale among the Humans and Dwarves alike takes a sudden upward swing. The heroes responsible for the King's rescue become known as The Company of Thirteen. Each takes the title One of Thirteen.

600

With the King recently returned, the lands settle a good bit. Morale picks up, and momentum begins to shift in the short but brutal Horde War. Victories mount for the Dwarven and Stonegate allies, but the fighting becomes more and more difficult. Many volunteers fill the ranks as all seek to do their part. As the year grows long in the tooth, two heroes are returned to the lands and the people as both Foz Coalbaron and Dannacus are found to be alive. Dannacus is rescued from the Fortress of Kaas by a group led by Lord Vala and Lord Ashe. Goodman Coalbaron returns after months of amnesia, and takes up residence in Galavast.

As the fighting enters its most savage and crucial point, an aging but still strong King Pylarius III decides to lead his forces from the North Wood and into the field against The Dark Horde. Striking several key victories against Horde forces, the Erlunn King and his army appear to turn the tide. In a feat of Elven magic, the area of the Ivory Plain north of the North Wood sprouts into a thick forest within a week. This cuts off the eastern half of the Dark Horde army from the rest of it, and allows the combined Erlunn, Stonegate, and Royal Dyllarian forces to converge on the largest part of the remaining force near the western mouth of the Devil's Gate Pass. The battle that ensues is one for the ages. All sides fight well, and even the still ailing King Balladan takes the field. The result is a resounding defeat of The

Dark Horde, although it does not come without a cost. The Dwarven Crown Prince, Threll Scanna is slain. He is buried with the other soldiers at his father's insistence, while the Elves and Humans look on. During the ceremony, King Pylarius III shows great respect by using his own cloak to shroud the body of the fallen Dwarven Prince. King Grell, touched by the gesture and the effort of the Erlunn army, declares that the Erlunn people will be removed from the Royal Book of Grudges. The fight becomes known as the Battle of Muddy Cloak.

After the victory and a brief celebration, King Pylarius III returns home to find his lands strangely quiet. Within a week after the Battle of Muddy Cloak however, the Elven Royal Family are found murdered in their beds. The King escapes such a fate while making an unscheduled midnight scouting trip. Furious and heartbroken, King Pylarius finds himself suddenly confronted by an enemy force that has somehow infiltrated his defenses. In defense of his lands and his people, The King invokes the power of a mighty artifact known as the Heart of the Erlunn Nation. After two weeks of fighting, the invaders are driven out of the woods, and King Pylarius III dies from prolonged exposure to the powerful magic of the artifact. The Erlunn throne sits without an heir.

Pockets of Horde forces still dominate some areas of Dyllaria such as Mythamber and the eastern Battle Plains. By the end of the year however, these groups become more and more fragmented, and it becomes apparent that the Dark Horde is very much on the run. In Lumberton, one of the heroes of the Liberation of Helmwood, Ezeakeal Zeldarius becomes Baron at the personal request of the King. The Baron brings much stability to the land, and by year's end the Lumberton market days have made a striking turn-around.

In Galavast, Lord Arianus accepts an invitation to pledge allegiance to Stonegate and is appointed as Count of the Shadowlands. The newfound unity also spreads westward as Lord Oakmore becomes the Count of Oakwood. In a tragic occurrence, two members of The Company of Thirteen receive their final deaths. Sheriff Fluffy of Galavast dies while defending the the people from a vicious Wyvern assault, and Dannacus dies along with the noted sage and Naturalist Xavier Lukather, after they and Count Arianus make an unsuccessful raid on the Fortress of Kaas. Kaas is destroyed, but The Overlord is not killed. Fooz Coalbaron and Garrett Starlen are named Lords of Ashton and Galavast for their unending service to the lands and people. Barons Dakota Ironbane of Rockcrusher Forge and Loren DeArman of Ashton accept their places within the new Kingdom gracefully.

By the end of the year however, Count Oakmore is summoned to stand before the Erlunn High Council as the last remaining heir to the throne. His claim is suspect as the bastard son of a royal mistress, but he is the only living Elf of any Erlunn blood at all. Just before his official crowning, Prince Aliposts Erlunn, lost since the end of the Dark Wars in 420, turns up and makes a claim to the throne. After confirming his identity, the High Council decides that Prince Aliposts shall rule as the king with Prince Alarian as his primary advisor, and that the blood line shall follow from Prince Alarian's first-born son. King Aliposts Erlunn III is crowned at a private ceremony late in the year. His people, the Aliposts Elves abandon their home in the southern Forest of Tears and return to Erlunn lands with their King.

601

The Horde War lingers on, but it is mostly contained in highly concentrated pockets of resistance. The main areas of continued fighting are that of the fallen City of Mythamber and the formidable Fortress of Kaas, and one of these would fall before the end of the year.

In Galavast, Sheriff Fluffy's grave is defiled by necromancers, and Baron Ashe makes a plea to his King and Count for assistance in making sure that this will never happen again. Accordingly, King Balladan decrees that a secure tomb to house the remains of the Company of Thirteen shall be set up in the heart of the refurbished People's Park in Stonegate City, and that a special force of retired adventurers known as The Eternal Watch shall guard it.

