



CHAPTER IX : FRIENDS & FOES

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Far more dangerous than the creatures which have sprung up in the time since Constantine are the humans and their goals. Fellow man can be far more destructive and dangerous than even a giant on a rampage.

The beasts that are detailed here have often been created or transported to earth by one of the rogue magi of the Saeculum Magorum, the time of the mages. Many of the magi of that time created guardians or summoned them from other planes as they could not trust the humans of this world to protect them. When their time past, these creatures became free from all bonds. Some went into the world and multiplied while others died or were forced from earth. Some priests believe that certain of these creatures have always been here but have gone unseen or only occasionally glimpsed. This belief is backed by the stories of the gods, their creation, and their part in the creations of the monsters. It is difficult to say which is the truth and most agree that it does not matter as the beasts live in the lands of the Empire now and must be dealt with.



Alfar

“As we traveled near Trolldheim in the lands of Skandia we came upon an exceptional city, situated overlooking the sea. Its walls were of formidable height and well manned. Approaching the gates we were greeted by a tall warrior very beautiful to look upon. He greeted us in the language of the Skandians and when we haltingly answered in broken phrase, he responded in Latin. He asked that we relinquish our weapons and come inside the city.

Once inside we found soaring buildings and colorful facades. The people all about were curious of us but unafraid. We met their leader, Hjellar, and he told us of a threat of Svartálfar to the north. He offered to let us winter in his care and we were obliged being tired of our journeys.” - Sextus Tullius, Of the North

The Alfar are broken into two different groups. The Ljosálfar are the elves of light from the Norse and German mythology. They are as tall as a man and very beautiful. They are skilled warriors but not as powerful as a man. The common belief among the Norse is that they pursue evil to this plane (Midgard). The truth of the matter is that the Ljosálfar prefer to wait in their city, Aflame, on the southern border of Trolldheim awaiting an unknown event. They will aid humans at times, although their aid comes at a price.

The Svartálfar are the second kind of Alfar sometimes referred to as the Black Alf. They are the opposite of the Ljosálfar in that they seldom help any but themselves. It is rumored that they were banished from Aflame due to some treachery against the Skandian gods, who all Alfar worship. They are terribly intelligent, and are often behind some of the most fearsome acts of violence and terror in the north. They hire themselves out to the highest bidder as warriors of no conscience and little morals. The Svartálfar live in an underground city called Svartheim somewhere on the border with Finland. Few ever get to visit the city but those who have tell of beautiful crystal caves and magical wonders that boggle the mind. The legends of the Norse say that if the Svartálfar are exposed to sunlight they will turn to stone, but this is not true. The Svartálf of the modern Empire shuns the sun but is not poorly affected by it. Truly, the greatest weakness of the Svartálf is their overconfidence. They believe all mortals to be beneath them. They view most mortals to be worthy only of being their slaves. Those they consider worthy to work for are usually only the most powerful, wealthy and intelligent of a race. The Svartálfar will abandon their employer if they believe they are losing. The Svartálfar do not believe in lost causes.

ALFAR

In addition to being skilled warriors the Svartálfar and the Ljosálfar are skilled craftsmen. They are not as skilled as the Dwarves but are none the less better than the average human craftsmen. How each race deals with trading their goods depends on what they want or need. The Ljosálfar deal for silver and precious metals although occasionally, must trade for food. The Svartálfar value gems, iron and wood. In truth, they may even deal for services such as retrieval of rare items or materials. Much of it depends on the needs of the craftsman and the community.



The Alfar were first sighted nearly 400 years ago by the Skandians. They seem to be immortal in that they do not die of old age, although they may be slain with weapons or die of illness. They are found in their homelands, Skandia and throughout the Roman Empire. Groups of Svartálfar have been found in the employ of the Alkasatians and the Jade Empire as well as less reputable Romans. Romans typically prefer to employ the more difficult Ljosálfar as body guards and advisers, since they take their contracts more seriously than their darker brothers. Many Romans are rejected by Ljosálfar warriors and advisers because they have a “taint” on them. Usually this refers to cowardice or a tendency for deceit. Alfar are said to be able to smell the taint of a persons soul. Whether this is true or not has not been proven.

The Ljosálfar value truth, bravery, and a sharp mind. They feel the Svartálfar are not without these merits but that they

sometimes forget themselves. Humans are viewed as children still finding their way and in need of guidance which the Alfar should supply. The Ljosálfar are known especially for their ships. These are not for sale but they will transport people if their cause is just and they have the fare. The ships are magical and are capable of moving against the wind or even with no wind. They are self repairing and nearly unsinkable. The Roman navy is desperate to get their hands on one of these ships or even better the knowledge of how to construct them. The Skandians desire them just as much but respect the Ljosálfar as agents of the gods. The Alfar do not discriminate between women and men in any way. All Alfar are free to pursue whatever profession they wish. This occasionally leads to problems with the humans. An Alfa, a female Alf, will not tolerate being condescended to which gains them a reputation for haughtiness among humans. Their long lives also lead to cultural misunderstandings with Romans, who have difficulty dealing with beings who are able to remember Constantine.

