

# The Land of Karn

## Fantasy Role-Playing Game

Basic Version

### Karn World Overview

The Land of Karn is a huge and varied place, with just as vast a pallet of cultures, races, animals, and other elements. Its known world spans a giant continent, numerous islands, and an undersea empire. Its history spans thousands of years and its origins are shrouded in mystery. There is so much to this land that it would be impossible to do it justice in a single tome, much less a single page. So this section leaves the world as mostly unknown at this time, but I wanted to give a brief overview of the world of Karn so you could actually play within the world using this basic version.

The actual books (and the access they allow to the private sections of the site) contain far more specific information about other areas of the world. The first book contains details of the Senton Kingdom and surrounding areas. These are not needed to play, but give a much deeper understanding of the Land of Karn and the people within it. What you choose to do is up to you.

#### Brief Historic Overview

Thousands of years ago (long before remembered or recorded time), Karn had its share of growing cultures (some even of great size). Then something happened to wipe them out and the land was sent into darkness and chaos for many cycles. Cultures on the fringes of the world were the first to emerge from this and reform (having mostly been untouched by it), but most of the world took ages before any real rebuilding took place.

The amphibious Sissinki of the south-west were the first to truly emerge from this time with any form of support structure and government. Small clans grouping together to form alliances. Eventually alliances coming together to recognize a single leader, at least in some respects. The empire (now known to the rest

of the world as the Lizard Lands) was born, but has not greatly evolved since.

The rest of the world was mostly in disarray, with all manner of small powers rising and falling. Only the Frenal seemed to hold some cohesion, but even they had troubles between the clans. Many races (like the Shifters and Gnomes) were driven into hiding by those that would want to destroy them. Other races and groups gained power over certain areas, while others banded together to defend against them. It was a time of chaos and struggle.

Working with the aid of many of the Frenal clans of the south-east large groups of Gnomes fled their homelands and were resettled on the desolate island in the center of the Blort Gulf. In exchange for their works and creations the Frenal agreed to protect them from outsiders and keep the island a secret and safe for as long as possible. With this protection and seclusion the Gnome culture was able to flourish and thrive without strife or outside influence.

On the mainland things were changing. Two super powers were emerging and taking control of the continent. The Armon Kingdom in the north and west and the Great Wolf Empire in the south and east. Within time they controlled most of the civilized lands on the continent (save for a small chunk of Frenal land to the far east). Then the inevitable happened and the two giants went to war for many years. Only one would come out of the battle intact and in charge, but not for long.

Just over a thousand years ago most of Karn was ruled over by the largest empire ever known, the Great Wolf Empire. Unfortunately (at least for them) it was unable to maintain control over this vast empire and it collapsed under its own weight. The land fell into chaos again, as every person of ambition and influ-

ence struggled for control over every piece of available land. The next few hundred years saw the births of many nations, hundreds of wars, and the fall of most of those young countries.

Only four major powers seemed to survive and shine above the rest and can still be found today: The Senton Kingdom, Argrow Empire, Vinto Kingdom, and Dwarven Empire. Many dozens of other small and medium sized powers exist, but none of them truly rival the pull and power of these four. The undersea empire to the far east, the joint council of eastern Frenal clans attempting to work as one, the Gnomes of Gnome Island and their advanced society, and several hundreds of others scattered throughout the Land of Karn.

## Region and Kingdom Overview

Since Karn is made up of such a vast collection of cultures and races it is best to discuss it here by general regions. Each of these kingdoms, empires, regions, and areas are briefly described here for your use. For more details you will have to wait for and get the books that cover them (which also give access to the web files with even more details).

Not all these areas are listed on the map, since some are underground, underwater, smaller, or otherwise not known or important enough to the average map-

maker of Karn to have included them.

## The Argrow Empire

Although large by current standards, The Argrow Empire is only a shadow of what it once was. All that remained of the Great Wolf Empire eventually became this southern power. The empire is a collection of independent tribes governed over by the Emperor and his council. Sometimes control seems to be almost nil as backstabbing and power grabs continue between tribes. The entire empire seems to constantly be on the verge of a civil war.

Most of the population of the area is made up of Rowgrran and the cat-like Pendrai (but many Frenal and other races can be found in the fringes of their society). The Rowgrran rule the land and all others either serve or try to go unnoticed. Dwarves are the most often enslaved race, as they are used to acquire the ores needed to make the weapons and armors they use. Gnomes are also popular here (but not as slaves), since they are a rare delicacy to the Rowgrran.

Geographically Argrow is almost completely located in one large woodland, and on the surface can seem rather primitive and sparsely populated. This is just an illusion caused by the social pack nature of the Rowgrran. They live in small tribal packs, with only communal buildings. In a large forest only a couple



wooden long houses can seem like a single residence, but may contain a pack of twenty or more adults and their children.

