

# HOUSE CORVEAUX

THE HOUSE CORVEAUX SUPPLEMENT FOR THE ELDRITCH LIVE ACTION ROLEPLAYING GAME

The ELDRITCH Live Action Roleplaying game is a lovingly crafted work of fiction created by John Kozar, Faye Ferguson, and Spencer McGhin, with additional input from, and content created by Megan Durham, Jessica Sills, Thomas Marshbanks, Galen Hall, and Joe Meyer. Special thanks to Lehanna Allen, Carl Holzbog, and anyone else who ever listened to us prattle on about the project. Thanks to everyone who helped to make this strange dream a reality.

A very special thank you to our Kickstarter backers: Jillian Bendixen, David Paul, Charles Cadwallader, Sam Fitterman, Megan Durham, Todd Branch, Joseph Walterbach, Mark Cockerham, Edward Febish, Aaron Alberg, Talieson C. Solmon, Josh Fryer, Alex Gardipe, Adrian Lippy, Chris Pozsgai, Tony Davis, Amanda Pink, Mario Medina, Sarah Robicheau, Josh Dillard, Jeff Kramer, Thomas McFarland, Stephan Empson, Alexander West, Jenna Montgomery, Erika Shaffer, Kathy Empson, Kerry Beckett, Kevin Bryan, Gabriel Taylor, David Hollingsworth, Joseph Klas, Nick Reno, Jen Coghill, Edite Forman, Will Bishop, Phillip Brown, Daniel Slentz, Russ Skurski, Tony DeFrancisco, Mark Butler, Cefyn Shryock, Sethron Bowman, Marc Schiermeier, Elyssa Lind, Jenna Jennings, James Yarton, Julie Laccarino, Luke Barker, Mae Empson, Cass McQueen, and Peter Whale.

All art by William Weird, Mel De Carvalho

Art direction by Spencer McGhin and John Kozar.

# HOUSE CORVEAUX

## WELCOME TO ARNESSE...

Eight great houses vie for control amidst a world in ruin after centuries of conflict and war. Ancient institutions scheme amongst the rulership of the land for their own small piece of the empire. This is the world of Eldritch. With this guide, you hold the key the gates of a world rife with bitter conflict, political turmoil, and mysteries both arcane and unseen. Ancient alliances are broken as quickly as they are forged. Lines are blurred between ally and enemy. Heroes are found in the most unlikely of places. The world is awakening anew. Where will you find your place in this forgotten dream?

## USING THIS GUIDE

The player supplements for Eldritch are intended to provide detail information beyond that which is known to the general player population. All information in this guide is to be taken as in-play information, known by you and others in your corresponding faction. You may over the course of Eldritch events discover new information that corresponds to your faction, however you will be able to share this information as you wish.

## SUMMARY

---

### CREED

"Farther!"

### CASTLE

Vairsing Keep

### PROTECTORATE

The Midlands

## MAJOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND HOUSE FIGURES

### Desmond Corveaux

*Lord Paragon Desmond Corveaux*

Age: 61

Desmond Corveaux is the current Lord Paragon of House Corveaux. His mother was the previous Lady Paragon Brighid Corveaux, a famously fierce warrior woman all the way up until her death at the age of 71 in 755 A.S. Desmond inherited his mother's fierceness, and he exhibited stern fairness and

equality during his proving. It was an easy decision for the Lady Brighid to claim him as her heir. Desmond has held the Corveaux seat of power for twenty-two years, with the Lady Amelie Corveaux of Suthwater by his side.

### Amelie Corveaux

*Lady Amelie Corveaux of Suthwater*

Age: 42

Amelie Corveaux is the wife of Lord Paragon Desmond Corveaux, and cousin of Lady Jeanne Corveaux of Suthwater, the current Lady of Suthwater. She is a quiet, but kindly woman. She doesn't speak much when she is present at council, but she has much stronger opinions about certain subjects than she leads on. Many believe that she has become a master at manipulating Desmond Corveaux's decisions behind closed doors. And when one is married to the Lord Paragon of a Protectorate, that is the only person that needs to be persuaded.

### Aramaux Corveaux

*Lord Aramaux Corveaux, Knight Commander of the Vermilion Order*

Age: 23

Aramaux is the first son of Desmond and Amelie, and Lord Protector of Corveaux. He leads the Corveaux's elite cavalry in the Vermilion Order as a Knight Commander. Last year, he won his father's proving and was named heir of House Corveaux; when Desmond Corveaux is ready to step down, Aramaux will take his place as Lord Paragon. In the meantime, Aramaux exhibits the classic qualities of a Corveaux Lord, with the exception of his promiscuity. He is an exceptionally handsome young man and has often been caught with several young Commonfolk women in his chambers. Luckily, his escapades have been mostly kept quiet by the family, out of necessity, for the sake of his knighthood in the Vermilion Order. His vow of celibacy will be lifted once he takes his place as Lord Paragon, but until then, word of his wanton behaviors must be kept from loud mouths.

### Genvieve Corveaux

*Lady Genvieve Corveaux*

Age: 18

Genvieve is the sickly and weak first daughter of Desmond and Amelie. She is quite intelligent and spends most of her time reading and sewing. She has a special place in her brother Aramaux's heart, who will drop everything and come to her aid whenever she has a spell due to her illness. He will often carry her wherever she desires when she is too weak to

walk. Most often this is to Vairsing's extensive library. Despite her condition, she does her best to attend noble meetings and is often quite outspoken in them. She is the opposite of her mother in that she attempts to persuade all, rather than one.

#### **Emmeline Corveaux**

*Lady Emmeline Corveaux*

Age: 31

Emmeline is the first daughter of the previous Lady Paragon Brighid Corveaux, sister of Lord Paragon Desmond Corveaux, and wife of Lord Rylen Aragon. Since marrying Rylen ten years ago, she moved to the Tarkathi city of Taliesin where she was instrumental in reopening the trade routes through the area. With her marriage, trade between King's Crossing and Tarkath has flourished. She and Rylen have three young children; Arman, Meira, and Elior.

#### **Tomas Corveaux**

*Lord Tomas Corveaux*

Age: 24

Tomas is the second son of the previous Lady Paragon Brighid Corveaux and brother of Lord Paragon Desmond Corveaux. He is a knight of the Vermilion Order and takes his vows of celibacy seriously, unlike his nephew, Aramaux. He participated in Desmond Corveaux's proving and was equal to Aramaux in all but one round of the competition. He was unable to best him in a sword fight and only lost due to his foot slipping at an inopportune moment. Some members of House Corveaux are aware of Aramaux's vow-breaking behaviors and strongly believe that Tomas should have been named the heir, despite being defeated in martial combat. Since losing the proving, Tomas has left Vairsing to travel Arnesse on a personal quest of unknown nature.

#### **Garamond Corveaux**

*Lord Garamond Corveaux of King's Crossing*

Age: 37

Garamond is the current ruler of the city of King's Crossing, the second seat of power for the Corveauxs, and the head of the Corveaux cadet house of King's Crossing. He has never been known to be interested in politics, but he excels in military and security tactics. Before he came to power, the city of King's Crossing had begun to earn a reputation as a crime hotbed. When his father held his proving, he chose Garamond as his heir, knowing that his skill set would be a boon to the city; and he was correct. Garamond was matched

with Lady Jocelyn Bannon, now Lady Jocelyn Corveaux, so that she might make up for his lack of politicking.

#### **Jeanne Corveaux**

*Lady Jeanne Corveaux of Suthwater*

Age: 43

Jeanne is the current ruler of the city of Orgonne, the third seat of power for the Corveauxs, and the head of the Corveaux cadet house of Suthwater. She has ruled over Orgonne for the last fifteen years, after she was named heir at her uncle's proving. Jeanne has proved to be an exceptionally fair ruler. Her main focuses have been improving sea trade relations with the Cirque and protecting the region from pirate and brigand attacks. She is currently widowed; her husband, Lord Adrian Penrose, was killed in battle three years ago.

#### **Cedric Corveaux**

*Lord Cedric Corveaux, Knight Commander of the Vermilion Order*

Age: 44

Cedric is the second cousin of Lord Paragon Desmond Corveaux and a Knight Commander of the Vermilion Order. He is stationed in Vairsing and serves as Desmond's foremost advisor. Cedric is unique in the Vermilion Order in that he has a wife, Lady Michelle Penrose. At the age of eighteen they were betrothed, and that same year, they gave birth to twins, Arthur and Analise. Two years later they had a third child, Renee. Shortly afterwards, Cedric felt that his true calling in life was to become a knight and so he took his vows and joined the Vermilion Order. He did not need to annul his marriage with Michelle, but he has stayed true to his vow of celibacy since being initiated. Today, he has over twenty years of experience as a seasoned knight and has never been known to poorly advise the Lord Paragon.

#### **Rufus**

*Master Rufus, Preceptor of the Apotheca*

Age: 38

Rufus was a lowborn squire for a knight of the Order of Mercy when he first met a member of the Apotheca. He was helping to treat a leg wound on a man who had been fighting brigands near the coast when a magister approached to give the victim a pain alleviating decoction. The magister noted Rufus' leg splinting technique and briefly showed him how to properly set a broken limb. He complimented Rufus on his quick learning and suggested that he should look in to apprenticing with the Apotheca. Today, after years of intense study and climbing the ranks

of the Apotheca, Rufus serves under Lord Desmond in Vairsing. His focus is on that of being the house physician, but he also specializes in Corveaux and Castellan history, with a particular interest in architecture.

## QUOTES

---

“Reward does not beget honor; it is the honorable act that begets reward.”

“Freedom is a swift horse and a sword in hand.”

“The bird of prey needs only to look down.”

## HISTORY

---

The following section details that common historical information known to the members of the faction. While there is certainly more history to the faction, it will need to be discovered via the proper in-game channels.

### THE GREAT WAR - 441 A.S. – 451 A.S.

House Corveaux began as a High House to House Castellan, before the Great War. The Castellans were, and still are, famous throughout Arnesse for their architecture and advanced construction techniques. They prized their architects and engineers and greatly rewarded those who made advancements in the technology of the time. The Castellans also introduced the concept of Freemen to Arnesse; they gave serfs the ability to earn freedom within their kingdom and in turn, their peasantry was happier and more productive. They are still remembered as the most fair and just of people.

House Bannon had been a powerful force in the rulership of Arnesse long before the Great War. House Castellan was steadfast beside them, one of their greatest allies, and House Corveaux continued that tradition after the death of the Castellan line. All members of House Corveaux know the tale of the monarchy's founding, of the First King, Edric Bannon I, and his queen, Lady Desrys Castellan. That, in 440, the Magistrat Council, the rulers of Arnesse, was rocked by a massive explosion, killing most of their number. It was discovered that this tragedy was perpetrated by radical members of the Eldra faith, worshippers of the Old Gods, who sought to destabilize the government and end the restrictions that had been placed on their dangerous religious practices.