The Ljosálfar are ruled by two kings who are each elected for 20 years. Each election is offset by 10 years so that there is always someone who is experienced on the throne. Everyone who is present in Aflame is allowed to vote. The Svartálfar have only one king who rules until he dies. He may be challenged at any time by any Svartálf to single combat. The battle is to the death and if the current king is defeated the winner is able to name the new king. This often leads to a rash of change of leadership for the Svartálfar and helps keep them from becoming too organized and taking over neighboring Finland.

The Alfar have recently established embassies in the Roman cities of Roma, Constancia and Aelios. They have had embassies in the Skandian kingdoms for nearly 150 years.

Ljosálfar wear a form of studded leather armor and a banded armor helmet. Svartálfar wear a light chain and a plate helm.

Physical & Social Appearance: Alfar

Height: 5'6" - 6'

Weight: 150 lbs - 200 lbs

Eye Color: Blue, Grey, Black

Skin Color: White (Ljosálfar), Black (Svartálfar)

Hair Color: Blond (Ljosálfar), Black (Svartálfar)

Social Organization: Hierarchical

Alfar, Ljosálfar

Type: 5th Level Humanoid (Elf)

Size: Medium

Speed: 30 ft.

Abilities: Str +2, Dex +5, Con +1, Int +2, Wis +3, Cha +0

Skills: Craft (shipwright) 8 (+10), Navigate 8 (+13), Notice 8 (+11), Stealth 8 (+13)

Feats: Attack Focus (sword), Attack Specialization (sword), Attractive B, Heavy Armor Training B, Light Armor Training B, Night Vision B, Weapon Training B

Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Detect Taint

Combat: Attack +8 (+3 base, +5 Dex) (+9 with sword), Damage +6 (sword) or +3 (crossbow), Defense: Dodge/Parry +8/+5 (+3 base, +5 Dex or +2 Str), Initiative +5

Saving Throws: Toughness +2 (+1 Con, +1 leather armor), Fortitude +2 (+1 base, +1 Con), Reflex +9 (+4 base, +5 Dex), Will +4 (+1 base, +3 Wis)

Spirit Points: 50

Detect Taint: Ljosálfar can sense a person's vice nature simply by observing them for a few minutes. They can also tell immediately whether the person they look upon has acquired any corruption.

Alfar, Svartálfar

Type: 5th Level Humanoid (Elf)

Size: Medium

Speed: 30 ft.

Abilities: Str +3, Dex +4, Con +2, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha -1

Skills: Craft (blacksmith) 8 (+10), Intimidate 8 (+7), Notice 8 (+10), Stealth 8 (+12)

Feats: Attack Focus (warhammer), Attack Specialization (warhammer), Heavy Armor Training B, Light Armor Training B, Night Vision B, Weapon Training B

Traits: Darkvision 60 ft., Detect Taint, Supernatural Resistance 13

Combat: Attack +7 (+3 base, +4 Dex) (+8 with sword), Damage +7 (sword) or +5 (shortbow), Defense: Dodge/Parry +7/+6 (+3 base, +4 Dex or +3 Str), Initiative +4

Saving Throws: Toughness +5 (+2 Con, +3 chain armor), Fortitude +3 (+1 base, +2 Con), Reflex +8 (+4 base, +4 Dex), Will +3 (+1 base, +2 Wis)

Spirit Points: 50

Detect Taint: Svartálfar can sense a person's vice nature simply by observing them for a few minutes. They can also tell immediately whether the person they look upon has acquired any corruption.

Amazon

"They strode across the field as visions of beauty. Swift but deadly we could not evade them nor could we capture them. Deadly with bows as well as sword they wore heavy armor of the infantry. Later I would learn of their homes on the shores of the Pontus Euxinus and the sister who had colonized Africa. The size of these woman would always be the first thought of any outsider followed by comments on their beauty." - Epicycles of Athens

The Amazons are a tribe of women who have forsaken men in favor of self reliance. The legends of these beautiful and strong women appear in a number of cultures but in the eleventh century of the City the first of their cities were

discovered near Pontus Euxinus (the Black Sea). Soon after that another city was found in central Africa. These appear to be two very different tribes of Amazons. The Euxinus Amazons are Greek speaking and culturally, they are highly Hellenized. They view men as natural slaves who are incapable of taking care of themselves. The Euxini believe that they best serve the human race by keeping men subservient to women. To this end boy babies are often left exposed in the tradition of girl babies of Sparta if viewed to have undesirable traits. Male slaves are tolerated but only to the extent of their position. In other words, they are free to do as they will as long as they perform their duties and obey any woman. This practice has been going on for generations, almost 300 years, and it has had an impact on the men of the Amazons. They are considered superior slave stock in other cultures for their docility.



AMAZON

The Euxini Amazons organize themselves into native born warriors called Amazons, the Perioeci or women who joined the Amazons from other civilizations, and men who are slaves. The Perioeci often fill the role of merchants, traders and ambassadors. They also handle the slave trades. All women in the Euxini city-states can vote. They elect their queens who rule over the city-state and then the queens gather every ten years in secret to elect four Tetrachs to rule the Amazons in all matters. These Tetrachs can be removed at any time by the queens.