Enraged at the death of two of Dyllaria's staunchest defenders, King Balladan leads a large part of his army to make sure that Kaas is indeed destroyed once and for all, and that the remains of Dannacus are recovered. Accompanied by both Count Arianus and Count Artemis Silvertree, the expedition manages to recover Dannacus's remains, but those of Xavier Lukather are never found. Meanwhile, the Horde leader Maev's attempt to awaken an evil dragon to aid the Dark Horde's cause is thwarted by several adventurers and the sacrifice of several white unicorns who are required to give their horns to prevent the creature from awakening. A small memorial called "Tyrra's Sacrifice" is erected in The People's Park to honor those who aided in keeping the dragon asleep. It is noteworthy for its magnificent sculpture of a proud and majestic unicorn.

In Lumberton Shire, a powerful Death Knight known as Neyamius begins to attack the lands and the attempted peace with the Locathah of Lake Scenarius is in jeopardy. Baron Ezeakeal Zeldarious ascends to the position of Viscount, but is killed permanently by a large attack of fishmen. In a rushed move, his replacement as Baron, Artor Beash, accepts the role of Viscount and is succeeded as Baron by the former Knight of the Shadowlands, Malikie Sindorf. Rumors swirl that this move is made as a last-ditch effort by Count Silvertree to keep The King from declaring Marshall Law once again.

In the west, the rampant undead minions that have recently beset the lands of Ashton are seemingly defeated as the fallen knight Sir Steiner is believed to have been destroyed. With the aid of several adventurers, Lord Zacktell Blackwind uncovers the true nature of the creature known as Kal-Teth to be undead as well. Under Lord Zacktell's leadership, the town rallies together and destroys Kal-Teth in the absence of the newly appointed Baron Baern Dragonfang.

With the death of Emperor Cornelius, most of the old Imperial states fall to infighting, and Prinnith joins the lands of Stonegate. While Corliss, Ironholm, and the Crysteel City experience varying degrees of social unrest, the Free City of Vargus turns to its military leaders to provide order and lawfulness, which they do. A Town Council of local merchants and Guild Masters is appointed to handle domestic affairs while the former Imperial Mercenaries care for the town's defense. Among other problems are the ultra-fanatical anti-chaos group known as the Knight Blades, and a group of Marobai led by an extremely powerful magical creature known as Keldrin. The creature is virtually immortal, and can only be killed by first destroying several nodes of power that are located in towers guarded by undead, elementals, and other powerful creatures. The town has much trouble, including dissent within its ranks, but eventually Keldrin is defeated thanks to the leadership of Magistrate Arien, Head Guildmistress Katrina, Earth Guildmaster Valimar, and Celestial Guilmaster Altonvyr.

602

In Ashton, the Vampire Queen is finally put to rest, ending her reign of terror over the populace. The mystical graveyard thought to be her doing is found out to be the work of a powerful Wraith King. Four heroes led by Hoan of Avalon's Crown ally themselves with the power of Life. Four "seeds of life" are planted during a massive battle between the citizenry and the undead, and the graveyard is destroyed.

Meanwhile a massive army of Trolls entrenches in the hills west of the town, cutting off all contact with the highlanders of Sarum. The Trolls are led by mysterious robed figures that are rumored to be capable of transforming large numbers of them into greater beings.

The oft-absent Baron of Ashton, Baern Dragonfang is finally stripped of his title by Count Loamann at the urging of His Majesty. Bringdar Payne (formerly the drake known as Avalanche) is the new Baron of Ashton. One of his first acts is to lead an assault on the Trolls which succeeds in killing one of the robed mages that lead them.

In Galavast, The Arm of Winter is stolen from the safe-keeping of the townspeople by a large group of Fire Elementals, the Travelers' Stone is finally returned to its rightful place by a group of adventurers led by Lord Dinen Davere and Goodman Fooz Coalbaron, and rumors abound of a "Council of the Dead" arising in the Valley of Bones.

The King's Festival is held within the lands of Galavast once again, and it is a very eventful time. All enjoy the festivities despite a trial in which several traveling adventurers led by Mistress Wynter are found guilty of murdering Katrina Weaver, the head of the ruling council of Vargus. Viscount Vala holds the trial under the watchful eye of Count Arianus and King Balladan. After the trial, King Balladan holds audience with Katrina and Arien in which they discuss the possibility of a treaty between Vargus and Stonegate.

Lord Sheth and the Death Knight Neyamius join forces for an attack on Count Arianus. Houses Ebonheart and Sinniot respond immediately and arrive on the scene in time to help their beleaguered Count. During the assault, Baron Ashe Sinniot, One of Thirteen, receives his permanent death and Count Arianus is forced to resurrect. The recently relocated Prince of the Erlunn Elves, Alarain Oakmore, becomes the new Baron.

