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the line and Callow still there to save. The world's most beautiful woman: at least the most beautiful woman in Callow. When Catherine has to formulate a list of the hottest women she's ever seen, Dormer is the first person she thinks of. But she admits that even the Baroness has nothing on the Empress. The Duchy of Daoine The Duchy of DaoineAn ethnically distinct, autonomous region in the north of Callow, bordering the elves kingdom in the Golden Bloom. The Deoraiithe (as humans are called) are the descendants of the original human inhabitants of the Golden Blooms, who were driven from their lands by the elves centuries ago. They guard Callow's border with the orcs of the steppes as they make plans to one day return to their homeland. Badass Army: The Watch uses a number of unknown magical means to give itself superhuman abilities. Besides ridiculous amounts of training, it has finally become apparent that the source of the watch's power is a necromantic construction made of the spirits of all the Deoraiithe who have died since the loss of the Golden Bloom to the elves. Combat Pragmatist: The Deoraiithe, and especially The Watch are known for a brutally efficient approach to war and politics. Duchess KeganThe ruler of Daoine since before the conquest. Kegan was able to negotiate a fair degree of autonomy in her relationship with the Praes and has so far been reluctant to compromise by involving herself in any rebellion or other mischief. Lady of War Les Collaborators: In some ways. She fought against the empire (and lost) during the first conquest, but since then has ruled the contents of her duchy with minimal interference from the tower. The principle of Procer Rulers and Nobles First Prince Cordelia HassenbachThe ruler of the Principate of Procer, the ranking great power of Calernia and the most powerful nation aligned with the side of good. The ruler of one of the northern principalities of the Principate, Hassenbach ascended to the throne of the Principate in the aftermath of a long and bloody civil war and has spent time involved in a cold war against the Empress Malicia's agents across the continent. The First Prince believes that the Praesi cannot be allowed to keep Callow, and plans to launch a tenth crusade to drive them back to the wasteland and unite the forces of Good behind! Ain't Too Proud to Beg: When faced with the impossible task of rolling back the undead armies of the dead king, Cordelia gets on her knees and begs Catherine, the same woman whose country she declared a crusade on and had underestimated routinely and spoken spoken to save procer from destruction. It works. Nemesis: to Empress Malicia. Badass Normal: Cordelia may not be a Named or even a competent warrior in her own right, but she is still a ruthless and capable politician who can play Xanatos Speed Chess with the best of them. Good Is Not Nice: Reigning Procer is a balancing act, and she's certainly not afraid to chop off or stabilize bits of it. Not so different: Cordelia and Malicia are really very similar, both political pragmatists in similar political situations. Her devotion to her country is also similar to Catherine's. Refusal of call: In Book 5 Interlude: And Yet We Stand, Cordelia refuses the opportunity to get a heroic name, and refuses a villainous one and a few moments later. Cordelia: This country will have no queen, no empress, no pale director to stand above all others. She's the king: that's the first prince for you, farmer. The Woman Wearing the Queenly Mask: An inversion, much like her nemesis Malicia in that she's a ruthless and determined political operator playing the role of The High Queen. Prince Klaus PapenheimThe prince of Hannover and Cordelia Hasenbach's most important general. Prince Klaus grew up in defense of the Lycaonese Principalities of the Ratmen and the Kingdgom of the Dead, then went on to lead his niece, Cordelia's troops to victory in the Proceran Civil War.With the inauguration of the 10th Crusade, Klaus is placed in command of the Proceran forces sent to the Red Flower Vales. Prince Amadis MillenanThe prince of Iserre. He kept his principality largely out of the Civil War and became the main leader of the opposition after Cordelia Hasenbach came to power. Amadis supports an expansionist policy for the Principate, against the guidelines of the First Prince. Prince Amadis is placed in command of the Proceran army that invades Callow via the Staircase at the beginning of the 10th Crusade. Princess Rozala MalanzaThe Princess of the Principality of Aequitan. In the High