Militarily the Argrow Empire could be unmatched in the world through sheer numbers and physical strength, but the tribe and pack social structure makes this near impossible to control. The tight control and cohesion the government would need is lacking when you have tribes that don't always agree. As such it tends to only pull together on a smaller scale or to defend itself from outsiders. If a single leader was ever able to pull them all together it could spell the end of the world, as we know it today.

Socially the Argrow people seem similar to the Native Americans of the Pacific North-West only with a more dog-like pack mentality. Politically and culturally, however, they greatly resemble the old Roman Empire of the Caesars.

## **The Dragon Lands**

Little is known of this vast wilderness. Only legend and rumor tell of the places within. Even the maps made are vague and often contradict each other. The truth of this place may never be known. The only thing anyone truly knows is that few who have dared to travel into the Dragon Lands have ever returned and none have returned completely intact.

Most stories tell of the greatest evils in the world coming from this place and monsters of incredible power stalking through its wilds. Dragons are said to live in mountain cities by the hundreds, or even the thousands. Dangers and perils of all kinds are told to litter the realm. And the deaths of many great adventurers seems to point to at least some of this being true.

## **Dwarven Empire**

Nestled in the center of the vast Crescent Moon Mountains, the Dwarven Empire thrives and grows. They are the only large old kingdom not currently in a state of decline (according to the so-called experts), be it slow or quick. Few outsiders know the true size of the Empire since most of its population lives in vast underground cities connected by tunnel and cavern systems. Even many within the Empire are unaware of its true size.

On the surface it appears as a number of small villages and a few larger cities and forts scattered throughout the mountains. Due to this they are often overlooked as a real power of the world. These are just the people who deal with outsiders (making trades and handling diplomacy) and gather necessary topside resources (like wood). The real empire is underground and

greatly outnumbers and surface dwellers by a hundredfold or more.

The empire is ruled over by a senate (made up of representatives from each of the separate communities within the empire). They have equal say in all areas and senators can be voted out of office if their local community chooses to. The senate, however, does have complete and total control over the government and enforces it if need be. With a strong military at its command, few orders of the senate are ever questioned (although those senators who instigated them may not see their careers continuing much longer).

Although not exclusionary, very few races other than Dwarves every attempt to live in the Empire other than on the surface. The claustrophobic and hostile environments of underground living are just not conducive to most races. Plus, the construction is almost exclusively made to Dwarven standards and sizes. If one does dare to brave it, they will be accepted as one of the community in most cases.

Throughout most of the world the Dwarven Empire is famous for one thing: Metal arms and armor. The world's finest quality metal weapons and armors come from this empire, usually through trade and treaty agreements. Even though they give such great weapons and armor through trade, you know they have to be keeping the best ones for themselves.

Socially and culturally the Dwarven Empire acts closest to the Vikings and Scottish clans of our worlds history, but with enough fantasy twists to keep them interesting. Politically, however, they very much resemble the senate of the ancient Greeks and late Roman Empire.

## **Gnome Island**

Although some call it the Gnome Kingdom or Gnome Empire, neither of these titles truly fit them since they are not ruled by a monarch or even a small ruling class. The Gnome leaders are chosen for the job in much the same way blacksmiths or coopers are chosen for theirs. Whoever is deemed best at it gets the position, even though few seek it. These leaders are then treated with the same level of respect as any major worker, inventor or mage, and not as some great king or president. It is just another job for them.

Due to protection treaties with the Min Frenal, the people of Gnome Island have had little distraction from their pursuits of knowledge and creation. Inventors and mages are honored above all others in their society and technology has advanced due to it. Since the Gnome (as a people) have a truly pacifist heart, the inventing was not driven by warfare, but simply

creative imagination. In fact, to knowingly create a device of war is a great sin and dishonor to them.

They live in a clean society, with highly active water and sewer systems, and convenience contraptions of all kinds. With the aid of magic they even have many modern wonders that are far beyond even their mechanical ability. Basic mechanics of levers and gears are nothing to the Gnomes. They have moved on into the area of massive aqueducts and basic hydraulics, minute clockwork creations, experimental chemistry, and have even started experimenting with steam power and other areas.

In the pursuit of invention and knowledge nothing comes above the experimenting and learning (not even their own or other's safety). Death in an experiment or in the pursuit of knowledge is the greatest and most noble death there is (especially if the death resulted in some great discovery or revelation about creation or nature). It is not uncommon for entire structures to be destroyed in the pursuit of some new area of invention (only to have it rebuilt soon after). Of course these are just side effects of the invention since the active creation of items of destruction is a taboo.

Due to a distrust of outsiders and their war like ways, they rarely allow any creations out of their land that have even the slightest destructive uses. Clockwork creations (like music boxes and clocks) are the most commonly traded creations and can fetch a very high price in distant lands. The Min Frenal handles all these trades (as per their treaty), and they mainly just deal with the Senton kingdom (who then deals with the rest of the world).

