

# So saith Ed

*Responses to questions and Realmslore requests  
By Ed Greenwood on the Candlekeep Forums*

*Part 4*

*Nov - Dec 2004*

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

November 1, 2004: Hello, all. I bring you Ed's latest:

Well, Taelohn, if I tell you the locations and destinations of such gates, they won't be "forgotten" anymore, will they? :}

Seriously, I'm reluctant to curtail DM creativity overmuch, so I'll give you just a handful, WITHOUT telling you precisely who controls them.

Let me tackle your second question first. Most of these gates tend to be controlled by the wizard, or small cabal of wizards, or priesthood, or even wealthy merchant, who stumbled across them -- or learned of them from someone who did (whereupon they usually killed the "someone" so as to make the gates 'their' secret alone).

Individual Red Wizards tend to behave like everyone else when they learn of a gate: if they think other Red Wizards haven't observed them, they try to keep it 'their own' secret. Ditto the Zhents, unless it's a Zhentilar warrior who wants nothing to do with gates; such a one will report his find to a wizard but profess ignorance of the EXACT location of the gate (so he won't be ordered to be the guinea pig who demonstrates it to a watching mage).

Larloch has learned where a lot of gates are by magically farscrying unwitting beings, over the years, but even his minions rarely use them (except to pounce on emerging users they're interested in). Halaster traditionally hasn't been interested in gates that don't impinge on Undermountain, but it remains to be seen what new attitude he may or may not have acquired towards such matters since the events of ELMINSTER IN HELL.

Lone wizards and lone merchants tend to use gates they find in very similar ways: as 'secret getaway' routes, and as a way of reaching a new territory to explore (typically they'll establish a hidehold or hidden cache at 'the far end' of the gate, to use as a second base; if things ever get 'too hot' for them at one end of the link, they relocate to the other).

Merchant cabals and priests usually establish regular 'trade-runs' through their gates, and cabals of wizards tend to use them either to raid through, or (as merchant cabals often do) steal goods in one place and whisk them away to another -- often stealing items that are scarce at one end of the gate so they can be sold for great amounts at the other end.

Gates whose ends are in different climes, of course, allow merchants to make 'easy killings' by taking fresh fruits to snow-choked winter locales, to sell for stiff prices, or to transport skins of drinking water into dry regions for the same purpose.

As I've said many a time before, the Realms is riddled with hundreds of ancient gate-links, most of them long forgotten.

Here are four sample gates:

Tesper's Stride: Noted in some old diaries at Candlekeep as being the secret behind the financial success of the long-ago Waterdhavian merchant Ultath Tesper (no relation to the famous mage Tesper), this gate links a knoll near Amphail with a cellar somewhere under a Southbank building in western Scornubel (in what was once known as Zirta).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Its active area seems to be two men wide and taller than a man carrying a boar-spear at shoulder rest (in other words, at least twelve feet high), and traversing it reportedly takes but an instant "of extreme cold, while falling through blue-white mists."

The northern end of the link functions 'towards Zirta' only when bathed in moonlight, but works 'from Zirta' at all times. It's entered by mounting the westernmost of two like-sized boulders at the north end of a knoll that lies about a bowshot west of the main trade-road. Face south when atop the boulder, and step at least a handspan up off the rock. These boulders are about as tall as a cottage and as long as three horses, and have bird-dung-spattered but otherwise bare, smooth stone tops, but sides thick with green moss. Seek a knoll that has three bare 'fallaway' rock outcrops facing the road (on its eastern side), south of a tiny creek that comes out of a thick stand of blueleaf trees. Note that the scrub-covered ridge immediately to the north overlooks the boulders, and a watcher there has clear bowshot down at anyone arriving through the gate.

The southern end of the link seems to function in both directions all the time. Taking it 'north' to Amphail is a matter of entering the westernmost end chamber of a low-vaulted, stone-lined cellar, going to its northwestern corner, and touching a particular wall-stone that's visibly darker than the rest. The cellar is one of many in Zirta, where goods were and are kept safe from theft in deep cellars -- but just which building it underlies is uncertain, because this cellar was long ago linked to many others, and fitted with traps and access-chutes from above by the now-extinct Three Hands Coster (a local trading group of unsavoury reputation). At least two local thieving bands, the Blue Cloak and Rassavar's Blade, keep watch over who uses the cellars -- or at least, who ventures west from the busy, used-by-many-caravan-companies eastern end of the cellars (which are rented out by a sinister fat, bearded man hight Ravosz Orthroth.

Tesper used this gate to shuttle stolen goods out of Waterdeep, and to bring drugs, poisons, and perfumes from Scornubel into the City of Splendors, hiding them in chambers in the middle of 'fixed' casks of "winter ale" from Everlund, in the wagons of his passing-through-Amphail caravans. Some persons have definitely discovered and used this gate recently -- because fresh blood was found all over the north-end boulder last season, and a strange whisper-tale is making the rounds in Scornubel: of men 'ridden' by a chill presence in their minds, that 'stole into them' when they were using "a hidden, magical way."

The Westwalk: this gate functions in one direction only: east to west, or outside to inside. It functions at all times, and is entered by finding a slight hollow about six wagonlengths south off the coast trade-road that runs east from the westernmost gate of the city of Westgate. This grassy depression is several hundred paces east of the gate, well within view of wall-sentinels, and they've learned about the gate's presence (but not yet how to make it function), and now cut all brush in the area, to keep activities there in clear view.

Only one being at a time can use this gate, though they may carry anything they can lift and move on their backs. There are three elements to the gate's functioning:

- the user must step into the right puddle or (when weather has been very dry) ground-hole: the northernmost of the three
- the user must be carrying four silver coins and no other silver of any sort
- the user must utter the word "Alamaraska" (this may be whispered)

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



If all three conditions are met, the user is whisked into a stone cupola (roof-chamber) atop "Mother" Mustivvur's rooming-house, just inside the western run of the Westgate city wall. The cupola has window-openings on its east and south, a stone hatch in its (yes, stone) floor that's usually barred from below, and a door in its east wall that opens onto an outside stair. Two guards armed with loaded crossbows guard the cupola at all times, and a third man collects the gate toll: the four silver coins. Those desiring to dispute payment are advised to beware his sharpened, poison-tipped fingernails (he's built up an immunity to the unidentified venom he uses).

This gate is, of course, used by persons desiring to enter Westgate unidentified or uninspected by the authorities.

The Lion Gate: this two-way, always-functioning gate has made many a Amnian fortune over the years, and its use is now monitored and taxed by the Athkatlan authorities (a guard of one concealed hired wizard, one armed official, and two guards armed hand crossbows that fire darts that have been sleep-venomed, who collect a toll of 5 gp per use, and detain and question any armed groups of users of more than four in number) at the city end of the link.

That terminus is a second-floor room (now permanently occupied by city authorities) in the Sleeping Lion salon in southern Athkatla. One of several salons in the city, the Sleeping Lion is a place for discussions, dice and card games and the gambling that accompanies them, and light drinking and dining (of grapes, chopped fruit, nuts, wedges of cheese, and small spiced pastries). It's the 'lowest class' (most tolerant and least opulent) of Athkatla's salons, and has no guards barring admittance to persons purely on the basis of their apparent wealth or status, as the other salons do (the Lion does, however, have swift-acting bouncers to deal with violent or snatch-thieving guests, including both strongmen and roof-spies armed with blowguns that fire sleep-envenomed darts).

Those who keep order in Athkatla want to prevent invasion of their city by, say, the Zhents or the Red Wizards, or anyone practising slavery or hustling kidnap victims through the Lion Gate. Otherwise, they don't care how it's used, so long as the toll is paid (failure to pay results in imprisonment and confiscation of goods valued at twice the toll; repeat offenders face harsher penalties).

The Lion Gate permits the passage of only one living being at a time (additional living creatures will be teleported to random locales elsewhere in the Realms, arriving safely but with no indication of where they are, and no direct way of return). Similarly, non-living material up to the mass and weight of the living user's body can pass through if worn or carried by the user; all matter in excess of either the mass or the weight of the user will simply vanish, apparently disintegrated (some users know this, and have used the gate to 'disappear' corpses by loading themselves heavily with supplies, and then dragging a body behind them -- which the magic of the gate obligingly causes to vanish). In any case of 'overage,' material in direct contact with the user's body is retained when cargo carried in a packsack, satchel, or bag disappears.

The other end of the Lion Gate link lies in a cave in rolling, bandit- and leucrotta-infested hills just north of the Lethyrstream and east of the Eastingreach coastal wagon-trail, nigh the Forest of Lethyr south of the Great Dale, almost clear across 'known' Faerun. There are several such caves in an area of loose-scrree-covered hills surrounding an old gravel-quarry, and they all seep water and are used as lairs by a succession of opportunistic prowling beasts. Some bandits apparently know of the gate and lie in wait for those traversing it.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



To enter the gate heading to Athkatla, a user must climb the sloping rocky back of the correct cave, passing through a strange feeble green luminescence that seems to 'drink' some magics but not others, unpredictably (affecting only magic items, or actively operating spells, rather than written or memorized spells), to reach a ledge, and there touch the proper two stones at the same time. Just which two jutting stones is a secret, but they're close enough together that an average-sized elf, lying down, can touch one with a leg and another with a hand. Regardless of how a user's body is arranged, they reach Athkatla standing upright -- and also come from Athkatla standing upright, too (there's enough headroom on the ledge to do so, even for a troll or ogre).

Jusk's Stroll: This gate-link works in both directions, but functions only when the end it's being entered through is in darkness (both daylight and lamplight temporarily cause it to 'sleep'). It links a certain spot along the south wall of a dockside warehouse in Suzail with the alleyway behind (directly south of) the Dragon's Jaws tavern (feature 39 on the 2nd Edition Realms boxed set "Grand Tour" book [page 54] map). The warehouse is Flar Oldbottle's Nets, Ropes, Cables, Hawsers, and Cords establishment (a stout stone two-story building topped by a hammerbeam wooden loft and slate roof). It's the second long rectangular building on the east side of the channel leaning to The Basin (feature 16 on the map), counting northwards. In other words, it's the rectangular building that has a tiny shed attached to it on its north side ("Old Rak" Jumble's Fresh Fish, a reeking sty of a place best avoided). The gate is located between Oldbottle's and the warehouse of similar construction to the south of it (Red Sunsets Trading Company, a Suzailan merchants' collective rental space for 'small cargoes'), a little east of midway along the wall of Oldbottle's, and in the "towards the Jaws" direction only works when the warehouse wall is touched in just the right spot (about three feet up off the ground, and near a waterstain that runs diagonally down the wall).

The terminus behind the tavern is marked by a square of paving stones in the dirt, kept clear by city authorities. This gate is well-known to them, and they watch both ends of it to see who uses it. It's also an open secret among dockworkers and merchants having business on the docks; other folk of Suzail know of it but not precisely where it is or how it works.

Imprur Jusk was a long-ago wealthy halfling investor of Suzail. He discovered the gate and had no idea who created it or why, but he controlled the dock end of it until his death, of a winter fever (Oldbottle's was once one of his warehouses). The link got its name from his nightly use of it to swiftly reach the upper-class taverns and festhalls he favoured, along the Promenade. It was said you could tell where Jusk had fared on many an evening by the strong smell of harbour fish clinging to this or that highcoin girl.

Ahem. So saith Ed.

Who'll have more answers for scribes, I'm sure, tomorrow.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 1, 2004: Hello, all. I bring Ed's reply to The Blind Ranger:

Hmm. I'd not want to 'be around' during 'big stuff' like the Dawn Cataclysm, the fall of Karsus or the Time of Troubles. Pivotal, yes, but mighty uncomfortable times to be living.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

So I'd have to say I'd want to be living in:

-- Myth Drannor when it was really 'working' as a crossroads of all races (i.e. after the majority of its elves had accepted and embraced the various non-elves now living among them, but before the stormclouds gathered against it).

-- Waterdeep after Ahghairon assumed power and everything settled down, so prosperity was rampant, trade bustling, and the institutions of the city (sewers, policing, garbage pickup, standards being enforced for building, etc.) were all being improved at once. That feeling of living in a place that's visibly being made better and better with each passing day.

-- Silverymoon after Alustriel took power but before the advent of the Silver Marches (and her handing things in the city over to Taern Hornblade), for the same reasons as for Waterdeep.

These are, as usual, hard choices ("Which of your children do you love the most?"), and there are many Obarskyr reigns during which I'd want to be living in Cormyr, or times when I'd want to be in this dale or that (I'd have given a lot to attend that founding meeting of the Harpers in the Dancing Place, for example), but right now, these are what strike me as the times and places I'd really want to LIVE in (and not just see and then duck out again to some place of more safety or tranquility).

So saith Ed.

Who's hard at work on the first Knights novel as I post this, but will return with more replies anon.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 2, 2004: Hello, all. Ed makes reply to Capn Charlie:

Capn, please tell Dark Wolf this:

Every town, city, and village has its own rules about dealing with bloodshed within its boundaries, of course, and most of the latter have to deal with more brigand and monster raids than they do marauding armies (if they see the latter, everyone usually flees!), but 'rules of war' governing an area only apply when a strong ruler holds sway over that area (for instance, Alustriel over the Silver Marches, or any priest of high rank over an area influenced by his or her temple), and when communications are good and/or that ruler commands magic that means transgressors will expect that reports of wrongdoing and mistreatment will 'make it back' to the ruler.

simontrinity correctly points out that most moral codes of war-behaviour are rooted in faiths, and promoted by priests. Except when orders to the contrary are given or warriors are 'carried away by bloodlust' in the heat of battle, a priest's orders WILL be heeded, because he's your means of healing!

In general, across Faerun, the answer to your first question is: no. No structured rules, beyond what superior officers give as commands, either before a battle or during it ("Kill all prisoners!" etc.) No human willingly surrenders to orcs or any goblin, for instance, because they'll expect to get eaten if they do.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Spies are usually tortured or mind-reamed with spells to find out what they've learned or already passed on (the 'general knowledge' their superiors have shared with them), and then slain -- but in some cases a spy will be 'allowed to escape' so as to unwittingly carry misinformation back to the enemy.

Wounded enemy soldiers on the battlefield (unless of high rank so they can be ransomed: i.e. "keep me alive and I'll send a messenger to fetch back the title deed to my house in Waterdeep; when it comes, feed me and then release me") are usually killed and their bodies looted, by commoners living locally (who creep out onto the bloody field after darkness has fallen) if not by the victorious soldiery. Sometimes such scavengers don't bother to slay helpless and unconscious or apparently dying prisoners, who survive (stripped and weaponless). If the presence of lots of bodies is thought to be a monster-luring or stream-poisoning danger (or a disease danger inside a settlement), the bodies will be piled up and burned.

When an army is occupying an area, orders are often given to butcher most people or just locals of importance, and spare the rest. This is done to 'make examples of those who resist' to terrorize the populace, so they'll obey without having to be compelled at swordpoint all the time. Even some 'good' folk countenance this, rationalizing it as making for more lives saved and less violence in the long run.

Prisoners of war will be spared if they can talk glibly enough offering to share information or to fight for their captors, but this is usually only believed if said captors have a good reason to do so. (Knowing beforehand that a particular duke of Tethyr is hated and feared might cause you to believe low-ranking soldiers of his who offer to aid you the invader against him, for example.) Otherwise, prisoners are kept alive for callously practical reasons: we need you to build a bridge, cut down all those trees, bring us livestock we can eat, or form a defensive ring around us as we advance on your own castle, so the arrows they fire will kill you and not us... and so on.

In general, war in the Realms is more brutish than real-world moderns might expect. Trickery and incitement to hatred/scapegoating occurs, and grudges are long-held.

On to Lizardfolk. These Scaly Ones vary in intelligence from barbarian-thick (but cunning) to (rarely) as smart as humans. The smart ones will, of course, take almost anything. The brutish majority raid to get food (yes, that includes humans, and almost exclusively meat will be sought), useful items (weapons of all sorts [missile weapons least preferred because of the practise/training effective use of them requires], ropes, chains, chests, lamp oil [for use as a weapon]), and to weaken foes (trash a village that's too close or has been too aggressive against lizardfolk). Even stupid lizardfolk are smart enough to seize any item that they've seen emitting magic (even if they can't use it, they can take it so it can't be used against them again), and even wizards or priests (who will be bound securely, ankle-hobbled, and usually head-hooded). Some lizardfolk use coinage in trade (and so will seize it), and some don't. The Threat from the Sea aside, it's very rare to see lizardfolk raiding a city, though sometimes, in thick fogs, individual young lizardfolk will seek to 'prove themselves' by snatching a few humans from the docks of a port. There was a time, in the southern ports of Tethyr, when lizardfolk of some tribes lauded those of their number who could enter a port and bring back alive a highcoin girl (she was released unharmed after being 'displayed' to all), because it was known that such lasses could only be got from a particular festhall well inland within the city -- thus proving that the capturing Scaly One had traversed quite a few city streets, and overcome some resistance at the always-busy festhall, to gain his prize (not merely grabbing someone within easy reach on a dock).

As to your questions about Thay, I'm afraid the NDA wall comes down like thunder. I can say only this much: slaves are haggled over (though, like our modern real-world monetary exchange rate

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

or share prices, 'everyone knows' a ballpark current base price for, just to pick one category, a strong but unskilled male human). Trained warriors and craftworkers are highly prized (but also closely watched, sometimes by child slaves assigned as constant 'glaring from a distance' escorts, for signs of treachery).

So saith Ed, who's busy crafting more answers as I post this.

Ahh, dispensing with sleep again, Great Bearded Thing?

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 2, 2004: Hello, all. I bring Ed's reply to Karth:

I still rock, eh? Good to know. :}

Seriously, you're welcome. I love doing this, as you might well have guessed by now. As for the street keys, some I can share, some I can't (I shared the key to Marsember here already, for example -- but I've also done little streetscapes like I just did for you, for Realms authors, and feel dutybound to say absolutely nothing about those until after their book, or sometimes a series of books [in case the narratives return to locations], is published). What I never want to do is 'trip up' a Realms author who misses seeing my posts here and names a street in a city one thing, when I've firmly dubbed it another.

It's my intent to eventually provide this much for all cities on the Sword Coast, all around the coasts of the Moonsea and the Sea of Fallen Stars, and between: ruler, main imports, main exports, lawkeepers ('City Watch') patrol particulars, main streets and features (large temples, architecturally striking buildings, landmarks, a few taverns, a few inns, and a shop or two). Enough so a DM can 'wing it' if players send their characters into a city.

However, it looks like it's going to take me years to nail down such coverage in print. So I'm glad you're a patient waiter. :}

"Patient waiter, I'll have what the gentleman over there is having... elf maiden covered in fresh cream, isn't it?"

Ahem. So saith Ed.

Who isn't done with answers today, yet, by the looks of my inbox.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 2, 2004: Hello, all. Hereafter, Ed provides an answer to Bookwyrms' "GIMME!"

Sorry, Bookwyrms, all I can say is: perhaps I'll be able to reveal more by the end of 2005. Perhaps.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

I'd LOVE to lay bare all sorts of lore about the College, though I've created so many 2nd Edition spells and magic items that I'm largely stepping back to watch others do such things for 3e (and so, specifics of new spells won't be part of anything I post here). In fact, I'd love to provide details of many features of [NDA], but I simply can't comment on them yet. And yes, that includes names of haughty gold elf Masters of the College, I'm afraid.

In most cases, I slip and wriggle and waffle all I can, 'pushing' my NDAs to the limit, because I think it's good 'teaser' advertising for the Realms rather than anything damaging to the Intellectual Property (after all, what concept of FR can rivals swipe? Castles? Dragons? Rescuing princesses? Spells that work? Sheesh).

Also, the original Realms agreement 'recognized me as creator' of the Realms by explicitly giving me freedom to promote the Realms and create anything I wanted in it and for it, in an ongoing manner. These NDAs came along later, after WotC bought TSR, and a whole new wave of them (followed by several successive waves) have followed since Hasbro acquired Wizards. That's fine, but the NDAs apply to specific things, and I play them that way, rather than letting some lawyer who's never negotiated anything with me (and probably never even heard of me) shut down a right I bargained for and obtained.

If I don't see anything harmful to future products or still-secret projects I know about or suspect will soon be pursued, I'll hand you lore here. I never want to 'tie the hands' of a WotC or freelancer writer by scouring out a topic in depth, but I DO want you scribes to be able to pursue your Realms campaigns right now rather than leaving you waiting (perhaps forever) for details I could easily have provided.

With all that said, I'll impart more about the College as soon as I can, but I'm not sure when that will be.

So saith Ed.

Who's deep in crafting the first Knights novel right now, and "revelling" in it.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 2, 2004: Hello, all. Ed's latest answer concerns Baldur's Gate:

Verghityax, it doesn't take a cartographer to know that the map (or rather, 'gazing down from the clouds three-quarter view') in the computer game is, ahem, "wildly inaccurate." Fanciful, even. I understand the memory limitations of the computers of the day would force 'shrinkage' of features included in the game, but to this day I don't know why the end result bore so little resemblance to the master Baldur's Gate city map I drew (printed 'straight' in the FR Adventures hardcover with blue colouring and a better compass rose added, and used again in Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast). The Volo's map is the one you need to look at, because of its keyed features.

As George said, the city wall doesn't 'show' because, over the years, it's been partly dismantled (cannibalized for building stones), and partly rebuilt into building after building. A visitor to the city can readily recognize that the wall used to exist, and see where it ran, by glancing at those buildings, even if they knew nothing about a wall.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

The dismantling process has only recently been 'completed,' and has been going on for years. It has always been unofficial (not marked by any formal decree or law, neither to order it done nor to forbid it; it began when some builders whose own offices backed onto the wall started tearing down 'their' bit of wall, and selling the stone), and thus has reached the attention of few sages elsewhere in Faerun.

The Volo's map shows a shop, Felogyr's Fireworks, marked "15." That shop fronts on, and stands on the south side of, a long curving street that runs across the city, with a curious 'prow' or deviance at about its midpoint (west of Felogyr's), where it meets a short street that runs almost due south to the docks. The longer road is Stormcanter Street, and the shorter one is The Windgallop,' and the old wall ran along the north side of Stormcanter and the west side of 'the Gallop,' so many buildings along those two 'fronts' are stout, thick-walled fortress-like boxes of large old close-fitted stones (many of them at the western end of Stormcanter are the houses of well-to-do Baldurians, whilst all of those along the Gallop, and most of those on the easterly stretches of Stormcanter, are shops at ground level, with apartments above (Gallop end: a few warehouses with business offices sprinkled amongst; Stormcanter end: the occasional tavern or festhall).

Steven's comments on the sort of city buildings the Flaming Fist own are (of course) spot-on. Back to the Volo's Guide map. North of the Seatower of Balduran (feature 6) are two parallel wharves. The longer and more northerly of the two is known as Hethkantle's Jetty, and the street that runs roughly northwest from its 'dry' (land) end, right out to the city wall, is Caundorl Street. Follow Caundorl, yes, right out to the city wall, and you'll find a miniature keep: four towers linked by stone walls.

That's the headquarters of the Flaming Fist: an impressive-looking little castle known as The Keep of the Flame. Please bear in mind that the Fist is too large to muster inside ANY city. The Keep of the Flame consists of offices, weapons-practise chambers and an archery 'gallery' (with cable-drawn targets) rather than the usual open-air 'butts,' uniform and equipment storage, armories, and yes, dungeon cells below for the holding of prisoners for ransom (and, som Baldurians mutter, guardian monsters and darker things).

The Keep also features a glorious upper-floor map room (in its largest tower), and several one-way-outbound gates (ahem: portals) that lead to several hilltops well east of the city, where Fist members can assemble in the event of a mustering, or when they want to depart the city unnoticed (for example, with captives). The Fist also owns several other permanently-guarded armory buildings around the city, including two of the massive 'former bits of the city wall' structures on northfront Stormcanter.

So saith Ed, tirelessly setting straight more Realmslore.

Yawn. I'm for bed (ALONE, Wooly, and Sirius, and Karth, too. Sorry!)

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 3, 2004: Hello, all. Ed answers kuje31's latest:

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

kuje, Sandrew the Wise IS that busy, and DOES get around that much. A rising star in the faith, he was 'called' from Neverwinter to Silverymoon to receive instruction from senior priests of Oghma. He resided in the Gem of the North for about a season in doing so, worshipping and serving the Binder in Silverymoon -- and then sent off to Waterdeep, to take charge of the temple there.

Sandrew is very tall and very charismatic, with a mellifluous voice and deeply-hooded eyes that blaze "with zeal," as other priests of Oghma like to say. They DO seem to emit a golden light at times (his pupils are a strange butter-yellow hue), and some folk have mistaken him for a god, or the servant of a god, when meeting him. Sandrew dresses simply, in ankle-length robes of white shimmerweave (while conducting 'high rituals) or beige homespun (the rest of the time). He wears several magical rings, carries a magical staff, and wears slippers that have toes that can sprout sleep-venomed daggerblades when he needs to defend himself. Sandrew's chief talents lie in NEVER forgetting a reference, or where he saw it, and in perceiving how best to state or impart something for his intended audience (as Kitten of Waterdeep once put it, "he can make even the outrageous seem reasonable").

So saith Ed.

Another Realmslore query dealt with (dusts hands briskly, reaches for mug of tea). Ah, this is the life. Feet up, Realmslore flooding into my computer, Ed's teasing merrily everpresent...

love to all, until next,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 3, 2004: Hello again, fellow scribes. I bring Ed's latest:

Blind Ranger, you're quite welcome. Oooh, and a Lordship! Thank you, I'll take very good care of it... I'll just put it on this shelf over here, and... there we are...

There's no "official" postal service in the Realms, with stamps and uniforms and suchlike, but all peddlers, minstrels, caravan wagon-merchants, trading coster offices, and caravan masters have traditionally taken verbal messages, written messages, and small packages (usually a canvas 'purse' sewn together and sealed against damp with pitch or sap before being sewn inside a second layer of canvas) for delivery to distant places, in return for quite steep fees (so common folk use such means only in emergencies). The cost reflects the fact that the delivery person may pay someone else, partway along the route, to do the last leg of the delivery, and still wants to make a few coins of profit after doing this. It would be rare to find any tangible message being delivered for less than a 6 gp 'up front' charge, unless it's "just to the next village or two along" a shared road.

Heralds and court envoys regularly deliver official messages and royal communications, of course.

All priesthoods maintain a regular message service between temples (and can use spells to deliver short verbal messages 'directly'), and often offer a cut-rate service to faithful worshippers (who have already given regular or substantial offerings to the temple) for including their messages along with the temple reports, written prayers and sermons, and holy decrees.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Lastly, shippers of large cargoes will often make several copies of a message for their intended recipient, and slip it inside crates or coffers that are then closed and sealed. Sometimes these are of the "If the finder of this delivers it unopened to Durth Merrilees of Merrilees Tapestries on the Way of the Dragon, Durth will pay a reward of 4 dragons" variety (this example obviously being for a message inbound to Waterdeep).

Note that this can take some time, and many messages never arrive. Note also that there's really no such thing as privacy unless codes are used, because in many cases a 'local village scribe' does the initial writing for the sender, and anyone can open and read (or even alter) the message en route. Many folk employ 'private codes' of this sort: plain everyday writing, but certain phrases have a previously-arranged 'private meaning' (example: "Aunt Maerl continues to do well, and asks after you" really means: "Our investment scheme is flourishing, and that extra money you offered to put into it is now needed")

There are armed, experienced, mounted couriers within Cormyr and Sembia (operating only within the boundaries of those countries), because there's enough wealth and population density to support such services. They typically deliver small packages swiftly and reliably, in return for 25 gp or more fees.