Assembly, she is opposed to Cordelia Hasenbach because the First Prince allowed her mother, the former Princess of Aequitan, to commit suicide. Malanza comes from a long line of military commanders and is one of the best generals in Procer. She's the army field commander who invaded Callow in the 10th Crusade. Worthy Adversary: as general for Catherine and Juniper. She is the only royal in the invading army that takes the Callowan army seriously, and she implements smart measures to counter their strengths, such as their field engines and magicians. Species Drow The Empire Ever Dark Ambiguous Gender: Drow considers the powerful (The Mighty) to be above concepts such as gender. Referring to powerful Drow with anything other than a gender-neutral term is seen as an insult. Asexuality: as a rule, have little to no sexual or romantic desire. Reproduction is seen as a chore for the weak Drow to occasionally participate in the of the Sigil up. On the other hand, rape is unheard of in their culture. Chronic Backstabbing Disorder: When you get another Drow's life force/magical energy/knowledge by killing them and harvesting the Night of Their Corpse, and your society is based on Asskicking Equals Authority, the concept of loyalty or swearing oaths seems rather strange. Fight by Champion: Their society emphasizes the powerful tribal leader (Sigil-Holders), lieutenants (Rylleth), and other Mighty in the hierarchy over the cattle of the rest of the civilians and soldiers in a Sigil. As a result, if the Sigil-Holder and lieutenants are killed, the majority of a Sigil will surrender. Klingon Promotion: Drow can only gain status by harvesting the Night from the bodies of others. The more powerful, the more Night a Drow has. This makes it very tempting to take out one's leader and absorb his power. Soldier vs. Warrior: Firmly on the Warrior side, to their detriment when the organized, better equipped Soldier Dwarfs invade. Rudimentary Empire: They live in the ruins of the vast underground cities carved with ancient poetry and the tainted art of their once great civilization. Dwarves The Kingdom under Adam Smith hates your guts: They make the best weapons, and siege engines known in this world. They certainly don't sell that to surface dwellers though. Instead, they sell cheaper, less powerful models and keep the good things for their own armies. This is the main reason why the Praesans value Gobinsteel and Goblin-made siege engines so much. They also have a habit of stealing magical artifacts, and then selling it back to surface dwellers as wonders of dwarf forging a few decades later. Dug Too Deep: Usually the cause of this. They claim rights to everything below a certain depth. A mine that belongs to another species that goes too deep is seen as theft, and is not taken properly. One-Gender Race: Implicit to this, if no one is really sure how they reproduce. There are rumors that they can swallow a stone and spit a dwarven baby a few months later though. Our dwarves are all the same: Slightly below average human height, rock-like skin, uncertain longevity, rather secretive, and sporty Badass Beards. Fantastic racism: They generally see their ephemeral, technologically-backwards upstairs neighbors as inherently inferior, in an Innocently Insensitive way. They don't consider man sensitive enough to actually hold property, and are visibly bewildered when Catherine claims that someone is her subordinate. For them, all people are so primitive that the idea that they have a hierarchy in them is funny. Guilt-Free Extermination War: Against the Drow, which occupy the underground areas of the North East. They don't keep a real wants to move towards the Drow, but want the territory and view Drow as nothing more than vermin. Higher-Tech Species: Much more advanced in this aspect than any known society, except of course the mysterious Gnomes. The Tho for Mead: They consider it a bad form to drink while negotiating... Because it's too light. They have harder to drink over business. Sticky Fingers: Since other species cannot own property in their eyes, everything on the surface is free game. Since resistance can be met with entire cities being sunk into the ground and survivors slaughtered, surface-dwellers allow. A notable example is a Human Nobleman almost completely bankrupt after having to buy back his own family jewels from a dwarf. Elves The Golden Blooms ambiguous sex: Their marble-like skin, slender physique, and generally inhuman appearance make them seem rather androgynous. Absolute xenophobic: Elves on other continents actually live alongside other species and semi-often