In Vargus, the town continues to grow thanks to the leadership of its guilds. Several citizens rise to the challenge and become important leaders within the ruling council, including Arien, Katrina Weaver, LaMort, Kestra Moonshadow, Zorin, Bobo, and the brothers Altonvyr and Val'Imar Zauafin. As the council formalizes treaties with the collective cultures of the Forest of Myst, they begin to try and deal with the remnants of Keldrin's magical curse which prevents the casting of formal magic, as well as the use of formal items and spirit effects within the town proper. They are unable to remove the curse however, and no successful market days are held within the town as a result.

Meanwhile, Goodman Fooz Coalbaron arrives in Vargus as an official envoy from The Kingdom of Stonegate. He and the council engage in negotiations for bringing the town under Stonegate control. The local populace seems to have little use for Stonegate, and Coalbaron receives a very cool response.

In Lumberton Shire, the Fractured Skull Orc War gets out of control. Locals are alarmed when the Orcs build a fortress on the outskirts of the Barony. Without any nobles in town, Falgar Shinglefoot leads a brave band of adventurers in a doomed assault on the Orcan lines. The attack is a ruse to allow a group of scouts led by Bleys Silverleaf to infiltrate the enemy lines, and it is a success. Several die in the attempt, but the scouts are able to gain some vital information as to the nature of the encampment. Late in the year, The Army of Stonegate overwhelms the Orcan position and destroys the fortress. Once again, King Aug escapes.

Despite the trouble with the Orcs, attendance at the market days begins to climb slowly as Baron Sindorf shows his strong character and leadership abilities. He assembles a strong group of nobles around him, but by the end of the year there are whispers among the commoners that too many Elves are gaining prominence in the Baron's hierarchy. Count Artemis Silvertree is rewarded for his years of faithful service when he is promoted to the position of Regent of Dyllaria. Tobilnor Xenox, an ex-Arcane Brigade member and noted sage takes the position as Count of Silvertree.

Near the end of the year, Foz Coalbaron, One of Thirteen dies in Ashton while defending the town against Dark Dwarves. In a mysterious occurrence, Lord High Warden Garrett Starlen also receives his permanent death. Both are buried within the Tomb of the Thirteen along with Ashe Sinniot, Fluffy, and Dannacus.

603

The year is marred with strife as there are several changes in nobility and The Kingdom experiences some tough times.

In Lumberton, Lake Scenarius has grown in size mysteriously and has turned the entire area into a swamp. Stonegate officials are baffled as to the exact cause of the dilemma, as well as how to reverse it. In a last-ditch effort to salvage the town the site is moved a few miles to the East, away from the newly formed swamp. The new town is christened as New Lumberton Shire and by the end of the year Baron Sindorf gives up his title in pursuit of other interests. His First Knight and half-brother, Ecaed Sindorf becomes the new Baron of Lumberton Shire.

The lands around Ashton are settled when Baron Bringdar leads a group of adventurers to eradicate the Troll armies. After a vicious battle and rousing victory, the region becomes relatively quiet for a time. By the end of the year however The Baron resigns his position under less than favorable circumstances. Without any obvious successor the lands of Ashton fall under Marshall Law.

The Shadowlands suffer the most during this troubled time as Count Arianus becomes preoccupied with Stonegate business and spends little time running his lands. Viscount Vala performs admirably in his absence, but attendance at market gatherings falls. Baron Alarain Oakmore loses interest in his position and fails to even make it to market gatherings. He is replaced as baron by the end of the year. His successor is Sir Gunter Gorloch. A loyal servant of Galavast for many years, Gorloch is the perfect choice. Still, the King's Festival is cancelled due to this instability, and many abandon the town during its time of need. Most notably absent are Sir Anslem Poleho, the First Knight of Galavast, as well as Lord Dinen Davere and other members of the Count's House. The population of Helmwood falls drastically as Baron Felson Marsh is captured and killed in a mysterious incident. Baron Marsh's Champion, Sir Metrex survives the ordeal and pledges himself to Baron Gorloch.

Outside of The Kingdom, the lands of Vargus experience much strife as well. Apparently discouraged by a lack of success, several members of the Vargus ruling council abandon their positions. The town seems on the verge of collapse, and market gatherings are small and few as commerce grinds to a halt. The Drae, Altonvyr Zauafin steps into a more prominent role in the running of the town and successfully leads a group of brave adventurers on a quest to remove Keldrin's curse once and for all. The finality of the group's success lifts morale, and though there are still small issues to be resolved the victory for the town is hard fought and well-deserved.

Meanwhile, a small chain of islands known as The Dragon Isles in the Southern Sea of Dyllaria becomes a popular destination for Dyllarians and Emurians alike. Embroiled in a conflict known as the War of the Veil, this locale offers much in the way of adventure. Many come here seeking to get away from the seemingly crumbling state of The Kingdom and all of the political and economic strife that has marked 603.

