

## The Kingdoms of Illyria

### Tortha

In an age long since passed, Tortha stood as the capital of the sweeping Darcidian Empire lead by Ragnar the Black. After his death hundreds of years ago, his empire slowly crumbled and his great capital city began to sink into the rivers surrounding and beneath it until it was lost to the pages of history. Though its citizens have long-forgotten much of their origins, the laws and moral codes of the nation still cling to notions of knighthood, chivalry, and feudalism.

When Hysperia began its conquest decades ago, Tortha was the first to make a stand. After being soundly crushed, other nations learned from Tortha's lesson and took Hysperia's side. As soon as Gareth took the imperial throne, his paranoia drove him to oust King Benton in exchange for his own puppet king and impose heavy taxes and other burdens on the country's people. Now Tortha is one of Hysperia's tribute states and its citizens are being shaken to a breaking point. It is under these trying circumstances that heroes are made, heroes like Elric Faranthal.

### Hysperia

In the days of the Darcidian Empire, Hysperia was a rural land with few citizens and a sparse collection of towns and villages. As the memory of Ragnar began to fade from the land, Hysperia, being on the fringes of the old empire, was the first to obtain sovereignty. It was first a tribal collection of lesser lords, but its access to vast stretches of flat farmland and excellent climate made it ripe for growth.

It wasn't long until the fledgling nation rose to power, with refugees from the other lands pouring into its borders and causing its cities to swell. After generations of nearly endless wealth and expansion, Rendall rose up from a tiny, unnamed village to usurp the corrupt nobility and establish his own kingship. Seeing his success as the fulfillment of prophecy, he turned his eyes to the rest of Illyria, quickly bringing all but the fringes of the land under his sway.

Eventually, his son Gareth, seeing himself as the true heir of prophecy, poisoned him and took over the mantle of Emperor Divinus. In his paranoia, he broke Tortha further, overthrowing its king and establishing one loyal to him. He also inflicted penalties and abused human rights to the extent that its people are beginning to mutter and talks of rebellion are bubbling just beneath the surface.

### Feylanor

Before Ragnar the Black ever existed, Illyria was, ironically an ancient Fey kingdom that stretched from the eastern seas to the forests of Tortha. With the rise of humanity, the elder kingdom and its ways were forgotten and Feylanor came into being. Seated in a dense forest and nestled heavily against water, Feylanor depends on the river trade that gave it its famous weapons armory. This same water allocation also made it the ideal setting for the Temple of the Saker, Illyria's burgeoning monotheistic religion.

A matriarchy, Feylanor has been ruled by a lineage of queens that goes back to its founding, the most current of whom is the Iron Lady, Queen Tonnil Atannis. An intelligent woman with an imposing demeanor, she saw it wise to ally herself with Hysperia after Tortha's fall. She is the very one who suggested that Elric Faranthal's family should be killed to secure Eriez for the empire. In exchange for her loyalty, the empire has given her a great deal of influence in its goings on and is helping eradicate the non-human residents of Illyria that she has hated since childhood.

### Nycenia

When it became obvious that Tortha would lose against Hysperia in the last war, Nycenia quickly allied itself with its neighbor to deliver the powerful, final blow. Despite being technically lorded over by King Marle Morian, Nycenia's true power sits with the very wealthy Thieves' Guild, led by Joric Loch, and the very powerful and secretive Assassins' Guild, led by a figure known only as The Watcher.

With a long stretch of coast that covers a third of its mass, Nycenia was the obvious choice for the empire's growing navy and an enormous amount of money was put into building its shipyards. In exchange for his fealty, Marle has been given rising power over these factions by Gareth, making him both a loyal and dangerously unpredictable enemy.

### Kourmar

In every age and through all of time into forgotten memory, Kourmar has been Kourmar. It was never in the ancient Fey kingdom, Ragnar the Black could never tame it, and even now, as Gareth beats upon its doorstep, the tiny, mountainous peninsula stands as a rock against the storm. To outsiders, it's a painful thorn. To loyalists, it's an impressive stance against an oppressive force. To its many non-human inhabitants, it's the final sanctuary in a world that wants them dead.

From his seat in the capital Kourr, the young and headstrong Othric watches over his beleaguered kingdom. A protector of many, but friend of few, the young king is aware of the many enemies that surround him and so cares about only loyalty and strength. Having seen the rest of the continent collapse around him has given him much to think about, and so he steals his heart and the hearts of his people against the hardships to come.

### Vasena

When it became obvious that Ragnar the Black would be more than another tribal lord, the Vaseneans erected the Iron Wall, a massive, magical wall that stretches from sea to sea and has only two gates: Westgate in Tortha, and Korvas' Folly in Kourmar. Ever since, contact with the rest of Illyria has slowly petered out into the modern day, when nothing is known beyond ancient record.

With nothing more than assumptions, most people believe Vasena to have died off, consumed by the eldritch creatures and magics that called the land home. Others think that it may have been destroyed by its own scholars, men who were famous for wielding powers unseen on the rest of the continent. Still more think that something both terrible and wonderful lies just beyond that wall,

waiting for the day when its wheels will turn and the enchanted doors that guard it slowly clank open once more.