As for the general spread of information (news and rumors), it spreads by priests spell-talking to distant priests, via 'wandering' peddlers and minstrels and the Harpers, via trading costers, and with every ship and caravan (alert readers of my accounts of the Realms from 1979 onwards should recall what THO knows well: every arrival of a caravan to stay the night at the Old Skull spurred most of Shadowdale to turn out to "hear the latest" news).

There are even newspapers ("broadsheets") published in many cities (see my Realmslore WotC website column for some details of those printed in Waterdeep), and these travel with all of the above. The arrival of a 'new' (sometimes seasons-old) broadsheet in a remote village is cause for a social gathering at the local tavern for the best reader to entertain everyone for an evening.

Thanks for the question, Blind Ranger, and keep 'em coming!

So saith Ed, who's enjoying spinning the Knights novel right now.

I can't WAIT to read it. Sigh.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 4, 2004: Hello, all. I present Ed's latest words:

Bookwyrms, Faerun IS getting crowded. From the original Fiend Folio onwards, the number of hitherto-unknown races has increased sharply, and as the Realms was the official home of the 2nd Edition of D&D, every last one of them had to be shoehorned in. The apparent overcrowding was made worse when a lot of the 'wide open spaces' were trimmed from the Realms map for 3e (in other words, the "empty spaces between the human cities and realms, where one could meet with all manner of talking critters" suddenly just weren't there anymore).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

However, I've always postulated that the continent of Faerun, at least, is a verdant breadbasket that can feed LOTS of folk (except in its desert and frozen bits -- hence the orc hordes sweeping south to raid from time to time). It HAS to be that way to feed all of these folk, and there HAVE to be a lot of folk, or (most of the species of) dragons (a very-firmly-bolted-on element of the game) would starve.

TSR from the first downplayed the sexual side of things, and so my hints that, hey, there seems to be "something in the air" here: everyone's coupling like bunnies, and babies are born in relentless profusion, have always been omitted or watered-down. To my way of thinking, this fertility MUST be present, or none of the races would ever produce enough bodies to fight all of these wars and still have civilizations (of sorts) standing -- or to fill the slave markets (and country) of Thay.

I plant a radish, and sixteen sprout. I make love to a partner, and twins or triplets arrive; the next time we couple, pregnancy occurs almost immediately (the females of Toril must be internally as strong as oxen!).

Something else should be noted, too: check out page 10 of the DM's Sourcebook of the Realms, in the original Realms boxed set ("Old Gray Box"), wherein the map of the United States is size-compared to the Heartlands. We're talking a LARGE area, please remember.

After all of this, if things still seem uncomfortably crowded to you (especially given the dominance of humans atop the soil, and drow below), make many of the peoples very scarce ON FAERUN, but more numerous on other continents of Toril (so they can arrive on trading ships, and leave a scattering behind across the lands, but be very rare "here"). That's what I did with the dwarves, the gnomes, and to a large extent with the elves. The halflings I spread thinly everywhere humans dwelled, and then gave their own kingdom 'way down south.' The flind, gnolls, ogres, and giants were my real problem, and you'll notice I shoved them into remote, inhospitable locations. My original players will recall that there's an entire continent dominated by giants, and another landmass (that they've explored but little) that seems to consist of vast rolling grassy plains, inhabited by lots of centaurs, wemic, gnolls, flind, and so on.

So saith Ed.

I can certainly attest to the lusty side of Realmsplay, but it seems some of you (hello, Wooly... and Sirius... and Karth) have already figured that out.

love to all (breathlessly),  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 4, 2004: Hello, all. Herewith, Ed makes reply to Gerath Hoan:

Ah, Gerath, you've stumbled across an Untold Secret of the Realms. Way back when Barb Young was editing DUNGEON Adventures magazine, she asked for short, simple adventures ("Side Treks" and slightly-larger equivalents). I did one for her ("Irongard," published in issue 18), but we never got around to publishing my second one, "The Haunted Well." I still have it, somewhere, a simple little three-chamber (or so) 2nd Edition dungeon, and may in time publish it somewhere and somehow. It's, yes, a wayside well that's locally deemed to be haunted. Though its water is just fine (drinkable), overnight camping near it is strongly discouraged.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

So saith Ed.

Who's not telling you the whole story, in part because we Knights left some unfinished business there.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 5, 2004: Thank you, Alaundo. I suspect Ed's most recent NDAs are going to stop him from even commenting on Jerryd's (ahem, Jerry D--'s) Cormyr files, but I'll pass them on, never fear.

Hello, all. Bookwyrn, you mentioned you lacked access to the Old Gray Box. I know there's been some monkeying with the FR map since then. Among other things, it's shortened the distance between the Sword Coast and the Sea of Fallen Stars, but before that 'telescoping of wide open spaces' occurred, a due east-west line across the Heartlands land mass of Faerun, from the Sword Coast to the city of Telflamm, was just a shade greater than the distance across our real-world United States of America at its widest point (from about Eureka, California to Cape Hatteras in North Carolina). That's what the page Ed mentioned depicts.

On to his latest answer:

kuje31 and Faraer, I must begin by apologizing to Faraer for taking so long to answer his Reverie query, which was asked here months back. Briefly, I see the elves (including the drow) as evolving, so that definitive answers no longer fit each and every individual elf. For most drow, gestation takes, yes, two years -- but just as for Faerunian and real-world humans, there are premature-birth children who survive and thrive, sometimes after as little as eleven months of pregnancy.

As Elaine Cunningham said, elsewhere here at Candlekeep: "I postulated that natural adaption would result in other solutions, but also assumed that their elven natures, including the ability to enter reverie, were fragmented by their environment. So I left the issue unresolved, describing various drow in different situations. Some drow slept, some entered a form of Reverie, and some, such as Gromph, could not sleep at all. (It also occurred to me that the drow would likely have developed some sort of brief but deeply restorative meditation -- a very useful skill for warriors, priestesses and wizards who, for whatever reason, cannot afford to take their eyes off their enemies for long.)... there are references in the earlier lore to support these possible options: dreamless sleep, sleep with a dream phase, elven reverie."

I've always treated surface elves AND drow like this: this elf does this, this elf does that, and no definitive statement can be made for the entire race, any longer.

So, yes, Colin McComb's elven Reverie is part of 'my' Realms, but not all elves go into Reverie all the time. Some don't sleep at all (until they get sick or are wounded, whereupon they typically 'crash' in a semi-coma for tendays at a time, only to snap out of it 'just fine' and go on sleepless as before). How upset or wounded a particular elf is, drow or otherwise, affects which of the three options Elaine outlined 'govern' that particular elf. There's also the deeper 'stasis Reverie' that elves who "sleep" for long periods (like the Srinshree) enter.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

MOST surface elves don't sleep, but do Reverie (not very often). MOST drow sleep as humans do, tormented by dreams, but don't need to sleep very often (they can 'remain awake' for days, though that doesn't mean they can run for days on end, or fight unceasing for days on end: physical exertion causes weariness of the body for elves just as it does for humans. Dwarves and gnomes CAN perform prolonged physical exertion for longer than other races, and halflings can engage in complicated mental exertion (adding up sums, sorting, remembering genealogies) for longer than other races without making mistakes due to mental fatigue.

Again, these are gross generalizations, of the sort that if I made them of real-world human sub-races I'd be rightly accused of "stereotyping." However, I make no apologies for having some elves do one thing at a particular time and another thing later on, or this elf doing something different from that elf. It's one of the features that lends them this fey 'aura of mystery' in the eyes of Faerunian human characters, and real-life human gamers.

So saith Ed.

Who's still happily writing away on SWORDS OF EVENINGSTAR (or whatever it'll eventually be called).

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On November 5, 2004 THO said: Hello, all. Thy Hooded One. Ed is busy ferrying wife to medical appointments for the first half of today, and I'll not presume to answer for him, but I feel moved to point out a logical fallacy in your post, Jerryd.

I'm not disagreeing with your conclusions about widows (and I doubt Ed will, given what I've seen of the Realms in well over a decade of Realmsplay), but this sentence of yours is suspect: "It seems obvious to me from this that the peoples of Faerûn would place a high value on fertility and childbirth."

You're assuming superb communications, clerical near-unanimity, and a societal consensus here. Folk tend to value highly what is rare and unusual, not what is commonplace. If fertility and pregnancy are everpresent, it's merely "the normal state of affairs," and for most common folk there's little awareness of overall population losses, only of local deaths and bereavements.

kuje31, please tell Kezghan that his request for particulars of our Knights characters can't be honoured. As Faraer pointed out, it amounts to sabotaging our campaign (however unintentionally), and is in fact written in to the release forms we all signed, so long ago, for each of our characters.

Ed will return with more replies as soon as he can.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 6, 2004: Hello, all. I bring Ed's answer to Taelohn (re. "lusty business"):

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Taelohn, the ability to wield spellfire is usually inherited, yes, but very unreliably (it may manifest generations down a bloodline from the 'last' hurler-of-spellfire). So it's by no means even to be expected that the son or daughter of a spellfire-wielder will themselves be able to hurl spellfire (remember, it's usually been so rare in the Realms that the folk belief that 'the gods only let one person at a time wield spellfire' was able to both exist and persist).

With that said, of course if you as DM want your spellfire-wielder player character's offspring to also be a spellfire-wielder, of course they will be. However, there ARE other things to consider. The ability to handle spellfire IS very rare, despite the fecundity of the Realms, so perhaps the gods DO restrict its use.

Yes, it would "be possible that some other folks out there might want such a thing." However, few women would want to be among those to bear and mother a spellfire-wielder, because if they know about spellfire at all, they know too things: it's dangerous, and a lot of powerful wizards seem to want to get spellfire, and are prepared to do almost anything to get it.

Certain women in the Realms may be as naive and stupid as any other grouping of Faerunian lifeforms, but folklore and rumours in Faerun will swiftly and very colourfully supply whatever might not have occurred to them, from the "Wizards will enslave me to get my child, and slaughter me the moment it's born" to: "Wizards will rape me magically to get me pregnant, and then twist me into something inhuman, spell to spell, to give my unborn child various powers" to: "Wizards and priests and rulers from all over Faerun will come to capture me with swords and spells and commanded monsters, and kidnap and slay everyone I hold dear to compel me to behave thus and so, only to be slain by the NEXT wizard or priest or ruler -- and I and my friends and neighbours and our homes will be caught right in the middle of all their fighting."

The exceptions to such attitudes might be found in these three small subgroups of women: insane (megalomania) women who ARE rulers or powerful clergy or mages; devout female priests whose doctrines of faith (as stretched by superiors, perhaps) could embrace such a role; and frustrated wealthy social-climbers [successful merchant families] who've realized that they're being permanently shut out of local nobility, and so have nothing to lose in their attempts to become REALLY special. 'Real' noble females would never go for this unless very jaded, lonely, or insane, because deviance from the norm within their elite means loss of status as part of that elite (in other words, they could be shunned and lose their nobility).

If your spellfire-wielding character has access to any of those groups, we have a 'perhaps.' A possibility tempered with the fears of such women about being caught in the crossfire of power groups ambitious to gain spellfire, and with the dangers you've pointed out that the PC will bring down on his own head by going about announcing his power. He will of course have to demonstrate his own spellfire ability, or a rather large percentage of women will treat him as real-world women do any man who makes 'special powers' claims: prove it, baby, or it's just another line spun by someone who wants to get into my pants. (Of course, as you speculated, the PC's rank and charisma will come into play here.)

Certainly a woman of any of the groups mentioned above (or a woman controlled by a power group), could offer the PC several thousands in gold for his seed (probably not more, because they'll play up the "unproven reliability" of his passing on the power, in order to keep the price low), BUT if the PC thinks for more than a few hours (and isn't governed by recklessness), that notion that "Once they have my seed, or perhaps my child with proven powers, they'll have me 'make' a second one, just in case, and then they'll be almost certain to slay me to keep their spellfire rare and valuable. Or they'll enslave me somewhere to turn out their own private army of

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



spellfire-children whom they can train and indoctrinate from birth to serve them. The moment any of my sons reach puberty, I the un-indoctrinated one am surplus to their needs!"

Of course, all of this probable activity flows from a lot of people taking the idea of inherited spellfire seriously, and to answer that part of your question, yes, the general idea probably IS sound. So then it comes down to "How much excitement do you want in your life?"

To highlight the choice facing your PC, let's spin a sideline fantasy (hey, bear with me here, this is what I do for a living). Say another of your players had a female character, who knew for certain (because a god had told her so, privately) that she, and anyone who came into sexual contact with her, would become immune to a plague that is very rapidly killing all other humans. She knows the god is right, because she's nursed her entire dying family, covered often in their bodily messes, and although they've all died, she's just fine. In fact, she's the only one left alive in her village, as desperate humans from everywhere else flee through it, heading they know not where, in a probably vain attempt to escape the plague (she can tell that many of these people are fleeing it). Does she dare tell anyone she can "save" them? If she wants to save someone, how will she do it and not then be forced into sex with anyone who has magic or physical might to overcome her? How can she retain the power of choice? Or will it just be easier to say nothing, and try to lie low and avoid being killed by the desperate folk fleeing everywhere?

That's the flipside of "Hey, perhaps I can get women to PAY me for sleeping with them, whether or not I'll manage to fill the world with spellfire-wielders!" The religious beliefs of the PC will come into play in this decision, too -- because the gods of the Realms are real to folk of Faerun, and this is important enough to not merely be left to the PC consulting a local priest, but will instead probably get the PC a manifestation in his waking lap, or dream-vision-visitations in which the god or a servant of the god will make some powerful suggestions as to what the PC might do (my little parable of the plague-immune woman might be one such vision).

A great question, Taelohn, and a fascinating ingredient for campaign play. I'm not trying to influence you one way or the other on allowing it; as DM, responsibility for entertaining your players is yours, and so 'the call' on this must be yours, too.

Just remember that Azoun was a special case. He had great charisma and an even greater reputation, causing almost hero-worship among the majority of Cormyrean commoners -- who knew, on the basis of his past performance, that there were so many bastard offspring 'out there' already that bearing the King's child WASN'T going to bring them unwelcome attention from War Wizards or nobles (or Sembians or anyone else) wanting to capture royal offspring for some plot or other. Azoun was so revered among Purple Dragons, especially, that there are many instances of women offering themselves to Azoun for a night with the full eager, admiring consent of their husbands. That attitude probably wouldn't be extended to the PC you mention, coming through the door with a cheesy grin on his face as he says something akin to: "Hi, I'm Joe, and I'm a spellfire-wielder. Care to pay me for enjoying my favours?"

I'm going to stop typing now, before I inspire the lovely Lady Hooded to think up something REALLY provocative. I can just HEAR her evil chuckles, reading the last few lines I typed, above.

So saith Ed.

And so right you are, Cuddly Bearded Thing -- oop, EXCUSE me, Exalted Master of the Realms and Great Sage Unsurpassed. So... when were you planning on trying to give ME spellfire?

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 6, 2004: Oh, Wooly, now you've told the world! Thy hamsters, with their soft fur and enthusiastic wriggings, their bright eyes and breathless - - Ahem. Sorry.

Now, where was I?

Ah, yes, Sourcemaster 2's post.

Oh, Sourcemaster, I love suitors who lay on the sarcasm so thickly that it almost buries me. Accordingly, you may, just as much as you like, beat around MY bu--

AhemhemhemHEM. Yet perhaps I should say rather less about things, lest Wooly and his ferocious hamsters run amok and do damage enough to upset the noble Alaundo, our long-suffering host (to whom we owe so much for making this ongoing revel possible). I wasn't sure if you wanted my answers to your questions or Ed's, but as it happened, we chatted about them back and forth this evening, and agreed on things, so you may take the following as coming from both of us:

1. Probably, given your use of the word "eventually." However, until a new deity rose to control whatever new system of magic replaced the Weave (remember, Mystra IS the Weave; for her to be destroyed "beyond re-creation," Azuth and all of Mystra's Chosen, in whom parts of her power reside, would have to be destroyed, too), magic would be wild or simply wouldn't work. Probably magic items would do SOMETHING when their stored powers were unleashed, but not function as their wielders expected them to (and not under any precise control or exhibiting any consistency of effects).

It's doubtful if most spell-using beings would survive such a cataclysm. None of them would survive it unchanged, to be sure. Nor would the Shadow Weave just 'step in and take over' if Mystra were destroyed utterly, because the Shadow Weave depends on the Weave; without the one, the other (which opposes it, and is 'balanced' to do so) will inevitably collapse too.

So the gods who remained would probably battle for control of magic, in a world in which all magic will have a governing tendency to 'go wild.' Farewell Realms as we know them, and so on.

We're both curious: why do you ask this? :) Is a particularly foolish PC in your campaign planning to assassinate Mystra? (And if so, HOW?)

2. Psionics might be seen as a threat by particular gods in particular passing situations, when wielded by particular other gods or beings, but in general: no. Most gods themselves use psionics, so it's just another ability (like breathing, and it's a rare god [except one whose portfolio is unconcerned with the dead] who'll look down at mortals and seriously say, "Look at all those dangerous beings! Yes, dangerous, I say: see? They're all BREATHING!").

3. Your third query is so important that I'm going to start by quoting it straight: "Just how much control do Faerunian clerics have over the spells they are given? Can a priest trust that the spells he prays for will be granted, or will the gods deny a spell they believe will be used for unworthy

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

aims? Might a deity slip in a different spell if it thinks it will be needed, or is such intervention extremely rare?"

In the PUBLISHED Realms, particularly in Third Edition, it seems to be against design principles to have the gods use their extraordinary powers in ways "unfair" to mere mortals. To put it another way, if the PCs have to follow spellcasting rules, so do the gods.

However, in the 'home' Realms, the gods have ALWAYS showed their displeasure (and sometimes approval) of PC performance by controlling what divine spells are granted in return for prayers. In other words, the god can see if Priest X intends (at the time of asking) to use a spell for selfish purposes not in accordance with the faith, and bestow a lesser spell or nothing at all (or the spell plus a warning lecture).

If the deity is particularly pleased with the performance or aims of Priest X, a spell or spells might be placed in the PC's mind that they could never hope to gain by prayer (i.e. something beyond their level limits).

In all cases, cleric PCs are on constant 'performance review.' If you fail in your mission due to circumstances honestly beyond your control, that's fine, but if your actions and motives stray from the faith (or the commandments, however mistaken or foolish, of your clerical superiors, EXCEPT when you knowingly disobey because you can clearly see THEY are straying from the faith and by your disobedience you will be cleaving to it and furthering the aims and influence of the deity), you will pay a price. Sometimes it's a penance, sometimes a difficult mission or test assigned to you, and sometimes it's 'shorting' your requested spells.

This is one of the key DM tools to making priests very different from "fighters who can cast healing spells, so the rest of the party had better suck up to them, or at least pay lip service to the priests' gods."

So say we both, Ed and I, and I know from experience that he does this.

Which is why priests and credos and priesthoods in the 'home' Realms have always felt real and meant something, long before the superb series of books crafted (in part using Ed's notes, of course) by Eric Boyd and Julia Martin and others.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 7, 2004: Hello, all.

Athenon, Ed asked Keith Parkinson (the artist who did that particular piece) that back in 1987, and Keith shrugged and said, "Whoever you want it to be. I dunno." So there you have it. Ed wanted a more Merrie Olde Englande/Sherwood Forest look, and in fact was asked to prepare (and did) an exhaustive art order of three figures (with particular attention to every last little detail of what they'd be wearing).

Faraer, I passed your post about wanting to see The Haunted Well on to Ed, whose reply follows:

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

In design terms, it wouldn't be hard to convert it to 3.5e, but it would have to wait for three things: next year (Hasbro budgets done and set for 2004, so no more web acquisitions), approval from those who do such buying that they want to see it at all (and remember, there are 'orphaned' EEE and Volo's columns from DRAGON floating around that WotC already owns and has paid for, that haven't seen publication because of lack of desire to show them to the wider world), and -- being as it's an adventure that uses some hitherto-unseen (but very minor) magic items and spell effects -- approval by the internal WotC 'Rules Council,' who have a lot of far more important work on their plates to review.

So I'd like to publish it, somewhere and somewhen, as much as you'd like to see it, Faraer, but neither of us should hold our breath awaiting it. I'll mention it to certain Mysterious Masked WotC Masters, though, and see what befalls.

So saith Ed.

I suspect Ed also wants us Knights to return to the Well and play through it before he unleashes it on a waiting world, too. And as you may have gathered, we're an oh-so-obedient lot.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On November 8, 2004 THO said: To Taelohn and Wooly Rupert:

Well, of COURSE I'd like more special powers. Seriously, I'd love to live the rest of my life, from this moment on, able to wield these powers or effects, at will:

Ask Advice Of Dead Ancestors and Former Teachers  
Counter The Bosom-Droop of Age  
Feather Fall  
Fly  
Mend  
Message  
Move Silently  
Peer into Ed's Mind  
Procure Munchies from Afar  
Recover from Peering into Ed's Mind  
Spider Climb  
Teleport From/To Lap of My Choice  
Teleport Self and Lover from Bed to Surface and Location of My Choice (and then back again)  
Two-hour Spontaneous Orgasm  
Unseen Servant  
Write A Brilliant Fantasy Novel (Without Selling Soul To Anyone)  
Write Another One

That's just those that've occurred to me off the top of my head, just now. I'm disconsolate at the thought I can never have any of these in real life, and find myself in need of being cheered up.

Personally. Right now. Leash and all.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Helpful scribes?  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 8, 2004: Hello, all. Thanks, Wooly; I knew I could count on you. I bring Ed's latest reply, this to Kajehase from fair Sweden (a country Ed enjoyed visiting very much):

Sorry, Kajehase, it IS just a coincidence. The "Obarskyrs" have no relationship at all to "Boareskyr Bridge" (please note the 'e' in there). Jeff Grubb and his wife Kate Novak named the ruling family of Cormyr, and I named the place (after the long-ago adventurer Boareskyr [also my creation] who built the first bridge there). Ah, but you're a daring scribe, if you're going to try for the Lady Hooded's leash. Me, I'd just walk up to her and ask for a kiss -- that usually gets you a kiss and then some.

So saith Ed, who's busily blowing my cover again (reputation? Hah! Gone long ago, in one sense, and better than ever, in another).

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 8, 2004: Hello, all. Ed replies to Jerryd this time:

Hi, Jerry! Yes, I'm afraid the dreaded NDA wall hath come down, and I can say little on your chapters (and many other topics besides [sigh]).

You're quite correct on the higher mortality rate in the Realms than in the real-world, with one seldom-mentioned difference: these days, in Faerun, there are fewer 'killer plagues' than in our real world (medieval, Dark Ages, Renaissance, and even the post First World War so-called "Spanish Flu"). There USED to be just as many 'plagues' among humans in the Realms, but the mingling of so many species (predatory beasts and 'intelligent races') would tend to pass around all the 'bad bugs' centuries ago, so most folk in the Realms are now fairly resistant to diseases. So nowadays, individuals die of disease all the time, and many travellers are unwitting carriers, but pandemics are rare.

As has been said before, the Realms in general is more gender-equal than our real world (although I'm speaking in generalities here). Widows and widowers often remarry or just re-cohabit (remember, the pantheistic Realms is VERY different from our medieval real world, wherein the European recorded history we have is of a society dominated by one faith, albeit with many schisms: it's simply wrong to think of "marriage" customs in the Realms in anything like Christian terms).

You are quite correct (in your reply to the Hooded One) when you point out that most priesthoods want folk to have abundant offspring, but she's right in disagreeing with you that Faerunians consciously "place a high value on fertility and childbirth." To them, it's simply normal for women to be very fertile (hence the use of herbal contraceptives by many women who for one reason or another dare not have a child at a certain time [examples: a warrior woman in the midst of desperate guerilla-style warfare, for whom a pregnancy will hamper them when fighting, and a babe die of lack of care when born; or a noblewoman, priestess, or other socially prominent

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

individual who'll rose rank or perhaps even her life by bearing the child of the 'wrong' man, or a child at all]).

Your assumptions about most warfare being conducted by males is (as a generalization, of course) right, and so most battle casualties will in turn be male, yes, and so there will indeed tend to be significant numbers of widows who are still of childbearing age. You're correct that (aside from VERY small-population hamlets and villages, where some women will be jealous of others who can seduce several men, and so sneer at their bastard children, and the aforementioned noble and royal cases) there's little stigma to being a bastard child.

I'm not so certain that (aside from those dominated by priests of certain faiths) there'd be "significant social pressure" on widows to continue bearing children. It's more that, again, it's 'the normal way of things,' and isn't thought about all that much in general social mores.

Which brings me to your "wild and wicked thought." Now, tempting as this idea is to the fiction writer in me (sorry, Realms porn fanciers, I merely said I was tempted -- and, by the way, The Hermit is quite correct in pointing out that it seems to be largely a fiction [we can try to pin the blame on the French romantic writers who also cooked up Lancelot]), I'm going to have to say no to this as a general custom. I will, however, accept that certain priesthoods (Sharess ahem, leaps to mind) might hold with such ideas, and that unscrupulous local rulers, priests, and landowners might try to invent and claim such a right, after hearing bardic ballads and minstrels' tales that feature the notion. The "lord chasing the lass his eye falls upon" element so crucial to Tess of the D'Urbervilles and so many other tales of yesteryear is a stock element of certain sorts of novels because it's rooted in human nature. In the Realms, of course, I see no reason why (given that there are herbs that 'unman' a male for a time, and others that force him to be rampant) women with power and influence couldn't go chasing men in this way. However, combining these claimings with wedding nights is only going to be acceptable to certain faiths, so it's not going to be the norm.

Now we have been assuming 'power overcoming the desire of the wedded couple' here, and being as you brought up the Obarskyrs as an example, I should point out again that in their case (as probably with many nobility, such as the nobles of Tethyr centuries back), certain commoners saw it as an honour to 'entertain' royalty or nobility -- and bearing bastard children was could well mean social advancement, not (real-world Christian thinking again) shame or loss of status.

An interesting topic to explore, but one can readily see (given the Code of Ethics and now the Code of Conduct) why those who publish the Realms have been less than eager to allow delvings along these paths. On the other hand, one only has to glance at a Terry Goodkind novel to know that other fantasy publishers go much farther than we've ever cared to.

So saith Ed, who's busily putting his garden to bed for another year.

He hasn't had to fell any trees for firewood, though, as obliging windstorms keep splitting the old forest giants and bringing them down for him.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

November 9, 2004: Hello, all. kuje, I just e-talked to Ed, and he said: no snow yet, but bitter cold. He was out clearing brush down by the road, stripped to the waist, and looked up and saw a teenaged lass staring at him -- from the depths of her snorkel-hooded parka! Ah, Canada when the season turns...