604

New Lumberton Shire continues to be plagued by a variety of creatures, including Orcs, Locathah, Hobgoblins, Minotaurs, and the never-ending threat of Neyamius. Several of New Lumberton Shire's nobles receive their permanent deaths, including Count Malidor Bradok, Lady Baroness Liriili Therinophilus, and Squire Shadow, adding to the rumor of a curse upon the nobles of Lumberton. Lord Fenick is elevated to the position of Count amid a subdued celebration. The new Baron, Ecaed Sindorf, continues to hold the Barony together, creating a strong house in the wake of the destruction, and slowly the market-days continue to grow. The Hobblings have settled in nicely in New Lumberton Shire, and continue their business of logging, ever careful of the presence of Dryads.

Just when things are looking up in the county of The Shadowlands, Baron Gorloch faces a devastating attack from a new group known simply as the Council of the Dead. This group is in some way tied to Lord Sheth, and thanks to his support Galavast falls to a devastating surprise attack and her people are forced to flee. An outpost is created for the refugees, and Lord High Marshal Shannodin takes command of the situation personally. Both the Dyllarian and the Erlunn kingdoms send aid. The situation is made worse by a new weapon employed by the Council, known simply as the Crystals of Pree. Used to create a particularly virulent form of Dark Earth, the stones are eventually destroyed by a group under the direction of Baron Gorloch. The town is later reclaimed after much bloodshed and loss of life, when the Tree of Order is planted in the center of town. Lord High Marshal Shannodin takes his permanent death as part of the assault. On order from The King, his remains are returned to The People's Park at Stonegate where they will be interred in a proper tomb and guarded against defamation. Count Arianus remains mostly absent from the Shadowlands and Viscount Vala resigns his position out of frustration.

In Ashton, Fiona Ravendale is named as Baroness. As one of her first acts the Baroness successfully leads a brave group to dispose of the Onyx Tower, a den of evil that has grown unchecked on the outskirts of the Barony. Also, a group known as The New Empire begins to attack the town and the nobles in particular. The group is reportedly led by Razik Starger, a wizard of some skill and brother of the former Count.

In the Dragon Isles market gatherings begin to shrink as the War of the Veil grinds on. Even when the war is resolved, the region is found to be of interest to several cadres of Faeries, and by the end of the year a Fae War seems inevitable. Without any real political structure The Isles suffer economically and seem doomed to fall back into anonymity.

In Vargus four leaders step forward and form a council to help return law to the lands. Among them is Altonvyr Zauafin. Past trials and tribulations plague the new leaders, and although the going is tough at first they are finally able to eradicate both the lingering side effects of Keldrin's Curse as well as the shadow of their former status as an Imperial holding.

Stonegate continues on valiantly with fighting on several sides, despite the death of Lord High Marshal Shannodin in the Reclamation of Galavast. Near the end of the year the citizenry learns of a failed assassination attempt on the life of The King. The King is left very ill but soon recovers. The assassin is never found. Meanwhile, Drae assassins make an attempt of the life of some powerful members of the Erlunn nobility, and rumors of a pending war abound.

605

The new year brings a great deal of resolution and happiness to the County of Oakwood and the town of Ashton in particular as many long-standing threats are dealt with through the valiant efforts of the adventuring class and Baroness Fiona. Chief among these are the plague of spiders and quest for the elemental shards, the latter of which is brought to a conclusion with the slaying of the Harvester and the success of the shard champions. Though the New Empire continues to threaten Ashton and the Sarum Protectorate, countless adventurers stand against the onslaught and win several key victories. The year's successes are not without a cost however, as local heroes Sir Nicholas Kytarm and Goodman Kopka receive their final death in defense of the lands and the people. By the end of the year, new threats arise in the Ashton area as The New Empire lays claim to at least one artifact from the Scrolls of Prophecy and a mysterious group known as The Sept of Netamir sets up camp outside of Ashton, offering their services as visionaries and seers available for the right price. Rumors of trolls and dark dwarves joining the New Empire circulate widely.

In Vargus the year begins with uncertainty after the deaths of council members General Trenathor Altrion and Nathaniel Riverdorn. However, Governor Altonvyr steps into the breach and becomes the newest member of the council thus solidifying the local government. The strange fae portal grows in power as members of the Unseelie Court and various Fae monsters begin to plague the area. In response, the town begins production of cold iron weapons en masse.

A dark cloud settles over Lumberton Shire as many foes turn up in its midst. The ever growing Vampire threat reaches a peak when after efforts to rid the dark scourge from the land fail, the master of the Vampires attacks Lumberton in force. The good Baron Ecaed Sindorf and his house along with several adventurers of note flee the town proper and seek ways to reclaim it. Eventually their quest is triumphant, showing any invader that Lumberton Shire and her people are not to be taken lightly. At the final stand, Sir Aeneus Solarde fights valiantly against the aggressors and receives his permanent death while holding his ground to the last for King and country.