Prime Consul Edric Bannon, the leader of the Magistrat, survived the explosion and moved quickly to declare martial law, as well as passing the Faith Separation Act to forbid the

practice of religion of any kind in Arnesse. By 441 Prime Consul Edric had rallied four houses, Bannon, Castellan, Hale, and Richter to join him in destroying the Eldra Gods. Using immensely powerful magic, they bound these immortals to physical form and killed them with mighty enchanted weaponry. Fundamentally disagreeing with the cause to slay the Gods, House Athan, the ancestors of House Innis, joined with House Aragon, and rose to stop Bannon's army. House Athan was soundly defeated by the forces of House Richter and Hale in the Battle of Thornwood and House Aragon, along with their dragons, were defeated by the Bannons, Castellans, and the Richters at the Battle of Redwick. Within a year, the victorious army led by Lord Edric Bannon and Lord Edwyn Castellan had destroyed all the Old Gods of the Eldra faith.

In reward for his glorious victory, Edric Bannon was to be crowned King of Arnesse, supported by the victorious great houses as the rightful ruler. During their coronation, Edric and Desrys were brutally murdered by assassins from Houses Aragon and Athan. Lord Edric and Lady Desrys' daughter and heir, Lady Catherine, was coronated Queen Catherine Bannon I. Her retribution against those who killed her father would plunge the land into civil war for the next eight years. Seeking revenge for the death of their King and Queen, the forces of Bannon, Castellan, and Richter attacked Thornwood, and during the Second Battle of Thornwood, decimated House Athan. Seeking to liberate House Athan, Houses Rourke and Aragon attacked the Midlands and destroyed House Castellan, killing all of the men, women, and children in the entire family. House Bannon and Richter met the Aragons and the Rourkes at Belburn and crushed them in battle. In retribution for the death of her father, Catherine ordered four thousand prisoners of war crucified at every quarter mile along the Vermillion Road from Belburn to Highcourt. From that day forward, she was known as the Crimson Queen. Both the Aragon and Rourke retreated to their homelands, while Thornwood was occupied by the forces of House Bannon in a period known as the Bitter Harvest.

During this time, the Corveauxs rose up as a Great House after the death of House Castellan, like a phoenix from the ashes. The head of house of Corveaux was Lord Dorian Corveaux, cousin of Queen Desrys Castellan. Of all Castellan's High Houses, House Corveaux was closest in blood and strongest in power to the old Great House. It was not an easy transition for the Corveauxs, though. With the deep-seated freedom and autonomy that House Castellan encouraged, came rebellion and opposition when one of their High Houses attempted to fill their large shoes. Some High

Houses openly attacked House Corveaux; others refused to pay taxes or trade with them. Two actions supported House Corveaux's eventual success at control. The first was Lord Dorian Corveaux's quick pledge of loyalty to the new Queen Catherine Bannon after the murder of her father, who was the first monarch of Arnesse. It was a natural decision for the Corveauxs to continue the long-standing relationship between their predecessors and House Bannon. The second element was the fact that the other High Houses could not agree on who exactly they wanted to put forth to become the next Great House. In fact, a few openly denied the need for one and thought that the Midlands Protectorate would do better to become a land of city-states, with each High House ruling autonomously. This lack of unanimity made it possible for the Corveauxs to bring each of the High Houses to a heel, one by one.

In the last days of the Great War, House Aragon, House Athan, and House Rourke, desperate to win against insurmountable odds, summon incredible magics that bring about the Eldritch Cataclysm. Arnesse is plunged into a dark age and the land descends into chaos.

#### THE AGE OF KINGS - 451 A.S. — 760 A.S.

House Bannon and House Corveaux took leadership of a land in crisis during the Age of Kings. Magic formed a basis of society in Arnesse and in the wake of the Eldritch Cataclysm, without it, the people were lost. Many nobles took this disorder as a chance to betray their oaths and attempted to seize power over the land. The first decade of the Age of Kings was marked by constant strife in the newly formed monarchy. Queen Catherine rose as a ruler who, with the support of House Corveaux and their armies, managed her remaining vassals to defend the throne. Some nobles came willingly, others came at a price, and still others only came at the point of a sword. Those who would speak ill of House Bannon would come to call Queen Catherine's methods as cruel and even tyrannical, but there are few who challenge the fact that she was one of the greatest monarchs to have ever lived. By the time Queen Catherine's son Edric II took power in 497, the lands from the Thornwood to Tarkath had been brought to heel.

Edric II married a noblewoman of House Hale, Thyra, and while his reign was also marked by a great deal of strife and war, he managed to bring Everfrost under the control of the crown. He ruled until 515 when his son Richard I took the throne. Richard proved to be equally as capable as his grandmother as a warrior, but also a master at diplomacy and administration. He divided the Kingdom into Protectorates and established the position of Lord Paragon. At the time, it

was Lord Tomas Corveaux, grandson of Lord Dorian Corveaux, who became the first Lord Paragon of the Midlands. Richard I made several sweeping revisions to the law, including the standardization of taxes and better treatment for Commonfolk. He formed the King's Council to advise the monarch and created the Kingdom's treasury, the Royal Exchequer. He empowered both the Grand Bank and the Cirque to have more control over trade and banking. If there was a monarch who made the Kingdom into what it is today, it was Richard Bannon I.

During the reigns of Queen Catherine, King Edric II, and King Richard I, the Corveauxs took up residence in the Castellan built halls and began their rule. Since then, several things changed for the Midlands Protectorate. The Corveauxs were, and still are, proud of their ancestry, but they failed to live up to the architectural fame that the Castellans were known for. Yes, the Corveauxs lived in and maintained the grand constructions of the past, but what attempts they made to create impressive structures themselves fell flat. That isn't to say that their infrastructure crumbled; rather, the Midlands were and still are known across Arnesse as having the best roads and cities to travel through. When they couldn't seem to get far with the shoes of an architect, the Corveauxs tried on chivalry for size and found that they excelled. One of the tactics they used to unite the other High Houses under their banner was holding tournaments, in which the champions, and the houses they represented, were generously rewarded. Over time, these tournaments became increasingly important to the culture of the Midlands, as the High Houses vied for favor and recognition from the Corveaux family. In this way, the Corveauxs were able to maintain the military prowess of their predecessors.

In combination with this and the ideals of equality and freedom that permeated the Midlands society, the High Houses became Knight Houses. It began with House Perryn, who's lands the Ordo Erdani was headquartered in. In short, the Lord Perryn and the Knight Master of the Ordo Erdani had a dispute and one challenged the other to a duel. The Ordo Erdani knight bested the lord. Lord Perryn had no children of his own and he was so impressed by the knight's skill, and humility in victory, that he petitioned the Lord Paragon Corveaux to allow him to name the knight as his heir. The Lord Perryn didn't need explicit permission to name someone other than his own progeny as his heir, but House Corveaux granted the request, then promptly passed a law that definitively allowed any knight of the Midlands to be named the heir of a house.

The reign of Richard Bannon I's son was marked by a time of civil war and unrest. House Aragon had been building an army for some time, regaining strength after their downfall during the Great War, when they finally took an opportunity to attack the Sovereignlands. At the same time, a new faith rose in the Midlands, driven by a man named Magnus Blayne. When Richard II ordered Blayne's execution in 609, his followers managed to assassinate the King. Despite the fact that King Richard II and Lady Cateline Corveaux had a legitimate heir, Lady Anne Bannon, Richard II's brother, James, attempted to take the throne. Initially, the Corveaux's had been supporting House Bannon during the civil war, but when James betrayed their trust and began his march to Highcourt to take the throne, the Corveauxs withdrew their armies and rallied under Queen Cateline Corveaux. James Bannon's illegitimate reign lasted less than a year and the armies of Hector Aragon defeated his forces at Caddock Tor. Queen Cateline and Lord Hector Aragon formed an agreement; they arranged a marriage between Hector's son, Roland, and Cateline's daughter, Anne. Hector's son was crowned the first non-Bannon monarch in the history of the Kingdom, King Roland I, and Queen Anne, resentful of her uncle James' actions, spurned the Bannon name and henceforth was known as Anne Corveaux.

King Roland I and Queen Anne Corveaux took quick action to reform Arnesse. True to the Aragon and Corveaux ideals of freedom, they announced a reversal on the ban of worship in Arnesse and declared religious freedom for all. The Queen and her Corveaux family made a special gesture of gifting the Tarkath Protectorate to House Aragon. King Roland also restored House Athan to good standing; they renamed themselves House Innis and became the rulers of the newly formed Protectorate of the Northern Reaches. Lastly, the King and Queen granted the title of Great House to House Ulster, the Knight House of House Corveaux. House Ulster was loyal to the teachings of Magnus Blayne and so renamed themselves House Blayne. As for the fate of James Bannon, King Roland and Queen Anne had him publicly executed. His sons went into hiding and were not heard from for many years.

Unfortunately, the reign of the Corveaux-Aragon alliance was shortlived. Queen Anne died giving birth to her third child and King Roland died in 641. Doran Aragon, their son, ascended the throne at the age of eighteen with his uncle Lord Falk Aragon as his advisor. He announced his engagement to Lady Katelyn Valewood, but the young couple was murdered in cold blood at their wedding, and the crime was likely perpetrated by Rourke brigands. Doran's older brother and sister had already died years earlier and suspiciously, other

key members of the family who were in line to inherit the throne died shortly after Doran and Katelyn. The son of James Bannon, Richard, was crowned King Richard III and married Lady Helena Richter. Almost immediately after this, Lord Falk Aragon's brother died under mysterious circumstances and Lord Falk became the new Lord Paragon of House Aragon. These events, and their suspicious nature, soured the blossoming relationship that had been forming between House Corveaux and House Aragon.

Richard III and Helena Richter failed to have children for many years. King Richard adopted John Bannon of Caer Dorston as his heir. Though rumours abounded that their failure to have children was due to a loveless marriage, they did eventually have a son, Edwin. When Richard III died to illness, John and Edwin spent the next decade in a conflict known as the Brother's War to determine who would rule. With the aid of House Richter and Rourke, Edwin was able to best his brother and was crowned King Edwin I in 673. King Edwin took a Bannon bride, Queen Margaery, and focused much of his almost two-decade reign on improving infrastructure in the Kingdom. He constructed edifices such as the Rose Bridge across the River Ard, the Pontus Aqueducts, and the Arelate Amphitheater in Highcourt.

King Edwin I's reign came to an end in 692 under suspicious circumstances. His daughter and heir, Lady Eleanor Bannon, sought the throne, but a number of rivals to her claim emerged in the form of at least four bastard children who said that King Edwin was their father as well. For the next six years, Lady Eleanor fought what came to be known as the Bastard War. She was able to defeat two of the claimants, but in an effort to resolve the dispute without further bloodshed, she offered to marry one the strongest of the remaining bastards, Lord Royce Wolf, her half-brother. Despite the controversy behind their union, Lord Royce was crowned as King Miles I, alongside Queen Eleanor I, in 698 and with the strength of his army, they were able to bring the rest of the bastard rivals to heel by 700. Though it was widely rumored that Queen Eleanor and King Miles detested each other, a child was born from their union, Giles. King Miles had a fairly public affair with Lady Lesha Aragon, from which a son, Charles was born. King Miles accepted him as his own son and gave him a Bannon name. This action ultimately led to a duel with an Aragonese champion that cost the King his life.