There is no real-world example to compare Gnome Island to. The best you can do is take some kind of ideal utopia of peace and combine it with a twisted version of an early steampunk setting from a novel or game.

## **The Lizard Lands**

Unlike most areas of the world (which have mixed and interacted with bordering cultures for hundreds or thousands of years), the Lizard Lands have remained separated and secluded both culturally and geographically. For thousands of years they lived their simple and secluded lives and evolved without the influence of others. Only in the last hundred years, or so, have others started coming to their land and interacting with them on any real scale. Senton has opened trade routes with them and curious travelers have started to visit their cities. Still, they have remained as they have for thousands of years.

The Lizard Lands has a single leader, but not like any other kingdom or empire. Although called the Emperor, the leader is mainly in a position as overseer for all the clans and houses of the lands. He settles disputes when they become too big for those involved to handle on their own and now handles international politics. He holds a position of honor and respect so all houses are expected to show him as much (but occasional problems do pop up). When needed he can call upon the forces of any houses he chooses to aid him and this gives him a potentially huge army (although rarely does he call upon more than a few at a time).

Since there has been relatively little interaction with others most of the world knows next to nothing about the Lizard Lands culture other than they mostly live in wooden houses on stilts that have some sort of fabric for most of their walls. They are also known for trading all manner of strange marine minerals, spices, and even a rare metal found only on a few of their islands. This trade is done almost exclusively through the Senton Kingdom.

In most ways the Lizard Lands resembles ancient Japan in the days of the Shogun and Samurai, only mixed with bits of other Asian cultures and a helping of aquatic fantasy (since they are an amphibious race). The main thing to remember is the firm belief in honor and house loyalty.

## **The Lost Islands**

This is the island equivalent of the Dragon Lands and is feared just as much (especially by sailors). They are believed to be the haunts of all manner of creatures, ghouls, fairies, and ghosts. Even the waters surrounding them are said to be filled with sea serpents and other evil creatures. The truth of these stories have never been uncovered since no sailors are willing to rest their luck (or their ships).

## **The Lost Territories**

As the name implies little is known of this area (although a number of expeditions to explore it are currently in progress). Although some dangers persist to hinder these studies, they are not bad enough to call them off completely. So far most of this area remains unclaimed wilderness. Some evidence has surfaced recently that suggests ancient civilizations may have once lived here.

## **Min Frenal**

Although not an actual government, this area has united for defense and international trade reasons. It is still made up of a number of separate Frenal clans

who control their own areas and even have their own laws and rules. Those clans don't always agree and would never truly combine under a single government (but do see the value of mutual protection and trade agreements).

The area also seems to be rather exclusionary to races other than Frenal (and is steeped in the traditions and beliefs of the Frenal). The only other race they seem to care about at all are the Gnomes and many suspect that is due to the lucrative trade deal they have with them. They are constantly at odds with the Fairy Folk of Dwarfwood, but have not had major trouble with any of the other kingdoms in a long time.

## **Northern Wastes**

Although not as populated with dangerous creatures as the Dragon Lands or the Lost Territories, the Northern Wastes hold great dangers all their own. The main danger in the area is the extremely cold weather and storms that last through two thirds of the year. The rest of the year may see the ice thaw out, but few would call it a real summer with. Cold and frozen most of the year makes it an inhospitable land for most creatures and races, but some insist on making it their home (and Vinto claims it as theirs).

## **Sandy Point**

Although partially claimed and controlled by the Senton Kingdom and Min Frenal, Sandy Point mostly remains untouched and unclaimed by any official power. Even the swamps and mountains on the other side of the Strait of Ok sit mostly unclaimed. Most of this is due to the worthless quality of the land (ranging from hot sands to steep cliffs to sweltering marshes).

Some have made it their home though. Senton laid claim to the main river delta and founded Crooked River City, which has become a huge trade town for all the southern lands (and many distant ones as well). All these merchant ships and heavy trading of goods has also attracted the attention of pirates and other thieves out for a quick buck.

## **Senton Kingdom**

Senton is the world's largest kingdom (for sheer area of land it covers) and is ruled over by a single king (although controlled by a number of well placed noble lords who hold positions under the king). Each area has some of their own laws and ways, but also have to follow the laws and mandates of the king. The more lax control of the king has led to more stability and happy local leaders (so internal problems are few

and none seem to be sewing the seeds of rebellion). It does lead to some minor problems with the peasants under the control of a cruel or corrupt local leader, but rarely do they last long in those positions.

Worldwide, Senton is known as the international trade leader. They import from and export to almost every land in Karn. They have trade agreements and treaties with almost every kingdom, empire, and controlled land (many of them exclusive). With the addition of their own native exports (mainly cotton), they all but control the world trade and tariff costs. Even so, most of the people of Senton remain relatively poor since only the noble merchants see most of the money.