Although the vampiric threat is a major concern to The Barony, the Locathah also begin to suffocate the borders of The Shire. The retaliatory vanquishing of the Vampires finally frees the town's resources to remove the invading Locathah from the lands. After much preparation the townspeople attack the Locathah stronghold, and in two groups seek to eliminate the key Locathah figures behind the continued attacks. One group led by Dame Coralysse Vascla descends the depths of Lake Scenarios and fights their way through a labyrinth of caves to find and kill the Locathah King Ran'Sor and his general Per'Ras. After the dust settles on this conflict the people of Lumberton can finally be at rest as a peace agreement is made between Baron Ecaed and the new Locatha King Per'Sin.

In Galavast, The Council of the Dead is scattered and destroyed almost as quickly as it is formed, precipitated by several strategic attacks by the townspeople. Thanks to efforts led by Baron Gunter Gorloch, the Necromancer Maeve, once a powerful nemesis, is relegated to eternal darkness when she is defeated and receives her final death.

In Stonegate, things roll along as ever, and all seems relatively quiet and well in hand for a change.

606

Baroness Fiona's efforts to tame the darkness and return the light to Ashton finally bring about the end of the New Empire. The Townsfolk best the last remnants of their long-standing enemy in a pitched battle within the town itself, while county troops along with a few stalwart adventurers make a stand in the wilderness. Soon after The New Empire is laid to rest however, Baroness Fiona receives her permanent death as well. An extremely popular leader who has managed to return pride and stability to the town of Ashton, the Baroness's passing is a sad and sobering shock to the people. Her spirit was strong and her will even stronger, and many despair that Ashton will return to the ways of its less than glorious recent past.

Under the leadership of its new Triumvirate, Vargus begins to expand and forms trade routes to several of the other local City States. It also reaches a hand to Stonegate and begins tentative trade routes in that direction as well. Some are worried that Stonegate will move in and claim the area in the manner of Prinnith but the deft political maneuvering of the Governor helps to keep Vargus free and independent, at least for the time being. The citizens of Vargus score a major victory against the Fae incursion by finally closing the portal to the land of Faerie that has stood for almost a year. Council member Leanetta Dunsparrow has a powerful vision of Vargus being completely destroyed by a major disaster. Knowing her visions to be true sight, Governor Altonvyr evacuates the town and establishes a new community to the south. Strange green gasses begin to seep from the ground around the area of Old Vargus. The original two Councilate members Leanetta Dunsparrow and Grimbold Barov both go missing and no sign can be found of them. Leanetta's estate appears ransacked but unique & powerful magic seems to have protected Grimbold's. Leadership is left solely in the hands of the Governor but the army formerly under the command of General Altrion is hemorrhaging men at an alarming rate. Though some are joining militias financed by the local land owners, rumor has it that many are being recruited by Stonegate or some other foreign army.

In Lumberton Shire many changes occur as forces of Elemental Darkness under the direction of one powerful Elemental being called Pit take hold of the region. As a result the lands and Lake Scenarius are plunged into perpetual shadow. All contact is lost with the Locathah as a result. Later in the year the combined might of local adventurers and forces of Elemental Light are able to vanquish the foes, effectively returning Lumberton to the light. The Murovi vampires led by Solovius are finally defeated, thanks in no small part to the assistance of a very powerful vampire hunter named Garrett Thomas. All of the blood-suckers are destroyed except one known simply as Minimet. The lone survivor, Minimet takes advantage of the chaos of battle to flee the scene, prompting Garrett Thomas to take up watch outside of town in anticipation of his return. King Aug resurfaces briefly and demands tribute from several petty Orc Lords in return for raising an army against Stonegate. The effort is a ruse, and Aug adds the collected tribute to his horde and his army dissipates. Amid all the trouble, Anthony DeGuz is named as the new Count of Silvertree and almost immediately names Misha as a Lady within his house. A festival to celebrate the new Count's coronation also features the wedding of two prominent townsfolk, Daisy and Christo Berylstar. Baron Ecaed's House grows as well, with the Knighting of Sir Brock and naming of Lady Illyanna Lothriaan to House Sindorf. A Changeling surfaces among the populace, causing much havoc. It impersonates many influential people, including the Count. By year's end an outbreak of were-jaguars has been noted around the nearby Army of Stonegate Outpost, and there has still been no communication from the Locathah.

In Stonegate, all is not well as by mid-year King Balladan is showing signs of an unknown illness. Rumors abound concerning the fact that the mysterious assassination attempt of 604 may not have been a failure after all, and rumblings begin to surface concerning the line of succession.

In Galavast, new enemies rise to take the place of the recently vanquished Council of The Dead. Strange magic stirs within the trees, bringing them to life to reflect the faces of fallen friends and long-dead heroes as a bizarre perversion of Nature Magic takes root within the lands. The main representation of this corruption shows itself through iconic embodiments of corrupted animals and plant life that seem bent on the destruction of civilization. This threat is handled well by the Biata adventurer Cedarlock, and eventually subsides to a manageable level, although there does not seem to be an immediate resolution. In addition, the break-down of relations with the Scavenger Coalition prompts action from Nine the tavern keeper, who with the aid of other townspeople and nobles manages to forge a tentative peace with Coalition representatives. Even as the townspeople work steadily to stem the flow of Giants and odd, were-like creatures from the Dragonfire Peaks, new threats arise as the Ogres become united behind a Half-Ogre with enough wits to make them a viable threat for the first time in recent memory. The Miydrandan Dark Elves continue to pose a threat, until a group of adventurers, led by the Zau'afin Clan, deal a devastating blow to Sultan Krackor, leaving room for the Queen Mother to begin rebuilding her once glorious empire.