Giles came of age in 727 and took the crown amid a time of famine and want in the land. He spent most of his twenty-five years as king improving the administrative structure of Arnesse. He would break most of the protectorates into subdivisions known as boroughs and encourage the use of

local officials such as castellans and sheriffs to regulate the flow of taxes. Giles also worked to restore and improve much of the trade and commerce infrastructure within the Kingdom and encouraged an expansion of power among the guilds. More towns and cities were founded during the reign of Giles I than by all the kings in the previous century. Giles took Lady Rosalind of House Bannon to be his queen and she bore him a son, Giles. Giles I also reworked much of the legal system in Arnesse, including the ability for spouses to annul their marriage. Rumors of malcontent between he and Queen Rosalind became reality when he annulled their marriage. However, the laws surrounding the annulment meant that Rosalind was still technically queen, and her son was still the heir. Realizing that she was a threat to Giles, she fled to the protection of her family members in House Hale with her son.

Shortly afterwards, King Giles I declared his intent to marry Lady Elysande of House Corveaux, daughter of Lady Margot Corveaux and Lord Keelan Innis. He wed Lady Elysande in 734 and Queen Elysande bore Giles a second child, Emma. Lady Elysande was deeply in love with the King, and her dedication to him was unwavering. But by 742, she had been unable to bear him a male heir. King Giles wrongfully accused her of infidelity and put her on trial where she was found guilty of adultery and executed. This act stabbed deeply at the heart of the Lady Paragon Brighid Corveaux, Queen Elysande's sister. King Giles wasn't done targeting the women of House Corveaux, though. Lady Anne Corveaux, Queen Elysande's younger cousin, caught his eye and he wed her in 743. But she died less than a year later in childbirth, and the child died with her. Struck by grief, the King's health began to fade. It is during this time that he took more serious action against the rise of the Aurorym faith. It is said that King Giles I had a vision that the Aurorym would lead to the ultimate demise of the Kingdom of Arnesse and he tried to place a series of restrictions on religion once again. This caused unrest among much of the populace and when he took Lady Maeve Innis as his bride in 748, rumors spread that she had bewitched him to turn him against the Aurorym.

When Queen Maeve was announced to be with child in 750, the fear of an Innis heir to the throne fueled the rumors that the King and Queen were both involved in witchcraft. These rumors were further fanned by his first son, Giles, who, unbeknownst to his father, had converted to the Aurorym faith. In secret, Giles II gathered troops from House Blayne, House Hale, and rebellious factions within House Bannon to march on Giles I's throne. Giles met his son on the field of Battle at Lanton. Despite the recent events with the Corveaux queens, the now Lord Paragon Desmond Corveaux sided with King Giles I to protect the kingdom from the rebellious Giles

II. If he could prevent him from defeating his father and ascending the throne, then Queen Elysande Corveaux's daughter, Lady Emma Bannon, would have a chance at becoming queen. Unfortunately, the combined forces under King Giles I were soundly defeated. The King and Queen were taken captive and put on trial for witchcraft. Supposedly during the conflict, Maeve bore the child who came to be known as the "Witch Prince", Reynard. Maeve tried to have the child secreted away, but he was hunted down and killed. King Giles and Queen Maeve were both found guilty of witchcraft and burned alive for their crimes. Some say that it was less Giles' involvement in any kind of sorcery and more the string of broken alliances and oaths in pursuit of the love that caused his undoing. His son was crowned King Giles II in 751. Giles II promptly cemented his alliance with House Blayne by marrying Aline, daughter of Lord Frederick Blayne. The King also took a significant portion of the Midlands Protectorate, known as The Troth, from the Corveauxs, and gifted it to House Blayne as the Hearthlands Protectorate. Severely weakened by the Battle of Lanton, House Corveaux was unable to fight back as their lands were taken from them.

## THE PRESENT

King Giles II has sat on the throne of Arnesse for twelve years. In that time, his relentless focus on faith and morality have begun to threaten much of what the Bannons have worked three centuries to create. While King Giles has stopped short of making the Aurorym faith the official religion of Arnesse, many feel that it is only a matter of time before he does. Some have blamed his wife, House Blayne, and even the Aurorym itself, but from all accounts, Giles is acting of a sound mind and genuinely seems to believe in the faith.

Giles could be a brilliant strategist, but he has neglected to attend to many of the diplomatic duties of a King and as a result, House Bannon's relations with the other Great Houses have grown more distant. Even traditional allies such as House Corveaux and House Hale are seen less frequently at court; their relations have soured as of late. Traditional threats to the throne like House Aragon and House Innis have grown quiet and there is a very real concern they are plotting something. King Giles has been one of the most divisive monarchs in the history of the Kingdom. He brings close to him those who are loyal to the Aurorym faith, and even created a seat on the King's Council, the Lord Patriarch, for a priest. He is regularly seen in the company of priests and commanded that all his immediate household and retainers convert. For House Corveaux, these are dangerous signs. The King's closeness with the Aurorym faith is a danger to the

freedom that the Corveaux's hold so dearly. This sentiment was only exacerbated when, in 760, the King passed an addendum to the law that made certain morality transgressions illegal and punishable. The decree has been met with extremely mixed feelings Kingdomwide and has been controversial. House Corveaux has even refused to enforce some of the law in the Midlands. Members of House Corveaux now pay close attention to Giles II's every action, watching him to see when or if he decides to enforce his religious practices on the rest of Arnesse.

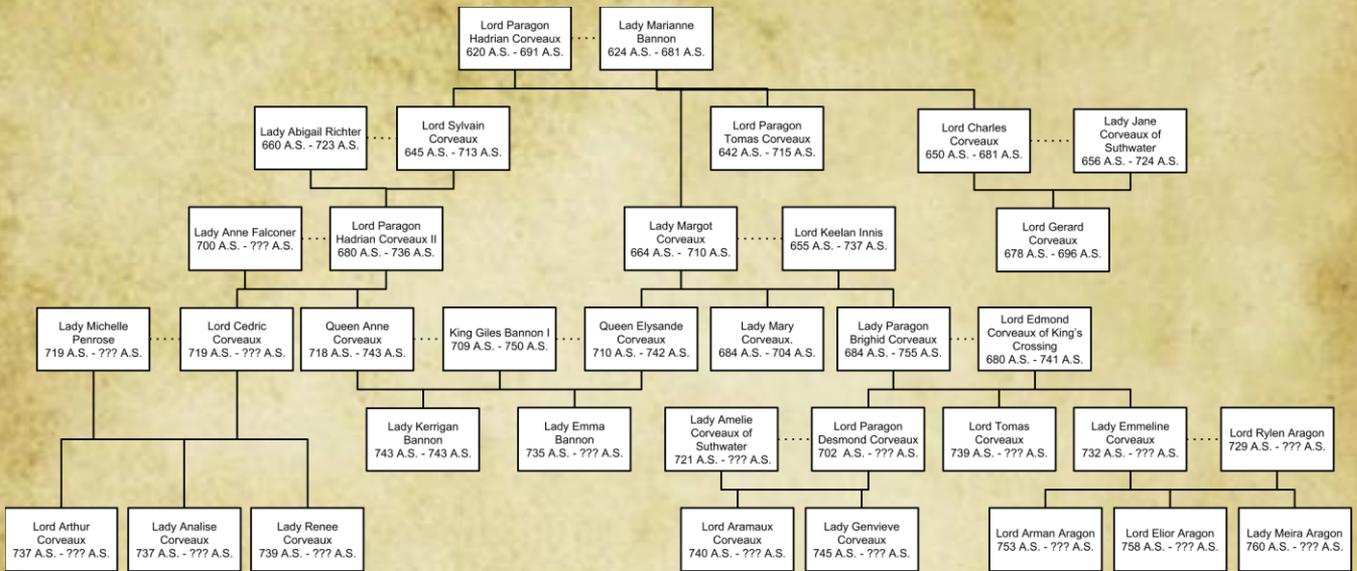
King Giles' focus on affairs of faith and morality has not just cost the Kingdom diplomatically but many of the hard-won changes put into place by his father Giles I, in areas of trade and commerce, have been forgotten or left by the wayside. This has caused a general decline in the prosperity of the realm and while times are not desperate yet, there are many who fear that they will be soon. Even the long-standing trade relationship between House Corveaux and House Bannon has decayed. In the wake of the monarch's neglect of these things, guilds like the Cirque and the Apotheca have stepped in and as a result, grown in strength. There have been instances of both those groups challenging the authority of nobles of late.

In light of the betrayals that House Corveaux has suffered from House Bannon, Lord Paragon Desmond Corveaux has looked to other houses for alliances. In 753, he rekindled the relationship between House Corveaux and House Aragon, once again, by engaging his sister Emmeline to the son of Lord Paragon Vaeros Aragon, Lord Rylen Aragon. There isn't a great deal of communication between House Corveaux and House Innis, but some marriages and small trade agreements between the two houses and their vassals have been going well for years now. Desmond is indifferent towards the Richters and has not yet made attempts to reach out to the Lord Paragon of the house, but some think that he would not shun a relationship if the opportunity presented itself.

There is a general split between the Knight Houses of Corveaux that has grown ever deeper over the years: the Horse Lords in the north and the Castle Lords in the east and south. The Horse Lords are made up of House Urqhart and House Perryn. These Houses have built their wood and stone keeps themselves and the layout of their cities are practical and utilitarian. Their people are hardy and are known for their diligence in work and life. To the Horse Lords, the large castles that the Castellans built did little to save the Great House from destruction. So why should they take pride in

them? The Castle Lords are comprised of House Corveaux, House Valewood, House Penrose, and House Falconer. They live in the still-standing Castellan keeps, proud of their lineages and history. The people that live in the cities of the Castle Lords appreciate the finer things in life a little more than their Horse Lord counterparts. Unlike the Horse Lords, the Castle Lords view their keeps as honored relics of the past, giant reminders of the greatness of House Castellan and the values that they stood for.

# CORVEAUX HIGH HOUSES



## HOUSE CORVEAUX OF KING'S CROSSING

Knighthood: Vermilion Order

Castle: King's Crossing

Rulers: Lord Garamond Corveaux and Lady Jocelyn Corveaux, Lord and Lady of King's Crossing

Idealism: Justice



The Corveaux line of King's Crossing has commanded the city and the surrounding region for nearly three hundred years. They have always had their work cut out for them, overseeing the huge influx of people and trade that floods the

city. The current ruler, Lord Garamond Corveaux, is not a particularly politically inclined man and so spends most of his energy acting as Knight Commander of the Vermilion Order stationed in the city. His laws are fair, his justice is swift; King's Crossing has seen a period of relative peace and low crime thanks to Garamond. His wife, Lady Jocelyn Corveaux, previously Lady Jocelyn Bannon, took control of the King's Crossing court the moment she stepped foot in the city. She has a propensity for political maneuvering and intrigue. Some think her cruel and there doesn't seem to be much love between she and Garamond. But one cannot deny that as a couple, they have secured prosperity for King's Crossing for many years.