Surrounding Senton are some of the South's most inhospitable lands, boxing it into the forests it now controls. To the west is the vast and dry Kalville Grasslands (home of the Insectoid terrors known as Grass Devils). To the south is the Butch Wasteland (barren flats of hot cracked earth). To the northwest lies the numerous vast swamplands (that protect the area from the dangers of the Dragon Lands). And to the northeast and east fall the Central Mountain range (towering over the land).

Senton is clearly based on the traditional fantasy setting of a medieval Europe mixed with magic and legend. Most of the look and feel comes from western Europe, mainly the England, France, and Germany of the era.

## **Southern Islands**

Although usually grouped together when talked about in distant lands, these islands have no connection to each other. In fact they are completely separate and secluded communities. Borno Island is a Human separatist colony that believes in the purity of the race and culture. Its neighbor, the Island of the Frenal, is even worse. They are Frenal that have even shunned other Frenal who have spent too much time with other races.

In addition to these huge islands are hundreds of smaller islands and island nations scattered around the southern waters of Karn. They come in all forms, from happy open lands to dark pirate townships. Some have not even have contact with the outside world for thousands of years. The exact number of islands is unknown and how far south they can be found is also unknown since few are willing to sail too far south for fear of upsetting the Creators and Vaccaro (the after-life that is said to be south of Karn).

## **Undersea Empire**

Little is known of this strange land that spans the

ocean floor of the eastern seaboard and Blort Gulf. They are believed to have minor trade dealings with the Min Frenal and perhaps even Gnome Island (but none of that can be proven). All that is known is that odd undersea races control these waters below the surface and have a number of great cities on the ocean floor.

## **Vinto Kingdom**

The remains of the Armon Empire reformed after the fall of the Great Wolf Empire and Vinto was born. According to them, King Armon had ascended to godhood and the church placed the new government in charge (based on his teachings). The government and church are still one today, but the control of the church has been relaxed slightly (at least on the surface), to allow more religious freedom among the people. This was done to quell the signs of rebellion they saw brewing many years ago.

Although politically steeped in religious control, Vinto is culturally more advanced than most of Karn. They are in the midst of a renaissance of the arts and manufacturing. Quality (no matter the cost) seems to be growing more important than making a huge profit. Beauty and art for no reason are a common sight in most of the larger towns and cities. Also, unlike most of the rest of the world, glass and glasswares are a common sight here (since the area is rich in the perfect sands and they have a long tradition of glass mastery).

The government is very reminiscent of many older European countries, where the church had great influence over the political structure and the king. Socially, however, it is very similar to the historic Renaissance in Italy and France.

## **The Wooded Islands**

These are another relatively unexplored region, but not so much due to fabled or real dangers, more due to their geography. Their proximity to the Dragon Lands and Lost Islands makes approach from the north next to impossible. A southern approach would have to pass through the Lizard Lands and due to trade agreements it is difficult for large ships or groups to do this. As for the Lizard Lands themselves, they have only explored the southern most of these islands and see no reason to explore more. Until more work is devoted to their study the Wooded Islands will remain a mystery.

## **Major International Trade**

Most kingdoms and large controlled areas are actually self-sufficient and don't need to trade to survive.

International trade is mostly driven by the nobles who want exotic luxuries that can't be found locally, prodded on by the merchants who want to make money off of them. There are a few exceptions, but they have to be transported in bulk to make any profit, so few trade merchants bother. There is also the trade underground that deals in items and substances that are illegal in one area or another.

Although there are thousands of different types of goods and items traded daily on the international market, only a few are commonly traded enough to warrant special mention. Most of these goods even have set standard trade routes and rules when dealing with tariffs and other taxes, handling rules, inspection, quarantine, and other aspects of international trade. Most of these special rules are to help speed the items on their way and to reduce the costs, but some of them can do the exact opposite.

## **Commonly Traded Good**

No matter what area of the world you're talking about, the most commonly traded items and goods on the international market are luxury items. This can be rare spices, exotic fruits, pieces of art, wines and other drinks from foreign lands, or even hand crafted creations of some specific master or land. Most of these items have no real use other than to excite or amuse the wealthy nobles who can afford them, but they do bring in good money for the trade merchant.

From the Lizard Lands come rare spices, plants, and creations of bone and shell. There are also very rare metals and items made of them. For the more extravagant collector come weapons and armor of very special design and made of rare materials only found in the Lizard Lands.

Although Senton has the largest import/export business (mostly dealing as the middleman between two other powers) it has the fewest natural exports. Its main native export is cotton and cotton goods, which are shipped in massive scale to keep costs down as much as possible while keeping profits up. They also export some local plants, wines, and creations (but on a much smaller scale).

Vinto is known around the world for two things: they are the greatest creators of high quality glass and glass works in Karn and they export just about anything that can be made of it. They also tend to export a lot of art (in many forms), but most of that is by demand and not just general export.

The Dwarven Empire exports ores, stones, metal cre-

ations, gems, and all manner of crafted goods from within the mountain. Anything from rough ore to finely crafted metal creations can be found in these shipments, along with rough or cut gems and many other earthly goods.