607

Instability and change marks the year 607 in the lands of Ashton. Political strife in the wake of Baroness Fiona's passing leaves The Barony greatly reduced. While the noble houses fall to chaos and in-fighting, the people manage to eek out an existence as attendance at Market Gatherings declines but still shows strong. Despite these troubles, many brave adventurers work together in order to eliminate the threat of the Anathema, a magic-suppressing cloud that threatens the lands and the people.

In Vargus, green gas eruptions become more prevalent and magical mutations appear in many creatures. Some have beneficial properties but most are horrific or even deadly. A huge explosion rocks the area and scouts report that old Vargus has been completely obliterated. Large eruptions of the green gas are reported from all over and a host of common folk are mutated or killed. Many estates are hard hit, losing livestock and crops, and fortifications crumble. To raise morale and assist in sorely needed trade, Governor Altonvyr organizes and hosts a week long celebration which has the desired effect of bringing in merchants and adventurers from all over Dyllaria and Emuria and beyond. Many regional communities help in small ways, including a general policing of the Vargus borders by Corlissian mercenaries. Despite this assistance the event is almost a disaster as a giant, multi-headed, draconic beast attacks the town proper. The creature is eventually defeated by a combined force of local adventurers led by the stalwart members of Moriken.

In Stonegate, The King's condition worsens, and the members of His House are left to rule in his stead with the assistance of perhaps The Kingdom's greatest living hero, Count Rage Scenarius. Lord High Wizard Arianas makes a special journey to The North Wood within The Forest of Shadows in order to ask for assistance. The Arch-Wizard is granted an audience with King Alipostos Erlunn, and returns to Stonegate with a cadre of Erlunnite Arch-Mages. The combined powers of the Erlunnites and Stonegate's finest are able to keep The King alive, but barely. Count Scenarius is constantly at The King's side, and even sleeps in the same chamber. The venerable Hero of the Goblin Wars is seen at times weeping openly at The King's bedside. As the year wears on, a secret quest undertaken by Lord

High Warden Avila Segovia san Sebastian restores The King to health, and things return to some semblance of normalcy for a while.

In Lumberton, the famed Death Knight Neyamius is defeated. A powerful leader of The Dark Horde and member of Tilicaf's inner circle, Neyamius is finally brought down due to the leadership of Baron Ecaed Sindorf and the townspeople of Lumberton Shire. Several spirits are weakened, and the good Baron Sindorf himself receives his final death. The Count appoints Lady Ilyanna as acting Baroness until such time as he can find an appropriate replacement. Later that year contact is re-established with the Locathah due to the persistence of their King, Ran'Sin. The King's son is missing after a trip to the surface, and Ran'Sin asks the townspeople for help in locating him. A council of wizards moves into the Barony, calling itself the council of Rhee-Ver. Sir Eldar Mangus is Knighted and becomes the County's First Knight. The Count also adds Lord Aziak and Lady Embeth as members of his County house. By year's end Lady Ilyanna is officially named the Baroness of Lumberton Shire. Her first act is to dismiss all of the Lords and Ladies of House Sindorf. A green-skinned Elf that some refer to as a Guardian of Tyrra arrives in the Barony and visits one of the last remaining areas of Darkness near the tavern. As he examines the node of Dark energy he tells of another area of Darkness to the south, beyond Mythamber. Suddenly and without warning, The Guardian is pulled into the Darkness and disappears – it immediately expands to three-times its size. A small group of Sarr establishes a nearby village. The group claims to be led by the last remaining survivors of the Khala culture, and has relocated to Lumberton from its refuge in The Shadowlands due to a dispute with the nobles of that region.

Meanwhile, in Galavast, the Lord of the Haunted Wood rises to prominence on the Plane of Faerie, leading to a Great War upon that plane against the Seelie Fae and the Lady of the Wood. Townspeople from Galavast, guided by several of the local Gypsies and Chev'alien, are inexorably drawn into the conflict as The War spills over to Tyrra. Champions from among the Tyrran adventurers are chosen to defend The Lady, but She eventually falls leaving many in Galavast and on the Plane of Faerie questioning what would occur next. Even as the battles on the Plane of Faerie rage on, the Traveler's Stone continues to glow red, tainted by a bizarre Chaos dweomer.

As the year winds to a close, The Overlord Tilicaf surfaces in Galavast while attempting to cast a powerful Formal Magic spell on The Traveler's Stone. Tipped off to the attempt by a spy within Tilicaf's camp, a strong band of adventurers led by Lord High Wizard Arianas, Baron Gorloch's House, and the Damashay Gypsies, attacks The Overlord in an effort to stop the casting. During the fighting a portal to the Plane of Void opens, apparently destroying The Traveler's Stone once and for all. Amid the melee, Tilicaf begins a new casting on the portal and Baron Gorloch manages to push Tilicaf into it, apparently destroying The Overlord.