### HOUSE CORVEAUX OF SUTHWATER

Knighthood: Vermilion Order

Castle: Orgonne Castle

Ruler: Lady Jeanne Corveaux, Lady of Suthwater

Idealism: Chivalry



The Corveauxs of Suthwater have only commanded the region for three generations. It began in 604 with Lord Trystane Corveaux, brother to the Lady Paragon Isolde Corveaux. At the time, Orgonne had been in decline; the people were constantly harried by pirates and brigands and they were struggling to produce enough food to survive on, let alone export. Lady Paragon Isolde asked her brother to relocate to Orgonne, along with a contingent of Vermilion Order knights, to secure the area and ensure its flourishing. Today, Orgonne is commanded by Lady Jeanne Corveaux of Suthwater. She has followed the command that Isolde gave

her predecessor nearly one hundred sixty years ago and continues to ensure the safety and success of the region. Lady Jeanne commands not only Vermilion Order knights, but naval soldiers as well. Orgonne is in a prime location for trade and the Cirque frequents the city.

### THE VERMILION ORDER



If there is a knight order in Arnesse that is considered the pinnacle of valor, honor, and chivalry, it is the one in direct service to House Corveaux – the legendary Vermilion Order. Where the order originated is a matter of some conjecture, but tales say that the order was founded by a knight of old – Arlin the Red. Ser Arlin was the sole survivor of a valorous last stand to defend a town against an overwhelmingly superior force who would have put all of them to the sword. Arlin returned, grieving for his slain comrades, his armor covered in their blood. Thus, he became known as ‘the Red’ and the order he founded to honor the slain became known as the Order of the Red, or the Vermillion Order. While the Vermilion Knights are known to be masters of combat, it is their virtue and honor which make them without parallel in every part of the Kingdom. The concept that a member of the Vermilion Order would ever lie, cheat, murder, or commit any unlawful act is nearly beyond comprehension by many. They are the first into a fight and the last to leave, even if that means their death. Their commitment to selfless acts has made them paragons of many communities and it is to them that many look in times of trouble. The Knights Vermilion often have a great deal of sway over others because of how they are viewed and are often seen as the embodiment of heroism by the people. The heraldry of the order is a shield

with two crossed swords set atop a pair of golden eagle's wings upon a field of vermillion. The Knights of the Vermilion have rank in their order but do not display it publicly. As a sign of their humility, the Vermilion Order does not take personal heraldry or coat of arms.

There are many in the Kingdom who would seek to join the Vermilion Order, but membership is very difficult to attain. Aspirants to the order must be willing to abandon their old life and leave all ties behind. Then, they must undergo a strict regime of both physical and mental training that pushes many to their limit. When they are deemed ready, they can go upon a quest that is given to them by their master. This quest often is extremely hard to complete, extremely dangerous, and often involves some type of self-sacrifice or mission of mercy. If they survive the quest, they must swear a hallowed code that calls for total adherence to chivalry, a vow of celibacy, and a true adherence to defending the weak and upholding justice. The Vermilion Order often give themselves entirely to the quest, travelling the Kingdom in search of purpose. They are known for protecting the innocent and taking on causes most would consider hopeless; many have lost their lives in this pursuit, dying for their honor and code. In battle, the vermillion banner on the field was a sign to their enemies that not only were the knights you faced willing to die for their cause, but that you had been judged by them to be unjust and unlawful. The leader or leaders of the Vermilion Order are kept as a closely guarded secret. It is said that the order is not led by one person but by a council of three, for it is felt that no knight is incorruptible and that so much power in the hands of one man or woman is bound to tempt them to darkness in time.

## HOUSE PERRYIN

Knighthood: Ordo Erdani

Castle: Avalen Keep

Ruler: Lord Etienne Perryn, Lord of Avalen

Idealism: Freedom



Amid the rolling plains of northern Corsicana lies the mighty keep of Avalen, home of the horse lords of House Perryn. The Perryn are known for breeding some of the finest warhorses in all Arnesse and the people who make these lands home regard horses as a sacred animal. There is a rivalry between House Perryn and the Bannon vassal house, House Marston. The Marstons are House Bannon's primary source of cavalry and so are in direct competition with the Perryns. There are persistent rumors that House Marston has stolen horses from House Perryn lands, to increase the quality of their steeds. But no one has been able to prove this.

The Knights sworn to House Perryn are the Ordo Erdani, a group of mounted warriors who are without peer in the saddle. The Ordo Erdani are known for two things: their expertise at mounted archery with a short bow, and their courier service, which has become a primary means of communication in the Kingdom. The Ordo Erdani were founded by a peasant knight named Ser Lena of Dunwillow, who distinguished herself by risking her life time and time again to ensure that messages were delivered on the field of battle and between commanders during times of war. With the patronage of House Perryn, Ser Lena went on to form an

order of courier knights that became masters of riding and speed over great distances. As word of the skill and reliability of these riders spread, the soon Ordo Erdani found that its skills were in high demand, even outside of war. The heraldry of the Ordo Erdani is a white horse set upon a field of forest green with three golden scrolls set above upon a brown border trimmed in gold. Knights of the order gain the ability to put one to five gold scrolls on their personal heraldry or coat of arms depending on rank.

The Ordo Erdani are also unique in that they have many knights who come from lowborn backgrounds. Perhaps it is their proximity to the Troth and House Blayne, but Northern Corsicana has always been a hotbed of unrest over social equality. House Perryn, almost by necessity, is one of the most progressive houses when it comes to promoting from among the ranks of the common people and as a result, the Ordo Erdani draw most of their squires from among the Commonfolk. While they are swift and fearsome in combat, the Erdani are best known for their messenger services. If you want a letter delivered in the Kingdom, you hire the Ordo Erdani. The order has founded chapter houses in almost every major city in the Kingdom of Arnesse, where those who wish to send a correspondence may pay a fee to see it sent to the desired destination. Using a combination of horses specifically bred to be hardy, fast, and possessed of high stamina and a series of way-stations where they could rest and change horses, the Erdani can make deliveries almost entirely without error. All members of the Order take an oath to uphold chivalric codes, but also swear to ensure their missives reach their destination and that the contents of such will be kept a secret. The Ordo Erdani are one of the most widespread knightly orders in the kingdom, it has almost two thousand knights and at least five times that number of retainers and support staff that assists them in their mission to deliver parcels. The leader of the Ordo Erdani is Knight Master Evelyn of Fairwater, a lowborn most renowned for her tournament victory over the famous knight Ser Lorence Corveaux of the Ordo de Leon. Since then, Ser Evelyn has risen quickly through the ranks of knighthood in House Perryn and now runs all the Erdani's operations from their central station in King's Crossing.

### HOUSE PERRYN OF THE GREEN

Knighthood: Ordo Erdani

Castle: Windsong Keep

Ruler: Ser Sherwyn of Redwick, Protector of Windsong

Idealism: Freedom

House Perryn's secondary seat is located southeast of Avalen, where the Mercy River breaks away from the great Gryphon

River. Ser Sherwyn of Redwick earned his position as Protector of Windsong by delivering more messages in the first ten years of his knighthood than fifty Ordo Erdani knights combined. His speed and efficiency earned him the title Sherwyn the Swift. Lord Etienne Perryn recognized his service by granting him rulership of Windsong Keep at the young age of twenty-eight and Ser Sherwyn translated his productivity into the governing of a keep quite well.

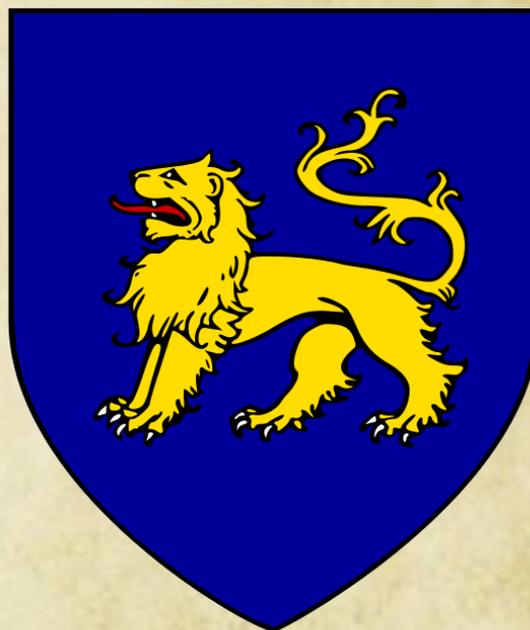
### HOUSE VALEWOOD

Knighthood: Order of the Lion

Castle: Lionguard Keep

Ruler: Lord Dominique Perryn and Lady Alexandrine Valewood, Lord and Lady of the Lionguard

Idealism: Tradition



Perhaps no other knight order embodies the ceremony, pomp, and Corveaux martial tradition quite like the Order of the Lion; the knights of House Valewood. They have a well-established reputation as being some of the best tournament knights in the lists and mounted fighters in all the Midlands. Their knack for showmanship has garnered them an air of arrogance, yet true to the knights of Corveaux they are largely humble in all they do. Though they may have the ability to impress a crowd, the tricks they use to do so are also taught as deadly fighting techniques for use in battle. Flying the great golden lion upon a field of Corveaux blue, a knight of the Order of the the Lion is unmistakable. Many can be found in the shining, wing emblazoned armors of their family, wielding heirloom weapons that have been lovingly

maintained and passed down from parent to child as they receive the sacred honor of knighthood. They commonly fly multi-colored tassels in the color of their house from their weapons and armor, both as a means of traditional decoration and with the more insidious intention of distracting their opponents. Unique among the Order of the Lion is their practice in the dual longsword style. While many knights and warriors may scoff at this technique, the Order of the Lion has turned what once was a tournament spectacle into something practical and uniquely devastating. Common among them is the saying, "A shield is only for them that believe they are to be struck." True to the code of most other Corveaux orders, the Order of the Lion holds honor in deed above all. They are often sent as guards to the Corveaux emissaries on diplomatic missions abroad. They speak plainly and without embellishment, seeking to amass a wealth of honorable acts such as to build their reputations among the others of their order and the knight orders of Corveaux.

The current lady and knight master of the order is Lady Alexandrine Valewood. The Valewoods have held southern Orgonne for centuries and have ensured their line continues in the tradition of the Corveaux knight houses through sending their offspring to be taught in all manner of martial styles and in the advanced academic pursuits. Her castle, Lionguard, sits to the south in the lush coastal region of Orgonne. It is one of the oldest keeps in the Midlands, having been built as a bastion against an incursion into Corveaux lands by sea. Integral to its defenses are the four heavily fortified stone towers along the coast which, along with the keep, makes up the Lion's Paw.

## HOUSE FALCONER

Knighthood: Order of the Gryphon

Castle: The Aviary

Ruler: Lord Renaud Falconer, Lord of the Spires

Idealism: Honor



House Falconer traces its lineage back to the time of the Castellan builders. They were said to ride atop large gryphons, charging into enemy lines with their great silver lances, wearing shining, winged helmets. The Falconer's of today tell a different story, however. Though they may not keep any fabled gryphons among their stables, they are renowned among the Midlands for training large golden eagles that are used to both hunt and terrorize the battlefield, tearing into the enemy with razor sharp beaks and talons. To receive a Falconer bird is to be honored with a sacred gift. For as practical as they are, so too do Corveaux lords and ladies treasure these great birds as reminders of their proud heritage.