In the words of Ed that follow, the Great Sage tries to help Verghityax:

Sigh. Here we run straight into NDAs, I'm afraid. Let me try to take your questions in order:

1. [NDA]

2. [NDA]

3. There's NDA trouble here as well, but I can say this much about just one temple: the Rose Portal, the Baldurian house of Lathander the Morninglord, is a beautiful structure made of rose-red sandstone, cut and polished into a upsweeping-from-the-ground giant pair of humans hands, clasped together. Long, narrow stained glass (pink in hue, of course) windows are located between the fingers, and the entire structure has been coated in melted glass (sandstone being a notoriously soft, easily-weathered stone). Spells cast within the vaulted central sanctuary of this place cause 'doors' of red radiance to appear and drift about in the air, at various heights (these are illusions, 'shadows' of magical portals rather than real portals -- but when the clerical choir that dwells in the temple, and in tallhouses immediately around it, sing particular harmonies during hymns, some of these doors drift together, and a real portal appears; its destination is said to be any other consecrated altar of Lathander in Faerun that its user is familiar with [has previously visited]).

4. Certainly, for "a few."

First, the street that runs along the inside of the city walls from the Stormkeep (the fortress at the westernmost end of the walls) to Black Dragon Gate is known as 'The Run.'

The street that runs along the edge of the docks from the Seatower of Balduran (feature 6 on the Volo's map) to The Water-Queen's House (8) is 'the Western Wet,' and the street that runs along the docks from the two 'keel-slips' (boatbuilding drydocks) east of The Counting House (29) around the ship-basin and along the wharves as far as Waendel's Wharf (the centermost protruding dock protruding from the east side of the harbor, that has three [and only three] 'legs') is 'the Eastern Wet.'

The wharf to the south of Waendel's (that has four 'legs') is Stormwynd Dock.

The wide, legless wharf north of Waendel's is Athcaulyr's Stand.

The small wharf between Hethkante's Jetty and the Seatower of Balduran is Glaezel's Dock (it's had several owners and different names in the past; Manthuran Glaezel is the very wealthy head of a prosperous, long-prominent Baldurian family that owns many city businesses and properties), and the street that runs roughly northwest from its 'dry' (land) end, right out to the city wall (parallel to, and immediately south of, Caundorl Street), is Black Eel Street.

The street that begins at Black Eel Street one block in from the Western Wet, and curves northeast near Krammoch Arkhstaff's house (21) to pass along the front of The Lady's Hall (7)

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



and then in front of Black Dragon Gate (10) right to the city wall, and thereafter curve south along the wall to The Rose Portal (27), is Wendserpent Street.

Belltoll Street (9 on the Volo's map) runs from The Wide (2) west to join another street just north of the home and office of the sage Ragefast (a fascinating fellow who tries to trace the whereabouts of magic items and dragon treasures, among other things; this building is map feature 22). The street that Belltoll joins, that curves east from that moot to end at its moot with Wendserpent, and west from that moot to the Stormkeep, is Sornbanner Street.

Another street, Long Lane, can be found by tracing the way that passes the walls of the Blushing Mermaid (map feature 19) and Manycoins House (20) to curve to the eastern city gate. The northern end of Long Lane is a small triangular open plaza (often crowded with wagons loading and unloading crates, coffers, and barrels destined for, or fresh come from, city shops). This open space is called 'the Thulgrave,' because the tall, narrow fountain at its heart (a pillar of stone carved into the likeness of a waterspout, with the hands of Talos and of Umberlee rising out of fierce waves around its base to direct the waterspout higher; its water falls back down into the waves and drains away through holes bored at their lowest points) is Thulgrave's Fountain. Ilgrar Thulgrave was a wealthy merchant fleet shipowner (and yes, he's buried in the base of the fountain, so it's literally 'the Thulgrave'). It should be noted that "plaza" is a word unknown in the Realms. In Baldur's Gate, such an open space is called a 'strake.'

Immediately east of Long Lane, paralleling it on its path from the city gate to the Thulgrave (and running right past the doors of map feature 5, the Elfsong Tavern), is Lorammor Street. Many small shops line Lorammor (sometimes three establishments to a building, in cellar, on street level, and in the upper level).

The street that passes Manycoins House (20) on its west side, and curves around to the southernmost city gate, is Nuthkhal's Way.

The street that encircles The Wide (2), running from The Counting House (29) north past the doors of Flamesinger House (23), and then south again to pass the doors of The Rose Portal (27), is Manyspears Lane. Its run is dominated by three- and four-story tallhouses that have been divided into many small apartments; many Baldurian shopkeepers, crafters, and shop assistants dwell along Manyspears.

Lastly, three moots (street intersections) have names that visitors to Baldur's Gate would do well to know, because locals use them as everyday landmarks (e.g. "He dwells seaward of Three Spires"). They are: Three Spires, Fox Bottom, and Lionsmoot.

Three Spires, named for the spired towers of three ornate private mansions that tower above the moot, is the six-way intersection just west of map feature 21 (Krammoch Arkhstaff's house). On the Volo's map, it's directly above the numeral "2" of the "21." The north-south street that passes between the "2" and the "1" is Hauth Lane, and the other two streets involved in the moot are Wendserpent Street and Blackraven Lane (Arkhstaff's house actually fronts on Blackraven, and it runs west through the moot to end in a moot with Chalsendace Street, a curving street lined with the mansions of the wealthy, that runs from the city wall to end in a moot with Stormcanter Street.

Years ago, Fox Bottom was a wooded hollow where a vixen denned under rocks and bore brood after brood of hungry foxes. Now it's the closest thing Baldur's Gate has to a slum: a moot surrounded by crowded, run-down rooming-houses where rats scurry, washing hangs on high everywhere, and beggars and maimed old sailors are watched warily by well-armed patrols. Fox Bottom can be found a mere two blocks south of Manycoins House (20), where Long Lane

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



crosses Hulkael Street. Hulkael begins in the Lathdell (the small open strake where the Shrine of the Suffering, Volo's map feature 26, stands), and winds south through Murl's Rest (the strake where Sorcerous Sundries, map feature 14, stands) to pass along the east side of The Blade and Stars inn (map feature 18), before hooking around west and northwest to the docks.

Lionsmoot is just southeast of Stormkeep. From the fortress, one takes Stormshore Street (feature 11 on the Volo's map, and yes, it runs clear across the city, not far north of the docks, through where the numeral "11" appears on that map, and beyond) to the end of Stormcanter Street. That threeway moot, where Stormcanter begins its run across the city, is named for The House of the Lion, a luxurious festhall that stands in its eastern angle. For some years, it's been the habit of young 'blades' (men of youth, style, and coin) and 'lacethroats' (daring young women of style and coin enough to dress fashionably) of the city to gather on pleasant evenings to duel, gamble, flirt to choose bedpartners for the night, and parade their fashions and attitudes. When things grow too rowdy, the 'waycudgels' (bouncers) of the brothel go out and drive many of the couples indoors to the Lion to continue their revelry, scattering the rest to continue their fun elsewhere.

Pronunciations: "WAYNe-del" and "Ath-call-EER's" and "THULL-gray-ve" and "Lore-AM-more" and "NUTH-call's" and "Chall-SEN-dace" and "Hull-KALE"

5. [NDA]

So saith Ed.

Well, at least you've got about a third of the Baldurian streets named, now! Sorry about the unanswered questions, Verghityax, but at least Ed's NDA notations tell you he's involved in some way with something to do with Baldur's Gate that's not yet appeared. I'm guessing a licensed product (Atari computer game?), but that's just a guess -- Ed has told me absolutely NOTHING about this.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 9, 2004: Hello, all. Ed makes another reply:

Torkwaret, Steven's already dealt admirably with your first question; of COURSE you can still have baneliches around if you'd like to use them in your campaign.

Here are some banelich names from my notes: Clarth Hornhaeld, Khorvan Jaeleth, Harlrhys Moksoun, Haurisar Rhallowglas, and Laumbur Yuthlekh.

As for burnbones, to quote the rules: "The early days of the Banedeath did not go well for Cyric, the (then) new god of the dead, and many of his fledgling clerics were slaughtered at the hands of powerful Banites. Cyric soon after empowered select members of his clerical faithful with a portion of his power -- so much power, in fact, that these clerics' mortal forms dissolved into nothing more than mere bones and the fiery power of the Dark Sun. These new undead, burnbones, are similar to the blazing bones found in the ruins of Myth Drannor in appearance, but that is where the similarity ends. Burnbones tend to wear the symbol of Cyric on themselves (as a holy symbol, for instance) as a sign of their devotion."

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

In other words, they're paranoid, fanatical worshippers of Cyric who appear as walking skeletons sheathed in everburning flames. They do fiery damage by their touch, and heat damage to all creatures within ten feet (the flames never consume their bones, and they're a lot more powerful than skeletons). They retain the spellcasting abilities (but no actual casting needed; they just point a finger and the spell issues forth) they had in life (as priests of Cyric of 12th or greater level). Cast spells return in 24 hours, spells can't be interrupted, and they can cast a spell with one hand and attack with the other in any given round. Curing spells harm them. Burnbones are detailed in the 2nd Edition D&D Realms boxed set TSR1120 Ruins of Zhentil Keep (the cover of the box shows three adventurers confronting a burnbones).

Cyric controls them personally if he desires, so there's no need to hunt down these rules; make their specifics whatever you want them to be, and blame the result on Cyric's presence.

So saith Ed.

We Knights never faced a burnbones, but we did tangle with more than one blazing bones. Not nice creatures. REALLY not nice creatures.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On November 10, 2004 THO said: Ahem, Bookwurm, what is this talk of brothXXX festhalls? I accept no coin, and thus... well, anyway...

Karth, I believe Loudwater is under heavy NDA protection at the present time because of the RPGA (Green Regent). Are there any scribes reading this who can enlighten me on this, one way or the other? I'm not a member and never have been, but Ed's a Charter Lifetime member, and although he regards Ian Richards (current RPGA head) as a friend, I also know he's out of touch with the current RPGA program.

Me, I miss his diabolical chuckles as he penned yet another silly cert that he knew would drive HQ nuts ("A cert that forces Azoun to trade his armor and swords for yours on sight, because you hold the Ancient Acorn of Thargoth? What the @\$#%^&! was Ed DRINKING?"). :}

Ah, those were the days.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 10, 2004: Hello, all. This just in! I bring a reply from Ed to kuje regarding Larloch:

It's certainly true that the 3e philosophy is that PCs can do (or at least attempt) everything. However, this reminds me of the old "I killed the god!" and "Our party wiped out the dragon in two rounds, no problem!" 1st edition arguments. Plus ca change...

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Hunting Larloch could make the basis for a fascinating high-level campaign, but the DM must run it as if Larloch is amused by the PC attempts, and thus doesn't swat them (much) the moment they begin trying, or it'll be a very SHORT campaign ("You attack Larloch? Okay. WHAM. Right, everyone roll up new characters...").

In the same way as too many PC dragonslayings depend upon the dragon being played as a dumb brute, it's highly unlikely that any PC party will have the sheer power to take down Larloch - and in any war of attrition against his many, many liches and modified powerful undead minions (forty blazing bones over here, a demi-lich over there, various hulking gigantic undead concocted of many battle dead yonder, deceptions galore ("That wasn't Larloch, that was your KING enspelled to look like Larloch! NOW you're in trouble!")), traps that release disease, poisoned this, poisoned that [like, ahem, the PCs' drinking water] etc. etc.), a party of PCs would have to be stupid indeed not to figure out that destroying Larloch just isn't worth the effort.

Like most gods in most situations, Larloch doesn't NEED to stand and fight when it's not to his advantage. Like gods, he doesn't need to sleep, and most PCs do. So he'll just have his minions harry them until they're stumbling-exhausted, and then throw MORE minions at them. Larloch isn't insane or stupid enough to need to show up in person to gloat; subtly controlling things from afar is what he DOES, and enjoys. So PCs can expect to find themselves attacked by civil authorities in whatever realm they're in, and then brigands, and then a few guilds, never being allowed to sleep without yet another undead attack - and even zombies and skeletons can wear you down when they come in waves, dozens daily, for day after night after month.

And if the PCs DO win their ways through all the liches to Larloch, "he" will almost certainly be just another lich (loaded with explosive spells) set up as a decoy, with dozens of hidden liches waiting to pounce on any surviving PCs who 'celebrate' after they take Larloch down. As the REAL Larloch watches (magical scrying) from afar.

Myself, as DM, I'd be wondering: "Such a glorious game, so many opportunities laid out before your PCs to devote your time to, and THIS fixation is the best you can come up with? Are you SURE you're adventurers?" :}

So saith Ed.

I take the view that if a DM tells you that a city your PCs are visiting is surrounded by a ring of hills, it requires a lot of PC insanity to try to destroy the hills "just because they're there." Consider Larloch a hill, part of the furniture of the Realms Ed has presented to you, not a target. Sounds like the very worst sort of power-gaming to me, and although we all need an outlet to just SMASH something once in a while, I'd hesitate to call this approach "roleplaying."

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On November 11, 2004 THO said: Ah, you ask something we Knights asked Ed long, long ago. Remember the mention of a Lord casting a mass teleport variant spell on a Hunt? Well, they can TRACE those suits of armour if they want to (with the right spell). So armour-snatchers have tried it, and paid the price.

Ed told me this, years back:

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Bear in mind that most mainlanders have only scant knowledge of Nimbral, and most of what they do "know" is fanciful and distorted . . . [snippage of much here That Should Remain Secret For Now] . . . See the glowing glass armour when a Hunt flies overhead, ask a sage or bard about it, and you'll probably (if you get any real answer at all) get the "and they always hunt down anyone who tries to steal your battlemetal" as part of it . . . So there's your answer, DDH.

As for "Knightse," obviously someone at WotC didn't check their computer work, and somehow Knights' became Knightse.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On November 11, 2004 THO said: Dargoth, some months ago (on Page 44 of this thread) you asked about the locations of some artifacts in the Realms.

I've found my old notes, and can enlighten you somewhat (I doubt Ed will, because he wants such things to either be widely-known "temple treasures" or surprises for a PC party):

In the city of Waterdeep, there's a deck of many things hidden behind a loose stone somewhere in the older, deeper chambers of Castle Waterdeep (don't ask how we found THIS out).

There's a Staff of the Magi 'hidden' as one of the four posts of a canopied four-poster bed in Alustriel's guest bedchamber in her palace in Silverymoon. There's another Staff of the Magi somewhere on a rooftop in Suzail (dropped there during an aerial night battle above the central streets south of the Promenade). And somewhere in the Ghost Holds, on the finger of an undead skeleton that can't operate it, there's a ring (finger-ring) that can make the user blink and emit a flame blade, and summon (teleport) yet another Staff of the Magi from an unknown elsewhere to the ring-wearer's hand.

I know this was a long time coming, but I hope it's of help.  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 12, 2004: Hello, all. Ed doth make reply to lordhobie:

Hi. Over the years (and various game editions), I've created bands of tournament PCs from whole cloth, originally to tailor their levels to the adventure challenges, and thereafter because many players return to GenCon after GenCon (to give just one example) to play in my events year after year, and like to 'pick up' their favourite characters. Many, many people have played the parts of members of the Baron's Blades band (personal bodyguard of Baron Uldonner Erendin, the Baron of Hawkhill in northeasternmost, mountainous rural Amn [no, you won't find Hawkhill on any Realms map) more than once, unfolding such puzzles as "Spellstorm" and "Lord Ravelstan's Left Nostril."

As they clearly enjoy running 'the next episode' in the exploits of these characters, I've been careful to stick to characters I use just for tournament play, so as to keep them 'unencumbered.'

So saith Ed.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Ah, yes, the gruff, lecherous old Baron (all bluster and walrus moustache and great big goblets of highly-fortified wine) and his frighteningly beautiful, and even more frighteningly capable, daughter...

Now, THEY should be in a television series. Move over, Addams Family.  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On November 13, 2004 THO said: As it happens, Blueblade, I've just been e-talking to Ed about pretty much this very thing, so I can give you a swift answer.

Ed has a long, long list of ideas: stories he'd like to tell, interesting questions ("What if the Simbul and Alustriel went after the same guy to be their lover? And he was being manipulated by Shar?"), and topics about the Realms or Aglirta that he knows have been neglected thus far.

However, Ed makes his living writing, these days. Which means he has to sell what he writes. So editors, who buy writing, really make most of the decisions. Ed is in the category of bestselling writers who seldom, if ever, have to write something 'on spec' and then try to sell it; he's almost always accepting an assignment from someone (who tells him length, deadline, tone [for kids/adult, humourous/serious, etc.] and content [put these characters together here, and there has to, ahem, be a cucumber in the story], and only then writing the tale.

When it comes to the Realms, Ed has a large amount of input in discussing what should go into stories, and after an editor approves an outline, is pretty much left alone to tell the story himself. If the result isn't what the editor wanted, the editor will demand a rewrite, sometimes several, and then of course (because Realms writing is "work-for-hire") can change literally every line after Ed turns it in. Some Realms writers get heavily line-edited, and some get off lightly. Ed's in the latter group because he's a good writer, has a professional attitude (if asked to change something, he usually does without argument), is the world's reigning expert on the Realms (so it's hard for an editor to tell him with a straight face that, just to invent some examples, he's presented Azoun IV wrongly, or misunderstood the nature of nobles in Waterdeep), and by now knows pretty much what WotC editors are looking for, and so delivers it (self-censors, if you will).

So deciding on the plot of a novel begins with: "Hey, Ed, how'd you like to write a novel about X? With Y and Z showing up in it? We need it to..."

Ed then replies, "Okay, but remember that X is currently A, so do you want this to be light and humorous? Should Y and Z be..."

There's brief discussion, Ed promises to whip up an outline and send it, the editor suggests changes, agreement is reached, and Ed goes to work. When the editor reads the first draft, they'll point out plot holes and confusing passages, AND say, "I was looking for more pathos (or whatever) in Chapter Q, so could you...?" Out of that comes the second draft, or sometimes just a few-paragraphs e-mailed 'tweak' of Chapter Q, and the latest masterpiece is done.

BRW, Ed rarely has less than four novels (and/or major gaming products) on the go at once.

So there you have it. love to all,  
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

\*\*\*\*\*

November 14, 2004: A good question, Blueblade. I was on the line with Ed when you posted, so here like lightning is his reply:

Every busy person has to deal with lots of tasks and make up priorities, whether they sit down and do it consciously, or admit it, or not. Writers are no different. I usually have about a dozen projects on the go at once, in some sense or another (even if it's just ideas jotted down that I'll do more with 'in an idle moment,' whatever THAT is), so I very much have to prioritize.

For me, what I've promised trumps all. I'm only as good as my word, and if I've made a firm promise, formal contract or not, I do everything I can to fulfill it. That's good business sense as well as my personal creed; there's no worse pariah in publishing than an author who NEVER makes deadlines. (They call them "DEADlines" for a reason. :} )

Leaving that aside, here's how I choose.

Realms first. My first love, my greatest creation, the baby I've put thirty-seven years of work into thus far, my headspace HOME.

Second, what friends ask me to do. I value my friends, and will drop everything if I can to help out a friend. Yes, it wins brownie points, but that's not why I do it. I do it because it makes me feel good, like keeping my word, and I don't want to do writing/designing at all if it's not going to make me feel good.

Third, something new. A challenge. A very short deadline or a confined format or style are my least favourite challenges, but they make the list. The challenges I love are interesting topics.

Four, everything else. Drafting a constitution for a local ratepayers' association. Crafting legal agreements and policy statements for a local library board. The necessary but unexciting donkeywork.

And that's it for me. Pretty simple.

Now, Blueblade, if you were trying to slyly find out what I'm working on right now, halfway through November 2004, my reply must be: four novels and the planning of three more, articles for magazines, columns for websites, eight short stories, three gaming sourcebooks, and two projects that must remain mysterious as of this writing. Plus procedural rules for meetings for that ratepayers' association, and some "here's something interesting at your library" columns for a local newspaper. Plus my annual Christmas story to be read aloud at a library in another town, and the annual Spin A Yarn frolic for the WotC website. Oh, and some ticklish correspondence, too. Plus dust-jacket blurbs for books by other writers.

I'm also reviewing two Realms novels right now, and will be writing suggestions/don't-forget-this notations very soon.

So saith Ed.

It's been said before just how blamed BUSY the man is, and this just demonstrates it again.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 15, 2004: Nobly tried, SB.

Ed would say only this:

Well, Sirius, one of them is in your poll, and one isn't. Both are by staffers or ex-staffers of TSR and WotC, both are largely set in the Heartlands, and both (from what I've seen thus far) should be very good reads.

So saith Ed.

About whom \* I \* now know a 'book secret' that I'm not going to breathe a word about, yet. Heeheehee (ah, such a mature and urbane reaction; SB, tug my leash, will you? I'm sure Wooly won't mind, as long as he gets to watch)

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 16, 2004: Hello, all. Blueblade, Ed doth make reply:

Yes, Castlemorn WILL be published (as at least the root sourcebook; as for the rest of the planned product line, we'll have to see). Think of a long, lumpy potato, surrounded by so-called impenetrable mountains (where many monsters and outlaws dwell) along one side (say, the 'north' side). The south side of the potato is a seacoast, and the potato itself is an array of many fascinating kingdoms. The seacoast looks out onto a saltwater bay, created by an arc of breakwater islands, and enclosing a mysterious island shrouded in legends and studded with ruins. The seas outside are 'trackless,' and to east and west are cloaked in everpresent mists, strewn with dangerous shoals, and said to contain a city of wizards and some other perils. No sailor can reliably go there and return.

So Castlemorn would work well as part of a continent of Toril distant from Faerun and isolated from it (except by, say, portals). There are differences in the deities, but it's not as if the Realms hasn't seen THAT before. :}

Myself, I think the sourcebook (or ANY single tome) is too small to provide the level of detail we've managed to build into the published Realms over twenty-five years, so I'm hoping you'll buy truckloads of the first book so we can do more.

So saith Ed.

Who surpriseth me not.

love to all,  
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

\*\*\*\*\*

November 17, 2004: I have a question for The Blind Ranger, relayed from Ed:

... "significance" of El's sigil how? Magical powers? What his being a Chosen does to it? Or is this "why does it take the form it does/is shaped the way it is"?

And (the Big One :)) which sigil? Elminster has two.

BR? Thanks!

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 18, 2004: Hello, all. Blind Ranger, Ed tells me the fruit answer is going to take a few days. As for the Elminster's sigil, his words to thee are thus:

Okay, let's forget I mentioned two sigils for now, all right? Not because I want to keep secrets, but because transmitting a drawing of 'the other one' isn't going to be easy for me right now, and because it's a LONG story. I'll tell it, some day - - just not now.

So we're left with the crescent moon, horns uppermost, and an oval floating in the 'bowl' created by those horns. This is the second sigil Elminster adopted (again, the why is very much part of that long story I referred to; the very short version is that he took this one because Mystra asked him to), he designed it himself, and he chose the crescent moon to echo the symbol of the Harpers (which he'd also designed, earlier) and because it also echoes the sigil of the Srinshree, his first teacher of magic in Myth Drannor, of whom he is very fond. The oval within the crescent symbolizes the 'Great Watching Eye' of Mystra, which was one of her favourite manifestations (a semi-tangible form in which she appeared to mortals: a giant floating eye that faded in and out of visibility/prime material plane "existence" and that could vary in apparent size from about nine feet across to about ninety feet across) at that time. (This is of course 'the first' Mystra, Elminster's lover, not her replacement Midnight/Ariel Manx.) Elminster wanted a simple, easily-drawn sigil that pleased his eye, and that meant sweeping elven curves rather than any angular or 'crossing strokes' designs.

Thanks to some work Azuth did with Mystra, all of the Chosen of Mystra can use their sigils in some ways that the sigils of 'just plain wizards' won't function unless their 'owners' find or create special spells to imbue their sigils with such powers. Such mortals would have to cast one such spell to 'empower' each drawn sigil with a particular ability, whereas the Chosen can automatically use the functions I outline below on any drawing THEY HAVE PERSONALLY MADE of their own sigil, no matter where it is in Toril (or rather, Realmspace: in other words, these powers only function when the sigil is in contact with the Weave). These aren't all of the uses of a sigil, they are merely those Mystra has revealed to her Chosen thus far.

It should be noted that many of the Chosen strongly suspect that Mystra and Azuth can both use their sigils for much greater magical purposes (sending healing through them into the bodies of someone touching such a sigil, sending spells through these sigils into the minds of creatures touching them, either to affect the creature or for the creature to cast as if they had themselves memorized it, and so on). This would explain instances of devout worshippers or servants of

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Mystra or Azuth touching a sigil in personal emergencies and being healed, rendered invisible or gaseous, enabled to fly, teleported elsewhere, and so on. The deities (but not their Chosen) are also believed to be able to temporarily reshape sigils into writing, so as to send short (or slow, a few words at a time) messages.

As any Chosen of Mystra can, Elminster can use his sigil as a spell focus in the following ways.

Any of his sigils, no matter where the surface (page of a book, tile, or whatever) on which he drew it has been moved (even without his knowledge), are to be considered a known, familiar locale to him for the purposes of his casting clairaudience/clairvoyance 'through' the sigil (it becomes the magical sensor of the magic, regardless of distance from him at the time). Such a sigil is also considered a "very familiar" locale, regardless of where it may have been moved to, for the purposes of determining the success of a teleport or teleport object spell.

In the same 'regardless of distance' manner, any of his sigils can function as the source (as if the sigil was the caster) for the spells: arcane eye, message, and silent image (remains stationary, anchored at sigil). The arcane eye can move about in the usual manner, or (more often used by Chosen) the sigil itself can function as the sensor.

A sigil drawn directly over the arcane mark placed by another being doesn't obliterate that mark, but causes it to completely cease functioning until the sigil is removed (this can have implications for the function of a Drawmij's instant summons or other magics cast by the being who placed the arcane mark).

At will, without casting a spell, a Chosen can cause any of his or her personally-drawn sigils to glow (akin in all respects to a faerie fire spell, with hue and intensity of light governed by the Chosen; the light can be made to pulse or wink in silent communication - - "Two means yes? One means no?"), and this function can work simultaenously with a spell (for example, clairaudience/clairvoyance used by the Chosen). The Chosen can instead cause a sigil to emit a continual flame (cancelling it by will at any time), but this power, though it can ignite things, apparently can't be made to change colour or pulse.

So saith Ed, who's just explained quite a few 'mysterious' happenings we Knights observed down the years. Hmmm.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 19, 2004: Hello, all. Herewith, Ed's reply to Baalster of Whitehorn:

Regarding the Knights of the North, if it suits your own campaign, it would be fine to "assume that the Knights would have gained followers, who also could have ended up Knights themselves."

However, I can make no promises whatsoever that added members will be echoed in official Realmslore, and can in fact say nothing at all regarding the Knights of the North other than to hint that all fans of the Realms may fairly soon know rather more about them.

Gosh, that hint was subtle. :}

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

So saith Ed, wallowing in sarcasm there at the end.

Ah, there's nothing quite like a good wallow in sarcasm.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 19, 2004: Hello, all. Ed makes answer to Foxhelm:

1. Yes. Many times.

2. I'd bring to the Realms: lots and lots of candy to use in bribery, to get people to do things to aid me. My maps of the Realms. Lots of pencils and a tiny knife to sharpen them with, and notebooks to make LOTS of notes in. And at least three digital cameras with LARGE memories.

The only way I'd get there would be with the aid of Elminster or Laeral, and my "musts" would be to visit Storm in Shadowdale, Alustriel in Silverymoon, Mirt in Waterdeep, and Tessaril Winter in Eveningstar in Cormyr (in that order), to see all of those places (I need a strong escort to take me all around Waterdeep whilst I gawk, enjoying the Moon Sphere, and then get me into a nobles' revel). (If things 'went bad' in Cormyr, I could hide in the Hidden House.) I'd ask EI to take me to see the Srinshree, and beg her to show me some of the most beautiful places known to elves. (At least a few moments, under her protection, at the heart of the overgrown-by-forest ruins of Myth Drannor, please!) I'd want to be taken up the Unicorn Run, and - - so on, and on, and on. Believe me, I have a LONG tour list.