The Argrow Empire has relatively little in way of common exports, although they do have a number of specific masters whose creations are sought after around the world. The main exports they do manage on a smaller scale are special skins, plants, and animals that are specific to the southern jungles and woodlands.

The Min Frenal also have a relatively small native export business, but they do deal in and export a lot of Gnomish creations. Native exports include woods, leathers, and creations made of both. The one thing they are best known for around the world are superior quality bows and archery equipment.

Gnome Island only exports to one place and only deal in their most harmless creations. Most of these creations are clockwork or magical in nature and none of them have deadly effects (even as a side effects). Clocks are the most popular clockwork creations exported from here and can be found in noble houses around the world.

## **Standard Trade Routes**

Although many of the nations of Karn trade with each other there are relatively few standard trade routes established. This is mainly done for safety reasons, since it is easier to protect a smaller path or area than a large number of them. Pirates and raiders can cause real problems for trade merchants, so establishing certain routes makes them easier to patrol. Most kingdoms recognize these routes and work together to protect them, even when they are politically at odds.

There are two basic types of trade routes: land and sea. Both have advantages and disadvantages and some routes even require a little of each. Sea trade is used far more than land routes for international trade, although both are used.

When comparing the two there are a number of things to consider. Ships excel at larger loads and speed through open seas, but they can only service coastal areas and are far more expensive to operate. Wagons can cover larger areas of the mainland and don't have to worry about sinking, but are slower and can't reach island communities. Roads are easier to patrol and maintain security postings along to stop brigands, but the seas have fewer natural dangers to deal with. Plus

a million other concerns all have to be taken into consideration when deciding which method works better for your needs.

## **International Land Routes**

Most of the commonly used land routes are within the borders of the kingdom using them, but there are a few "free trade" routes used for international trade. Most of these are centered in and around the Dust Bowl Desert. Senton, Vinto, and the Dwarven Empire all use these roads to trade freely between each other, although standard tariffs and laws may still affect these trades upon completion.

Senton and Vinto also handle major trade agreements in the mountain city of Zenoonia, which they both own half of. The mountain pass that passes through the city is the main source of trade between these lands. This city and these trade agreements are still relatively new since they were formed around 50 years ago (at the end of the Senton-Vinto war).

Some other standard trade routes can be found around the world, but none of the are as busy as those already mentioned: Between the border of Vinto (near the city of River Crossing) and the Dwarven Empire border in the mountains. The southern border of the Dwarven Empire (passing through Dwarfwood) and heading into the Min Frenal lands. The trade city of Fieldorn that serves as the main source of trade between the Min Frenal and the Argrow Empire. The southern road between Senton and Argrow lands.

## **Sea Trade Routes**

Most of Karn's sea trade happens along the southern waters of the continent, centered around a few major port towns and trade cities. In Senton it is the relatively small port town of Oosnaroonac (located on the coast near the Shifter city of Poono), that handles most of their shipping. Argrow has many small port towns, but most major dealings are done through the city of Horkon.

The largest trade city in the southern seas is the Senton outpost of Crooked River City, on Sandy Point. Trade is done here from most every major power and is the only place you will find Vinto and Argrow representatives involved in the same trade negotiations. To increase activity here even the Senton tariffs and laws are relaxed here to aid merchants dealing here.

In the southwest waters trade is mainly only done between Senton and the Lizard Lands. The port town of Tavish is the Senton base of trade for this and the

Lizard Lands only allows trade in the capital city of Bootka. Senton ships seen dealing in the Lizard Lands but outside of Bootka are boarded, searched, and have their cargoes confiscated.

Vinto does have some sea trade, but most of it stays within the region of the Armon Sea. In the summer, however, they do venture out more and travel down the river to the northern seas. From there they round the Lost Territories and trade in eastern waters. The main areas of trade for them are Cape Boontar and down in Crooked River City.

## **Taxes, Tariffs and Trade Expenses**

Most lands have certain laws and tariffs connected to trade goods brought in from other lands. The exact nature of these laws and costs differ from one land to another and even from item to item. Trade merchants also usually have their own costs to cover the final sale prices are increased again. Some countries have treaties and agreements that relax these costs for certain items, but this is usually only on common bulk goods and not luxury items.

On average common items will increase in price by 50% to 100%, often selling for double what they did in their native land. Less common and luxury items can even triple or more in cost (with the rarest items topping even ten times the original cost). And this is just the average cost of a single strait one country and one merchant trade to another deal. Multiple border crossings and merchants involved can increase it even more, as is often done through the Senton Kingdom.

Another major contributing factor is the final cost of imports is distance. The farther the item had to be shipped the more likely a higher end cost will be. Also, the cost and dangers the trade merchants must risk can affect the sale cost as well. All costs suffered have to be covered by the final sale cost or what ever was the point in bothering to ship it?