As is their namesake, House Falconer commands the Order of the Gryphon, and at their head is Sir Alain Falconer. Many say he is one of the finest swordsmen in the Midlands, and it would seem so given his win record at the tournaments of the kingdom. Whereas it is said the gryphon riders of old used to fire upon the enemy with large, wooden bows, the knights of the order now train in the use of many different weapon styles, including the longsword, shield, and the spear.

Their keep, the Aviary, is in the southern region of Corsicana

abutting the Spires of Castellan. The white keep and its surrounding village winds high up the north face of Gryphon's Peak, a snowy summit stretching high into the clouds. The knights here train high upon the summit, conditioning their constitutions through breathing the thin air and climbing the treacherous cliff sides of the mountain. Would-be inductees to the order often seek to test their mettle upon the sheer, south face of the peak, many of whom have lost their lives when missing a small hand or foothold.

The code of the order dictates that honor in all things is paramount to even your allegiance to your lord. For if they are acting without honor, it is your sworn duty as a knight of the order to put the legacy of the order first. For no man who is below honor is above judgement or justice. Upon their banners is emblazoned the golden gryphon of their namesake, upon a Corveaux field of blue. Among their tenets is the belief that all shall be shown mercy that should desire it, although the deceptions of evil warrant a swift and harsh retribution; the judgement of the gryphon. Though the other knight orders of Corveaux may be flashy and maintain an air of pomp, the Order of the Gryphon espouses the beliefs of modesty, integrity, and unbreakable spirit in all they do.

#### HOUSE PENROSE

Knighthood: Order of Mercy

Castle: Esslyn Castle

Ruler: Lord Judoc Penrose and Lady Abella Penrose, Lord and Lady of Mercy

Idealism: Mercy



Not all knights are sworn to be masters of warcraft or seek to excel on the tournament field. Some, like the Order of Mercy, seek to aid the wounded and bring comfort to those who are afflicted by the horrors of conflict. It is said that the Order of Mercy is one of the oldest and longest lasting knight orders in all Arnesse and that while they may serve House Penrose today, they have served many great noble houses before them. The origins of the Order of Mercy is shrouded in mystery but it is said they were founded by an ancient order of priests known as the ephors in the days before the great houses were founded. The priests, not being warriors, were not able to help those who had been most grievously injured on the field of battle so they chose an order of knights and instructed them in their healing arts. Since then, the art of battlefield medicine has spread throughout Arnesse, but it's origins lay within the Order of Mercy. Today, the Order of Mercy knights are widely regarded as experts in the field and it is not uncommon for knights from all over the Kingdom to come and seek instruction in the arts of healing with them at Esslyn Castle in the Midlands. The heraldry of the Order of Mercy is strikingly similar to that of the Apotheca; this only seems to fuel speculation that these two organizations share common origins. One can easily identify the Order of Mercy by their auxilio, a golden rod with the wings of a hawk known, wrapped in grey bandages upon a white field. A knight of the Order of Mercy is entitled to wear between one and five auxilio on their heraldry or personal coat of arms, depending on their rank within the order.

While the Order of Mercy's origins may have lay with the priest of old, they long ago shed the trappings of religion and became a secular organization. Rumors still abound of them somehow being connected to the Aurorym faith, but there is no evidence of this. They do share a working and healthy relationship with the Apotheca and it is not uncommon to see members of the Order working side by side with Magisters to tend to the wounded. The Apotheca has even granted the Order of Mercy, and other similar knight orders a limited ability to craft apothecary decoctions of a medicinal nature. The Order of Mercy is based in the Midlands in the service of House Corveaux, but it is not uncommon to see their banners on battlefields throughout the Kingdom; a fact that has made House Penrose very wealthy, for healing services do not come cheaply. To become a member of the Order of Mercy, a knight must swear a chivalric code as well as an oath to protect and aid the injured, even at the cost of their own life. They also are required to take an oath that forbid them to injure another unless it is in their own defense or in the defense of the defenseless. Despite this, many knights of this order are well trained in combat and arms and warriors who

assume a member of the Order of Mercy is weak and incapable often pay for that mistake with their lives. The leader of the Order of Mercy is Knight Master Augustin Penrose. Ser Augustin has been the leader of the Order of Mercy for the better part of thirty years and he is now well into his sixties. Though he is an old man, he is surprisingly spry and is still seen at battle sites tending to the wounded and sick. If one were wounded in battle, they would be fortunate indeed to have the expert hands of Ser Penrose tend to their injuries. Ser Augustin has worked tirelessly to maintain the neutrality and impartiality of the Order of Mercy and they are well known for treating the injuries of both friends and foes alike in war. This has made them very popular and well-loved among the warriors of the Kingdom and the people.

### HOUSE PENROSE OF WELLS

Knighthood: Order of Mercy

Castle: Esslyn Castle

Ruler: Lord Judoc Penrose and Lady Abella Penrose, Lord and Lady of Mercy

Idealism: Mercy

At the fork of the Gryphon River sits the Keep of Ninewells. Its protector is Ser Felice Penrose, first-born daughter of Knight Master Augustin Penrose. The city has the cleanest water in the majority of Arnesse. There are eight wells scattered within the walls of the keep. One in the courtyard, two in the gardens, another in the vast kitchens... A ninth well is rumored to be hidden in the keep somewhere, its water said to restore life to a person on their deathbed, no matter their ailment. This rumor brings flocks of ill pilgrims to the area, all hoping to find and drink from the well. Ser Felice can't provide them exactly what they seek, but she welcomes them into the keep's infirmary and the Order of Mercy treats their ailments. Despite the aid, the knights still find some travellers wandering the halls of the keep where they shouldn't be, searching for the mythical well.

### HOUSE URQHART

Knighthood: Knights of the Black Watch

Castle: Stag's Leap

Ruler: Lord Torr Urqhart and Lady Katarin Falconer, Lord and Lady of the Hunt

Idealism: Law



Every family has a black sheep. While the Vermilion Order is known for valor, the Order of the Lion for ceremony, and the Order of the Gryphon for modesty, the Knights of the Black Watch are first and foremost recognized for faultless duty. The Black Watch traces its origins to the ancient rule of House Castellan. Hundreds of years ago, the Castellans introduced the Freeman caste to their lands, allowing Serfs to pay off their debts and earn their freedom. When word spread of this, an influx of serfs attempted to immigrate to the Midlands from the surrounding regions. This strained the relations between House Castellan and the other Great Houses, who were losing serfs by the hundreds. Stationed on the border of the Corsicana region and the Sovereignlands, House Urqhart stepped up as protectors of the boundary. Their outward appearance was that of making sacrifices in order to maintain inter-House relationships and prevent overpopulation of the Midlands. But soon after they began to actively turn serfs away and return them to the House lands to which they belonged, House Urqhart acquired key marriage proposals from House Bannon and House Castellan.

House Urqhart's new knight order built towers at strategic locations along the western borders of Corsicana. On either side of these towers, the knights burned the plains grasses in fifty-foot-wide lines that stretched as far as the eye could see. The plains grasses were often tall enough to conceal groups of serfs as they snuck across the border, but the blackened, bare

lines made it impossible for them to hide. The watchmen were soon referred to as the Black Knights, and House Urqhart adopted the name. The Knights of the Black Watch were not popular among the Commonfolk then, and their reputation has not improved today. Even among some of the other Knight Houses, they are disfavored. The rivalry between House Urqhart and House Perryn is well known. The Perryns have a partiality for the Commonfolk, and the Ordo Erdani is primarily comprised of Freemen who have proved themselves as knights. The Black Watch advertises that Freemen have equal opportunity to join them, just like any other knight order in the Midlands, but there is a curious lack of them in their ranks.

The immigration of serfs to the Midlands declined after all other regions of Arnesse were forced to adopt the Freemen caste. However, it did not altogether stop because the Protectorate still had the most flexibility and ease of promotion from Serf to Freeman. Today, serfs no longer exist in the Midlands, which makes it a desirable place to live. The Knights of the Black Watch still have their work cut out for them, preventing owned serfs from entering the region and capturing those that slip past them.

Outside of their duty, the Black Watch is known for exhibiting exceptional hunting skills. Every knight is an expert in the use of bows, knives, and short swords. Being as spread out across the borders as they are, the knights often live at their posts with limited resources and none of the creature comforts that city-dwelling knights have access to. As a result, they are survivalists on the plains of Corsicana. All members of the Black Watch can successfully hunt on their own, but many of the watchtowers have kennel annexes, and groups of knights will go on hunting expeditions with their dogs, pursuing deer, foxes, and wolves. The heraldry of the Knights of the Black Watch, and House Urqhart, is a white stag on a black field. Their keep is Stag's Leap. They are often present at the large tournaments that are held across the Midlands, but in smaller numbers than other Knight Houses. Known for their sober composure and dark humor, which is in stark contrast to most other Corveaux Houses, they accept their challenges, and victories, in a quiet air of superiority. For their task is one of sacrifice and duty, and the only people they truly need to prove themselves to are their brothers and sisters in arms.

As a note, House Blackwood, a High House to House Bannon, was once a lesser vassal of House Urqhart. Sixty years ago, House Blackwood rose up in rebellion against House Urqhart, but failed to have any impact. They fled to the Sovereignlands in defeat, where they became a High House to

House Bannon, an act that alluded to the rebellion being funded by the Bannons.

## INDUSTRY AND ECONOMY

---

The great houses of Arnesse have remained in power throughout history due in no small part to the leverage granted them by their industrial and economic influence. This section details the current state of their affairs in these realms.

### INDUSTRY

House Corveaux is above all, an elite cavalry force. They can levy, equip, train, and utilize cavalry troops with terrifying efficiency and speed. Of course, people from across the land see the fierce horses that these troops are mounted upon and demand for them inflates. The Corveaux reserve the finest bloodlines for themselves, but they breed and export horses for all uses. Most of these horses come from the lands of House Perryn and House Urqhart, collectively known as the Horse Lords.

Agriculture is certainly common in the lands of the Horse Lords, but production and quality pick up the closer one gets to the safety of the ancient Castellan structures and the powerful families who live in them. The Castle Lords of House Corveaux (House Corveaux, House Falconer, House Valewood, and House Penrose) offer protection for vast stretches of land that provide an agricultural breadbasket, supporting a great and prosperous kingdom. They can produce and store as excess more cereals, grains, vegetables, and animals than most other kingdoms produce in any given harvest. The surplus goods are sold to the Cirque and distributed to the rest of Arnesse or used as a political tool in negotiations.

Food must be paired with fine wine, and none are so fine than the Midland vintages. Hills are topped with family run wood and stone wine presses, dwarfed by the rows upon rows of grape vines that line the land around them. Much like the blood of their famous destriers, the Corveaux covet their favorite wines, and some vineyards send their product only to Vairsing Keep. The rest export their desired goods across the Midlands and beyond.

### ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS

House Corveaux openly trades with most of the other Houses and factions. The exceptions being House Rourke, sometimes House Blayne, and the Fayne Moirai. Even then, the Corveaux make exceptions. Not all families of House Rourke raid the coasts of the Midlands, and Lady Jeanne of

Suthwater will participate in trade with those members. With House Blayne, the Corveauxs are bitter about the new Great House receiving the Hearthlands from House Bannon. The Hearthlands were once the Corveaux's most abundant and verdant farmland. Since the Blaynes received that land twelve years ago, the Corveauxs believe that they have everything they need to thrive, and so they shouldn't need much in the way of trade with the Midlands. House Corveaux certainly doesn't openly shun trade with the Hearthlands, as they want to maintain an alliance in the eyes of House Bannon, but they do make it difficult whenever possible. As for the Fayne Moirai, they largely get the supplies they need from their patron Houses. But the Corveauxs don't employ the Fayne Moirai's services so there is not much in the way of an economic relationship between the two groups.

The Corveauxs use a combination of their own merchant groups and the Cirque to do business with other regions. Goods and services funnel into either King's Crossing or Orgonne from across the Midlands. From those two cities, they are distributed to other parts of the realm. But merchants are welcome everywhere across the Protectorate and smaller trade transactions, initiated by trade caravans, are common in every city.

## THE MIDLANDS PROTECTORATE

---

The Midlands Protectorate lies in the central region of Arnesse, to the east of the Sovereignlands. They are bordered to the north by the Hearthlands and to the south by Tarkath. Most of their southern and eastern border is met by the Soundless Sea. The geography of the Midlands is perfectly ideal for farming and husbandry. The majority of the land is made up of plains, with a few pockets of forest. The most striking features are in the south and east. On the southern border lies the Spires of Castellan, the extreme mountain range that seems to pierce the sky, and on much of the eastern coast, the land suddenly drops off into the sea, creating impressive cliffs where only birds can find ground.

The weather remains fairly mild all year round. The plains go through a yearly dry season and rainy season cycle, but rarely does the area become unbearably hot or cold. Irrigation is a must for the farmlands and the Gryphon River in the Orgonne region, Kalleen Lake near Vairsing, Talon Lake in the northern Corsicana region, and Lake Emmeline in western Corsicana are all reliable sources of water. Year-round rainfall is more common in the southern region of the Midlands, where the winds carry clouds south and the Spires of Castellan stop them from travelling further. Thunderstorms

are frequent in the spring and fall when warm winds from the south meet the cold breezes from the north.

The people of the Midlands are generally welcoming of outsiders. With the combination of the Midland's central location, trade being common throughout the region, and frequent tournaments that draw large crowds, most folks are accustomed to seeing other people of all walks of life.

## VAIRSING

The grandiose city of Vairsing is nestled at the base of the Spires of Castellan in the southern Midlands. It mimics the Spires and is built upwards, rather than out, on the side of Eagle's Nest Mountain. At the top of the city is Vairsing Keep, the seat of power of Lord Paragon Desmond Corveaux and Lady Amelie Corveaux of Suthwater. This keep is famous in many parts of Arnesse. The Corveauxs have ensured that the building has remained in pristine condition, with restoration projects occurring yearly. Even in other parts of the city, they commission sculptors to carve marble murals of horses, gryphons, and eagles on the sides of buildings and walls. The city, and the surrounding farms and hamlets, is home to eighty thousand people. The majority of the Vermilion Order is housed here, with upwards of 1,500 knights living in the barracks at any given time. With the high population, goods must flow out of necessity, but Vairsing isn't known as a major trade city because of its out-of-the-way location off of the Vermilion Road.

## KING'S CROSSING

In the West, the Corsicana region is a bustling hub of trade, farming, and martial tradition. On the western border of the Midlands lies King's Crossing, one of the largest trade centers in Arnesse. It is larger than Vairsing, with a population of approximately one hundred twenty thousand and an extensive city layout. It is House Corveaux's secondary seat of power in the Midlands and is ruled by Lord Garamond Corveaux of King's Crossing. Placed at the intersection of the Vermilion Road and the Aurean Road, travelers cannot avoid passing through the sprawling city unless they spend an extra day circumnavigating it. Like many of the ancient, permanent structures found across the Midlands, King's Crossing was built by prestigious architects of yore from the ancient noble family, the Castellans. Even the most mundane constructions on the edges of the urban expanse are wrought of finely hewn stone, and the closer you get to the keep at the epicenter, the more grandiose the scene becomes. With the constant influx of travellers and traders, King's Crossing is the most diverse city under the rule of House Corveaux. Unfortunately, this

also makes its alleys and side streets some of the most dangerous. Lord Garamond is known as a strict man, which is a necessity. He commands a garrison of five hundred Vermilion Order knights to keep the peace.

### ORGONNE

To the East of Vairsing, at the end of the Vermilion Road, lies Orgonne, the City of the Sea. It sits atop a cliff overlooking the Soundless Sea, another sparkling example of Castellan grandeur. It is home to about thirty thousand people. The third seat of power for the Corveauxs, it is commanded by Lady Jeanne Corveaux of Suthwater, cousin of Lady Amelie Corveaux. She has ruled over the port city for fifteen years and is recognized for her fairness and adherence to justice. She has been instrumental in maintaining the relationship between the Cirque and House Corveaux. At her disposal is three hundred Vermilion Order knights, along with a naval force of about two hundred fifty sailors, who ensure that the city is protected from raids by rogue pirates and members of House Rourke.

### LIONGUARD

On the southern edge of the lush Orgonne region, to the east of the Spires of Castellan, lies Lionguard. Originally built as a protective structure against southern incursions of the Midlands, Lionguard is one of the oldest keeps in the Protectorate. Four heavily fortified stone towers were built along the coast in front of the keep, and together, the structures are referred to as the Lion's Paw. The city has a population of about twenty thousand and is ruled by Lady Alexandrine Valewood, Knight Master of the Order of the Lion, and her husband, Lord Dominique Perryn. Lady Alexandrine is largely preoccupied with her role as Knight Master, so it is Lord Dominique who deals with the day to day business of running the house. The couple is well-known for showing off their personal flair, and the entire keep is decorated in brightly colored tapestries, flags, and rugs.

### ESSLYN

On the northeastern tip of the Midlands lies Esslyn, the headquarters of House Penrose and the Order of Mercy. It is ruled by Lord Judoc and Lady Abella Penrose and is home to about twenty-five thousand people. Unlike Orgonne, Esslyn lies on a flat, sandy beach, with miles of beach grass spreading out in both directions along the coast. The castle sticks out of the landscape like a beacon and can be seen from quite a distance. Like Lady Jeanne of Suthwater, Lord Judoc and Lady Abella command a small naval fleet about about two hundred sailors to protect the area from raids. But most of their efforts are focused on training knights of Mercy and

trading with the Innis. As the headquarters for the Order of Mercy, Esslyn is the main distribution point for rare herbs and flowers from the forests of the Innis. These supplies are used to make the poultices and potions that the Order of Mercy has been permitted to make by the Apotheca.

### KEEP OF NINEWELLS

South of Esslyn, where the Gryphon splits into the Soaring Gryphon Fork and the Rushing Gryphon Fork, is the fabled Keep of Ninewells. The keep is incorporated into the lands of House Penrose and acts as their second seat of power. Commanded by the first-born daughter of Knight Master Augustin Penrose, Ser Felice Penrose, the city has the cleanest water in the majority of Arnesse. There are eight wells scattered within the walls of the keep. One in the courtyard, two in the gardens, another in the vast kitchens... A ninth well is rumored to be hidden in the keep somewhere, its water said to restore life to a person on their deathbed, no matter their ailment. This rumor brings flocks of ill pilgrims to the area, all hoping to find and drink from the well. With the pilgrims, the population of the city can be anywhere between twenty and thirty thousand at any given time. Ser Felice can't provide them exactly what they seek, but she welcomes them into the keep's infirmary and the Order of Mercy treats their ailments. Despite the aid, the knights still find some travellers wandering the halls of the keep where they shouldn't be, searching for the mythical well.

### THE AVIARY

The Aviary is located in the southern region of Corsicana abutting the Spires of Castellan, southwest of Vairsing. The white keep and its surrounding village winds high up the north face of Gryphon's Peak, a snowy summit stretching high into the clouds. In its remote location, the Aviary and its city doesn't usually hold more than ten thousand people. The knights here train high upon the summit, conditioning their constitutions through breathing the thin air and climbing the treacherous cliff sides of the mountain. Would-be inductees to the order often seek to test their mettle upon the sheer, south face of the peak, many of whom have lost their lives when missing a small hand or foothold. It isn't just young knights looking to prove themselves who climb the treacherous cliffs, though. The great war eagles of Corveaux are never bred in captivity and members of the Order of the Gryphon must capture their own Golden Eagle fledglings from Gryphon Peak and the surrounding Spires. The Aviary is ruled by Lord Renaud Falconer, a widower of forty-six. He took to depression after the death of his wife, Lady Ophelia Perryn, and the Aviary has been quiet and reclusive in the last few

years.

## AVALEN

To the north of Talon Lake in Corsicana sits the wood and stone keep of Avalen. Built on a prairie bluff, the keep has sweeping views of the plains around it, making it nigh impossible to catch the Ordo Erdani knights by surprise. Built by the Perryns, it is a simple structure, in stark contrast to the imposing castles of the south. The surrounding city is utilitarian and well organized with a population of about five thousand. This is the headquarters of the Ordo Erdani, where there are more horses than there are people. Horse breeding and farming are the two main purposes of this area. Despite the practical nature of the city, gorgeous artwork of galloping horses and gliding hawks adorn the sides of buildings. The majority of the Ordo Erdani is spread out across all of Arnesse; there are only slightly more Ordo Erdani knights in Avalen than you might find in any other city. Lord Etienne Perryn is the ruler here; he recently ascended to the position after his uncle passed in a horse riding accident in the Whispering Wood.

## WINDSONG

To the southeast of Avalen lies Windsong, where the Mercy River breaks away from the great Gryphon River. Windsong Keep was also built by House Perryn, except that its foundation is an ancient Castellan ruin, forgotten long before their fall. Its population is almost equivalent to that of Avalen. The city is located near a bog and the main exports are peat and, once again, horses. Windsong produces sturdy horses that are better suited for working in fields and on farms. The protector of Windsong is Ser Sherwyn the Swift, famous among the Ordo Erdani for his speed and efficiency.

## STAG'S LEAP

In the northwestern corner of Corsicana lies Stag's Leap, home of House Urqhart. Adopting the practical tradition of burning swaths of prairie out and away from their watchtowers, a large circle of blackened earth exists around the city surrounding the keep. As a bonus side effect of this, no buildings in Stag's Leap have ever fallen due to prairie fire. The city is home to about seven thousand people, most of them farmers. The majority of the Knights of the Black Watch are spread thin across the borders of western and northern Corsicana. They travel in small groups with their horses and hunting dogs, surviving on the prairie until they reach the next watchtower and resupply. Their home base of Stag's Leap is ruled by Lord Torr Urqhart and Lady Katarin Falconer. Lord Torr is the perfect picture of a member of House Urqhart; stoic and serious. But he is also known for his angry

outbursts, which happen often during noble council meetings.