I can tour all of these places in my imagination, right now, but it would be good to dine in Storm's kitchen and really taste the soup, if you know what I mean. Even if the only way to do so was to let Sylune 'ride' my body, using it to go and do what she wanted.

And you're welcome. Don't worry about taking up my time. This is what I do with my life, quite willingly. It's like having the whole world come and play with a toy I created. I derive daily enjoyment from finding out new things about the toy, watching people add to it or debate about it, and watching it 'grow.' So thank YOU.

So saith Ed.

I know the longing he feels, believe me! Sometimes during play sessions I just lie back in the armchair, close my eyes, and let his voice take me there, as he described this or that, and spoke as various NPCs or made noises for the wind, beasts, doors crashing open, knockings, the hooves of horses, and suchlike. That's always been the great attraction for me: stepping through the door into the Realms, not hacking this or blasting that.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

November 20, 2004: Ah, a lull. How nice; perhaps Ed will snatch the chance to get the Spin A Yarn tale done.

Ahem. Hello, all. Ed answers zeathiel:

The armies of Silverymoon have changed in name and organization many times over the years, both as a result of plagues (1150 DR) and various orc hordes, and at the whim of many early Warlords of the city. They changed again after Alustriel became High Mage of the city.

Silverymoon still has a militia, and a Sword-of-Coins (officer who hires mercenary bands for particular missions, such as "scour out that trollhold," and "drive out any orcs you find betwixt XX and YY on this map"). The Knights in Silver are Silverymoon's professional standing army of very well armed, trained, and armored mounted cavalry, and are the backbone of the standing military. The 'Knights in Silver' name was adopted circa 1349 DR, from a line in the lyrics of a popular-across-the-Sword-Coast-North ballad by the bard Mintiper Moonsilver (before that time, the heavy cavalry of Silverymoon's paid soldiery was known as 'the Silvershields,' and had no formal name at all; both they and their motley fellow warriors (see below) were 'Soldiers of Silverymoon' in 'the Army of Silverymoon.'

The Spellguard (founded in 1255 DR) and the High Guard (palace guards, who also serve as bodyguards for Alustriel, Taern, all city officers, and visiting VIPs) were and are separate units, and so is Silverymoon's city watch. What has 'melted away' over the years (mainly due to combat losses not being replaced) are the outside-the-walls-patrol and training units known as 'the Steelshields.' These motley warriors (I describe them as that because of their widely varying weaponry and armor, not as any aspersion on their discipline or quality as a fighting force) dwindled in numbers, until they were quietly folded into the Knights in Silver. So the Knights now serve to patrol the lands around the city (in all directions, at least a three-day-ride out from the walls), and to escort important travellers, garrison encamped visitors and caravans, serve in the Argent Legion on Silverymoon's behalf, and be ready to sally forth as a strike force against raiding bands of brigands, orcs, trolls, hobgoblins, and suchlike.

The Argent Legion officially came into being in 1371 DR (as reported in THE SILVER MARCHES sourcebook, which also details the Knights in Silver and the Spellguard), when the League of the Silver Marches was proclaimed.

So saith Ed.

Who knows the Realms like no other, of course.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 21, 2004: Hello, all. Ed doth make ahem, fruitful reply to The Blind Ranger:

It was a design decision from the outset of the published Realms that gamers who didn't want to learn a world's worth of invented fruit, vegetables, trees, and metals could stick to what they knew. So you'll find oranges and blackberries and limes in Realms fiction and gamelore, under their own names. My various Volo's Guides and more recent WotC website article "My Slice of

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



Silverymoon" give glimpses of Faerunian cuisine, and earlier in this thread I mentioned food of Tantras and Turmish.

There are publishing plans, I'm afraid, that prevent me from providing any exhaustive catalogue of fruits here. Here are some highlights.

The severe climate of the North means very little fresh fruit is available in winter (after freeze-up, when ships stop sailing into Waterdeep and other ports) except in processed (jams, brandies, pickled or honeyed) form. Berries (literally hundreds of different sorts) and apples are the main fruit native to the North. There's also a savoury (not sweet) fruit native to, and cultivated in, the North known as the sarsae. Sarsae are tough-skinned and hardy, with a mottled green skin that darkens from yellow-white as it ripens, firm yellow-white flesh similar to that of some real-world apples, and an almost cheese-like, but tart, taste. Sarsae are used as we real-world folk would use tomatoes, and vary widely in size depending on how wet the warm growing months are, and how much sun they get (edible, unshrivelled sarsae may be as small as real-world golf balls, or as large as real-world volleyballs, with most of them being about the size of a softball).

One curiosity of the North is 'firefruit' (sometimes called 'amberglows'). These are small, succulent golden berries, very hard-skinned but filled with a semi-liquid as sweet as honey but fruity in flavour, that grow every three or four years on certain mosses and lichens, when these growths flower. Most mosses and lichens never bear such fruit, and only rangers and other experts on the flora of the area are usually able to tell which of the rare sorts of fungi will bear firefruit. When seen, protruding from hair-thin stalks out of the scabrous fungi, they can be eaten with surety, because there's nothing poisonous or inedible that looks like firefruit.

Another culinary peculiarity of the North are 'snowberries,' which grow in profusion in the Fallen Lands and near Glister in the Moonsea North, but can be found everywhere in the Sword Coast North. Heavily grazed by birds and animals of all sorts, these aren't a single variety of fruit but rather a rangers' (and Uthgardt barbarians') classification of many sorts of vines and bushes whose berries remain quite pleasant and edible when frozen -- and so can readily be eaten when found under ice and snow in the howling hearts of winter blizzards.

Many larders in the North, Sword Coast, and Heartlands hold wax-sealed jars of apple and berry jams and jellies, marmalade, pickled whole quinces and lemons (chopped up and used in cooking; almost never eaten whole, and honeyed figs.

Ships bring all of these processed foods (usually in large barrels, with the jarring being done in the ports where the ships unload) from warmer climes, and also bring fresh fruit in season.

One of the most popular such fruit -- popular because it travels so well (resisting rot and bruising, and is little loved by shipboard rats, hence only lightly nibbled), AND because it has such a long growing season, with fruits ripening for use from Flamerule through Marpenoth -- is the tammar, native to Calimshan, the hills around the Lake of Steam, and the Border Kingdoms. Tammar are small, round, hard fruit (about the size of a lacrosse or squash ball). The pink (when unripe) to crimson (when ripe; they go black when overripe) peel or rind is inedible and very hard to 'knocks,' but can readily be cut and then peeled (slowly, in a spiral one-layer-after-another tearing open) to reveal firm, chewy pink flesh that tastes something like real-world tangerines or clementines. This flesh is juicy when chewed, but isn't as 'wet' with running juice when revealed as that of tangerines or clementines, and is split into only four segments (more like 'buds' of garlic in sturdiness and shape than the many smaller lobes of most real-world citrus fruit).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

A lime-like fruit called a 'quace' is also abundant in the coastlands of the Shining Sea (in other words, in all the areas the tamar flourishes in plus Lapaliya and the Tashalar), but is very easily bruised and very strong (acidic) in taste. Except in various bottled sauces, it's little known in the North.

'Ockles' in Waterdeep are oranges from the Shining South coasts (that is, Estagund, Durpar, and thereabouts) that grow in long strings of attached globes, looking more like strands of pearls than fruit. Except for this configuration, they pretty much ARE what we real-world eaters would recognize as oranges.

All over the southern lands, pomegranates grow wild, and are sometimes shipped to the Heartlands and the Sword Coast North when a ship has extra space (they command low prices, but can be picked almost for free throughout the warm lands (the Shaar, of course, excluded); many southerners boil them to make sauces or dyes rather than eating them as fruit). In the Realms, however, the word 'pomegranate' is unknown; to folk of Faerun, these are 'araed' (as with sarsae, tamar, and quace, singular and plural the same; thus, 'a basket of araed' and 'I ate an araed' or 'Cut up two araed').

The other fruit imported into the Sword Coast lands and Heartlands from late summer to freeze-up (most of them can be kept for some months, if buried under earth or leaf mulch in a cool cellar to keep them from freezing) are melons of various sorts. The most popular three types of melons are ramrath, mritha-fruit, and tlarm-melons.

The ramrath is a reddish, round (volleyball-sized) melon grown in the Tashalar. Its flesh is firm and scarlet, and it can be used as we use watermelons, or sliced and fried (with the rind removed) to make a slab-of-cake-like fruit served on platters topped with desserts (confections of creams and syrups and more decorative fruit). Never say "ramraths," by the way, unless you really mean to. 'Ramrath' is the plural form of the fruit, whereas 'ramraths' is a euphemism for human breasts (both female and the large pectorals possessed by fat men).

Many shiploads of mritha-fruit and tlarm-melons are exported from Lundeth. Mritha-fruit are very like apples, but with sweet, acidic citrus-like juices at their hearts. Their skins are pale pink, and grow many reddish streaks and mottlings as they ripen. They can be eaten at any stage from pink to when they become 'all over red,' and although their early edibility has nourished many hungry Northerners who eagerly buy them from the first shipcaptains to brave breakup (of the sea-ice), most folk swear by the rich, strong, almost (black) licorice taste they get, from Eleasias on, when fully reddened.

Tlarm-melons are large, oval, green with streaks of darker green (think real-world watermelons in outer size and hue) fruit that have golden-yellow flesh. They taste almost like real-world rhubarb (which, by the way, is also found growing wild in abundance, in the Heartlands), and have very thick white inedible rinds that can be boiled down to make a glue or caulking, and that keep them very well protected against bruising and rotting. Tlarm-melons ripen late (Eleint), but are so numerous then that tlarm-flesh alone could feed almost everyone in the North (though they'd soon be sick of a steady diet of only tlarm, of course) if some way could be found to ship it all. Many farmers along the Shining South coasts gorge themselves on tlarm-melons, fill their cellars with tlarm-preserves, compete with each other to make tlarm soups and stews that taste like something else - - and still have wagonloads of tlarm that they plow under as fertilizer. That's one of the reasons that the South is where spices are big business (and a wide variety of strong spices are gleamed from local plants).

So saith Ed.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Enough to go on, TBR?

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 21, 2004: A serious answer for simontrinity (who probably wasn't expecting one): Ed's hardest task is keeping straight details of Realmslore added by other creators, because increasingly (as he ages), such details don't "stick" in his mind.

NDA's are easy. Err on the side of caution, always, and then when it comes to teaser time, put yourself in the position of what the company would want (easy if you've discussed a project with the company staff handling it) and proceed accordingly.

I usually imagine Ed, these days, as an eye winking at me through this or that chink in this ever-rising castle wall of NDAs.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 22, 2004: Hello, all. Thy Hooded Lady with a response to the Hells thing.

Ed (yes, that guy, the creator of the Realms and of the Nine Hells as D&D-ers know them, as well as the writer who inflicted Elminster In Hell on a bewildered world) speaks:

The Hooded One has sent me the entire text of the thread thus far, and I must say first off that I'm pleased and impressed that scribes feel so passionately about what is, after all, a series of imaginary creations. There's hope for us all yet! ;}

Everyone has the perfect right to hold personal opinions, and I'd be astonished if everyone started to like the same things -- even alarmed: if all the readers in the world shared the same tastes, there'd likely only be one novelist getting published at a time (until burnout and replacement), and it probably wouldn't be me! ;}

There are no definitive answers about matters planar, so I can't give any, and in any case don't want to squash or inhibit debate. Have no fears that 'the displeasure of the Great God Greenwood' is going to descend on anyone. (Uh, that'd be my dad in any case, and I doubt he reads these forums.)

I've no interest in getting into heated debate with anyone over what is "right" or "wrong." After all, EI in Hell is published (as amended by its editor), so it's all, in one sense, water under the bridge (or as we longtime Realms toilers inside and outside TSR are wont to say, "we burned that bridge when we were on it, as we always do") and not worth upsetting anyone over.

However, it's worth reminding EVERYONE that Realms publications are all 'work for hire.' In other words, WotC editors can change every word of text between turnover and publication. Not that they always do, by any means, but it's important to remember that authors of Realms novels

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

DON'T have an entirely free hand in determining what you read on the page. EI in Hell did get edited, both for length and content details, and the 'mechanics' of the Nine Hells, its archdevils, and Mystra (and what she could do and did) WERE discussed and agreed-upon. So in one sense, if you don't like what was portrayed, tough fudge: you can't change it now, and neither could I then, as I was writing. Don't like the power level of the Lords of the Nine, as portrayed? Don't like the absence of Bel? Too bad. I had to stick to what was official, in the same way that an engineer assigned to design a car will probably get fired if he instead designs a childrens' wading-pool and tries to present it as the finished car. I was given the title "Elminster In Hell," and the opening situation (Elminster having fallen through the rift, descending into Avernus), and was asked to write it (with the promise that if I didn't, someone else would be assigned to write the book). I chose to tackle the task. You've read or not read the result, and like or dislike it, and I can't do anything about that. (I must and do thank the scribes, such as Moonharp, who've noticed what I've been doing with my Realms books.)

What can be of value to everyone interested in running D&D play involving the Nine Hells or writing future Realms fiction ditto is running through some of the specific points of contention. Not to prove anyone right or wrong, but to give a glimpse of the reasoning behind the design decisions.

First, the Nine Hells as portrayed. Simply put, what you see in EI in Hell matches not just PGtF, but the 3e Manual of the Planes (the official rules of the D&D game, which I'm bound by as a creator; you can do what you like in your home campaign, but \*I\* can't when writing WotC products). Aside from adding the Blood War and making minor urban renewal changes to the Bronze Citadel, everything you read in the Manual of the Planes about Avernus and Nessus is as I originally put them into the D&D game, from the very names of both, to the basic concept of Avernus, unchanged through all editions of the game and game lines, that Avernus was the uppermost and most chaotic (least tightly governed and ordered) layer of Hell, where Tiamat could be found, the outcast archdevils who weren't Lords of the Nine lurked and schemed, and all manner of non-native-to-the-Hells visiting creatures could be met with, in a tortured landscape of rivers of blood and a generally dry and rocky terrain, with few green growing plants and much dog-eat-dog hunting and battle. When I wrote EI in Hell, PGtF hadn't yet been published, but the Manual of the Planes (which Jeff Grubb had shown me the text of before publication for my suggestions [I was then a paid WotC lore consultant], as he'd done for the first Manual of the Planes) had been, and I was editorially instructed to stick to it in any details of the Nine Hells. "This and only this is official, right now," were among the words used. I can assure all scribes that many of the details folk have wrangled over in the thread were specifically hashed out, between myself and several games designers (WotC has a revolving-membership triad called the Rules Council that determines what's official, and again, like it or not, that's what we creatives are stuck with) as well as fiction editors.

I do take issue with comments in the thread regarding the Nine Hells as being primarily fleshed out in Planescape products. Simply untrue, as any objective examination of my original DRAGON articles will show. In short, I was writing about a place I already "knew." (Over the years, several editors customarily 'ran' all mentions of the Nine Hells that were going to be published in Planescape materials 'by me' for my comments, because although I was a freelancer rather than a staffer, I was considered 'the' expert on the place, a post grandly titled: "The Crazy Hells Guy" or just "The Crazy as Hell Guy.") In my opinion, Planescape materials are often (because of the 'give us funky adventure stuff, and none of the boring stuff' design philosophy that reigned at the time, and the absence of outlets such as web enhancements for publishing the boring-but-necessary foundation stuff) inferior to some of the root materials they drew on, because when examining them I see precious few balanced ecologies in the Outer Planes. How do devils ever get enough to drink? Where do their droppings go? What causes changes in the weather in the Hells? (And so on.) I provided biological details of the effects of the Styx and the Lethe, but in

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Plaenscape products, such things were simply tossed aside to make room for the next cool battle encounter. I don't mind if someone substitutes THEIR preferences for the Styx and the 'what eats what' food chains, but as a designer I DO mind when such things are omitted entirely. We were publishing official products, and official products should clear up more rules gaps and controversies than they create. If the excuse for everything is 'because God X lives there and wants conditions to be that way,' fine, but then the product should tell me WHY God X prefers those conditions. If some hardy mortals establish dwellings in the Nine Hells, as we're told in the rules they do, what's it like to live there, day after day (rather than just invading with a band of adventurers on a military expedition)?

We discuss such things. Believe me, we discuss such things. (One of my pet amusements, when visiting the old TSR in Lake Geneva, was lunching at various restaurants in surrounding places like Elkor, and watching the faces of nearby diners as they overheard some of the things we were saying.)

Here's some of the reasoning that went into ELMINSTER IN HELL. I decided to use the outcast archdevil Nergal (I borrowed the name from mythological sources of devils' names, as I did for many of the devils), which I'd created and portrayed as one of the most powerful outcast devils in my DRAGON articles, as my main villain. I've said elsewhere why the novel took the shape it did, with most of the battle going on inside Elminster's head, so I'll just recap it VERY briefly here: I didn't think I could do a good full-length novel of devils really being themselves without repeatedly offending against the WotC Code of Conduct. In short, if it was all physical confrontations, we'd very shortly be wallowing in bestiality, rape, devourings alive, grotesque tortures involving fistfuls of gnawing maggots thrust into eyeballs and brains, and so on and on. The editors would then be forced to censor, writing the book would take a lot of extra time that none of us had to spare then, and the result would be a deeply-flawed book unsatisfying to readers who wanted all the gore as well as to everyone else.

Which brings us to plot mechanics. Elminster began this thread by asking, "Why Mystra had to send Simbul and Halaster to rescue Elm? Why she couldn't have done it herself? Or why couldn't she just give Elminster enough power, so he could slay Nergal himself?"

Let's dispose of the second question first. As a Chosen of Mystra, Elminster has a degree of independence from Mystra. He can WILLINGLY agree to accept augmentation of his power, IF she can reach him to give some, but he's darn near the limits of his mortal frame right now, something I spent an entire book exploring (the 1995 Realms novel SHADOWS OF DOOM). To give him 'enough' to hand their horns back to archdevils and legions of lesser devils would simply have destroyed him; to give Elminster much more than he has now, in the physical twilight of his years, would render him magically near-helpless, as it did in Shadows.

That brings us back to Elminster's first question: why Mystra had to use proxies rather than doing the rescue herself. Which also brings on board The Simbul's (the scribe, not my character :) ) comments on plot, and Shemmy's dissatisfaction at not seeing Mystra "get her head handed to her." That comment of Shemmy's frankly puzzles me, because she DOES get her head handed to her, very swiftly: as she slaughters many, many lesser devils, the various warring devils all over the plane notice this and start to gather against her - - and she's promptly forced to flee.

One side note on this: no, even if Bel did exist in this conception of the Hells, he could never have been "moving the plane itself to smack" anyone around: by the very nature of Avernus, it's the most weakly-ruled of the layers, NOT under the absolute dominion of anyone. It has to be that way, or all of the outcast devils would have disappeared long ago (eliminated by any absolute planar ruler). Moreover, Bel would be the most powerful Lord of the Nine, not the least, because

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

he would capture all visitors to Hell and be able to use them against his fellow Lords. Believe me, designers have discussed this over and over, down the years. No one wanted a static Hell, and the basic D&D game concept won't permit it. Remember the 1st Edition Players Handbook with its full-page illo of 'A Paladin In Hell'? Such forays would never occur if the entire resources of the plane can swiftly be mustered to flatten any intruder - - and the same rule governs all Planescape material; any plane, no matter how inhospitable, must permit adventurers to intrude and have survival time therein to do things.

Nor is there really an "infinite" number of devils, as was discussed in the thread; repeatedly designers have agreed that by that hyperbole they really mean 'effectively infinite from the viewpoint of a single mortal entity,' because no matter how powerful, a mortal entity can't kill or conquer 'em fast enough to keep pace with reinforcements arriving to defy that mortal. The Blood War is endless (in the aligned planes concept; check out BEYOND COUNTLESS DOORWAYS from Monte Cook and friends for a non-aligned planar view) because new fiends are constantly being generated from souls.

We all have our own mental concepts of what particular deities can and can't do. Shemmy thought I portrayed Mystra as far too powerful, whereas The Simbul holds the opinion that I 'played her stupid' to make the plot work (she had no need to enter the Nine Hells at all). Well, as the creator of Mystra, I have an opinion too. ;}

First of all, let's dispose of the idea that a hellbound Elminster can freely contact Mystra at will. One of the established limits on Mystra's power is that she's 'blind' to her Chosen if they desire it. Another is that Mystra's power extends only so far as the Weave does.

Within Realmspace, Mystra is the most powerful deity of all (excepting Ao), or would be if Ao hadn't limited her power by vesting some of it in her Chosen (to prevent utter chaos ensuing if Mystra went mad, or just on a whim decided to trash things, drifted into tyranny [absolute power corrupts absolutely], or somehow [as happened in the Avatar trilogy] became the captive of another entity). On Toril, Mystra and Chauntea are the most powerful deities: Chauntea IS the land and all of its natural processes (as opposed to partial aspects of them, such as storms or the emotions and deeds of sentient inhabitants of the planet), and Mystra embodies the Weave, which can (roughly) be defined as the natural forces, and energy flows and cycles, of planetary life (the Shadow Weave being the 'dark' or return flows of the cycle). To use a slightly clumsy real-world analogy, Mystra is the brain observing and in small ways controlling the heart, the Weave is the heart and the arteries, and the Shadow Weave is the veins.

Mystra can certainly sense the opening of a rift between Realmspace and elsewhere. In some cases, entities close to a rift can see through it and even fire missile weapons or cast spells through it, but this is seldom reliable activity; in almost all cases, mortal or divine, one is working "into" rather than "through" the rift. So Mystra in most cases can't "look through the rift" and determine anything at all about Elminster's whereabouts or situation when he's in the Nine Hells.

The rift Troy posited and that I inherited (like any planar rift) causes a violent collision between, and a roiling mixing of, the energy flows of Toril and Avernus. Wild magic will be everpresent, and so will a natural tendency for the fabrics of both planes to try to knit themselves together again, sealing the breach (usually after a lot of stuff has leaked through). This process was what Elminster was trying to aid by casting spells at the breach: he knew they would be twisted by the planar fabric and their raw energy used to aid the closure of the rift. Again, I'm speaking now of what designers have discussed and agreed upon, over the years. If you cleave to a different view, be aware that the implications of disagreeing with 'self-sealing' is that there will be no stable planes anywhere - - INCLUDING any Prime Material Plane setting. Everything will be like those

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

old Doctor Strange comics where the landscape is a crazy-quilt of everchanging hues and forces, with no consistent rules of magic or physics or life cycles. Not a landscape most gamers would want to try to adventure in - - or, if it's run properly, would their characters be able to survive it for long.

To Mystra, trying to 'see through' the rift and determine anything at all about Elminster after he's been sucked through it, would be akin to (clumsy real-world analogy time again) staring into the high-beam headlights of an approaching vehicle of unfamiliar make on a rainy night and trying to identify just who is sitting in the back seat of that conveyance.

Elminster isn't calling on the Weave of Toril to power his spells once he's in the Nine Hells. Like every mortal spellcaster or wielder of a magic item, he's calling on tiny amounts of borrowed power of the Weave stored within himself (or within an item) to work their specified magical effects, until they 'run out.' As a Chosen, Elminster DOES carry a tiny 'cycle of the Weave' within himself, yes, and it's spending some of that to send it drifting back through the planes of existence to rejoin the parent Weave that carries his 'calling to Mystra that he needs help' message. He can't tell her where he is or what's happening to him, he can only alert her to his desperate need for aid. This process works far more speedily if the entity you're trying to reach 'thinks of you' and thus attunes their attention to your slow, very faint call (hence the scenes of various Chosen puzzling over sudden thoughts of Elminster). Aside: if a mortal wizard studies to regain spells, or a sorcerer regains magical energies, while in Avernus or any other Outer Planes, he or she is in effect calling on the 'Weave' of that plane rather than that of their home plane. The spells they gain may have subtle differences, both when cast on the Outer Plane and if carried back to their home plane and cast there.

When Mystra does become aware of Elminster's need, she tries to find him by homing in on that part of the Weave he holds (again, something well established in Realmslore that he or any other Chosen can hide from Mystra if they want to; of course, Elminster in this situation very much doesn't want to). Mystra is aware that he's in great danger and so is the power he holds, that could be 'tainted' by an archdevil and therefore permanently lost to her, or return to her bringing an insidious diabolical influence with it that she can't eradicate (which would be a fatal weakness when archdevils detect it, and become aware that they can influence her, and thus the Weave, and thus all life in Realmspace, in this manner). She's also aware that by entering the Hells she's putting herself in great danger, but she believes the danger to herself will be less if the rescue is accomplished very swiftly. She believes she is the only being with enough power to accomplish that, and servitors can't hope to do anything except fail. So she acts. (The 'why don't you send Azuth?' question is answered by the old American 'you don't risk the President and the Vice-President by putting them on the same airplane' thinking: if you consider the safety of magic in Realmspace first, you as Mystra CAN'T send Azuth.)

So Mystra, admittedly an inexperienced replacement in her portfolio (I'll get to The Simbul's arguments on that topic later), and influenced by her inherited-from-her-predecessor fierce fondness for EI (that drives her to get to him FAST because he needs her) and by her own 'I feel lost without the guidance of the old goat' feelings, enters Hell. Mystra's presence in Avernus, by the very nature of WHAT she is, is an attempt to bring the Weave into the Nine Hells. She has the personal power to do so, but as the Weave of Realmspace clashes with the natural cycles of Baator, the roiling causes the opening of many rifts, through which some of Toril 'leaks' into the Hells, and some of the Hells (read: lots and lots of unwanted devils) 'leaks' into Toril (Realmspace, really, but the contact point is Toril itself). The longer Mystra stays, the more this will go on, and the more the Realms are endangered. At the same time, Nergal is in Elminster's mind and Elminster is in Nergal's (SPOILER note: EI of course defeats Nergal in the end because Nergal has seized so many of EI's memories that his force of will is weakened by the vulnerabilities and human qualities EI's memories carry), and Mystra realizes she has to be very

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

careful what she does - - and that she lacks the experience and time to do the task properly. DDH\_101 picked up on this and commented on it.

So Mystra retreats, knowing she needs The Simbul (who loves Elminster and will, yes, go through Hell for him :) and who's one of the most clear-headed, ruthless, accomplished fighters-with-magic Mystra knows) to at least buy time for her to properly rescue Elminster. She needs to deflect the arousal and involvement of the one other Lord of the Nine who will care enough to get involved so long as Elminster and the attempt to rescue him is confined to Avernus: Asmodeus. (The other Lords of the Nine are charged to defend their own layers of Hell; watching Avernus get torn apart is little more than free entertainment for them, unless Mystra's invading forces go deeper.) Calling on her inherited memories of what befell Elminster in SHADOWS OF DOOM and many other titanic contests of magic, she seizes upon Halaster's insanity as the 'subtle blade' that might well affect Asmodeus just long enough to snatch Elminster out of the Nine Hells.

The Simbul put together a very amusing 'short version' of El in Hell, showing how Mystra needn't ever have left Dweomerheart to rescue Elminster, and none of the events in ELMINSTER IN HELL needed to happen. Well, to quote two old saws: "There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip," and "No battle plan ever survived engagement with the enemy."