## **Perception of Time in Karn**

Although most of Karn has accepted the use of the standard Creators Calendars measure of dates and the Gnomish measure of time, there are a few cultures that have held off and use their own measures. Usually this is due to long-standing traditions or even cultural arrogance, but occasionally it happens due to lack of contact with other cultures.

The two main holdouts are the Min Frenal and the Lizard Lands. Both of these alternate measures will

be fully explained when the areas using them are covered in later books or on the web page, but a brief synopsis of each will be given here. Beyond that will be full explanations of the two parts of the standard and accepted measure of time in Karn.

## **Lizard Land Time**

In the Lizard Lands there is very little difference between one part of the year to another so the idea of seasons was never conceived. Instead they based their measure of time around the moons in a lunar calendar that only roughly matches an actual Karn year, going about two days over it. This means that the “months” happening now are actually happening at a completely different time of year than they did ages ago. This has either gone on unnoticed due to their short life spans or ignored since it matters little to their way of life.

Their perception of time within a single day is also quite different from the rest of the world. They have no measure of hours or minutes, only areas of time based on the general location of the sun. They perceive all of “Dawn” or “Mid Day” as one unit of time and don’t even attempt to break it down further. Finite speed or time is unimportant to their culture.

## **The Frenal Calendar**

Although they have accepted the standard Gnomish measure of time the Min Frenal have refused to stray from their cultural roots when it comes to their calendar. Since the number seven is sacred to them, their entire calendar is based around it. Seven days to a week. Seven weeks to a month. Even Seven months to a year (with seven two-day holidays that fall after each month). Then, every seven years, they have a seven day holiday week that falls outside and in addition to their normal number of calendar days.

Although it seems very complicated and steeped in their culture, it does end up balancing out every seven years to be the same number of days as the standard accepted Creators Calendar used in most of the world. Every year (except the one with the bonus holiday) is one day shorter than a Creators year so the holiday evens it out.

## **Acceptance of Gnomish Time**

Although much of the world had already determined their own standard measures of time within a day it was never an exact science. Water clocks and sun dials all had their flaws for accurate time keeping, plus most of these clocks were too bulky or difficult for the

general public to use on a wide scale. Water clocks were just too large and required a constant flow of water and sundials were useless half of the day. Only the most wealthy could afford magical clocks that could keep accurate time.

All that was until the Gnomes creates relatively inexpensive clockwork creations that kept accurate time as long as they were tuned and maintained properly. Now all the nobles and many middle class establishments could afford an accurate clock. Large towns and cities built clock towers for the masses. And, best of all, many of them were even small enough to be easily transported from one location to another with minimal trouble if the need called for it.

All it took to have this stable and accurate measure of time was to accept the Gnomish way of measuring it. This was no big problem since it was basically the same as what most had been using (only more detailed and accurate). So most of the world moved to the standard 24 hour clock with 60 minutes to the hour and 60 seconds to the minute. Many rumors persist that the Gnomes acquired this specific odd measure of time from a strange visitor from another world or notes found in an ancient tome left behind by the Creators themselves.

All mentions of minutes, seconds, and hours found throughout the rules are in reference to these standards. All magic, speeds, melees, and even crossbow loading times are using this measure of time. Also (unless clearly specified), all future releases and information will use this measure of time for easy cross-referencing. And (just for the record and ease of use), Karn hours are almost exactly the same as our standard Earth hours with use of both am and pm.

## The Creators Calendar

With a couple of notable exceptions, most of the land of Karn uses a standard measure of days and years. It is said to have been laid out by the Creators themselves (most likely by Aaron, the “Great Scholar”). It has been in use for as long as any group can remember, even according to their recorded history.

Even most areas that don’t worship the creators (or have completely different beliefs) use this calendar in one form or another. The Gnomes have tweaked it slightly to even out the number of days in a month more, but the rest is mostly the same. Some cultures have even accepted it but made other alterations of their own. In Argrow they changed the names of a couple of things, but the use is the same.

The basis of this calendar is that there are 358 days in a year and these days are grouped into season, month, and week long segments to more easily measure them. Each of these segments have their own names and meanings. On the other end, a number of years are grouped into spans and cycles to more easily record and understand long periods of time. Each of these also have names and meanings.

## Days of the Week

There are seven days to a week, each with its own name and meaning. According to most of the Church of the Creators officials (and sub-churches) there is a specific day of worship each week and it is not to be worked on. This makes the official work week for most places six days long, but many are open seven days a week with different people working on those days. Plus, some jobs (like farmer and sailor) can’t really get away with not working one day a week. Instead, they tend to try to lessen their loads those days and take time out to worship.

**Creators Day:** This is the first day of the week and is named for the gods that created the world. This is usually the day of worship in most Creators religions.