## THE TRADITIONS OF CORVEAUX

---

### HOUSE LEGENDS

#### CORVUS THE WINDLORD

Long ago, Corvus the Windlord was a hero to man. Ancient rulers once tried to chain him and imprison him under a mountain. But he managed to break free from his cell and waged a terrible war against his captors. When they were defeated, he led his people to a beautiful land where they could spread their wings and be free. He did not stay long; he imparted his wisdom upon the settlers, then took flight, constantly moving from one place to the next. One day, Corvus had taken the form of a crow and was resting in a tree. Suddenly overhead he saw Golden Eagle soaring. Corvus took flight and followed him to a cow carcass where Golden Eagle was now feeding. Realizing he was hungry, Corvus approached the carcass and asked Golden Eagle if he could share in the bounty. Golden Eagle screeched and attacked Corvus, using his talons to remove one of the crow's eyes. Angered, and still hungry, Corvus flew to Golden Eagle's nest and consumed his young. This he did, year after year. He would return to Golden Eagle's home while he was out hunting and break his eggs or kill his fledglings. Until one year, before Golden Eagle's mate was about to lay another clutch, he sought out Corvus. Golden Eagle begged the crow to leave his young alive this year, for he was getting old and it was his last chance to ensure the survival of his kind. Corvus agreed, but not before he banished Golden Eagle to the mountains, to force him to build his nest on sheer cliffs and travel far to find prey. To this day, the Golden Eagle and the Crow have a deep rivalry. The Crow keeps to his forest, and the Golden Eagle is bound to the mountain. If the Golden Eagle strays too close to the forest, the Crow will swarm him and remind him of the injustice he inflicted on Corvus the Windlord.

#### KNIGHTS OF RENOWN

Some of the greatest knights known to man have hailed from the Midlands Protectorate. There was Sir Lachland Falconer of the Order of the Gryphon, Warden of the West and Hero of Baelyn; Ser Lena of Dunwillow, founder of the Ordo Erdani; and Ser Arlin the Red, founder of the Vermilion Order, to name a few. Some of the famous knights that are alive today include Knight Master Augustin Penrose of the Order of Mercy, Knight Master Evelyn of Fairwater of the Ordo

Erdani, and Lord Tomas Corveaux, who is praised for his strict adherence to his Vermilion Order vows.

### THE FAIR LADY

A bawdy tale heard in taverns across the Midlands portrays a marriage proposal given by a Blayne lord to a Corveaux lady. The Blayne lord had just ascended to his father's seat as ruler and was looking for a fine noble woman to thicken his family's weak bloodline with. He looked to the Midlands for such a prize. Now, the Blayne lord had preferences for who's family his new wife would hail from. First, he sought the hand of a beautiful lady from the Corveauxs of Vairsing... and received a letter in return stating she was already betrothed. He then looked to King's Crossing and Orgonne, both of which left him empty handed. Yet undeterred, the Blayne lord travelled to the keeps of Falconer, Valewood, Penrose, and Urqhart. All denied him a wife. If the Blayne lord had any redeeming quality in the eyes of the Knight Houses, it was that he managed to make the Lord Urqhart smile at his proposition. Defeated, the Blayne lord rode to Avalen, his last hope being a Perryn lady. By the time he had arrived, the Perryns had of course heard of his travels across the Midlands. And they knew that they were his last, and final, choice. The Blayne lord approached the fair, redheaded daughter of the Lord Perryn and asked for her hand. She smiled sweetly at him and accepted, stating that the ceremony would be held at once. Elated, the Blayne lord cleaned himself up, as best as a Blayne can, and awaited his betrothed. After some time, and the Blayne lord beginning to wonder if something had happened to her, the door opened and in walked a brown horse, led by a page. The Blayne lord assumed that maybe the horse was just part of the wedding ceremony, it being a marriage to a Perryn and all. But the page led the horse right up to the altar and handed the reigns to the Blayne lord. The officiate asked if the Blayne lord was ready to begin. Realizing he had been duped, yet still desperate, the Blayne lord simply asked how much the horse's dowry was.

### HOUSE TRADITIONS

The people of the Midlands largely celebrate the King's Holidays and practice common traditions, which are ubiquitous across Arnesse. But the region is home to a few unique customs as well.

### TOURNAMENTS

First and foremost are the extravagant tournaments that are frequently staged in major cities of the Midlands. Of course, tournaments are held in other parts of Arnesse as well, but

they hold a special place in the heart of every Midlander. Most tournaments are open to all and fighters from across the region gather to compete. It is the best way for knights to prove their metal and for their names to be spoken in every household. For the Commonfolk who aspire to greater lots in life, competing in a tournament is one of the quickest ways to earn the respect of a noble lord or lady and receive an offer of knighthood. For all, they are times of celebration, good food, and companionship.

### SKY BURIALS

In Arnesse, burials are the most common type of funeral. And for most of the Midlands, that is the case as well. But the southern lords on the edges of the Spires of Castellán opt instead for sky burials. To them, nothing is more freeing than becoming one with the sky, so the Corveauxs and the Falconers carry their dead to high peaks and allow the eagles to feast on their bodies. Some members of the Corveaux cadet houses on the western and eastern borders of the Midlands request that they too, be given sky burials, and so their bodies are transported to the Spires upon permanent death. It is largely just the nobles who participate in this custom; for the Freeman, it can be too expensive and difficult to carry a body so far into the mountains. As a substitute, cremation is sometimes practiced, as it is similarly seen as carrying the dead skyward.

### RAGS TO RICHES

Serfs have not existed in the Midlands for over four hundred years now. Nowhere else in Arnesse can a Freeman rise so far above their station and become the head of a noble house. However, while it is possible, it isn't exactly frequent. Some Knight Houses are worse than others, but nepotism is a common theme. The desire to pass one's legacy on to their children is strong, and difficult to give up. To qualify to become the heir of a house, a knight must participate in a proving. What challenges that proving consists of, and when the proving is scheduled, is entirely up to the head of the house. Typically, if a lord or lady has children, they will train and groom them starting at a young age for their specific proving. And when their children are ready, they announce the event. By law, the lords and ladies must allow any knights from within their respective knight orders to attempt their proving. Some houses have been rumored to use under-the-table tactics to disqualify other participants, to ensure that their child or chosen heir are the champion. One might think that this doesn't exemplify the values that the Corveauxs uphold. But when a father, a mother, or even a friend, truly believes that their candidate is the perfect successor, the one who will lead the people of the Midlands better than they ever had, then they will do whatever it takes to put them in power.

The Corveauxs and their Knight Houses believe that while it may not seem fair in the short term, it ensures that well-groomed leaders who defend the ideals of the Midlands become sovereigns, and therefore continue to protect equality and freedom for all.

## HOUSE AND GUILD RELATIONSHIPS

The Age of Kings has marked a new era for Arnesse. Each great house struggles to maintain its power and legitimacy through navigating the mazes of power. This process has led many to form unlikely alliances with old enemies and make new and bitter enemies where before there were none. The following details the current state of each relationship as they correspond to this faction. This information is to be taken as in-play by you and other members of this faction.

### HOUSE RICHTER

The Corveauxs have a copacetic, but not particularly strong alliance with House Richter. Being that House Richter joined House Bannon in revenge against the death of House Castellan, the Corveauxs have been sure to remember that act of allegiance. House Corveaux purchases military weaponry from the Richters, just like most other Great Houses. But there have been no significant events between them since the beginning of the Age of Kings, save the odd marriage arrangement. The biggest factor that has kept them apart is their respective cultures. The Richters are a somber, dire folk, while the Corveauxs are much more festive and light-hearted. In addition, the Corveauxs are well aware that the Richters only work for the highest bidder. They don't follow any particular code, which to the Corveauxs, is reprehensible.

### HOUSE ROURKE

A deep-seated rivalry exists between Corveaux and Rourke. Rourke and Aragon were the two houses who annihilated House Castellan, whom House Corveaux was once a High House to. This rivalry was made even worse when, in 641, the son of Queen Anne Corveaux and a daughter of House Valewood, were murdered on their wedding day. It was House Rourke who performed the assassinations.

To make matters worse, House Rourke frequently harries the eastern shores of the rich Orgonne region of the Midlands. Lady Jeanne Corveaux, Lady of Suthwater, and Lord Judoc Penrose, Lord of Mercy, do their best to protect the waters from the raids with their naval garrisons. Many a Rourke brigantine has sunk at the hands of the Corveaux navy in the Soundless Sea. But despite their best efforts, some Rourke brigands still manage to make their way inland to steal

supplies of food and wine. Women and children often go missing from the fishing villages during these raids as well, never to be seen again.

### HOUSE BANNON

House Corveaux and House Bannon. House Castellan and House Bannon used to have a steadfast alliance and that relationship has continued between Corveaux and Bannon. House Bannon was quick to seek vengeance against the Aragons and the Rourkes when House Castellan was wiped out. The Corveauxs immediately pledged loyalty to the Bannons after this event and have since felt gratitude towards them. The Corveauxs were the only house to truly support Queen Catherine Bannon in her ascension to the throne. If it weren't for the Corveaux armies that backed her, she might have been quickly overthrown. Instead, she went on to rule for forty-three years.

In recent years, some events have put strain on this relationship. In the early 600's, Anne Corveaux, feeling betrayed by her Bannon uncle, forsook her father's name in favor of her mother's Corveaux bloodline. The Corveauxs were proud of Queen Anne for this decision, but it stung the heart of many a Bannon. Twelve years ago, King Giles II, in an effort to support an alliance with House Blayne, gifted a large portion of House Corveaux's lands to the Blaynes. This act put a significant rift between Bannon and Corveaux. The Blaynes were given the richest land in the Midlands and since then, the Corveauxs have watched them squander it.

While the Corveauxs certainly have a strong affiliation with the Bannons, they are not completely blind to the Great House's sometimes cruel nature. Some members of House Corveaux have high hopes of encouraging change in House Bannon. Others have less faith and believe that a shift in the winds is coming, and that it might be best for House Corveaux to focus on maintaining its other inter-house relationships.

### HOUSE BLAYNE

House Blayne and House Corveaux have a bond that waxes and wanes. They have several distant blood relations, as the Blaynes were once House Ulster, a Knight House of the Corveauxs. It was King Roland I and Queen Anne Corveaux who promoted House Ulster to a Great House, at which point Ulster became Blayne. While the Blaynes have, in part, the Corveauxs to thank for their current status, events throughout time have caused significant friction between them.

Before they became Great House Blayne, the Ulsters were a troublesome High House for both the Castellans and the Corveauxs. Much more religious than the other High Houses, House Ulster would often attempt to forcefully encourage piety in regions of the Midlands other than their own, which included High House Corveaux's lands. The Ulsters would quietly target the outlying villages and hamlets of other High Houses. Missionary groups from House Ulster lands, under the guise of peaceful worship, were known to turn violent when the Commonfolk in a village weren't up to their religious standards. When news of these acts reached House Castellan, their knight orders would step in to protect the Commonfolk. House Castellan would cite freedom from religious oppression, and the outraged House Ulster would cite freedom of expression and dissemination. The small attempts at religious expansion turned into full blown rebellion that House Castellan had to shut down more than once over many years. The Ulster's last attempt at rebellion, just before the Great War, nearly had them destroyed as the Castellan knights, including the Vermilion Order of House Corveaux, easily defeated their armies to a man. The consequence of this was that a powerless House Ulster had to watch as the Gods they loved so much were extinguished, unable to help because of their tacticless rebellions.