Mystra's 18-mile-range sensing/remote communications hold true WITHIN THE WEAVE, not in Avernus, where the Weave is more like an aura folded tightly around her. She knows El is somewhere in Hell and goes there hoping she can then 'see' him readily, yes. She can 'feel' that he's close, on Avernus, but can't immediately and infallibly use her remote sensing, because not only is she under attack by clouds of devils, the Weave isn't operating reliably except very close around her.

Certainly she can work magics to try to snatch Elminster elsewhere - - except she dare not expose herself to Nergal (who's apparently winning the El/Nergal mental battle) in doing so, and thanks to the Weave-link between herself and her Chosen, that's what she'll be doing no matter how careful she is with that Miracle spell. She can't depend on the reliability of the Weave (and therefore of her Alter Reality/Miracle), remember, and can feel this as she's fighting. If she sat in Dweomerheart and tried to just 'reach in' to the Nine Hells and work all of this from afar, she'd feel that unreliability instantly, too.

Again, this is something designers have discussed many times, down the years, and come to various agreements on that share this similarity: 'home ground' (being on your own plane) brings an advantage. It has to be this way, or we'd have no books full of glorious planes and sizzling gods to sell you: the fastest divine gunslinger would have wiped out everyone else long ago (reaching into random planes and using their "irresistable" divine abilities on other deities before said deities could do the same to them), leaving us planes of uninhabited, desolate death for us to describe, and one absolute god, a.k.a. Last God Standing (hence, no free will, and no opportunities for adventure: we'd all just be robots carrying out our little part in a script, unable to even contemplate breaking free to do anything else).

I'm not going to discuss the 'Halaster factor' affecting Asmodeus in any detail due to NDA prohibitions (no, SiriusB, please don't ask :}), but let's wrap up the healing of Elminster and then turn to 'Mystra as naive dummy.'

Yes (ignoring Shar's little bid in the interests of not putting everyone to sleep whilst I drone on and on), of COURSE Mystra could magically heal Elminster and whisk him home. What she can't do is tinker with his mind (well-established-in-Realmslore separation between the Chosen and Mystra again, something I put there deliberately to keep the Chosen from becoming 'angels' or

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

anything akin to angels), so she needs someone who loves him and will 'guide him in healing himself' by taking him to see the right places and people to let him self-heal. The old Mystra had that love, but the new one wants EI as a friend, not a half-brain-dead hangdog wannabe lover, so she lets The Simbul do the work.

The Simbul (again, the scribe, not my character :)) disagrees with my interpretation of Mystra's abilities. While it's true that Mystra's inherited portfolio has an INT of this and a WIS of that, the D&D game posits deities who aren't all-knowing and mentally infallible (or there'd be no strife among deities at all, because all of them could foresee how everything would turn out, so again every being would be following a script or remaining static, with no free will and no room for adventure). Time and again we've seen D&D gods who are very like the Greek and Roman gods: supersized humans, who have exaggerated flaws as well as exaggerated powers. The Realms, as a D&D setting, must necessarily be no different. The Avatar trilogy, my Shadows of the Avatar trilogy, Prince of Lies, Crucible, and my Elminster In Hell and Elminster's Daughter have all shown us divine fallibility. (As have many other Realms novels, with Finder and Lolth and so on and on and on.) It's an integral part of D&D, like it or not.

The mortal Ariel Manx (Midnight) 'put on' that keen intelligence and that great wisdom like a cloak; stats aside and 'going by' just what we read in Realms fiction, it's clear that she lacked such stature as a mortal, beforehand. The Weave and exposure to Azuth and the Chosen swiftly elevated her intelligence and made her stagger under the weight of accumulated memories, but we've all known brilliant, long-lived individuals who forget things, get confused, go off on mental tangents at inappropriate times, and so on. The mortal Midnight is no different - - and along with all the overwhelming power and distractions (she's still exulting in just 'riding the flow of the Weave,' like a skier going down a mountain, something her predecessor got over literally ages ago), she got a huge dose (under constant reminder) of inferiority and lack of confidence. Her predecessor did all this, but she didn't. She knows how things are supposed to be done, but she hasn't actually done them herself. Give me three hours, and I can thoroughly explain to you how to disassemble my tractor - - but I doubt most of you, after those three brain-wearying hours, could then go ahead and take the thing apart without any confusion or breaking anything or head-scratching UNLESS you'd done such things yourself already. As Nergal found, 'borrowed' memories aren't the same as actually doing something yourself. Myself, I'd say Mystra could go on learning where her own mental furniture is (and falling over a lot of it in the process) for at least twenty years of Realms time.

If Shar manages to kill off some key Chosen or Azuth erupts or something else occurs to really upset Mystra, things could get wilder, and take longer. And I've a few ideas in mind, believe me, but [NDA NDA BEEG NDA]. :}

If readers don't like reading about a Mystra who's still learning on the job and is a little hesitant, too bad. That's the Mystra I see as allowing mortals the most freedom, so it's the best Mystra for the game and for Realms fiction (and, hey, I created Mystra AND the Realms, so I think my judgement's pretty good about such matters). Yes, I could write a 'The New Mystra Gets Cheesed Off, And Whups Everyone!' novel, and have a lot of slam-bang fun, but I don't WANT to wreck the Realms. If I was a film director, I'd far rather do The Lord of the Rings than Godzilla - - and I think I'd be better at trying to do The Princess Bride than either.

So saith Ed.

Whew, what a mind. Okay, now I'm going to have go right back and read EI in Hell right through, all over again. Thanks, Elmonster and Shemmy and The Simbul. No, I'm not being sarcastic, I really mean it: thanks!

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On November 22, 2004 THO said: Hello, all. Ed reports that this year's Spin A Yarn is half-done, and will very soon be sent to Mary-Liz for editing. In his words: "The usual romp fun, but I tried to make it a more serious story, too - - DESPITE the best efforts of Realms fans at the seminar."

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On November 23, 2004 THO said: Alaundo, Ed says you're VERY welcome, and as long as he has time, he'll keep the Realmslore coming.

To The Blind Ranger from yes, this Hooded Lady, in response to thy query: one of the most frequent 'mysterious happenings' I was referring to was small intriguing objects appearing in our Knights' chambers in the Twisted Tower. I now know what I long suspected: that Elminster had drawn sigils in most rooms of that fortress, and could teleport objects to them with ease.

Said objects often included maps, keys, and other 'necessary for an adventure' items, or things that goaded us into prying where we otherwise wouldn't have.

Sneaky, sneaky Ed.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 24, 2004: Hello, all. Ed says this long-awaited lore reply may be of particular interest to both the Sage of Ann Arbor and the Master Baker:

Ranks of the Waterdeep City Guard and City Watch:

To outsiders, Watchmen come in three sorts: "patrolman" (male) or "patroljan" (female), "captain" (any officer controlling a patrol) and "commander" (any officer of higher rank).

In actual fact, the Watch has the following specific ranks, listed in order from lowly to exalted: blade, sword (equivalent to a sergeant), swordcaptain (patrol leader), rorden (in charge of a Watchpost or barracks, or either five or six patrols), orsar (envoy to guilds, citizen groups, noble families; also serves as prisoner escorts and in honor guards), guardsword (duty head for shifts patrolling the city docks and gates), commander ('officer of the shift'), and watchlord (the heads of the watch, usually three or four officers who hold special titles personally bestowed on them by Piergeiron). The Watch also has special offices (such as jailer, armorer, and horsemaster) that are held in addition to ranks.

To outsiders, the City Guard come in two sorts: "soldier" and "commander" (any officer).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

The Guard actually has the following ranks, from lowest to highest: trusty, vigilant (sergeant), shieldlar (commander of a patrol or gauntlet [fighting or duty group, equivalent to what some real-world armies call a "squad"]), aumarr, valabrar, torsin (who make up the majority of VIP escorts, honor guards, and bodyguards), commander (equivalent to a general), and then specific superior ranks, such as Seneschal of Castle Waterdeep, Lord Defender of the Harbor, Lord of the North Towers, Lord of the South Towers, Lord Armorer (who also commands the quartermasters), Lord Hand (officer in charge of training, medical treatment, and liaison with the Watchful Order), and of course Lord's Champion, the personal bodyguard of the Open Lord.

So saith Ed.

Who should have laid bare such secrets YEARS ago, this Knight says pointedly, remembering a certain embarrassing situation of mistaken ranks when she was trying to impersonate a member of the City Guard. And where, Master of the Greenwood, are the rank insignia or badges? So that say, player character adventurers can tell the rank of someone they're dueling or infuriating or yes, impersonating?

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 25, 2004: Hello, all.

mauricio, it's fine with me and with Ed if you translate something he or I have posted here. However, it may of course not be fine with Alaundo, and we will both bow to his wishes, AND if may very much not be "all right" with Wizards of the Coast, the current copyright holder of the Realms. Ed has been participating in these forums 'through me' under his now-lapsed consultancy agreement by express permission of David Wise, who was a V-P of WotC when that agreement was drawn up, but is no longer employed by the company. Ed promoting the Realms is part of the original Realms purchase agreement from way back in 1986, but there's a difference between "promoting" the Realms and "publishing" the Realms, and Ed tells me he feels it would be best for everyone involved if we got an 'okay' from someone (still) at WotC.

With that said, please understand that neither Ed nor I have any objection, so I'd say that paraphrasing our words and reporting our opinions (as opposed to detailed Realmslore) would be okay right now. Again, subject to Alaundo's pleasure.

kuje31, Ed wanted me to reiterate that he's not the right person to ask about official 3.5e games rules questions (he'd refer this one to Rich Baker), but if this arose in a situation where he was DM, Ed would not allow access to both Shadow Weave and Weave-based effects (including spellfire). In his words, that's like the 'greedy-greedy' space soldier who wants to fire a matter-ray and an anti-matter ray at the same time. Nuh-uh.

And to all American scribes: Ed and I of course had our Thanksgiving a month ago, but we're both having a huge turkey dinner again now to show friendship, support, and our own personal gluttony (in other words, thanks for the excuse to devour turkey).

love to all,  
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

\*\*\*\*\*

November 26, 2004: Hello, all.

kuje, not to worry; Ed groaned and then laughed when he gave me that reply to pass on to you, so he wasn't upset; he just doesn't want to become a D&D rules spokesman because he KNOWS he'll say the wrong thing too often.

Torkwaret, your request has been passed on to Ed, and I suspect he'll reply when he can. Be aware that in my experiences as a player in the 'home' Realms campaign, most merchant organizations when 'out on the trail' don't wear livery; they wear leather and homespun and other blend-in-with-the-landscape, appropriate working clothes, adorned with their badges (most of which have been printed in the rulebooks).

Capn Charlie, Ed makes swift reply to you:

I haven't time to say anything definitive, I'm afraid, so I'll settle for a few running notes: most places in the Heartlands celebrate harvest festivals after the harvest has been 'brought in' (and processed for winter storage, so beforehand there may be as much as a tenday of threshing and milling, or pickling, or salting away in barrels, and so on). Prayers are given to Talos for refraining from not utterly wiping out crops with his furies (except in years when weather HAS wiped out entire crops), prayers are offered to Malar for success in hunting vermin that prey on harvested edibles, and in success in 'the forewinter hunts' (wherein a concerted effort is made, in multi-day large-muster expeditions, to go out, 'beat' woods and swamps and wilderland caverns to 'flush out' wolves, owlbears, and other creatures that will become dangerous prowling predators in the coldest months), and prayers are offered most importantly to Chauntea for her bounty.

These of course culminate in a feast, usually accompanied by much drinking, and in some cases by copulation in the furrows of tilled land to 'ensure' fertility of the land in the growing season to come (next year).

...

[Note from The Hooded One: well, Capn, THAT ought to spice up your Friday game. Is it an, ahem, 'full roleplaying' occasion? ]

...

Some hamlets and villages celebrate rites similar to 'the Stag Lass' celebrations published in one of my New Adventures of Volo DRAGON columns. In most places, however, any debauchery arises informally out of the feast-time drinking (though such informal 'celebrations' may occur every year).

[THO commenteth: ]

In many communities, a local lord or local temple will roast whole beasts (oxen and large boars and stags are favourites) and prepare and serve a grand feast for the poorest folk (the aged, infirm, beggars, disabled, and 'maze-minded' [crazies]) in the community, for all children, and for all servants and apprentices. In other words, 'the lowly.' Sometimes presents are given, but (unlike those often given at other festivals of the year) these are never toys or frivolities: they are winter cloaks, boots, knives, gloves, blankets, and other 'useful in winter' items.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Harvests are when 'good years' of ales and wines and spirits are recalled, and colourful tales retold about brewers, vintners, distillers, and infamous drunkards. In rural areas, good or clever or eccentric farmers are venerated in the same way, and tales of past harvest 'doings' are related.

The vermin hunts, however, are usually the most socially exciting events, involving everyone from gangs of lads with rakes forcing rats out of barn lofts into the jaws of waiting and assembled dogs to most of the men of a village taking to the forest in a huge warband to slay owlbears.

So saith Ed.

Who is now, he tells me, once more first-aid certified (and aching all over from two days of doing CPR on dummies, lifting and rolling and carrying both small and shapely librarians and huge hulky hairy gravel pit operators all over the place, and sitting on some of the most uncomfortable chairs known to man). He also informs me that the notorious 'Beer Can Chicken' recipe (for those not in the know, it involves rude contact between a beheaded beer can and a chicken that's placed atop it, for cooking) can admirably be transformed into Ale Keg Turkey (said 'kegs' being the LARGE metal beer can sort, not classic wooden-with-hoops kegs). Myself, I'll stick to more traditional methods of turkey preparation, but this approach must work because Ed was: 1. still alive to tell me about it, and 2. not in an emergency ward, but at home and quite comfy.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On November 27, 2004 THO said: Torkwaret,

In the very first Forgotten Realms boxed set (also known as the "Old Gray Box" or "FR0," published in 1987), page 63 of the "Cyclopedia of the Realms" booklet displays an entire column filled with the banners and trailglyphs of six major trading organizations: the Seven Suns, Thousandheads, and Dragoneye Dealing costers, the Trueshield Trading and Six Coffers Market priakos, and the Iron Throne.

These were reprinted on pages 100 and 101 of the "A Grand Tour of the Realms" booklet in the 2nd Edition Realms boxed set, with updated and augmented information.

They are, of course, under WotC copyright, and in any case both Ed and I lack any means of transmitting images to Candlekeep.

My notes have turned up one instance of 'colours' being used. We Knights once observed several warriors standing guard over some wagons in Scornubel, and both the sides of the wagons and the cloaks of the guards displayed two adjoining vertical stripes of orange (on the left) and brown (on the right). We never followed this up, however, so of course Ed told us nothing more (Scornubel can be a place of wild distractions).

THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 28, 2004: Hello, all.

One correction to the above: Jeff Grubb applied the term "festhall" to Ed's "brothels."

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Beowulf, I passed your question on to Ed, and his reply is as follows:

It depends on the place (everyone does it slightly differently). If lords preside over the ceremonies, blood is usually collected in a bowl and then sprinkled on the ailing, respected elders, and/or young seekers-of-adventure or hunters of whom great things are expected (or mixed into drinks they imbibe). If priests preside over the rituals, the blood is usually set afire with magic on an altar as part of a prayer to the god (in other words, it becomes an offering).

Again, parts of the animal to be devoured vary from place to place, with priests usually reserving the heart and/or the head of the animal for altar flames (again, offered to the god), and keeping choice cuts for themselves, then distributing the rest by strict order of social rank tempered by those they desire to show favour to (or keep/recruit the support of), such as local secular rulers or lawkeepers.

If secular folk 'run' the feast, body part edibles are usually distributed on the basis of gender (women get those associated with fertility), age (elders get the brain for wisdom, the very young get leg meat to give them growth... and so on), and profession (hunters get the eyes, and paws to aid them in tracking). As I said, the results of these various attempts at distribution are widely varied. In some places guests are very well treated; in others they are virtually excluded or ignored. The same goes for dead ancestors.

I've never viewed these gestures as community-splitting, roots-of-feuds affairs, but rather as subtle and more lightly taken ("No stag tongue this year? Ah, well, perhaps I'll be given some next year"). Any community is more drawn together by the harvest home feasts than it is split apart.

So saith Ed.

Who has (ah, such typecasting) just finished playing Santa Claus for HIS local community.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

November 29, 2004: Hello, all.

Dargoth, back on page 37 of this thread you suggested Ed could 'introduce' one new temple of the Realms a month, for the edification (ooh; sorry, that pun wasn't intentional, truly) of all Realms scribes.

Not feasible, I'm afraid, but Ed did like your idea, and want to present a few of the more modest temples that might be of use or interest in play, so here's a hitherto-unknown center of worship in Suzail:

Valkur's Berth stands on Tholone Lane. On the map of Suzail (published on page 54 of the "A Grand Tour of the Realms" booklet, in the 2nd Edition FR Campaign Setting boxed set), Tholone is the short arc of street that bounds a block of buildings immediately to the north of the block that contains The Black Rat tavern (map feature 51). Tholone (pronounced 'THOWE-loan') begins at its western end in a moot with Nerester's Run, and at its southern end in a moot with Silverscales Street (which the Black Rat fronts on).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.  
This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

The large cobbled area between Silverscales and the buildings fronting on it to the north is occupied by drying-frames for fishing-nets, that double from time to time (when catches are unusually large) as overflow vending space for fresh fish.

The block of buildings bounded by Nerester's, Tholone, and Silverscales are all aging three-storey stone-and-timber tallhouses, in some disrepair. They house businesses in their cellars and street levels, and the floors above are divided into apartments wherein dwell dockworkers and 'retired old salts' who now eke out meagre livings as errand-bearers, spies, and small-illicit-item vendors. Most are owned by middle-class merchants of Suzail who seldom venture near their dockside possessions (sending around rent collectors each month, who are never accompanied by less than a quartet of bodyguards).

Around the midpoint of the buildings fronting on the south side of Tholone is a gap or 'wagoncut' allowing traffic to enter the block of buildings bounded by Nerester's, Tholone, and Silverscales (there's another wagoncut onto Nerester's, just one building north of the Nerester's/Silverscales corner).

The end building on the west side of the southfront-Tholone wagoncut is known as 'the Black Rock' because its dark stone is covered with soot from three serious fires. It's a massively-built, beast-face-carving-adorned onetime headquarters of a long-defunct trading coster (the Tireless Eyes), and is now home to Murrock's Fine Glass, a cellar glassworks with street-level shop above where sarcastic, scarred old Ildul Murrock and a dozen apprentices (including his three swift, efficient, fearless, sharp-tongued, and increasingly-restless-to-get-away teenaged daughters [who've attracted the attention of some young and restless noblemen, though nothing has yet come of this]) make and sell sturdy 'everday' glassware of stout construction rather than stylish beauty (glass net-floats, bowls, jugs, drip-tubes, and oil-lamps). The Murrock household and staff all dwell on the floors above, and make steady, comfortable coin.

(Murrock's wife died over a dozen summers ago of an unknown sickness brought into port that claimed almost twenty victims before fading out. Ildul Murrock devised a way to shape glass into a magnifying lens four years ago, and since then has been unable to keep up with a stream of covert orders from nobles and wealthy merchants whose eyesight is failing them; he usually makes 'handglasses' consisting of a round eye lens on a pierced-for-a-lanyard glass handle, and sells them for 100 to 120 gp each.)

Unbeknownst to many in the neighbourhood, the Black Rock has a secret side-entrance (next to its garbage-heap) that leads down into a 'second cellar' south of the one occupied by the glassworks (another secret door connects the two cellars).

This second cellar, the Berth, underlies the center of the block of buildings, a place customarily crowded with dock-cargo-wagons. Its ceiling is about fifteen feet below ground level, making it much deeper than the glassworks (both secret doors leading into the Berth open onto steep ramps descending into it). Harbour water constantly seeps through its glistening walls, even during winter freezeup, and is pumped out by the temple staff when it becomes more than three feet deep (the floor of the Berth is always covered by at least ankle-deep water, because no one wants to pump constantly, and because the flooded conditions keep roaches, rats, and other vermin away).

Valkur's Berth is furnished with several wooden benches that hang on chains from ceiling-rafters, walkways of raised stones (about a foot higher than the surrounding floor) connecting both entrance ramps with a central altar, and a floating raft of large, old logs lashed together in three layers to keep a railed uppermost platform dry (a storage-place for smuggled goods, temple

Produced at [CANDLEKEEP.COM](http://CANDLEKEEP.COM) from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

offerings, and temple supplies). The altar is a square stone block graven on all four sides with the stormcloud-and-three-lightning-bolts symbol of Valkur, and a larger depiction of this device (a mosaic that employs gilded stones for the bolts) is on the south wall of the cellar. The south wall of the cellar has several secret doors opening into side-cellars used for goods storage and by the clergy as sleeping-quarters, and at least two of these are connected to buildings in the Nerester's-Tholone-Silverscales block by crawl-passages that give into rooms inside those buildings, sometimes ascending through the walls to the back of a closet in an upper floor room.

Like many old sailors and senior merchants of the port, Murrock (who knows many safe shipping voyages provide not only his personal prosperity, but that of Cormyr beyond what mere subsistence farming and logging would bring) is a faithful worshipper of Valkur. He provides space for the temple for free, and contributes the meals and comfort of its clergy regularly.

Most clergy of Valkur in the Sea of Fallen Stars region believe they can only maintain their personal standing in the eyes of both the god and His lay worshippers if they go on voyages at least once a season. Many fall into the habit of exploring most of the Inner Sea ports, and often trade temple duties with fellow clergy of the Captain of the Waves.

As a result, the staff of the Berth (one of the quieter but wealthier and more pleasant, if less ornate and socially prominent, temples of The Mighty) change often. They are usually three to five in number, and diligently serve sailors who come into port, comforting the lonely and bereaved, and caring for the sick, the injured, and the penniless.

Although clergy of Valkur don't advocate smuggling (especially frowning on trade in illicit goods, and being dead set against slavery), they see as part of their work aiding working sailors in avoiding port taxes and oppressive rules (such as any prohibition on visiting sailors entering certain areas of a city). Therefore, they often store (hide) smuggled goods, arrange 'undercloak' (undercover) trades, and provide refuge for sailors fleeing authorities. They never request payments for such services, but do accept them if offered, and captains who make regular use of the Berth's help take care to reward its clergy well.

As a result, the clergy found here are usually diligent, loyal to sailors as well as professed worshippers of Valkur, and maintain a large network of coffer and chests with hidden compartments, and cellars, back rooms, and upper-floor closets about the port area where such items can be stored.

At least one Valkuran priest on staff at the Berth at any time (and usually as many as three) will know the secret passages, backrooms, cellars, and alleys of Suzail's port intimately, and be able to signal (with whistles, patterns of tossed pebbles, and the like) for ropes to be let down in a dozen buildings, to enable fleeing sailors to get up and into rooms before pursuers catch them.

It's understood by sailors that the Berth isn't to be used as a long-term home, and its clergy are not homemakers for lazy sailors or sailing old salts; the Valkurans provide emergency or short-term aid, not 'a living' for anyone who's tired of going to sea. (Priests of Valkur DO try to put retiring sailors in contact with folk who can find a place and work for them, and also help to trace relatives and former shipmates for folk.)

The wild-bearded, gray-haired old priest Amagar Warland, now quite elderly, came to the Berth three seasons ago and shows no sign of leaving. (The fact that two of Murrock's daughters lionize him, feed him, and flirt with him outrageously might have something to do with that.) The flamboyant, full-of-tales old priest is now considered the head of the Berth, and is becoming known around Suzail. In the past, Berth clergy made the rounds of taverns trying to convince

Produced at [CANDLEKEEP.COM](http://CANDLEKEEP.COM) from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

unhappy sailors to leave off drinking and come to the Berth for comfort; now, Warland need only thrust his head in and remind them of how many bells it is until the next service to get a roaring escort. Of course, Warland's habit of spending his own coins on hiring low-coin lasses to 'come around to the Berth' to give kisses and cuddles to sailors probably influences more visiting salts than the still-vigorous old priest's craggy, wildly-whiskered face.

Warland is said to have found a sunken treasure ship somewhere in the shallows of the Neck one year, and made a vast fortune from it (coins that are banked in Suzail, which is why he now tarries there). Whether this is true or not, the priest seems to own several buildings in Suzail, to have some friends in surprisingly high places, and to never personally run short of coin.

Another cleric of the Captain of the Waves who seems to like the Berth and serve in it often, though she always departs after two or three seasons, is the sharp-tongued 'Storm Bird,' the darkly beautiful Jalatharra Storn. Short-tempered, restless, and given to wild but short love affairs, she never talks about her past, but lovers report that her back and backside are a mass of deep, crisscrossing whip-scars. Jalatharra respects Warland and Murrock, but seems to think highly of few other men she meets, using them as lovers and then curtly telling them to begone. She does seem to yearn for something more than the stink of the docks, though, accepting almost every young nobleman's invitation to a revel or a feast (and has sometimes even journeyed upcountry to various noble castles, to put on fine gowns and dance for a night or two).

Clergy of Valkur fight against all use of slaves and undead in ship crews, and against slavery and 'kidnappings to the waves' of all sorts. They frown on (and covertly work against) any one owner assembling a fleet large enough to dominate the shipping of any large port or country, and are especially alert for attempts by rulers or nobility to covertly control shipping or goods prices by arranging "shortages," and the like. Otherwise, they don't approve of sailors working with rebels to overthrow any but the most naval-unfriendly rulers, and will never themselves knowingly aid such conspirators (Valkuran priests never help the malcontents of Marsember against the Crown of Cormyr). Clergy of Valkur disapprove of piracy in direct relation to how violent the particular pirates are to other sailors: those who slay, burn ships at sea with folk aboard, or torture prisoners and defeated foes will receive poor welcomes from Valkurans, whereas those who do as little violence as possible will be treated with friendliness.

Some Valkuran oaths (with rough real-world equivalents given in parentheses):

"By the wheel!" (Son of a bitch! or Holy shit!)

"Brokenkeel!" (Damn! or Shit!)

"Storm at the helm!" (Bloody hell! or G\*ddamnit, no!)

"Drown!" (Fuck!) [thus: "Drown you!" means fuck you or fuck off]

"Safe harbour!" (Valkur aid you!)

So saith Ed.

Who's probably happily writing away at the Spin A Yarn tale as I post this.

love to all,  
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

\*\*\*\*\*

November 30, 2004: Hello, fellow scribes. some housekeeping this time. To Sarelle, who's long waited for details of Uthmere; to Metis, who hungers for lore about the Wizards' Reach; and to Verghityax, who wants lore about no less than NINE locations: I want all of you to know that NDAs are preventing Ed from providing you with much. Yet.

(Hang in there, please!)

Verghityax, you are aware of Ed's archived website columns covering some Great Rift city locations, right?

kuje31, Ed sends this brief reply to Ovim Ironstar:

There's one big error in WIZARDS AND ROGUES OF THE REALMS, but it's only a single word long: "All wizards of Nimbral are specialist illusionists." should read: "Most wizards of Nimbral are specialist illusionists."

All of the lore given in that 2e tome (quicksilver eyes, lack of weapon proficiency and stamina, etc.) applies only to the large numbers of Nimbrese wizards who ARE specialist illusionists trained in the 'Way of Thaernd' (sometimes called 'the School of Thaernd,' though all trace of Thaernd and his actual school vanished long ago). The restrictions and abilities don't apply to any Nimbrese sorcerers, nor to the minority of Nimbrese mages who are 'standard' wizards or various 3e prestige classes related to wizardry.