intertwined. The Golden Bloom Elves are an extremely racist splinter group. Childless Dystopia: No elf has been born on the Calernia since they arrived. Fantastic racism: They see all non-elves, and non-Heroes as vermin, and will kill anyone who approaches The Golden Bloom. Genocide Backfire: When they arrived at Calernia, they slaughtered all the previous inhabitants of their forest. This earned the absolute hatred of the surviving Deoraiithe, and accidentally cursed the country into a childless Dystopia. Good Is Not Nice: Technically be considered well aligned, but certainly not friendly. Half-Human Hybrid: These are rare, with the only known being Ranger. The Elves of Golden Bloom see them as an insult to their Master Race and try to kill them. Our elves are different: They are relatively immortal, impossibly fast and strong, and better at magic than any other race. Sacred Language: If for some reason they have to interact with non-Elves, they use supernatural body language or mental projections of concepts. Using inferior tongues is seen as degrading. However, the idea of a man speaking the Elvish Tongue is seen as absolutely heinous blasphemy. Screw This, I'm Outta Here!: Their response to Dread Empress Triumphant's Conquest and the Tenth Crusade was to faze The Golden Bloom out of Creation so they wouldn't have to participate. Fae Seasonal Courts Blue-and-Orange Morals: They run on tropes, not morals. Unless a very specific trope they have as their embodiment leave them, of course. In a very specific way that needs to be tailored to the story that is being played out. Born-Again Immortality: Fae are reborn when their Seasonal Court is reformed into an ever-repeating cycle. Cold iron: Iron weapons cause them immense, often debilitating pain. The Honest People: Boy, howdy. They are slightly more ideas and themes than they are actual personalities. Very powerful, very extreme ideas. Physical God: The more powerful Fae Nobles are more or less this. Especially true of the king and queen. Seasonal baggage: The two of Fae present at any given time always represent two opposing seasons in a continuous cycle. The Summer Court Fae generally have fire or natural powers, while the Winterhof Winterhof often have darkness, ice or wind forces. They really don't like each other. The Wild Hunt Carnival of Murderers: They are sociopaths who will look happy as one of their own is tortured and humiliated in front of them. They have no interest in deadly conflicts or moral code. They just love to kill. Doom Troops: For Catherine. They have been sadistically hunting humans and other creatures in the Waning Woods for thousands of years. Humanity's recent wars are just a chance to hunt more entertaining game. Lieutenant Larat, former prince of the Winter Court, is their current leader. He has no love for the others, but keeps them in line to avoid punishment on himself. Catherine calls him her Treacherous Lieutenant. Mounted Combat/Lighting Bruiser: Their specialty because of their surprisingly vicious Unicorns and ability to use portals between dimensions. Seasonal baggage: seemingly reversed. They are composed of Fae from both the Summer and Winter Court, and show no internal division in this direction. Masego wants to dissect some to find out what it is that sets them apart from other Fae. Giants The Titanomachy Body Language: Giants are involved to have a complex and meaningful system of nonverbal communication. The White Knight and The Witch of the Woods, two heroes trained by Giants, can use it to communicate. Great Offscreen War: Procer apparently attacked the Titanomachy in a particularly brutal or unexpected way a few generations ago. Whatever happened, the First Prince wasn't at all surprised when the Giants didn't show up to participate in the Procean-centered Tenth Crusade. Magic Music: The Witch of the Woods is a spellcaster taught by the Giants. This form of magic can become so powerful that a practitioner once created a large lake (now called The Titan's Pond) as collateral damage from a fight. The nose knows: When The White Knight was ship-wrecked on the banks of the Titanomachy, the first Giant to find him could immediately smell the lingering smell of the Seraphim on him. Only friend: The Dominion of Levant is the only country they tend to communicate with. Others, they tend to attack on sight. Leprechaun's unknown budding inventor: heavily inverted. They're scary competent. The Dreaded: Their location, territory and government are all completely unknown. They are apparently looking at everything everyone does, including underground, remote