Much more recently, King Giles II granted a considerable portion of Corveaux land to House Blayne which, understandably, angered the Great House. Since then, the Corveauxs have watched as House Blayne has squandered the rich farmland that they once owned. Because of the close relationship that House Corveaux has with House Bannon, and the budding relationship that House Bannon has with House Blayne, the Corveauxs have put on a brave face. They maintain a facade of friendship towards the Blaynes, but they would prefer to have nothing to do with them. The Blaynes offer marriage proposals several times a year, but House Corveaux easily finds better suitors.

Of note is House Blayne's High House, House Botley, which was originally a Knight House to the Corveauxs only twelve years ago. House Blayne acquired them when they received the Hearthlands. House Blayne converted the Botleys into a High House and disbanded their knight order, The Serpentine Knights. While House Botley had been troublesome, due to their propensity to never forgive any perceived slight, House Corveaux is aware of the hatred that House Botley holds for their new Great House. Frequent communication has persisted

between the houses of the Midlands and House Botley

### HOUSE HALE

The Corveauxs (and the Bannons) privately refer to the Hales as their "dogs" and use them as a threat tactic when dealing with other Houses. While the relationship between Corveaux and Hale is strong, it has an edge to it. Some of the High Houses of House Hale were created from the clans of the North. In an attempt to bring these clansmen to a heel, House Bannon had some of the southern Corveaux lords and ladies married to the clan leaders. It worked, to an extent, but the clans were, and still are, rebellious, which causes no end of friction between the two Great Houses. In addition, even while they call some allies, House Hale regards all southern Lords as weak, soft rulers living in the lap of luxury. In return, the Corveauxs see the Hales as rough, crass, and violent ruffians who care nothing for civility. This breeds a struggle of superiority.

### HOUSE INNIS

Marriages between Innis and Corveaux (and other Houses with Innis) have thinned the bloodline of Innis and brought in new traditions. For some in House Innis, this has bred resentment towards the Corveauxs. Historically, the Corveauxs and the Innis have always been on opposite sides of the battlefield, mainly due to House Corveaux's alliance with House Bannon. This rivalry has kept a rift between them.

In the present day, the relationship between these neighboring houses is decent. If it weren't for events of the past, they might have a strong bond. Innis and Corveaux have similar ideals; both fight for fair treatment of the lower classes and equal opportunity for their High (or Knight) Houses. House Penrose is advantageously poised on the northeastern tip of the Midlands to trade and commune with the southern Innis lords by sea, which helps to maintain the relationship between the two Great Houses. Small Penrose trade ships sail from Holbeach and Esslyn into the Innis port city of Corgarff where they drop off food and wine in exchange for lumber and hard to find herbs. Some members of House Penrose have married into the High Houses of Innis.

### HOUSE ARAGON

Much like the Rourke-Corveaux relationship, a rivalry has historically existed between Corveaux and Aragon. Rourke and Aragon were the two houses who annihilated House Castellan, whom House Corveaux was once a High House to. This particular rivalry is not so deep as the one between

Corveaux and Rourke, though; it is more of an angry red scar than a gaping, bleeding wound. This is because a marriage between Anne Corveaux and Roland Aragon I took place in the early 600's A.S. Their alliance brought House Aragon back to good standing within Arnesse as a whole. More recently, the Corveaux have begun another attempt to rebuild a relationship with the Aragons. Lady Emmeline Corveaux, sister to Lord Paragon Desmond, is married to Lord Rylen Aragon and they have three children between them. This happened soon after the Bannons betrayed the Corveauxs by giving away a large swath of their land to House Blayne. Lady Emmeline helped reopen trade routes between Tarkath and the Midlands. It also helps that the Corveauxs have a good relationship with the Apotheca, and so they can find common ground with the Aragons.

### THE APOTHECA

The Apotheca are quite welcome in the Midlands and members of the order can be seen in nearly every keep and castle. The region is a treasure trove of knowledge for the Apotheca, with how well the Corveauxs have maintained the old Castellan structures. The magisters are paid to record family history and tend to the sick, and the lords and ladies allow them to study their halls and attempt to uncover secrets of the past.

Magisters have a particularly close relationship with House Penrose and the Order of Mercy. The knights of Mercy practice field medicine, especially in battle. The Apotheca has granted the Order of Mercy the limited ability to craft apothecary decoctions of a medicinal nature. In exchange, the Order of Mercy provides the Apotheca with studies on the human body and battlefield injuries, seeing as they have intimate knowledge of the subject.

### THE FAYNE

Where the Aurorym receives indifference, the Fayne receives contempt from House Corveaux. No Corveaux will be told by a witch what their destiny has in store for them; only their sword and shield can do that. Most people of the Midlands suspect that there is some dark force that the Fayne uses for their powers. Not only that, but the Fayne must be paid for their services, which House Corveaux finds dishonorable. If a man were about to make a decision about something that could potentially cost his life, why would you charge him money to save him? To avoid the social stigma, no lords or ladies in the Midlands have openly welcomed a Fayne into their public court.

If the Fayne have any redeeming quality in the eyes of House Corveaux, it is their unique fighting style. Martial practices are prized in the Midlands, and even if one doesn't approve of the Fayne's premise, they can respect their martial prowess.

### THE CIRQUE

Everything of true value comes from the breadbasket of Arnesse. Food, drink, work animals. This is a veritable goldmine for the Cirque; there is a constant flow of high demand goods that they can distribute from the Midlands. And with King's Crossing being under the purveyance of House Corveaux, many other types of commodities must pass through their lands. Generally, the relationship between the Cirque and House Corveaux has been prosperous and friendly, both in the present and the past.

But just as all good friends bicker, the trade relationship has been strained at times. It has been mentioned previously that House Corveaux will use their breadbasket as a political tool. In the past, the Great House has had to all but cease its exports, to ensure that the Cirque would not distribute any goods to their political enemies. Having a reliable source of income be at the wit and whim of nobles puts the Cirque in a precarious position. So while House Corveaux works closely with the Cirque and maintains fair trade laws, the Cirque attempt to influence political plays to keep noble relationships in their favor, a ploy that can warrant contempt from the Corveauxs.

### THE AURORYM

In the Midlands, there is not an abundance of unhappy peasantry. Serfdom has been abolished for hundreds of years, Freemen have opportunity for promotion and fame, and the majority have jobs and are well fed. In addition, the Commonfolk feel just as much desire to fulfill their own destinies as the nobles do. They trust their tools, swords, horses, and their own physical and mental abilities to carry them to glory. As such, after the death of the Gods in the Great War, the people of the Midlands have not turned to religion for comfort and solace. The exception, of course, being House Ulster which became the Great House Blayne. This has made it difficult, but not entirely impossible, for Aurons to make headway in the region. House Corveaux tolerates the presence of the Aurorym faith, but they do not actively encourage it. The religion has slowly spread in the North of the Midlands, where it is closest to House Blayne lands. No representatives of the faith have been seen at court, save for one who has been known to visit Avalen and

Windsong keeps.

## PLAYING A CORVEAUX

*“The travail of freedom and justice is not easy, but nothing serious and important in life is easy. The history of humanity has been a continuing struggle against temptation and tyranny - and very little worthwhile has ever been achieved without pain.”*

- Robert Kennedy

Corveauxs are naturally competitive, which can manifest itself in more ways than one. It often appears in the form of martial ability; all the men and women of the Corveaux family are encouraged to learn a fighting style of their choice, although it is often largely influenced by which knight order their house represents. But it isn't just weapons and warmongering that the Corveauxs are interested in excelling at. A sharp mind is considered a leadership quality that is just as important as being able to physically fight. A tavern bard knows better than to challenge an Ordo Erdani knight to a duel of riddles, for he is sure to lose.

Despite how seriously a Corveaux takes their duty, they are often known for their jovial personalities. Bright colors, a broad smile, and a glass of wine in hand are the marks of a Corveaux at a social gathering. At tournaments, the most common Corveaux celebration, competitive attitudes are met with friendly back claps and laughter. People are naturally drawn to them due to their boisterous personalities and they tend to acquire friends with ease. They are certainly loyal to their families, but the camaraderie of knighthood makes their brother in arms just as important.

The Corveauxs strive to be the epitome of chivalry, freedom, and justice. They are often the first ones into battle, whether that be a literal fight, or a figurative assault against injustice. Most of this stems from the pride they have in their history as the descendants of House Castellán. Sometimes this desire to live up to their past is so strong and blinding, that they end up working against the very ideals they wish to uphold. There is a certain sense of faded glory for the Corveauxs. Stains to their name, the largest of which being their unrelenting loyalty to the Bannons, have put a bad taste in the mouths of the other houses. The Castle Lords of Corveaux work hard to cover up these stains, to the point of almost complete ignorance. If a Lord makes a bad decision, he stubbornly defends his choice in the name of some high moral code. When speaking of past transgressions of House Corveaux, members of the family make excuses for their ancestors, or claim that it was likely due to their blood not being purely

Corveaux. The Horse Lords are more aware of their faded glory than the Castle Lords are. They take much less stock in the past and instead set their focus on the future. While still proud of their lineages and ancestors, they accept that their history isn't perfect and work towards not repeating it.

The horse and the bird of prey are both sacred to House Corveaux. They appear in art and literature, and they are treated with the utmost respect. Horse breeders and trainers across the region must follow strict rules concerning how they treat their animals, lest they lose business and face social consequences. All horses are retired when they become too old to work and are sent to pleasant pastures near Avalen where they are cared for by senior members of the Ordo Erdani. Birds are common pets across the region, ranging from small songbirds to massive war eagles. While raptors and other birds of prey are given special appreciation, any bird that is known to fight back against these predators is given no small amount of recognition. One example of this is the crow, for which the eastern forests of the Midlands were named.

## HOPELESS IDEALISM

If there is one fault that the Corveauxs are infamous for, it is their stubborn idealism. Great knights have fallen in the name of justice, law, revenge, love, equality... the list goes on. Corveaux rulers succumb to this inflexibility, often at the expense of their rule, their power, or even their lives. A few have even become tyrants in the eyes of their Commonfolk, enacting laws and issuing punishments that work against the very freedom they swore to uphold. Lords and ladies have had their reigns cut short because they held on so tightly to what they thought was right when, had they compromised even just slightly, they might have survived or their rule continued and they could have gone on to do great things for the Midlands. Some might have even become true monarchs of Arnesse...

House Corveaux, and all of its Knight Houses, suffer from some specific, stubborn idealism. For the main line of the Corveauxs, that is Virtue. Virtue in everything they do, from the smallest feats to the most impactful actions. Corveauxs are honest, righteous, and honorable to a fault, and fight for the continued right to sit on the pedestal that their people put them on.