So your campaign can include all sorts of 'native Nimbrese' who don't have the abilities gained through the Way of Thaernd. So far as I know, the Thaerndar (also sometimes called 'Wizards of the Way') haven't yet been updated into 3e format. As you know, in my Realmslore comments here, I avoid edition-specific hard-rules stats and detail as much as possible - - but only the most minimal rules changes are necessary to convert the 2e kit for these mages to a 3e prestige class.

Although there's no stigma to becoming a Thaerndar, most of the Lords and really powerful mages resident in Nimbral aren't Wizards of the Way. One note about the 2e text concerning Thaerndar: entering a dead magic zone causes only temporary blindness (sight is regained in an instant upon leaving the zone, with no lingering vision impairment or susceptibility).

So saith Ed, Who will return in the fullness of time with yet more Realmslore to enfold weary scribes like a warm, comforting cloak by a fireside...

love to all,  
your happily-glowing THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On November 30, 2004 THO said:

Verghityax, what you're looking for is Ed's Elminster Speaks articles on the WotC website. They are archived at:

<http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/archfr/es>

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



If you can easily unzip files, go for the "wrapup compilation" at the head (end) of the list, and get it all at once:

<http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=dnd/es/20030514a>

This will give you Elminster wandering from Voonlar to Delzimmer to Kholdtar, and from 2nd Edition AD&D to 3e D&D. (Game stats added by Jim Butler and others along the way.)

Pure Realmslore from the Master's quill, so to speak

Ed of course wrote the classic Dwarves Deep Realms sourcebook, which is the definitive guide to Great Rift locales (even if a lot of text did get trimmed, to lurk on TSR hard drives somewhere to this day).

THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 1, 2004: Hello, all.

Nay, kuj31, Ed and I mind not in the slightest answering queries relayed here by you, from the WotC boards or elsewhere. "The Realms' the thing," to mangle a saying. :}

I bring a reply from Ed to a long-ago question on this thread by Lashan (back on Page 37, I believe), regarding sewers. Yes, sewers. ;} Herewith, the words of Ed:

Lashan, Tantras possesses fragments of a sewer system. That is, it has lots of center-gutter street runoff down into the harbor (in some cases passing through pipes laid under the wagonways right along the docks to prevent stormburst 'rivers' from sweeping wagons and all into the harbor), and it has various small and often-flooded sewer systems emptying into the harbor from various western parts of the city. The problem is seawater flooding back in (when winds blowing to the east augment the tides) and washing everything 'back up whence it came,' so to speak.

This problem has never been solved, but attempts were made to lessen the severity of the 'backwash' by hollowing out increasingly large water-chambers (rooms) along the network of sewer pipes, and by enlarging those pipes. Part of Tantras stands on solid rock, and part of it's built on layers of ooze, so much of the sewers are lined with stone blocks or large sections of round tile (and extensive cellars are thankfully few). Gratings are fitted over most of harbor-mouth sewer outlets to prevent the tides bringing large objects (that can become wedged, and created blockages) into the sewers. However, the tidal back-and-forth flows do a fairly good job of sluicing out the sewers.

Some of the largest sewer water-chambers have been fitted with bucket-run chains (not pumps, but something akin to the way some primitive water-wheels work: literally, a string of buckets that dip out water and then are carried aloft when the circuit of chain is moved). These mulepower chains lift (filthy sewer, not drinkable) water into silo-like water-towers located in the eastern reaches of the city, which are from time to time drained in a 'flushing rush' (gravity-powered flood) through the easternmost sewers, to carry the reeking dung they contain out into the fields immediately east of the city (where, as you can imagine, there are some rather noisome marshes). The presence of these wetlands is one of the reasons Tantras has been slow to expand in that direction (with most new construction outside the walls planned, if the current city-defense decrees forbidding unbridled building sprawl ever change, for the south).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Drinking-water enters Tantras through pipes (pumped by mules or oxen traveling around and around capstans) from springs well to the northeast of the city (building on or near these springs is forbidden, and the city maintains guardposts over them).

So saith Ed.

Next time, he'll conclude with what happens to all of these flows in winter, and deal with the dead.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 2, 2004: Hello, all. First, to Mauricio: Ed is happy to report that he's been given WotC permission for his postings here to be translated and put on the Brazilian website you mentioned. It's also fine with Ed and with me, so given the tone of Alaundo's posting here, earlier, I'd say you're green to go. Alaundo?

Ah, and a another question for Alaundo: Ed doesn't yet have clearance to provide regular articles for the Candlekeep newsletter you mentioned. If he did contribute, a WotC copyright statement would almost certainly have to accompany Ed's words, of course, but the officials of Wizards who must consider this matter want to know these three things: the frequency of this newsletter, its format (only posted here, e-mailed to anyone, any print appearance), and whether any money is involved (does anyone have to pay to receive this newsletter, are any contributors paid, etc.). I assume the answer to that last matter is: no money involved, but Ed (who's perfectly willing to provide these articles for free, of course) tells me the WotC folks need definite statements, not assumptions. :}

With real-world business matters dealt with, I return you to Ed's rich Realmslore.

Faraer, you're quite correct about the Voonlar map. There were others that didn't appear for years, and a few that haven't been published even yet.

Herewith, Ed concludes his Tantras reply to Lashan:

In severe winter weather, of course, most flowing liquid things freeze, and the sewers of Tantras are no exception. Human waste generates its own heat, but still: things get hard and won't readily flow anywhere. The upside is, cold air cuts down on the smell, and insects that can carry diseases from dung to people are largely or wholly absent.

So in winter, Tantras does what a lot of places do: uses nightsoil-wagons (that 'pick up' along each street from residents shoveling middens and dumping chamberpots) to carry wastes away (unless heavy snowfalls prevent travel - - and all of the nightsoil-wagon owners have built huge, heavy, multi-runner sledges that can be slid under wagons to allow travel in deep snow). It's during the winter months that wastes get spread over many farm fields all around Tantras (instead of getting dumped in the swamps).

Drinking-water gets brought in in large wagons (metal tanks sitting in trays in which small fires are built and tended, to keep the tanks warm, said trays resting on massive crossttimbers, on flatbed wagons) from the springs, and men use pickaxes and hammers to keep the springs and their plungepools free of ice. The pipes that bring water to the city in the warmer months are opened

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

up in several places to allow for ice expansion (so the pipes won't burst in other, much-harder-to-reach spots).

Catacombs: yes, there were many in the early days of the city, but almost all of the older subterranean ones got flooded repeatedly and have either been abandoned with their dead inside (ahem, quite possibly undead, by now) or emptied and the second sort of catacomb used: networks of narrow passages and burial niches within the thick walls of the largest, grandest buildings. There are only about a dozen of these networks known to still exist inside Tantras.

Above-ground crypts ("little stone houses for the dead") were popular in the early days of the city's expansion, but all were soon overtaken by the growing city and eventually destroyed, with the remains moved well outside the walls to, yes (as you surmised) a cemetery -- or rather, three burial-grounds: one, a little south of due northeast, is Rosestones, a tiny 'village' of stone crypts (now shunned and overgrown as a haunted place, but grand stonework under all the brambles and briars) where the wealthiest families interred their dead; another (a little south of due east from Tantras, and closest to the city of the three cemeteries), Raindance Hill, is a windswept hill on a sheep farm where paupers were buried in simple, unmarked graves; and the third, Auntar's Rest ("Auntar" is pronounced "AWN-tar"), is a drystone-walled, rambling field of vine-choked trees and many, many leaning headstones, still in popular use today, where the bulk of dead folk of Tantras lie. The Rest has grown to take over six farms agood way southeast of Tantras, and will probably swallow more soon.

Most temples in Tantras inter priests under the floors and within the walls of their 'holy stones' (building walls); the temple of Torm is large and grand enough to have alcove-like side-chapels whose walls are entirely given over to filing-cabinet-drawer-like (all stone) burial niches filled with stone coffins. Lesser shrines may inter the bones of priests in stone coffins sunk into the shrine floor, but send their lay worshippers and staff for burial in the aforementioned public burial-grounds.

So if you've been envisaging a huge network of dungeon-like sewers linking every corner of Tantras underground: no. Not unless you're a really small snail or amphibian. Flooded attempts at establishing such a large system, now: yes.

So saith Ed, THE tireless dispenser of Realmslore.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 3, 2004: Hello, all. In the following reply to Ardashir, Ed speaks plainly about matters sexual (though not in what most people would call a 'dirty' manner), so if reading such things offend you, stop now and skip to the next post.

Myself, I find such things very interesting (as Wooly and SB and others might well suspect ). But enough; I present the latest words of Ed:

Ardashir, "festhalls" (Jeff Grubb's word, substituted for my "brothels" for TSR Code of Ethics reasons) vary in customs, but the more elaborate ones ARE "a cross between a private club, a casino, and a brothel."

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

This is due to the fact that many folk in Faerûn can readily couple with someone (on a rooftop or behind a midden in crowded cities, and 'out in the woods' or in a nearby thicket or hollow in a distant pasture, in a rural setting) if mere sexual gratification is all they want. What they go to the brothels for (and yes, some of these establishments are private clubs, particularly those specializing in S&M, mate-swapping, or inter-species congress) is for 'added fun.'

By this term, I mean: striptease performances, playacting and dressing up in outlandish costumes ("Hah, my pretty, I'm not merely Rorold the fat butcher from down the street - - I'm Ravagar Wanderglar, dread pirate of the Serpent Seas!"), the chance to gamble (betting one's body, temporary freedom, or items of clothing) or gambol (yes, dance), make love to music, have access to situations visitors wouldn't dare try outside a club (mock rape of a priest or priestess or ruler or other authority figure), making love on a tomb, crossdressing, eating food off the bodies of strangers, and so on), and the chance (particularly in masked revels) to enjoy someone else in a small community who's married to someone else - - to 'find' each other in public, or even be seen heading off to a tryst, would cause a scandal, but going to the brothel separately and getting up to all manner of hijinx there, even (in some cases) if observed by fellow community members, is 'okay' (the brothel is accepted as 'outside' normal society, a safety valve in which folk can temporarily set aside their usual public manner and status).

I see the popularity of brothels in the Realms as based on the Faerûnian love of play: as in our real world, children lose many opportunities for playing as they grow up (unless they can shift into participation in a sport, or acting, or performing and use that as an outlet), but brothels offer a place to go on playing, lifelong.

Some people never engage in a sexual physical act at a brothel, but visit them often. Some of these go to watch the fun (ogling), some go for the chance to flirt or make lewd suggestions they'd never dare utter elsewhere, and some just like to chat or play cards or drink with others while naked, or while crossdressing, or while pretending to be of a race or profession (example: the pirate above) that they're not. Some folks frequent festhalls to play tag, or blindfolded tag, or all sorts of other games that again, are play but not necessarily sexual.

(And then of course there are also brothels that are 'simple whorehouses,' particularly in ports where sailors make landing after long voyages without access to 'fresh faces,' or caravans disperse ditto.)

So saith Ed.

Umm, I'm feeling rather warm. Wooly, you know your cues.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 3, 2004 THO said: Mauricio, that's just great. You're welcome, and Thank YOU for promoting the Realms! The more Realms fans everywhere do this, the more the Realms "can never die."

simontrinity, Shadowdale's house of pleasure exists because of the many caravans that stop there. You'll find modest cathouses (of the sort Ed referred to, at the end of his post, as 'simple') in most caravan stops throughout the Realms, no matter how small and rural they are (desert

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

oases of course excepted). I'll pass on your request for more info, but I understand Ed might be doing a 'hands off' on Shadowdale because of his needs when doing the not-yet-written second and third Knights novels.

Dargoth, a "feasthall" (as opposed to 'festhall') is a room or event of temporary dining and debauchery, situated in an establishment that doesn't offer such amenities the rest of the time. (Real-world equivalent: "Friday Night Wings" offered at a drinking-spot where a patron can't get ANY food on other nights.)

So when a tavern offers "something more" for a limited run engagement of travelling 'professionals' (an arrangement that usually means said 'pros' avoid paying full taxes because they 'move on' before a tax collector can ever get to them, and the establishment pays little taxes on the extra coin generated because they 'forget' as many nights as possible of the extra takings), they're running a "feasthall." The term of course is a contraction of "feasting hall," a name applied to a large room whose purpose is allowing larger numbers of folk to sit down and dine together.

Gray Richardson, the truth is that orcs vary widely in sophistication, and that many of the younglings seen by others as part of invading orc hordes are those who have had the least food, supervision, and exposure to 'culture.' When aroused to bloodlust, their natural urge to destroy is stronger than most other desires. I'll forward your request to Ed of course, to see how much he'll post here of 'orc culture' details, but I can say as a player in the home Realms campaign that at least a few orcs are much more than simple brutes.

I expect another Realmslore post from Ed early tomorrow. He has to participate in a public reading of 'A Christmas Carol' tonight.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 4, 2004: Hello, all. Faraer, I like that title just fine. (One lore note: some of the Knights dating in FR7 is wrong.)

Lord Rad, Ed will get to those poisons; promise!

Herewith, however, Ed replies to Blueblade's latest query:

Garen Thal (and thanks! Superbly done!) answered your question about my 'dream Realms product' bang-on. I've actually been debating whether or not a rigid 'book box' slipcase holding separate hardcover, stitched-cloth bindings (the very best, so the books can be opened flat and WILL STAY THAT WAY without cracking the bindings) volumes for Cormyr would be better, thus:

-- Volume 1/Gazetteer (travel guide, with complete entries about the prominent folk, history, industries, and 'character' of every known locale in Cormyr [including full inn and tavern entries, of course])

-- Volume 2/Atlas (detailed maps, including city and important buildings maps with full keys, designed to be used side-by-side with Volume 1)

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

- - Volume 3/The Crown of Cormyr (royal family, history of rulers with full family trees, laws, plus rights and responsibilities of all of the following, as part of full entries about joining, uniforms, pay, etc etc 'all about' the Highknights, Purple Dragons [yes, org chart with ranks, uniforms and equipment], Blue Dragons [ditto], War Wizards ['almost complete' roster], the Royal Court and courtiers, court etiquette and daily 'how things get done,' Cormyr's Heralds and heraldic rules [such as precedence])
  
- - Volume 4/The Fair Flowering (the noble houses of Cormyr, with founding and history to date, family trees, heraldic arms, investments, mansions and castles with floorplans, aims, alliances, and feuds, current members and dispositions, rules of taxation, inheritance, and legitimacy [with a 'secret sage file' identifying known and suspected royal bastards])
  
- - Volume 5/Life, Spiritual and Secular (how all religions are represented in the realm, with temples, temple rosters, festivals and observances, vestments, laws and special Crown treatment if any, capsule histories, and current aims and activities; then: festivals, customs, and folk beliefs of Cormyreans, with fashion and garb, sayings, cuisine [with some sample recipes], drinkables, and the 'look' of architecture, everyday item design [e.g. crockery, belt buckles, windows], how gossip spreads [and who embroiders it and why], how trade goods flow and are taxed and why, what's imported and exported)
  
- - Volume 6/The Pursuit of Power (an examination of power groups in the Realms not covered in previous volumes, such as trading companies, covert cabals, guilds, the Mages Regal, the Sword Heralds, the Society of Stalwart Adventurers, and so on; the history of treason and revolts (including present-day activities), the laws governing adventuring bands [including sample charters] and a brief overview of currently prominent adventurers and historically important bands and their activities, coverage of important individuals who have influence but aren't part of any organized power group, and an overview of foreign or larger-than-Cormyr's borders influences [such as Sembia, the Red Wizards of Thay, the Harpers, merchant fleet owners active in the Lake of Dragons, and so on])
  
- - Volume 7/The Book of Purple Dragons (a collection of sample ballads [yes, with sheet music], fireside [ghost and 'urban legend'] tales, love poems, jokes, childrens' rhymes, folk tales, 'quotable quotes' from historically important Cormyreans [on places, Cormyr itself, the character of Cormyreans, and so on], games popular in Cormyr [with full rules, sample boards and cards or other tokens], popular pastimes and hobbies of Cormyr; then: a section on non-human inhabitants of Cormyr, from the dragons [including of course a history of 'THE purple dragon'] and elves down through halflings and gnomes to the prevalence of monsters [include Cormyrean attitudes towards all such creatures])

As Garen said, I'd have to be centuries old to complete even this lone kingdom overview, and I'd probably drive any publishing company into penury trying to publish it. So it is indeed a dream, and must (sigh) remain so.

So saith Ed.

Sigh from me, too. What a glorious thing that would be to have and to hold. Release one volume at a time, every six months, with the slipcase last (said slipcase coming with an extra volume: a FULL, exhaustive, cross-referenced index and errata/update).

Ohhhh... Woolly, tug my leash, will you?

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



mournfully wistful love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 5, 2004: Hello, all. Continuing to catch up on 'Elder Realmslore requests,' Ed just e-handed me a few more tidbits about The Simbul for George Krashos and Blueblade:

The Queen of Aglarond personally dislikes on-the-ground (as opposed to aerial ballet, whilst employing flight magic) dancing (though she doesn't mind watching other folk dance if they're good at it), enjoys very little music (what she does prefer is soft, slow-paced gentle music of chords and fading notes and repeated motifs, NOT wild, loud, or up-tempo music of any sort), and prefers stormy weather to calm weather (lightning and windstorms preferred to drizzle or plain downpours), night, fog, and twilight to bright sun, and cool conditions to hot or warm (hence her enjoyment of feeling stormy weather on her bare skin). The Simbul is a very tactile person (the primary reason she likes to go barefoot), and prefers to keep her hands and feet uncovered, and her body unclad (or clad in loose-fitting, well-ventilated garments) whenever possible. In other words, she likes to feel contact with the world around her at all times, and not merely with garments that move and remain with her. She loves having itches scratched, and has a very high pain threshold (she feels a pinch sharp enough to draw blood, for example, only as discomfort). Her famous rages build far more swiftly (and boil over far more often) when she can't 'get away by herself to think,' and when she can't avoid or get away from loud noises, bright lights, glaring sunlight, and/or crowds of people (or just their chatter). As a result, the rooms she frequents in her palace tend to be kept as quiet and as deserted as possible by her courtiers.

So saith Ed.

In support of this: my main character once calmed The Simbul, in the Twisted Tower in Shadowdale (she'd ALMOST burst into a rage when two Zhent envoys showed up and tried to convince Mourngrym to allow Thayan traders to establish an 'office' in Shadowdale, using a lot of what the Queen of Aglarond knew to be honeyed lies in their attempt, and was seething on the brink of fireworks), by drawing her into a dark, deserted bedchamber, suddenly whipping her gown up over her head (where my character left it, hooked up on high over a chandelier-chain), throwing open the windows to let strong night breezes blow in (because Elminster had once told me she always liked to 'feel the breeze'), and then locking her in and fleeing.

Frankly, I expected her to blow the room apart the moment she got head and hands free from the imprisoning gown, but apparently The Simbul just let her knees sag until she'd determined that the gown and chain could take her weight, and when she found it could do so, just relaxed and dozed, enjoying the solitude and the feel of cold air on her skin.

The doze became a real sleep, and she didn't awaken until the morning sun started to warm her - whereupon she changed into raven form, flew out of the window, and before heading off elsewhere, sought out my character to pass on her THANKS.

live and learn,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

On December 5, 2004 THO said: Hear ye, hear ye! Word is finally out, so I can talk about this now. ALL Realms scribes should read Faraer's (sharp-eyed as always, sir!) thread here in the Novels forum, entitled: "Best of the Realm: The Stories of Ed Greenwood."

You know the far-too-often-overused publicity phrase "The Publishing Event of the Season"? Well, this book truly is, for all Realms fans - - not just scribes who like Ed's fiction writing.

Ed tells me that at least three stories in it have never been seen by anyone (aside from the editor of this book, of course) before, a fourth has only been seen by a "small handful" of olden-days TSR staffers, a fifth has only been read by a slightly larger handful of insiders plus one lucky Realms fan and whomever she may have shared it with, and just about everything else in the book has been at least tweaked (minor rewriting). In one case, a tale has been restored to its original size, i.e. more than doubled in length.

The contents of this book include close-up glimpses of many important Realms characters, so it will be of interest to long-time Realms fans, and people just discovering the Realms, alike. For one thing, it should provide "snapshots" of how important NPCs talk and think, for DMs running the Realms to refer to.

I think of it as a single precious tome of lore that's somehow fallen off the shelves of the Secret Library of the Realms that Ed's written and thus far not shared with us, and been carried out for us to peruse. I'm expecting to buy about a dozen copies (one for my home shelves, one for my keep-pristine Precious Realmslore collection, one for my cottage, and the rest to give away, over the years, to people wanting to know what the Realms is, or who've just discovered the Realms and know I'm a part of it and so can Tell Them More. As I said, this book is THE Publishing Event of this Season (in the field of Realms fiction, I mean - - and yes, I say that knowing of several superb titles coming up in 2005). I predict that this will become a 'bedside comfort book' for many Realms fans, to be kept within reach so they can enjoy a few favourite tales over and over.

Colour me happy, happy, happy.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 5, 2004 THO said: THIS is the secret I've been sitting on; something I consider a 'must-have' for the true Realms fan. About the cover: bear in mind you're almost certainly looking at a 'prototype' mocked up using the background from the first Best of the Realms book with a preliminary pencil sketch superimposed, so the final may well not look like this. Of COURSE it plays to so-called 'signature characters' (and babes); remember, the cover is to sell it to non-Realms fans; we who love the Realms would buy the thing if it was sitting in the bookstores WITHOUT a cover.

About the contents: Ed tells me he's done very minor clean-up rewriting to everything, that the lineup of tales has been set, and that unless it disappears in the editing, every tale has specific dating given, there are many previously unpublished tales, and that you won't see any of the Spin A Yarn stories (in other words, the attempt is to make this "best" stories, not "collect all of Ed's stories"). I personally know of almost fifty unpublished Realms stories by Ed, so this collection can only scratch the surface, so to speak.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

I think there will be seventeen stories in this book, plus a quotation or two, but this is just my guess based on some snooping I did during my last visit chez Ed, nothing confirmed by Ed himself. I do know that Ed wrote short introductions for every story. I also know that Ed chose some of the stories you'll be seeing for the first time in order to give us 'you are there' glimpses of important Realms NPCs at important-to-the-wider-Realms moments in their lives. And of course, the title suggests that some of the book's contents will be previously published Realms stories, which almost certainly means some of the 'Realms of' tales, and probably retrieving Ed's Mirt story from DRAGON and possibly the computer manual stories (though bear in mind that those two MAY be trammled by legal permission problems).

Those who don't like Ed's writing will, of course, be easily able to dismiss this book, but my own knowledge of Ed's unpublished oeuvre lets me say two things: you'll see something of the wide variety of styles Ed can write in, herein, and if you read all of the tales, you'll have a masterful grasp of the thinking and 'character' of some important Realms folk (usable by DMs, and hopefully to be used by Candlekeep scribes in informing arguments and viewpoints they express in this forum).

In short: essential Realmslore. A treasure.

Myself, I'm already hungry for Ed's sequel collection to this one!

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 6, 2004: Hello, all.

Back in June (Page 41 of this thread), Metis asked about the city of sunken Northkeep: not its present state, as the Bell of the Depths/Bell in the Deep, with cruel marel's lurking around it, but what it was like before its sinking by shamans of the flind-led gnolls of Flindyke in 400 DR (when the city had been flourishing for over fifty years). The first part of Ed's reply follows:

Today, the sunken ruins of Northkeep are about fifteen miles offshore (that is, north of the southern shore of the Moonsea) at a point about halfway between Elventree and Elmwood. In the days before its sinking, Northkeep was only about two miles offshore.

The great magic that sunk Northkeep was a divine act of titanic force, wherein the rock ceilings of a series of partially-water-filled Underdark caverns (a 'sea beneath the Moonsea') were blasted to rubble by humanoid deities answering the prayers of the shamans - - so the hilly island on which Northkeep stood collapsed down into the sudden hole, the Moonsea flooded the Underdark basin beneath it, and a cape that had formerly jutted out into the Moonsea, with Northkeep situated on an island off its tip, ceased to exist (also collapsing into the depths). The rolling surface of Northkeep Isle cracked in countless places as it fell, and most buildings were tumbled into rubble, but some still stand to this day on the seabed, albeit usually tilted crazily from the vertical. Extensive cellars and underground tunnels beneath the island's surface, though cracked in countless places, largely survived their descent into the watery depths.

But enough of cataclysm: back to earlier days, and the rise of what became Northkeep...

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Northkeep was first settled continuously (as opposed to being a seasonal camp) in 348 DR. From the first, it was a supply base and defensible refuge for human traders from warmer, more southerly lands seeking the mineral wealth of Thar and the other cold lands north of the Moonsea (and in later years, as these things grew scarcer closer to home, the southerners sought bulk pelts and timber, too). From the beginning it was a citadel (hence its name), initially a timber palisade around a conical tower at the northeastern tip of the island, that swiftly grew larger.

The defensible nature of the island (separated from the mainland by a strait too wide for humanoid armies to hurl or fire things over, so would-be invaders were forced to make or seize boats or rafts to attempt invasions, and during such water-crossing assaults were easy pray for defenders using fire-arrows) was what made it attractive in the first place. The 'Northkeep' name was soon applied to both settlement and island, as the one grew to cover the other. (To the flind, gnolls, orcs, and hobgoblins, the island was "Haardhahr.")

Even at its height, Northkeep lacked proper walls all around its shores, but had tall fortified towers at its northwesternmost point (Harl's Gard), its northeasternmost point (Storm Gard), at its center (the legendary Tower of the Bells), and a row of towers linked by castle walls along its southern shore (the Battle Wall, more widely and informally known as 'the Frowning Towers'). All of these soaring, massive keeps housed armories and were topped with huge catapults. These weapons usually hurled loads of great boulders, and were mostly used to swiftly break Moonsea ice in winter if invading armies threatened to cross it from the shore to the southern tip of the island (though in later years, Northkeep's defenders exhaustively practised aiming and firing the catapults, and became skilled enough to readily sink vessels in surrounding waters).

Northkeep grew to entirely cover the island, which was roughly diamond-shaped, with its long axis running north-south and the 'long narrow point' southernmost (think of a geometrically-perfect diamond with a blocky outgrowth on the northeastern or "1 to 2 o'clock" quadrant of its narrow or northernmost end, that extended the diamond east another half of the width of a geometrically-perfect diamond). The long axis of Northkeep Isle was three miles in length, and before its transformation at the hands of the builders of the ever-expanding city, the island consisted of rolling, wooded hills of thick organic soil over clay, that in turn overlaid fissured, fractured rock, through which springs bubbled up. The island was windscoured (which kept fogs to a minimum), and the weather generally wet, but trees were everywhere and marshes few.

Until its last twenty or so years of existence, most of the middle of Northkeep Isle was occupied by farms (which grew food crops for the ever-growing city) and a steadily-dwindling 'tall forest' of shadowtops and duskwoods that were cut for building timbers. In the end, the city of Northkeep entirely swallowed these open lands, leaving only a few parks, many small stockyards and paddocks for grazing not-yet-butchered 'food on the hoof' and mounts and pack-beasts for sale to traders and explorers, and several open marketplaces.