Later it is learned that a combined force of Stonegate, Dyllarian, and Erlunnite forces, along with the last of the Green Mountain Rock Trolls had simultaneously executed an assault on Tilicaf's extra-planar fortress. Led by Kings Balladan, Gell, and Alipostos, this small army is able to defeat Tilicaf once and for all when he resurrects there after the battle in Galavast. The victory is not without a heavy price however, as King Grell Scann III of Dyllaria and King Balladan of Stonegate do not successfully resurrect, along with several members of The Golden Lions. The last of the Rock Trolls perish as well, their bloodline lost forever.

With the death of King Balladan, all of the Counts are summoned to Stonegate City and do not return to their lands for several months.

608

The death of King Balladan is a blow to The Kingdom that many people fear will tear it apart. Without a blood heir there is quite a concern that no single ruler will be universally accepted. Several early plans are formulated that involve everything from joining The Kingdom of Evendarr to the reversion to a loose collection of city-states. Two of the more credible scenarios see Lord High Wizard Arianas or Count Rage Scenarius assuming the throne, but neither is seen as a unifying solution and civil war seems a real possibility.

Just when things seem at their worst however, it is revealed that The King has an heir. Skeptics abound, but One of Thirteen, Vala Gurth, is credited with retrieving young Talumar Lorne prior to his murder at the hands of the deceived Gili Rockcrusher. Vala had apparently returned to the year 598 by the use of time travel and rescued the baby before he could be slain. Open tests by Lord High Wizard Arianas, as well as Erlunnite and Dyllarian Wizards do not reveal any foul play, and so Crown Prince Talumar, not yet ten years old, is slated to be the next King of Stonegate. It is decided by a committee of The King's House and the assembled Counts that Count Rage Scenarius, 80-year old hero of The Goblin Wars, will act as the Royal Steward of Stonegate and will rule with all of the powers of The King until Prince Talumar reaches the age of 16.

Meanwhile, due to a lack of military power in the Vargus area, Governor Altonvyr takes an unprecedented step and reaches out to the local communities of races including the Trun elves, Gimmonites, Seelie Fae, and local persons of influence to form a new council. Unlike the previous council, this is not a ruling body but an alliance of mutual benefit. They agree to assist one another in time of need be it military, trade, or information. Greater stability and wealth comes to Vargus as a result, and things are looking up. By year's end however, Governor Altonvyr receives his permanent death leaving the future of the Free City looking very uncertain.

In Lumberton, the year starts out with a celebration. Dame A'ubria'na' gives birth to three children – two daughters (Lina and Ra'ei) and a son (Hedeon). A new slaving network takes hold over the winter and several local commoners fall victim. The few that are returned cite the brave actions of Reesie Damashay and Dorian Grey. Even local adventurers have become targets, as Leon Loud is barely able to escape due to his natural acrobatic tendencies and being fleet of foot. Lycanthropic attacks are on the rise it seems as the cadre of were-jaguars has seemed to grow in numbers. This prompts Perego Mordan to open his estate as a safe harbor for any who wish to use it. Dame A'ubria'na' relinquishes her position as a Knight after slaying King Aug for the final time and completing her quest for the Kai-Vokin. Her absence will be a great loss to the people, but she cites her need to care for her family as the primary reason. All are sad to see her go, but even sadder when she receives her permanent death at the hands of undead later that same Market Gathering. In The Lowlands, a new leader rises to take Aug's place among the Orcs. Little is known about him, only that he is covered head to toe in scars and fights with two maces with lethal precision. The Vampire threat seems on the rise again, and Garrett Thomas is not heard from. Still grieving from the loss of King Balladan, Count DeGuz is not seen often during the year. It is believed that he is holed up in the county manor house. Lord Azzaiak and Lady Aislinn relinquish their noble titles and leave the Lands of Stonegate in pursuit of personal interests.

In Galavast the lands begin to be consumed by the still-open Void Portal left by Tilicaf's incomplete Formal Magic spell. Eventually the portal is closed, and the lands are once again made safe. As a payment in return for all of his service to The Kingdom, Vala Gurth has been granted the realm of The

Shadowlands as his own holding. As one of King Balladan's last acts, The Kingdom makes good on the promise. Lord Vala becomes the sole lord of The Shadowlands, and Stonegate troops, nobles, and guild masters vacate the realm quietly as part of a peaceful secession. Baron Gunter Gorloch resigns his position and returns to Stonegate as a commoner and hero to the people.

In Ashton, the lands are quiet and Market Gatherings continue to suffer without a proper noble house. Late in the year, the former Baron of Galavast, Gunter Gorloch accepts the position of Baron and the situation improves almost immediately. The local citizenry embrace his reign, and Ashton seems destined for greatness once again in 609.