Goblin researchers. They are responsible for destroying the version of Atlantis in one day. No one wants to bother them. The Black Knight impossibly rushed off to destroy the Goblin Tribe responsible for earning a red letter to Praes, only to find out on arrival that the tribe had already killed all of their researchers and destroyed the findings. Higher-Tech Species: They have Machines and civilization-extermination weapons, while all other species are still mastering siege weapons and medieval warfare. Medieval Stasis / Enforced Technology Technology They only apparent reason for communicating with other species is to prevent any civilization from becoming too technologically advanced. Rule of three: They send a red warning letter the first time a country is progressing too much in a particular area of technology. The second time, they send a more strongly worded red letter. The third time? They don't leave any survivors behind. Shrouded in myth: Most of the population thinks they have a make-believe variety of tinkersers. The rulers know nothing of them, except the danger they pose. Goblins The Tribes Boisterous Weaking: As a rule, they are smaller and weaker than people or orcs, but make up for it with dexterity, tenacity, and generally over-the-top personalities. Comedic Sociopathy: Their culture keeps secrecy, ruthlessness and opportunism as core virtues, and generally does not fit into human concepts of morality. Fantastic racism: People outside Praes often believe they are damaged Dwarfs and therefore inherently Evil abominations. People are ugly: due to their blunt teeth, strange morality, and apparently gangly appearance, people are considered unattractive by Goblins. Matriarchy: Goblin Tribes are led by Matrons. Females are given important tasks such as leadership, and raising children, while hard labor and warfare are reserved for submissive males. The migration: A not specifically long time ago, the Goblins were driven out of their underground homeland and forced to their current, shallower homes and mines. The dwarves saw the act of not killing all goblins before they took their land to be very generous. Pyromaniac: Their alchemy-manufactured explosives make them very valuable to the Empire of Praes. They come in four main types: toxic gas, general explosives, flash grenades and Goblinfire: a supernatural green fire that burns for seven days and will consume everything, including magic, in a kind of combination between Hellfire and Anti-Magic. Holy Language: Goblins refuse to share their language stone-tongue with outsiders. Every Goblin who speaks it where outsiders can hear is killed, and the compromised words are quickly changed to prevent attacks at translation. The Matrons have their own, even more secret dialect that uses the same words, but draws slightly different meanings from them. The Sneaky Guy: Because of their small size, night vision, and generally cunning nature, they are the Praes' go-to troops for scouting, intimidation of enemy troops, and infiltrating enemy strongholds. We are like Mayflies: Goblins have a shorter natural lifespan than most other species. Life in the thirties is seen as old, and some Goblins are sent to the War College at the fairly adult age of ten. Partially reversed by Matrons and their direct descendants, who are on the one or way are usually larger and live longer than the average Goblin (by means apparently only known to matrons). Marshal Ranker takes this Up to Eleven by living in her sixties through an unknown alchemi alchemi What is this thing you call Love?: Played with. Goblin's have a different view of romance than most conscious species. Physical affection is alien to their culture, and two Goblins can be considered romantic together while breeding with others and never breeding with each other. One's teeth are considered a prominent sign of beauty for them. Ogres Unspecified Juggernaut Schemes: Much larger than the Orcs (although presumably smaller than the Giants) at more than ten feet high, soldiers of this kind always act as Heavies. Although very difficult to put down, they are vulnerable to being overwhelmed by superior numbers, so are usually used as shock troops. Punch-Clock Villain: Because of their small population and foreign ancestry, it is implied that they are generally not a real bet in Praes. However, they have a quota of soldiers to send to the Legions of Terror, and they do their job well. Slave Race: They were one of these for the Mizean Empire. A small number were brought to Calernia after The War of Chains, where they were included in The Empire of Praes after the