Over time, the city-dwellers transformed this 'crowd of cottages' into cobbled streets lined by tall stone buildings crowded together, with extensive granary-cellars beneath (though these are often referred to as "dungeons" today, very few of them were ever intended for incarceration or as dwelling-places, but rather as armories and storage-spaces, used as easy highways only when heavy winter snows drove folk underground).

The illustration on the cover of my novel *ELMINSTER'S DAUGHTER* is actually pretty close to the 'look' of the bell-towers that topped many of the city buildings from about 366 DR onwards (the bells were used to signal across the island, warning of all unfamiliar foreign vessel approaches and of other observed perils; in the early days of Northkeep, until adventurers hunted many of these menaces down, dragon and wyvern food-foraging raids were frequent). Before that

Produced at [CANDLEKEEP.COM](http://CANDLEKEEP.COM) from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

date, tall stone towers were few, and most folk lived in increasingly-crowded-together thatched fieldstone cottages fronting on a maze of cobbled roads (the climate was wet, and frozen churned-up mud is no easier to traverse than soft, sucking mud).

So saith Ed.

Not wanting to again cause that formatting (or perhaps just display, on some computers) problem that plagued us early in this thread when posts grew overlong, I'll bring you the rest of his reply soon.

love to all,  
THO

December 7, 2004: Hello, all. The second part of Ed's Northkeep reply to Metis follows:

Over the years, Northkeep was home to a variety of peoples, most of them Damaran humans. From the first settlement, halflings and gnomes dwelt in Northkeep; families of the latter worked tirelessly to build and rebuild the city, quarrying stone from cliffs around the Moonsea and from the spine of Northkeep Isle itself to make the fitted blocks of which the city was built (they were fond of carving the top of a block with a slight ridge or spine, onto which a corresponding 'trough' in the base of the block placed atop it fitted, to help bind walls together). Their architecture was simple, oversized, massive, and durable, made with 'expansion cracks' and the like to withstand the cruel cold, ice, and everpresent chilling winds of the island. Most buildings were entered through doors shielded from the passing wind by a small L-shaped 'cloak wall' that projected out from the outer wall of the building the width of a stout man, and then turned to parallel that outer wall for some twelve feet or so. Such windbreaks never guarded all entrances to a building (there were always larger, unencumbered ones for the passage of furniture, mounted men, wagons, and pushcarts), but they did shield the most commonly-used entrances, and were usually bedecked with climbing vines of edibles (such as the draeldagger, a close Realms equivalent to what we might call a 'scarlet runner bean').

Except during the harshest winter storms, large numbers of traders were always coming and going, but from the first Northkeep retained a permanent, year-round population. It became a city of hardy folk (overwhelmingly humans, most of an athletic, warlike or entrepreneurial bent) who never lost the feeling of being a garrison against cruel weather and more cruel foes. 'Northel,' as this citizenry were collectively called, wore their hair long and seldom shaved, preferring to stay hairy and thereby keep warm. They customarily wore furs, knitted hoods, and huge woolen cloaks, stripping down to leather breeches and vests over thick doeskin jerkins only in the warmest months.

Northel drank much small beer and wine (none of it distinguished; for such purposes, they bought something finer than local 'warmbelly' from visiting traders), ate much locally-made goat cheese (many goats were kept on the island) and roundloaves of bread, dined on both meats of the then-numerous wild herds of beasts (rothé and the like) around the Moonsea and fish netted in the Moonsea, and spiced their cuisine with much sage and mint and other mainland wild plants. Almost their only distinctive dish was 'braethyn,' a thick broth of mushrooms, sea ivy (the salty seaweed of the Moonsea that so often fouls fishing nets), wild onions, shoreleaf shoots (green young roots, very similar to potato sprouts), and diced wildfowl. Braethyn tastes like something between a stir fry and beef stew, and is still popular around the Moonsea today. Northel must have dined often on eels, because they almost exterminated them in the formerly 'teeming with blackslitherers' waters around the mouth of the River Duathamper (better known to humans of the time as the Elvenflow).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Entertainments in Northkeep were dominated by gambling games, betting on goods-investments for the coming season, and betting on which Northel hunters would kill the most stags (or monsters, or the most powerful monster) during the long winters. Northel also played elaborate wargames using Moonsea maps, stone tokens for fleets and armies, and cards depicting storms, beast raids, thaws, and treasure discoveries. These were most popular in the cold months, because in the warmer days such games were played 'for real,' in an ongoing struggle to get rich swifter than thy neighbor, and be 'in the know' (informed of unfolding events first and fastest, and thus able to invest more shrewdly than those slower to hear news, by using what we moderns would call "insider information").

So saith Ed.

I'll post the last of his Northkeep lore next time.

love to all,  
THO

December 8, 2004: Hello, all. Here's the rest of Ed's Northkeep lore:

Northkeep was governed by 'the Wise' (a council of wealthy merchants and caravan masters), who commanded 'the Lords Protector (a hired professional garrison of defenders, who in times of attack were to command a general citizen militia), but increasingly real power was held by certain independent wizards brought to the city by various merchant cabals. In time, these mages came to dominate and even hold covert power of life and death over 'their' merchants, and either control members of the Wise as puppets or openly become members of the Wise themselves.

These wizards were rivals, never a cohesive power group, and sages record no collective name for them except the disparaging term 'Farspells' (meaning: hurlers-of-spells-who-come-from-far-away) given to them by some Northel who saw their selfish machinations as an increasing peril to Northkeep.

In this view, they were ultimately correct (see the Portals of the Moonsea web article by Skip Williams, on the WotC website); one wizard ultimately betrayed the city (by giving information about some of the spells defending the island - - notably those strengthening the bedrock of the island, cast after certain mages learned of the existence of the Underdark 'sea under the Moonsea' - - to some humanoids, in return for fabulous wealth and a promise of rulership over Northkeep), making its doom possible.

Before that cataclysmic ending, Northkeep grew wealthy, crowded, and bustling day and night, its folk full of energy and ideas and ambition, the gem and mineral wealth of the lands north of the Moonsea flooding into its streets. Trade-rivalries were fierce, but most folk were too busy to carry on lasting feuds or try to establish a nobility; if one job or business venture didn't work out, most folk simply turned to another. The most powerful or swift-rising Northel were always in need of new folk to work for them, and there was work and wealth enough for all (no matter how many folk flooded into the city in search of riches). The Farspells crafted gates (portals) to other Moonsea cities, even before some of those cities were more than rough outpost settlements. These magical transports were used mainly by (trade agents of) the merchant patrons of the powerful wizards who created them (and details of them appear in the Portals of the Moonsea web article).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

A typical Northkeep building in the later days, when the city covered its island, was a tall rectangular block built of fitted stone, with few windows on the north or west sides (from which most winds blew) and balconies in its upper levels only. To its rear was situated a small walled yard housing an 'on poles' garden of edibles and a stables (with egress onto a mews-like shared back alley). It would have one level of cellars suited for food storage, a shop or business offices on the ground level, and three levels of living quarters above; a goodly number of Northel lived above shops they owned, in buildings they owned. The roof would be of fluted metal, tile, or slate, steeply pitched from a central ridgepeak to shed water, ice, and snow; its corners would have carved stone 'beast-face' downspouts, and the roof-sides would be fitted with periodic sharp out-thrusting vertical fins to break winter ice into small 'tumbles' instead of letting huge sheets of ice slide off and fall on the heads of passersby below (a frequent occurrence with unbroken metal roofs in cold climates). The building would have a central bank of chimneys, screened at the top to keep nesting birds from clogging them, with hearths on every level (so rooms were coldest at the outside walls, which were often hung with thick tapestries, and warmest near the center of the building, which is where most beds and lounge-chairs were situated). Furniture was usually of wood and of simple, massive construction -- though traders brought all manner of variety from afar, and most Northel bought at least some 'exotic' things from elsewhere in Faerûn to demonstrate their worldly-wise sophistication (where they in fact possessed such, or not).

Northel roads began as simple two-wagon-wide strips of loose-laid cobbles, always 'crumbling away at the edges,' and by the time the city had grown to cover the island, had advanced to being a little wider, built with a center 'crown' or high spot/ridge, sloping to drainage gutters at both edges consisting of two rows of cobbles laid on edge, on either side of a row of cobbles laid flat. One edge-row ran along the edge of the cobbled road, and the other along the edge of building-curbs, and the lower-down flat row between them was sealed with cement (yes, this 'hard sand' mix is known in the Realms, particularly among gnomes and dwarves) to form a smooth-ish channel for water runoff. The early roads were laid directly on soil, and the later ones atop a layer of tamped-hard fine gravel put on the soil under the cobbles.

The south shore of the Moonsea closest to Northkeep was dominated by dozens of privately-built wharves that were usually crowded with large barges and 'storm-wallow' cogs (so named for their handling in rough seas). These developed over the years, in muddy competing profusion, and the Wise were careful to make sure (by covert murders, if need be) that no one person or cabal came to own, control, or dominate a majority of them, so as to keep access to Northkeep as cheap and easy as possible (and prevent any treachery through any dock-owner having private dealings with humanoids or Northkeep's rival trading cities farther south).

This area was known simply as 'the Docks' (though elves called it 'the Stinking Mud' for good descriptive reasons), and though the Lords Protector eventually established large armed patrols and an armory there to keep order, it always had a certain air of lawlessness, with bodies turning up floating in the shallows or found huddled behind wagons on many a morning. Many roads and wagon-trails converged on the Docks, and although there were usually many caravans encamped and mustering (or dispersing), and enough human trading traffic (complete with warehouses, wagon-makers, blacksmiths, and brothels) to make elves more or less permanently withdraw from the shoreline, few folk actually lived in the vicinity of Northkeep along that south shore. For one thing, there were always a few lurking brigands, and for another, the land was thick woods swiftly being cut down for firewood and reduced to rutted mud rather than being cultivated and looked after.

There were exceptions: about a day's ride west of the Docks was Smiling Lady Well, where the Faithful Sisters of Tymora had a temple-farm (the closest thing to 'nuns of Tymora' that Faerûn has ever seen) that provided a lot of table vegetables, herbs, and grains for Northkeep, and west of there (and starting about three days' ride east of the Docks) were several small coastal fishing-

Produced at [CANDLEKEEP.COM](http://CANDLEKEEP.COM) from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

hamlets, most housing no more than forty-odd humans. Sages know the names of some of them: the first west of Smiling Lady Well was called Rorthimur, and the one west of that was Ryll's Rocks; and the closest one east of the Docks was Marthelspike.

All of these places sank along with Northkeep, and no trace of them (visible ruins) can be seen on the Moonsea seabed now.

So saith Ed.

Whew; another thick slice of Realmslore, once you pile the three posts together. Metis, hope this is of help, and comes not too late for your play purposes. Ed continues to be the World's Busiest Freelance Worldbuilder...

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 9, 2004: Hello, all. Ed and I both hold high regard for Faraer, one of the most erudite scribes among us, and he's been waiting a LONG time for some details of two ladies of the Realms: the Harper Sharanralee, and the innkeeper Jhaele Silvermane. Well, one at a time, and the Knights trilogy takes Jhaele out of the running for some time to come. Mindful of Faraer's earlier request not to show us 'too much' of Sharanralee until she's made her Realms novel debut, Ed provides this careful 'softly, softly' answer:

Sharanralee Crownstar is legendary among Harpers. A tall (6-foot-four-inches), slender fighter of (to use Elminster's words) "quiet grace, great dark eyes, and a magnificent fall of glossy dark brown hair that when unbound usually reaches the backs of her knees," Sharanralee has a sunny disposition, is gentle of speech and unassuming of manner, and (to quote Storm Silverhand) has "been everywhere, seen everything, and remembers all the back trails and alleys - - and who dwells or lurks along them."

Her knack is to easily befriend everyone she wants to, and make them feel special (a morale-building touch for many young Harpers, many of whom revere her), and her greatest skill is having a perfect, never-failing, apparently-limitless memory: Sharanralee DOES remember every last detail of snatches of conversations she overhears, particular smells, peoples' faces, tiny items worn or displayed on crowded market tables [the configuration of the 'business end' of a key glanced at momentarily, for instance], and so on. She spent her youth travelling the Realms widely and having many adventures, often in the company of rangers and explorers. She's always loved maps and seeing new places (and squaring the two, to make maps ever-more-accurate), and has proved herself very useful in guiding travellers or telling folk about navigational details of distant, unfamiliar cities and trade-routes.

Her mother, Miralee, was 'a dark beauty' from Mintarn (Sharanralee was named for her grandmother, dead for some years before she was born), and her father Taerazaun the head of the proud and wealthy Crownstar merchant-trading family of Athkatla (many Crownstars are now gem-dealers in cities along the Sword Coast from Baldur's Gate south to the Tashalar). They were slain by caravan-raiders (while travelling outside of Amn, with their daughter left 'safe' at home in their Athkatlan mansion) when Sharanralee was young. Her servants and relatives soon conspired to steal much of the Crownstar wealth and discredit Sharanralee (as an impostor, not a true Crownstar, and hence entitled to nothing of the family wealth and houses). When she

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

refused to be thrown out of the Crownstar mansion in Athkatla (or rather, was thrown out several times but kept climbing back in unattended upper-floor windows and trying to resume her life as if she'd never been expelled), attempts were made to murder her. She escaped several such, but when she overheard (from hiding) one of her uncles conspiring with the grooms to have them abduct her, ride her to the mountains, and there take their pleasure of her before slaying her and bringing back her heart and eyes as proof, she decided to run away - - and did so. Harpers took her in, Harpers took her all over the world, and she grew to love the life of adventuring in the wilderness.

At some point she gained a small, wearable magic item of some sort that enabled her to alter her looks (including stature and apparent gender), and the disguises this has helped her assume have aided her greatly in Harper work and in travelling to many places without being identified as Sharanralee, or molested as an outlander, a woman, or a non-member of whatever group she's walking among.

She has become a veteran of Harper missions and life in the wilderness, famous among Those Who Harp and a trusted friend, confidant, and agent of Alustriel. She's also acquired a husband, to whom she's very happily and passionately married, considerable wealth (on her own; she's apparently never tried to take any revenge upon her Athkatlan relatives, or gain a single coin of her inheritance 'back' from them), and owns several businesses and many properties in Everlund.

And yes, I'm very much glossing over the great bulk of her life and career thus far. Having sketched out her roots, I'd rather leave the rest until, as you requested, you see her walking and talking in the pages of a Greenwood-penned Realms novel. She's based in part on a real person (no longer living), and, like Storm Silverhand, I love her more than a little, despite her being an imaginary character I created. I'm sure that will be readily evident when you see her 'alive' in my Realms fiction.

So saith Ed.

Who showed we Knights this Sharanralee of his only for a few brief occasions. I, too, hunger for more of her (not THAT way, Wooly, so stop tugging on that leash! ). Soon, Lord of the Realms?

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 10, 2004: Hello, all. Ed replies to The Blind Ranger:

Dueling is widespread across the Realms, especially within the nobility of a realm (it's usually discouraged or expressly forbidden 'across borders' because of the danger of causing family feuds that all too easily become wars between realms), and even (in the past, though some ultra-conservative zealots still cling to beliefs that dueling is fine with the deity, merely disallowed by "decadent superiors desiring to maintain their lofty ranks") within certain priesthoods (Bhaal, Hoar, Myrkul, Shar).

Among commoners, because of the possibility of unrest (and particularly in ports, where trade could be permanently disrupted if the place acquires a 'too dangerous to venture there' reputation) dueling is usually illegal. This means no duels in public, not no duelling; persons having disputes go outside the city or town walls, to places where patrols from the city or town

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

won't see them (or meet inside private clubs [who may use such combats as entertainments for their members] or warehouses, by night) and duel there. There are even some guilds that formally specify duels as a means to settle certain disputes.

Honour is viewed very differently from place to place and race to race: an orc duel is almost always a duel to the death, by any means (there's nothing considered "unfair," including goading bystanders to take part), whereas a duel between elves is more often until "first blood" or "yielding" or "four touches" rather than death (although in cases of hatred, death of course often occurs). Many human duels between nobility must be conducted in the presence of royalty or a particular court official, who governs the rules of the duel and will often specify that a duelist who slays an opponent will be executed, so the duel MUST be to some lesser defeat.

To most commoners (especially farmers), dueling is viewed as vicious stupidity, a waste of life (hands that could be put to work). Brigands and thieves are to be killed or 'run off' (pursued out of the district, with captured thieves often being forehead-branded 'THIEF' and/or having hands broken so they won't be nimble-fingered for a long, long time), but everyone else is simply beaten up to settle scores - - in other words, there aren't duels so much as frequent fistfights.

Beowulf is quite correct in his partial listing of historical real-world reasons for dueling, and Lashan has put his finger on not just a Mulmaster example, but the general principle I use when crafting customs in the Realms for places where dueling is 'viewed as a public sport:' local authorities are always involved in adjudicating the duels. Again, this to make sure things don't get out of hand and become a general street brawl that could grow into mob violence or a wider uprising of the local downtrodden (in other words, said local officials will have large and well-armed bodyguards with them who are under orders to quell violence right away with, well, violence. :} )

As an extension of Beowulf's examples, there have been instances (in the past during the elves-vs.-dragons struggle for early Cormyr, and in Tethyr and the Vilhon region, as well as others that don't spring to mind just now) of champions battling each other to decide something that would otherwise plunge their peoples into a war. (For such contests to truly settle matters, of course, both sides must REALLY believe in, and abide by, principles of honour.)

There are no universally-accepted standards for dueling, but usually in the Realms it's one-on-one fighting, with adjudicators but NO 'seconds' (in other words, one being battles another being; both may have supporters watching, but those supporters will not be expected to fight under any circumstances). The contest will be under rules (particularly governing the ending: yeild, wounding, first blood, or death) decided by local law and enforced by the adjudicators (often a local priest, if there's no Watch commander, garrison commander, or judge handy), or decided by the adjudicator, or agreed-upon by the two duelists in the presence of the adjudicator. In most of the Heartlands duels tend to be: one hand weapon (usually a short sword) plus a dagger, and light armor, or: daggers only, with duelists both stripped to the waist. Some sadistic clubs customarily blindfold duelists for extra fun, and others drug them to make the duel slow, with single weapon-strikes less likely to be instantly fatal. Smokepowder and any sort of missile weapon duels are almost unheard-of (and would be deemed 'not really dueling' by most folk of the Realms, I'd say), and yes, a public challenge (usually by the hurling down of a glove or gauntlet, complete with SHORT public oration (one or two lines identifying the complaint and the complainer, plus perhaps an insult) is the usual manner in which formal duels (especially between nobles) are announced.

Please be aware that in most places in the Realms there's no dishonour at all in refusing a duel from someone of different rank (i.e. youngest knight or baronet who challenges an aging duke

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



would be sneered at by all, not just his intended foe, but if the duke WANTED to 'teach the young puppy a lesson,' he'd be perfectly free to do so).

So saith Ed.

Who's got plenty of Realmslore requests to wade through, but also these little things called novels...

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 11, 2004: Hello, all. Ed replies to Shemmy:

Well, quoted out of context like that, yes, I can certainly see why you (and others on other boards) would find my contention puzzling. I trust you'll pass this entire reply along to those same forums to clarify matters.

If you 'got into D&D', as you say, with 3e, then of course the Planescape that's been available to you from your beginning is the complete, mature product line. Colin's superb product (published in 1997) is an example of the necessary design infill work that had to be done to give gamers enough hard information so that they could run a campaign wholly or largely set in the Planes (as opposed to "your characters in a dungeon on the Prime Material step through a doorway and ZAP, you're briefly visiting 'Somewhere Else'" play that necessarily dominated D&D campaigns before Planescape came along).

I wasn't discussing or disparaging the merits or collective achievement of Planescape. I was specifically disagreeing with your contention that the Nine Hells had been largely developed and detailed in Planescape products, speaking as an insider who knew just how many hundreds (yes, hundreds) of manuscript pages of my Hells material were tossed into the trash or put into computer files that got used in the Manual of Planes and/or passed on to the designers of the first few Planescape products. I was privy to design discussions in which the then-Creative Manager of TSR expressed his amazement at the level of detail (and sheer AMOUNT, which was what triggered the "hey, we could do entire BOOKS of this stuff, you know?") that I'd generated for the Hells (and, with Stephen Inniss, for Limbo, a project that was never used, though Stephen's lillend did squeak through into print, and still appears in the 3.5e game today). You can of course only see the published results, not eavesdrop on the design genesis from those (1982 through about 1989) discussions.

Some of the other posters on the Elminster In Hell thread were obviously active gamers back then (when everybody in FRP gaming read The Dragon every month, and game store owners carried the rumors from GenCon and Winter Fantasy and Spring Revel back to their local faithful, and "everybody discussed everything") and obviously recall what leaked into public hearing of the saga of my Hells designs (involving Gary Gygax, Frank Mentzer, Kim Mohan, and Jim Ward among others).

My complaints with the early Planescape products centered on the problem Jeff Grubb wrestled with when doing the Manual of the Planes: the moment you introduce 'different' planar environments than the familiar Prime Material into the game, you are dealing with inspiring 'sense of wonder' (or 'gosh-wow,' if you prefer) settings and possibilities that can make for marvellous

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

gaming, but published products covering such settings quickly become very hard to use, without a LOT of DM preparation, if you don't clearly answer all the life-cycle, ecological details I referred to, from the outset.

If the approach had been from the previously-used "your characters get plunged from the Prime Material Plane into Plane X, now what?" then the "okay, I'm on Avernus and my character's thirsty/has to go to the bathroom/wants to build a hut; now what?" questions would have been covered right away. Instead, the earliest Planescape products made the same mistake the Manual of the Planes (and many of our 3e Realms products) have done: setting too wide a scope, and as a result covering "too much too lightly." What was intensely frustrating to me - - and to many others involved - - was the 'too much white space, too much "cutter-berk style" where we wanted more substance' appearance of the early Planescape products. That was my complaint when I posted here, and my complaint as a consumer as the Planescape line started to unfold - - and in the case of the Nine Hells, I KNEW a lot of the work I'd done was missing.

If you infer from this that I'm criticizing Colin or any other game designer, you're wrong. I know (believe me, I know!) that the final title, size, scope, and specific content of gaming products are only rarely determined by the folks who design them. Designer (or designers plural) writes, developer or editor chops a lot of that and rewrites the remainder, someone else reviews and rewrites again, and the result may bear very little resemblance to what the designer initially handed in. This can be very good, because multiple viewpoints and scrutineers make for a better-written, more widely-balanced product, but it often results in lots of material 'going away.' Today we have the web enhancement, but in those days, losses were either shoved into a future product (and yes, this happened with Planescape as well as with the Realms) or vanished forever.

I have, so far as I know, all of the TSR/WotC published planar materials. I'm familiar with them all, have used them in (2nd Edition) D&D play, and all in all, I love them. Yet I would still have preferred, rather than the line we got, a succession (right from the outset, not now in 3.5e) of hardcover rulebooks (not boxed sets), starting with an overview book (call it, ahem, Manual of the Planes), a full-length book on Sigil, a full-length adventurers' book (call it, ahem, Planar Handbook), and full-length books on all of the other planes, one plane to a book. (If the line started to 'run out of gas' sales-wise after the first dozen or so planes were covered - - and of course the Nine Hells and the Abyss and Limbo and Hades should be 'right up there' in the first few books of the sequence - - then certainly start putting shorter coverage of several planes into one book.)

You are looking at Planescape 'from the other end,' so to speak, examining its coverage once everything had been published and the details filled in. I agree that Colin's FacesFiends is the definitive coverage of matters devilish, and I don't disagree with "these planar adventures of Ed's Realms should really go into a separate high-level campaign line, along with the other planar ideas we've been toying with" thinking that won the day back then (it was certainly superior to the other design approach of the day, which was to take many things that weren't originally part of the Realms and weren't "sandpapered down to fit," slap a Realms logo on them, and so 'make' them part of the Realms :} ).

To give a purely design example of the problem I was speaking of in my original EI in Hell explanation, let's look at the 3.5e FR Players Guide to Faerun. Flip to the Cosmology section, look up Brightwater (nice place, my PC wants to go there!), and: I'm not given enough. Show me some sights, at least give me a paragraph describing my initial sensations (color of sky, smells, fauna and flora, topography). Why isn't there enough? Well, because we're trying to cover every plane in a little bit of this one rulebook, that's why. Planescape was guilty of this too: PRECISELY

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



the same problem or deficiency is obvious in ON HALLOWED GROUND. It provides much better coverage than the PGtF does, giving aerial views of planes if not maps, but there's still not enough flora and fauna. Spare me the endless deity-games-stats stuff [which should be, and had been, previously covered in other rulebooks] and provide instead a couple of pages of "On this plane, Resident Deity X can do thus and thus, even if you try this, or Resident Deity Y tries this. Here on this plane, Resident Deity X tries to/wants to/spends his-her-its days doing . . ." (I believe this sort of focus is what you're alluding to when you speak of Planescape's philosophy, and combat often being suicidal.) In short, as a DM, I can't pick up either expensive rulebook and quickly run an adventure set in a plane they 'cover' without filling in a LOT of details myself. And as you might have noticed over years and years of Realms products, filling in lots of details is the hallmark of the Realms.

You have every right to prefer the Planescape version of the Hells. I have the right to prefer mine (and yes, as a designer, "I speak for the Realms," as enshrined in the original agreement that gave TSR copyright ownership of the Realms; TSR and now WotC can 'correct' me by subsequently publishing different details on topics [remember that, aside from here at Candlekeep, I can't just "say whatever wild thing I want to" about the Realms; in DRAGON and on the WotC website and in Realms products, I'm always working through editors], so the 'first word' on an aspect of the Realms is often mine).

The differences in cosmology are one of the reasons Planescape became a different product line: the fact that Planescape and the Realms are two distinct product lines allows two differing cosmologies to exist.

You can certainly choose the one you prefer, but when writing a Realms novel set in, yes, the Realms, I'm going to stick to the Realms cosmology, and I'm going to disagree with criticism of that Realms novel advanced by you that tries to deem me "wrong" in my coverage of the Nine Hells because I in some manner don't follow Planescape cosmology. To me, it's as if you aren't happy that Captain Kirk doesn't seem to follow Darth Vader's command structure. :}

I hopes this makes things clearer. I neither wanted Planescape to be a different product line nor did I want two different cosmologies to develop, but we're stuck with them. If you'd like me to follow Planescape, then I need the Planescape materials republished with Nine Hells-specific details changed to match all of the already-published Realms work, because consistency MUST trump all. As it was, I danced around a lot in plotting and writing ELMINSTER IN HELL so as to contradict differences as little as possible, yet you obviously still weren't happy with the result. Well, so be it, I'm afraid - - but if you'd like to e-chat about this some more, I'm perfectly happy to do so.

Good luck with the thesis work. Are you deep in writing, or defending?

So saith Ed.

Who's busybusybusy right now, but promises to continues answering scribes as usual.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 11, 2004: Hello, all. Ed doth make reply to Lord Rad, hereafter:

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

That early Realms article of mine on poisons does exist and was purchased by TSR, so it's still NDA-covered, I'm afraid. I suspect it was 'suppressed' for the usual 'we don't want any lawsuits' reasons that has kept real-world poisons from being discussed overmuch in Realms products.