**Water Day:** This is the first day of the work week and is named for the element of life.

**Farmer Day:** This is the second day of the week and is traditionally the busiest day for most farmers.

**Merchant Day:** This is the center of the week but no one can seem to find out why it was named for businessmen.

**Kings Day:** As the fourth day of the week it falls just past the center of the work week and is often renamed for the current king or ruling family. In Senton it is currently officially called Durant Day, although many just call it Kings Day.

**Harvest Day:** Named for the fact that this is usually a farmers last full day of work in the farm as they harvest some of their goods to take to market the next day and sell. Some have even started to consider this the last work day of the week as well, switching to a five day work week, but this is far from common.

**Feast Day:** This is the last day of the week, both as a standard work week and in the seven day order. It is named for the celebration feasts that often mark its evenings.

## Months and Seasons

Each year has twelve months that average about 30 days each. These months are grouped into four seasons of three months each and all together they contain all 358 days of the year. Each month is generally named as the “Month of...” something, and most of them have stories behind their names (but these entire stories won’t be given here). The seasons are Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter and each contains three months.

1: **Month of the Rabbit:** 30 days. This is the first month of the year, first month of spring, and is named after the rabbit as it springs into activity about this time each year.

2: **Month of the Bear:** 31 days. Named for the great bear population of the north that comes out of hibernation and starts to show up again about this time of year.

3: **Month of the Butterfly:** 30 days. This is the final month of spring and is named for all the caterpillars that cocoon themselves around this time. Most believe it is named in hope of speeding them along so they don’t destroy as many crops.

4: **Month of the Lion:** 29 days. This is the first month of summer and is named for the lion since he is connected with strength, roaring in, and his mane that resembles the rays of the sun.

5: **Month of the Sun:** 30 days. Much simpler to understand the meaning of this month’s name since it also houses the summer solstice and longest day of the year.

6: **Month of the Bat:** 29 days. This is the final month of summer and is named for the bats seen out early in these evening feeding on the insects that have come out.

7: **Month of the Bull:** 30 days. This is the first month of fall and is named for the great bull that ran through the forest knocking all the leaves off the trees in the old fable.

8: **Month of the Firefly:** 31 days. This month is named for the fireflies seen in the southlands around this time of year.

9: **Month of the Wolf:** 30 days. This is the last month of fall and is named for the wolves that become more brave in venturing out of the woods in search of food around this time of year.

10: **Month of the Moth:** 29 days. This is the first month of winter, which is said to be brought in on

the wings of a great moth.

11: **Month of the Moon:** 30 days. As the center of winter this month has the longest night of the year and the winter solstice.

12: **Month of the Dragon:** 29 days. This is the last month of winter and the last month of the year. As an ending to the year the symbol of the Dragon is used since it represents destruction, or at least powerful endings. Dragons are believed to be the ones who will eventually destroy time and everything if the Creators don’t stop them each year. So here we end with a Dragon but head straight into a new year, thus defeating the Dragon once again.

## Years, Spans and Cycles

The largest measure of time used in the Creators Calendar is the cycle. Each cycle is 70 years long and divided into five spans. These cycles are used to record history and long term events (like ages of long-lived races or family reigns within a kingdom). Since the number of cycles just keeps increasing there is no symbols or names attached to them.

Spans are fourteen-year segments of a cycle that have been named after the five important metals of the world: Iron, Copper, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Each year within a span is also given a special name of an animal. Each of the fourteen years are named after these animals for reasons and each has special symbology attached to them (but I will only touch on the basics of it here).

1: **Rabbit:** Symbolizes beginnings, birth, and creation.

2: **Rat:** Symbolizes hardship, pestilence, and surviving through them.

3: **Spider:** Symbolizes chaos and beauty or chaos in beauty, as in webs.

4: **Goat:** Symbolizes stubborn perseverance and adaptation.

5: **Horse:** Symbolizes hard work and speed.

6: **Snake:** Symbolizes con men, trickery, and traitors.

7: **Wolf:** Symbolizes intellect and evil, but not necessarily together.

8: **Bat:** Symbolizes stealth and the night.

9: **Fox:** Symbolizes cunning and agility.

10: **Lion:** Symbolizes strength of spirit and leader-

ship.

11: **Bear:** Symbolizes physical power and endurance.

12: **Faerie:** Symbolizes magic and a playful spirit, almost childlike.

13: **Eagle:** Symbolizes nobility and purity.

14: **Dragon:** Symbolizes death, destruction, and powerful endings.

When you combine the span names and year name you get the name of the specific year within a cycle. There are 70 different combinations and no two years within the cycle will have the same name. The following is a complete list of all 70 year names within a cycle and the order they fall in.

## Lunar and Astrological Cycles

Much of how time is perceived throughout Karn is based, at least loosely, around the sun, moons, and stars own natural cycles. Almost none of the numbers were chosen by chance, although they were often tweaked from their natural cycles to better fit the more rigid lived of the people. The most prominent of these cycles are the moons and sun, but the stars themselves also have a much slower cycle.