609

The year begins chaotically as permanently dead beings begin to return from the dead, seemingly upsetting the natural order of things. Many declare The Returned to be abominations and vow to destroy them at the first opportunity, but researchers at the Stonegate Academy of Mystical Arts and the Erlunn Council of Elders declare them to be legitimately returned. Still unclear as to why this is happening, the realms' brightest sages, magicians, and formalists are called to Stonegate City to lend their knowledge to the anomaly.

Royal Steward Rage Scenarius openly declares the Writ of Cruorem Paternus in which non-human nobles need to be approved explicitly by his hand. There is much initial opposition to this proclamation, and many outlying Baronies seem to be the most affected. The fervor diminishes as the year proceeds however, and cooler heads seem to prevail. Lord High Wizard Arianas resigns amid rumors of being forced out by The Royal Steward, and the famed enemies of Necromancy known as The Order of the Righteous Arm are officially made a Knightly Order by Rage's decree. Criticized for their fanatical nature early in their history, The Righteous Arm have been zealous participants of The Kingdom's siege of the fallen City of Mythamber since its inception in 600.

In Ashton, the year begins on a sour note when count's house is captured and sent to the plane of chaos. A rescue mission is organized and all but one member of the house is returned – the First Knight does not resurrect and his body is not recovered. Meanwhile, a frontal assault on the mountain lair of the Frost Herald is sent out early in the year under the leadership of Baron Gorloch. The defenses are too strong for the group however, and a tactical retreat is called.

By year's end, Gunter Gorloch has stepped down as the Baron of Ashton citing health reasons. In his absence, Sir Tidus and Lady ViviAnn lead an assault that successfully destroys the Frost Herald and his minions once and for all.

In Lumberton, Gizmo Loud takes the position of Guild Steward as werejaguar activity escalates to the point of nearly wiping out the Khala Sarr settlement. Only a valiant effort on the part of a band of brave adventurers led by Lee of the Khala and Lord Ackron manages to neutralize the threat for the time being. Meanwhile Neyamius returns, apparently as a result of the Rockcrusher Forge graveyard's

influence. Luckily his power is much diminished and town leaders feel confident that he can be dealt with soon.

It is discovered that the creature known as the changeling has replaced Count DeGuz, and he takes the Baroness captive upon the Chaos Plane. Sir Brock, Lord Dorain, and the other members of the noble house lead a successful rescue and the changeling is destroyed. Shortly thereafter Lady Embeth returns as an Ogress – the result of a magical transformation forced upon her during her captivity by the Ogres in Syrinx. This ordeal takes its toll on her and she decides to return to her family and relinquishes her noble title. Shadow also returns as a Death Knight and assaults the town in the company of both Lord Sheth and Finnius. By the end of the summer however, Finnius leaves the barony and Sheth seems preoccupied elsewhere.

In Rockcrusher Forge, the Old Town Graveyard begins to exhibit some unsavory qualities as undead appear in and around it. The cause of the trouble is the crumbling remains of Dragundous, a Dragon who fell fighting on the side of Stonegate during the Horde War and was buried there by his followers. With the aid of Balvarson and led by Thorin Falstaff, a group of adventurers including Tycota and the recently returned Gilli Rockcrusher and Tordex heal the Graveyard and stop the return of the permanently dead.

Meanwhile, Flame Trolls move into the area and build a damn to flood the lands around Rockcrusher. The eradication of this threat causes many in the town to take drastic measures. Leon Loud acquires the crown of a Goblin King and begins trying to rally Goblins under his banner, the combined efforts of David Everspell, Gilli Rockcrusher, Tordex, and others work to try and save the local farmers, while Thorin Falstaff petitions The Kingdom for assistance. In the end the town successfully eradicates The Flame Trolls through an unlikely coalition with Ice Trolls and Black Orcs. Thorin and Tordex are given title in Artimus Silvertree's house, and talk of Rockcrusher regaining its status as a Barony gains momentum.

Change comes to Vargus as Guildmaster Antyr assumes tentative control of the town under the auspicious governance of the seemingly Undead Emperor, Trenathor Altrion. Patrols of undead become commonplace around the general area, keeping an uneasy peace and even minor battle alliance between a few of the undead patrols and town peacekeepers. By wintertime the tentative peace is broken however, as an assault led by barbarian siblings Viviann and Tidus forces Trenathor's army to flee to the south and take up residence near the Trollsclaw Hills.

The Army of Stonegate led by members of House Clexan and a smattering of other nobles lay siege to Ironholm. Grumbings among the nobility and commoners alike ask where The Crown Prince stands on these issues, but are soon quelled as it is revealed that Prince Talumar has given his approval in all of the decisions.

As the year closes, what was deemed to be a minor rebellion in the eastern County of Guthenor appears to be much more significant. It is learned that several members of the Baronial House have

been slain and only Lady Dora Gray and Sir Bastion survive the initial assault of the rebels. The Lady, as the ranking noble of House Prombus under these unexpected circumstances, assumes the interim title of Baroness.