occupier's empire collapsed. Orcs the Tribes Always Chaotic Evil: Played with. They are a man-eating race that glorifies war, but also possesses human-level intelligence, often has a Noble Demon nature and is usually very friendly to comrades in arms, regardless of species. The Berserker: Some orcs are prone to entering a state of euphoric rage into battle. Tasks Up to Eleven by people with the condition of Blood Rage, who has similar symptoms, only so uncontrolled caused by taking sufficient physical damage or a large enough emotional shock. An Orc in a Blood Rage is unable to distinguish friend from enemy, and is almost impossible to put down non-lethal. A Father to His People: The Orcs as a whole hold the Amadeus Black Knight in very high regard for his military reforms that prevented the orc soldiers from being used as Cannon Fodder, allowed all races in War College, and led them to great victories. Fantastic racism: Usually seen as illiterate beasts by the Praesan nobility, and as outright monsters by the rest of the continent. People are ugly: Orcs see sharp and large teeth as attractive, and are generally deterred by the relatively weak bodies of humanity and cow teeth. Hungry Menace: Long ago, The Empire of Praes learned exactly the amount of meat that should be given to Orc troops to prevent hunger, but enough for them to be bloodthirsty to ask how they were used as cannon fodder and meat-shields for the rest of the army. I'm a humanitarian: Orcs are largely carnivorous and usually prefer their meat raw. They also instinctively see every living thing as a possible meal, including Goblins and other Orcs. Since the reforms of The Black Knight, they are only allowed to eat enemy corpses to supplement their rations. Check out My Works, Ye Mighty, and Despair!: The Orc war bands used to rape, loot, and burn across the steppes and surrounding areas, areas, all their human neighbors live in terror and subjugation. When the Mezian Empire invaded The War of Chains, many peoples were subjugated, but no one hit harder than the Orcs. Their population was decimated, their war ties destroyed, their warrior-priest Shamans wiped out to the point that magical ability was almost completely removed from the gene pool, and they became a slave/warrior race. Things didn't get much better under The Empire of Praes. For millennia, they didn't even develop Named because of their decimated culture. Soldier vs. Warrior: Before the military reforms of The Black Knight, Orcs were warriors wielding broad words and battle-axes. After The Black Knight's Reforms, they immediately began adopting soldier tactics, with a corresponding dramatic increase in longevity and effectiveness. Ratlings The Chain of Hunger Always Chaotic Evil: They have no concept of morality, society or grace: only hunger. Evolution Power-Up: Ratlings grow throughout their lives through their unique biology. The bipedal Ratlings that last long enough grow into larger four-legged friends. Ancient ones that last long enough turn into the almost mythical Horned Lords: bipedal rats that are more than sixty feet tall and capable of human speech. Horror Hunger: Their characterizing trait is always on the verge of hunger due to their unique biology. They eat literally everything, which often leads to monstrous cannibalism, and people are devoured by the Horde. Leave no survivors: They have no idea of giving or receiving surrender. Dread Empress Triumphant famously killed more than ninety percent of their population, and they still wouldn't stop attacks. Monster Lord: The last known phase of Ratling growth is the mysterious Horned Lords. They have human-equivalent intelligence, the ability for human speech, and are more than sixty feet tall. The scariest part about them though? They can be appointed. Poisoned weapons: They often coat their primitive, barbed wire weapons in poison. Rat Men: Exactly what it says on the tin. Ratlings are a wild, bipedal, semi-intelligent species of rodent-like hominids. Rodents of unusual size: The average Ratling is already larger than any rodent found on Earth, but those that survive long enough evolve to old ones, which are large enough to act as siege engines. The Swarm: Constantly on the brink of hunger, these semi-intelligent creatures often wave south on a murderous search for food. As a result, they are often referred to as The Ratling Plague. Zerg Rush: Their main tactic. Given they attack due to chronic overcrowding and comparative lack of food, the huge death toll this usually results in only helps matters. Affairs.

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