### The Sun

The sun has the simplest cycle to recognize (since it rises in the east and sets in the west once per day), but there is more to it. At what time the sun rises and sets depends on the season and where in the world you are located. The farther south on the continent of Karn, the less difference there is from one season to the next. In the north, however, it can make all the difference in the world.

On the northern shore of the continent of Karn the sun rises at 4am and sets at 8pm in the peak of summer. In the depths of winter, however, it rises at 9am and sets 3pm. Along the southern shores the differences are not as drastic. In the summer the sun rises at 5am and sets at 7pm and in the winter it rises at 6am and sets at 6pm. Between the two extremes are median areas that fall somewhere between these two extremes.

### The Moons

Karn has two moons (most commonly called the Mother and the Daughter throughout most of the Creators Church occupied lands). The Mother appears to be twice the size of the Daughter and always shines

twice as bright. The Mother is pocked and pale gray in color, giving it the appearance of an aged and weathered stone. The Daughter is smooth and banded with slightly purplish lines of varied shades, with a surface that seems to shift and move slowly around.

The Mother is on a 24-day cycle (having a full moon every 24 days), and the Daughter is on a slightly more than 26 day schedule. So about once a year (Once every 12 of its cycles) one of its cycles has an “official” 27th day with a second full moon night in a row. This extra full moon is often called the “Wizards Moon” (but actually contains no extra special powers). Due to these cycles there is also a double full moon (where both the Mother and Daughter are full at the same time) only about once every two years, which is a powerful symbol to mages.

There are also two types of eclipses that happen involving the moons as well: Solar and Lunar. Although solar eclipses technically do happen more often they only effect a small part of the world at a time so Lunar eclipses seem to happen more often to most people and areas. Still, lunar eclipses only happen about once every five to six years and solar only about once every two years (but rarely on mainland Karn). Solar eclipses only hit part of the main continent of Karn about once every ten to twelve years. Each of these are also ones that only involve one of the moons, double eclipses (where both moons are in lunar eclipse) are extremely rare and even more powerful on the forces of magic.

### The Stars

Although most of the stars seem to be on a fairly set daily and yearly schedule (rising or appearing at night and leaving by morning), there are a few exceptions. The stars appear to have seasons as well (since certain ones only appear during parts of the year and their nightly positions slowly shift across the sky as the seasons progress). Different cultures have also named many of the star groups as different constellations over the years.

There are also five special stars (and one star grouping) that are extra bright that seem to be on their own independent cycles (having movement unlike the others). Although they are called many things by different groups and cultures, I will use the names chosen by the Church of the Creators ages ago (since it is the most widespread usage for them).

**Aldar’s Star:** It is very bright and greenish, but only appears about once every seven years and remains

clearly visible for about nine days, slowly crossing the sky each night until it is no longer visible. It usually even remains visible into the morning after most of the other stars have already gone.

**Krand's Star:** Although not as bright as the others it is bigger than any of them and remains visible for about sixty days in the night sky. It only appears once every fourteen years, however, and only in the winter months. It has a slight bluish tint to it and its colors seems to shift slowly from one shade to another.

**Meldor's Star:** This is the most common of the special stars since it can be seen about once a year and remains clearly visible for about fourteen days in the night sky. It appears as a pale orange star that burns brighter than anything else in the night sky, unless Aldar's Star is also visible.

**Zen's Star:** As the rarest of these special stars it only appears once every seventy years, but stays visible in the night sky for almost half the year, barely changing positions each night. It appears as a bright yellow star that shimmers slightly when the sky is clear enough to observe it.

**Gont-Dar-Rok's Star:** It appears as a pulsating red star, although closer inspection shows that it is actually two red stars spinning around each other. It only appears once every twenty-six years and stays in the night sky for about forty-two days. Most cultures see it as a bad omen.

**The Council:** This is a whole constellation of stars that appears about once every fourteen years, but then stays visible for about 120 days. It is made up of eight stars that form a rough circle in the northern skyline.

## Setting the Clock

Although every GM is free to set their adventures in any time they want, I have included this section for those that want to stay close to or along with the current official times of the world. The listing in this section is used as a starting point for adventures set in Karn's "modern" age (as of this writing).

It is the 82nd Cycle of Karn according to the Creators Church of Karn's official calendar and it is the year of the Gold Eagle. This means that there have been 81 seventy-year cycles before this one and we are in the 55th year of the current one.

The first full Mother moon will be on the 7th and the first full Daughter moon will be on the 24th. This

makes the first new Mother moon on the 19th and the first new Daughter moon on the 11th. The two-day full daughter falls in the Month of the Moon on the 11th and 12th days of this year. Plus the 1st day of the year is the 8th day of the 14 days that Meldor's Star is visible in the night sky.

I plan on having official calendars of Karn elsewhere on the site, but when they are going to be put up or updated and who all will have access to them has not been decided as of this writing. That will be the easiest way to set your calendars in alignment with the official ones, but you can do it with this information here.