Let's glance very briefly at those real-world poisons. Being in the UK, you have a lovely (if that's the right word) resource not easily available to gamers not on the Sceptered Isle: the Poison Garden at Alnwick Castle, in Northumberland. (By the long arm of inane and entirely irrelevant coincidence, I live in the namesake county of Northumberland in Ontario, Canada.) There you can go and see many poisonous plants growing (literally like weeds: remember, in medieval times these plants would rarely have been cultivated, so hardy wild plant species were the only plants folk had to test and try and build up lore about), some of them caged and guarded around the clock for public safety.

I'll list a few poisons known and used in medieval times, in no particular order: monk's-hood (wolfbane, foxglove: aconite), deadly nightshade (belladonna), box tree, giant hogweed, hemlock, castor oil plants (ricin), mandrake, darnel (a poisonous GRASS!), henbane, hellebore (green and black, two different plants, both poisonous), laburnam (cytosine), monk's pepper, hemp (cocaine; yes, overdoses poison, causing memory loss in particular), and Quaker's Button (the plant has many other names, but its poison usually gets called either strychnine or curare [yes, this is the 'death rictus' grin-causing stuff]).

Please note that all of these plant-derived substances also have beneficial (or believed at times to be beneficial) medical uses. There are MANY good reference books on this topic, but one of the most pleasant to read and therefore inspiring for DMs who don't want to devote more than an hour or so of reading to such matters is BROTHER CADFAEL'S HERB GARDEN (1996; Little, Brown and Company; by Rob Talbot and RobinWhiteman, various ISBNs for various editions, but two of the hardcover ISBNs are 0-316-88224-0 and 0-8212-2387-9, available at many libraries in the UK and North America). Another good 'quick and popular,' but not as inspiring, text that North American libraries may have is MAGIC AND MEDICINE OF PLANTS published by Reader's Digest (1986, written by "Reader's Digest," ISBN 0-89577-221-3).

In Realmsplay, I've always assumed that these are present in the Realms, and used much as they were in real-world medieval England (in other words, I'll never invent effects for them, or distort their real effects into something different). In the Realms as in real life, priesthoods, cults, guilds, and other power groups such as private clubs and cabals often make use of the hallucinogenic effects of herbs and concoctions. The state of seeing hallucinations [this also touches on Verghityax's query about diseases (on which I'm working :)] is known in the Realms, by the way, as 'godmad' (because all visions, nightmares, etc. are believed to be sent to mortals, for one reason or another, by the gods).

On to the imaginary poisons.

I trust you're familiar with the drugs published in the 3e LORDS OF DARKNESS tome (I contributed some of them, but Sean Reynolds fixed and fine-tuned all of their game rules details) and the poisons that appear in various e3 D&D rulebooks. Earlier in this thread (back on Page 23) I provided names and effects -- sans specific game rules -- of some other drugs, including both poisonous ones and poison antidotes.

Faraer kindly listed poisons (usually of my creation) that have appeared in earlier rulebooks: belpren, drow sleep poison, dwarfbane, huld, jeteye, lhurdas, night sleep, orvas, prespra, saisha, ulcrun, and varrakas. Do you need references or details for these?

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Lastly, here are two 'new' poisons from my files, both of them principally derived from entirely imaginary plants.

Horel: a distillation of the leaves of a certain lily-pad-like floating freshwater weed called "halfling's hand" or "oxhrel," mixed in particular (and secret) proportions with dried and powdered horseradish. This greenish liquid does no harm by contact or ingestion, but if insinuated into the bloodstream (by means of a sharp or pointed weapon), it causes violent, involuntary convulsions, onset 1d2 rounds and lasting for 1d4 rounds (effects: 4-point penalty on victim's AC and attack rolls, inability to remain still or complete delicate tasks such as pouring liquids without spillage, putting a small key in a lock, arranging beads, tying or untying knots, buttons, or pouch-toggles, etc.).

Tharace: a precise and secret mixture of the powdered roots of two grasses ("talltuff" and "marath"), a streambank plant known for its tiny three-leaf white flowers ("lurteasel"), and a groundvine known for its many tiny red edible berries ("blood-drops" or "bloodfall"). This brownish powder NEVER clumps or cakes, even if wet or frozen. If ingested or insinuated into the blood (but not by mere contact), it numbs all bodily sensations and entirely disrupts all commands sent by nerves to body limbs and extremities (onset time 1d4+1 rounds, duration 3d4 rounds). The head and always torso are unaffected. In other words, a victim can speak, breathe, and swallow, but can't cling to anything or hold anything (weapons will be dropped). The total blanketing of pain greatly lessens shock, so tharace is often administered before amputations or other surgery. It has also been slipped into food to make an intended murder victim helpless to defend himself or to prevent him from involuntarily crying out when struck (e.g. when stabbed from behind) due to the pain. Any quantity of tharace that gets baked in desert heat or beside a campfire (i.e. in garments being dried out) or cooked in food, or that comes into contact with alcohol, loses all of its effects forever - - but not when such contact occurs in the body of a victim upon whom the tharace is working (in other words, drinking much wine or eating food before or after eating tharace-laced food doesn't stop tharace effects, but tharace can't be slipped into wine, ale, or food that will then be cooked, and still be effective when ingested). Only pine gum and various tree saps can 'bind' powdery tharace to a metallic weapon such as a dart, needle, or dagger blade without harming it; water just washes it off, and most sauces and glues react with both the metal and the tharace to neutralize the tharace. (This effect doesn't occur with wooden weapons, thorns, or the like.)

So saith Ed.

Who tells me he's busily at work on more Realmslore replies.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 11, 2004 THO said: No, Jerryd, although you're quite correct about the islands you're interested in being neither Toaridge nor Eskember, Eskember is far to the east of Maztica. The earliest (Fonstad atlas) map projection is probably the best seen so far, but even it 'narrowed the seas' somewhat. I've passed your request on to Ed, but I know he has to check this one for NDA reasons (!). The FR Interactive Atlas is superb for mapping mainland Faerunian features, thanks in large part to Eric Boyd's tireless tracking-down of many, many references (and ProFantasy's willingness to include them), but it quickly goes 'wonky' the moment one heads offshore.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Dargoth, I know Ed has nothing about the Cult of Frost, out of respect for Jim Lowder (whom Ed has always hoped would pen a sequel or two to The Ring of Winter). I know Mr. Lowder reads and posts on these boards, so if I were you, I'd ask him about this in his own thread.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 12, 2004 THO said: SB: Yes. Partially. No worries, Ed says.

Dargoth, you asked me what elements would feature in a Realms novel that I might write, given the chance (VERY slim; though I could easily handle the writing demands, real-world work rather precludes such a project).

I've thought about it, and decided I have two replies for you: my "If I could write absolutely anything" novel, and the "What I'll settle for, considering that Ed can write this and that and the other so much better than I can."

The Anything Novel: Mirt the Moneylender when he was Mirt the Merciless, swaggering like Conan the Barbarian, and first hooking up with Durnan.

What I'll Settle For: Storm Silverhand and Maxer, falling in love. Torrid romance and full, in-depth Realmslore. OR: Elminster and The Simbul, ditto: the blow-by-blow (ahem, Wooly and Blueblade, I did NOT mean 'blow' in THAT sense of the word) romance.

Not that romance is my only style. I'd love to do a heavy-political-intrigue book centered on the struggle to succeed Alustriel as 'boss' of the Silver Marches, or a 'great adventurers go gray' book about the Comapny of Crazed Venturers in recent years.

Hmmm. Think I'll e-mail this to Ed, and tell HIM to start agitating to get to write these books.

\*\*\*\*\*

December 13, 2004: Hello, all. I bring Ed's latest lore reply:

Torkwaret, most of the trading organizations don't use livery in daily wear or 'in the field' because identifying themselves is more of a hindrance or danger than a help. THO has provided you with details of their trailglyphs and banners (the simplified glyphs are often used as badges, and as brands to mark company-owned items like coffers and strongchests, as well as their primary use as trail-markers), and I can add only a few "colours," as follows:

The Merchants League has a formal cloak (often made of dyed silk) worn at meetings (usually in Athkatla): a deep purple field with a double edge-stripe: that is, going inwards from the edge of the cloak, a your-little-finger-wide line of the purple field (and edge-binding sewing), followed by a line of similar width of gold, followed by another line of the same width of the purple field, followed by another line of the same width of scarlet, followed by the rest of the (purple field) cloak.

The Seven Suns used to wear cloaks of similar design, except that the field was deep blue, and both lines were stripes of gold, with seven sunbursts spaced around the 'collar' (head-hole) of the

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

fitted cloak. These are very rarely seen nowadays, being replaced almost entirely by purple sashes that have many (countless, the actual number determined only by the length of the material) tiny gold suns running in a line down their centers.

Firehands: a sash worn around the neck like a muffler or scarf, of maroon or claret-hued shimmerweave and dagged (NEVER tasseled) ends, with a human hand with fingers and thumbs of ragged flame at both ends of the sash. The sash is worn with both ends showing down the wearer's front, so the hands are both visible, fingers pointing toward the wearer's shoulders (invisible wrists closest to the ground or the wearer's feet), and thumbs on the 'inside' (toward the center of the wearer's body). These hands are fashioned of orange silk, shimmerweave, or other fabric that has a sheen or lustre.

Duskos Trading Coster: I couldn't pen this reply without salving my Lady Hooded's curiosity at least a trifle. The "two adjoining vertical stripes of orange (on the left) and brown (on the right)" she observed in Scornubel are used by a small but busy trader-in-sundries, Malahvo Duskos (and the sixty or so folk who work for him) trading between Waterdeep, Scornubel, Iriaebor, Elturel, and Baldur's Gate. Duskos has agents in all of these places, and buys whatever's scarce in one locale at another one, rushing said goods for sale on his next run. He also carries individual orders of shopkeepers to suppliers, and the goods ordered, and makes his living being personally attentive to 'small folk.' He also helps to cover his costs by taking paying passengers in any empty space in his wagons - - so long as said passengers pay in advance, and agree to being strip-searched and relieved of all weapons and suspicious substances (bottles or tools that could be used as weapons, drugs, poisons, and spirits). Such things are carefully stored and shipped, along with any goods beyond immediate changes of clothing and shuttered lanterns, in separate wagons from those the passengers ride in.

So saith Ed the Tireless.

From whom I'll doubtless be soon receiving more Realmslore.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 14, 2004: Dargoth, there have indeed been many massive, temporarily-climate-altering volcanic eruptions in the history of the Realms. Ed tells me that most of the recent ones were far to the southwest of Faerûn, but George Krashos has ably answered you in providing the 'nearer and dearer' ones.

He also sends this reply to Verghityax:

kuje31 is quite correct; the permission I was given for mauricio was clearly worded so as to also apply to you: all verbatim translations (and re-postings) of what I post in this thread are fine. Rewriting and expanding it for your own purposes, and using it in your games, are also just fine - - that's what this is all for, as far as I'm concerned.

kuje gave you the list thus far of plagues and sicknesses (from Page 27 of this thread), and I recapped and expanded on it on Page 63. There are many others, of course, because local outbreaks often leave no survivors who have the eloquence, wider world experience, or

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

knowledge to distinguish one "fever" from another, and so mislabel afflictions. Please note also my 'godmad' note about hallucinations, in my recent answer to Lord Rad.

So saith Ed, the man who is busier than Business itself.

A nice lady at a library open house once asked him rather patronizingly, "Do you have any grandchildren yet?" and Ed smiled and said, "Not yet. I haven't had the time. But I'll take care of that soon."

(He now has, by the way, though not as directly as he implied.)

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 14, 2004 THO said: SirUrza, just a terminology note here: there have always been bards (and colleges) in the Realms, from the first and unaffected by the various rules changes of the evolving D&D game. When you read Ed Greenwood-penned Realmslore, the "simple storytellers with no magical talent" (adventuring usefulness varying from individual to individual, of course) you refer to are what Ed calls "minstrels."

Tjhat's why you can read Ed sentences beginning: Bards and minstrels have been known to...

And to confirm, yes, the Gorstag in THE RAGE is not the Gorstag of Shandril's Saga.  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 14, 2004: PDK, I talked briefly on the phone with Ed about psionics in the Realms, and he said that psionics were in the Realms from the outset, with characters having 'wild talents' and no such thing as a psionist or other "character class" exclusively devoted to psionics, because that was the state of the (1st Edition) AD&D rules at the time (which was what Ed had shifted his fictional world to "match").

Psionics were taken out of the Realms by TSR editors later, at first (Ed believes from hearsay) because Gary Gygax had come to the belief that psionics would be better handled in a separate mind-combat game (or a separate rules expansion that could be used with the D&D rules but were independent of them), and (this part is definite, not hearsay) psionics were to be the hallmark of Dark Sun, and so had to 'disappear' from the other D&D worlds (which is why dragonriding and magical lances disappeared from the Realms; though Ed's were quite different, these elements were a hallmark of Dragonlance, and Ed's heraldry and geopolitical politics were also downplayed, because these elements were seen as 'belonging' to Greyhawk).

Ed has always preferred psionics in the Realms to be disorganized (i.e. individual creatures have wild talents, and may or may not have managed to find a tutor possessing the same power who can guide them in strengthening their own, in the same 1st and 2nd Edition way that magic users/wizards must bargain with and pay a tutor at each level advancement), for maximum surprise-in-Realmsplay reasons. He sees nothing wrong, however, with having secretive cabals (or blood-related families) of psionically-gifted individuals, or even a citadel or 'local hotspot' of psionic users.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

I hope this helps,

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 15, 2004: Gently, Woolly, gently. Size doth matter, and (purr) I think you're just FINE in that department...

(Ahem)

Hello, all. Herewith, Ed's reply to Lauzoril:

Most common folk of Faerun have neither the time nor coin to spare to travel far just to "learn things." Instead, they consult (and pay, in rural areas payment often being in the form of food) the nearest sage, or bard, or local temple priest, or failing that an elder in the community, traveling minstrel, or (often for the price of a tankard of ale) a widely-traveled merchant who's stopped for the night with his caravan (or peddler, who's stopped all by himself :} ). If they dwell in a city and are members of a guild, they'll ask fellow guild members, or through those members contact other citizens who may know what they want to learn. If it's genealogy and general history, the Heralds (spread across the Heartlands) can provide that lore.

Candlekeep is a temple (abbey, actually) of Oghma, and yes, can be consulted by those who can jump the hurdles of its entry policy. But its primary purpose is to preserve writings. It's rather like the Library of Congress in the United States: you don't go there to borrow the latest Stephen King (there are smaller local libraries for that) but if you were an American citizen, you depend on the L of C to keep two copies of everything published in the country safely stored for the reference use of select citizens and future citizens. It's the "repository" side of librarianship, rather than the lending side.

This is only "kinda weird" from an enlightened modern viewpoint of libraries being open to all (a very recent phenomenon, looking down the centuries of recorded history) rather than exclusive. "Ordinary people," after all, can always get a local priest of Oghma to 'look something up' at Candlekeep via the lines of communication within the priesthood of Oghma (in other words, neither the "ordinary person" nor the local priest has to travel to Candlekeep; a request is sent, and yes, an answer may take a long time to come, but unless it involves magical lore, probably won't be all that expensive IF the questioner is a devout or regular worshipper of Oghma).

Your question "Where on Faerun could some commoner find a rare book or some other knowledge which would satisfy the monks to let them in?" was asked by the Knights of a senior priest of Oghma (in Highmoon), who replied with a smile, "That's easy: write a book of poems, and take it. Find an old family diary, or ledger from some vanished but locally-important business, and take it. Write down local folktales, ghost stories, and beliefs, in your own words, and proffer that. Even if we have all those stories already, told by someone else, we won't have YOUR telling." The most common problem (as illustrated in the fictional part of my Introduction on this website) arises when someone finds an old book and judges (wrongly) that it's so rare and precious that the monks will accept it. The monks are always looking for what they DON'T have, or a complete and unblemished copy of something they only own damaged copies of, and so on.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

And the entry hurdles only apply to someone coming to the gates to try to get in and browse in person. Most folk send written requests to Candlekeep, and the monks spend time daily researching and writing out replies (which are sent via the clergy of Oghma back to the questioner). So the knowledge ISN'T "locked away" as you put it: only the tomes containing it are, to best preserve them. And yes, the monks ARE "hoarding the knowledge mainly for themselves and those with means and privilege to access them." Life, in the Realms as in our real world, isn't fair. However, the monks are bound by the dictates of Oghma, and provide what some folk would see as an astonishingly easy and open-handed access to the contents of their library (just not the books themselves).

No, it doesn't "bother Mystra at all that Candlekeep is storing magic spells," because the monks will, for fees, copy out many of the spells and provide them to the wider Realms upon request. It's against her creed for HER clergy to try to hamper the sharing and spread of use of magic, not for the clergy of others. To her, Oghma and his priests admirably fulfill the 'safe repository' function I mentioned earlier. There are a few spells considered too powerful and dangerous to share out without very good reasons, yes, but every wizard across Faerun who knows such spells holds a similar attitude about the wisdom and advisability of those magics being freely shared. Only the Chosen, clergy, and servants of Mystra are bound to act more generously in sharing magic and magical lore.

Yes, paupers have a hard time getting written answers out of Candlekeep (as do persons known to have burned or stolen books). However, these individuals rarely want or need a written reply from Candlekeep - - and when they want one, can always try to have someone else do the asking for them. Petitioners at the gates who are known to have rescued books or aided writers ARE often let in, as are those prepared to worship Oghma.

Candlekeep, like all long-lasting institutions, has acquired its own quirks and odd rules and strange customs over the years, but is above all a place where written expression is hoarded and celebrated. It makes no attempt to be a public lending library, though it does share knowledge (in exchange for fees, in the same way a farmer shares milk in exchange for fees: so that the farmer can afford to keep farming).

However, your PCs' local attempts to learn things can provide fascinating roleplaying opportunities. Just ask the Knights; they once spent three weeks of real-world playing time trying to pry some records out of Court scribes in the vast, labyrinthine Royal Court building in Suzail.

So saith Ed.

Who in the lines just above has reminded me of a moment of er, glory for the Knights that I can recall for myself all too well. I don't THINK the injuries we dealt the last six scribes were fatal, but we decided to depart in a hurry anyway.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 15, 2004: Yes, Melfius, they do study it, largely to make sure it's not a duplicate of an already-possessed work. During this examination, they determine its worth: anything old, even business ledgers, tends to be valued because of what sages and the monks can deduce from combining it with what they've learned from other old books. Fictional works are always valuable

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

if they record folk tales, song lyrics, etc. unless all have been previously duplicated in the Candlekeep collection. Brand-new, self-penned works received the harshest scrutiny, but if they tell a story, however banal, they're almost always accepted. Candlekeep wants all written stuff, and there's no such thing as "political correctness" or budget constraints or even space limitations on their collection.

This answer comes from Ed, via a phone conversation (his ISP is "down" right now).

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 16, 2004: Ah, shrewdly spoken, Melfius! Well said!

Hello, all. Herewith, Ed replies to darling Woolpert:

Wooly Rupert, Elminster and the Seven Sisters were ALWAYS Chosen of Mystra as they came into personal focus (in other words, by about 1972 I knew what a Chosen of Mystra was, some of the identities of the Chosen, and a lot about Mystra herself; I hadn't figured out who the Seventh Sister was, and in fact left that for Steven Schend to deal with, much later, but before there ever was a D&D game, I knew that a select circle of powerful folk, many of the ladies being sisters who had silver hair and were 'almost' daughters to Mystra, were 'special' servants of hers, called the Chosen).

When TSR first purchased the Realms, this matter was informally discussed VERY briefly and then kept for my home campaign rather than being championed into print (I believe the thinking on the TSR end was that Dragonlance had used gods masquerading as mortal characters or developing from mortals before the readers' eyes, so this Dragonlance-specific element had to be omitted from the Realms, but this is just a personal guess).

I dropped plenty of hints as to a 'special relationship' between Khelben, El, the Sisters, and Mystra and Azuth, and particularly between El and Mystra, during my 1986 turnover packages to Jeff Grubb at TSR, but you have to peer very carefully at the Old Gray Box to see hints of them.

The formal relationship was properly introduced to TSR later on for the same reasons I'd created it originally: they wanted to know why in tarnation certain characters could do, or had accomplished, what they did (and the status of Chosen was the explanation).

I know some TSR folks thought this was a mistake, and others welcomed the 'superhero' flavor the Chosen might be able to inject into the Realms (this being a currently-enticing design philosophy, at the time), but for me, it was merely revealing the explanation for why the Zhents hadn't swept away Shadowdale long ago, the bad guys weren't ALREADY ruling the known Realms, and so on: there had to be vigorous Forces For Good or Stability or the Status Quo 'on the ground' in the Realms, working against the jackbooted hurl-all-walls-down-ers.

Please note that this was part of limiting Mystra's dominant divine power, and that only she was to have Chosen. Continuing the superhero vein, other creators working in the Realms invented Chosen of X and Chosen of Y, but it was never intended that other deities have Chosen who were more than mortal champions or individuals marked with the deity's favor: Mystra was and is 'special.' As the goddess of magic in a high-magic world, she has to be.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

So yes, "El and Storm and Khelben and the rest" WERE "Chosen from the beginning," but the decision to feature them as such WAS "decided later on."

So saith Ed.

I've read longhand pencil manuscripts of Ed stories that bear dates in the early 1970s (before there was a D&D game) that refer to various characters being Chosen (one passage I recall was: "So it comes to this, Chosen of Mystra. Think you your fancy titles impress me, or will avail you one finger's-worth in deciding this fray?").

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 17, 2004: Hello, all. Milil, I relayed your questions to Ed. Here follows his reply (permission is of course granted to you, to quote anything or everything Ed says here, for your academic needs):

Do you play D&D?: Yes.

If you do play how (if at all) does the gaming experience affect your writing?: Gaming informs and enriches my fiction writing, and has done from the moment I started playing Dungeons & Dragons (the game was published some years after I'd created and was well along the endless road of detailing the Realms). Dungeon Masters must continually paint word-pictures of locations, characters, and events the PCs are witnessing, and doing so in play makes me aware of how best to quickly and clearly explain something or bring a moment to life.

Do you use the sourcebooks for ideas on characters/settings/abilities, etc?: I refer to the sourcebooks often, but usually I'm checking established facts and PRECISELY what's been said about a person, thing, or place. Ideas may arise when I read the sourcebooks, but that happens while I'm writing them or reviewing the raw text of not-yet-published books written by others for Realmslore continuity, not after they're published.

Do you look at characters and have their abilities fit within the framework of the character classes and progression as outlined in the various sourcebooks?: Yes and no. Many Realms characters were established in my mind and short stories before the D&D game was published, and fleshed out in game terms in my 'home' Realms D&D campaign before sourcebooks got around to detailing them. More than a few characters have changed, not just 'within the game setting' as events age them and impart experience, but as new editions of the rules have been released and character statistics altered to fit. As a result of this latter problem, in particular, I've "learned the hard way" not to be game-specific in print (as much as possible). I seldom write combat-heavy narratives wherein action specifically hinges on rules details, being far more interested in character interaction and development, and intrigue.

Did the release of the 3rd edition affect your decisions as a writer or affect the material that you wanted to write about?: As a game writer, yes. It interrupted (some might say 'derailed') my Grand Not-So-Hidden Plan to detail all geographical areas of the Realms in small-focus regional sourcebooks, and it transformed a game system I knew well enough to 'think in terms of' into a game system I had to relearn and think ABOUT as I was writing. As a fiction writer, it handed me a few 'Okay, wise one, now explain away THIS' matters, but by and large only raised troubles by

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

making far more of my original Realms titles and collective terms politically incorrect ("I don't care if she's been Dimpleknees the Sorceress since 1968, Ed, we call them sorcerERs now!") than earlier rules changes and editions had done.

Did the release of 3rd edition affect your sales in any way?: Yes and no. Sales of the game line soared, but at the same time more and more games (including video and computer, even online) are competing for the time and money of gamers, and so are increasing numbers of fantasy fiction writers. Print runs in general are shrinking across the industry, because that pie is being carved into ever-smaller slices by an increasing number of hungry pie-cutters.

How did working on developing the game system affect your writing or approach to writing?: Down the years, as the writer of large numbers of both game and fiction publications, I am increasingly aware of the needs for game balance and full, clear explanations, and the competing need of the fiction writer to entertain and often leave some matters mysterious, or left to readers to apply varying interpretations (often so that through such speculation they'll be 'hungry for more'). I cling to the principle that the Realms must above all be consistent: I am bound by details written by others, and if I must change those details, must make such changes 'within the game' or 'within the book' and not merely at apparent whim, without explanation. The Realms brings me daily queries from creators and fans all over the world, so I am always acutely aware of the needs, plans, and dreams of others regarding the Realms, and (like a well-meaning politician, I suppose) must try to balance these or bear them in mind as I write, so as to 'serve the common good' as much as possible.

Mr. Greenwood, you present somewhat of a special case, being the creator of the Realms. If you could give me any insight into how being such a prominent force in the creation of the setting has affected your writing and if you had problems moving away from the FR setting when penning some of your other books I would be much appreciative.

Ed's Reply: The Realms has taken over my life, and affected my writing greatly by taking up the majority of my time and publication opportunities, channelling my primary energies for years into spinning Realmslore. Had it not been for the Realms, I'd probably have more than a handful of mysteries and romances and childrens' fantasy books published by now, and frequently be writing comics and minor television or Hollywood stuff. At the same time, WHAT I write about the Realms has been increasingly restricted in terms of geographic locations, characters, and even writing style by the need to not too closely duplicate what other writers active in the Realms are doing. Terry Pratchett, for example, can go to any corner of Discworld or follow any character he wants to, in a given Discworld novel, but Ed Greenwood can't (for example) rush into the Underdark and do a Drizzt drow Realms novel.

When writing non-Realms books, most of those restrictions fall away, and so does the check-all-the-continuity stuff (wherein I try to remember what literally hundreds of writers have mentioned in passing, over more than fifteen years of 'lots of scribes toiling in the Realms'). I must only deal with editorial restrictions of length, format, style, and content, and be self-consistent. On the other hand, I can live, breathe, and think the Realms now, and have been able to for years, and when I venture into Darsar (the world of my Band of Four novels) or other settings, I have to step out of that easy, comfortable, "I'm at home, and my favourite chair is right over there" feeling and start creating all over again, assuming readers know nothing (and KNOWING I know nothing!).

I hope this helps. Feel free to post followup queries here if you need additional specific answers, and I'll do my best to give you useful replies.

Ed Greenwood

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

So saith The Father of the Realms.

Who was staggeringly busy with local library board, ratepayer association, family Christmas, library employment, library Christmas, and (oh yes) Realms writing obligations, when he sent me this. May Santa send you a dozen extra hours in every day, darling Weirdbeard, in 2005 and every year thereafter!

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 18, 2004: Hello, all. Ed tackles the matter of "Dargoth's dragons" this time:

Dargoth, you and George between you have nailed down the copper dragon locales west of the Dragonreach and south of the Moonsea. The Dales are pretty well scoured out (thanks to Zhent and Cult of the Dragon activities, and lots of warfare in recent decades) of copper dragons right now, what with the Thunder Peaks harbouring other sorts of wyrms.

If neither Glen nor the Desertsouth Mtns will do, I'm afraid your PCs will have to look as far afield as the (foothills of the) Earthspur Mountains bordering the Vast, and the Orsraun Mountains, nigh Starmantle. I can't see much more than eggs and a few dragon hatchlings (in human or other custody and hiding) being found in the eastern dales, just now. (I am of course assuming your campaign isn't currently featuring The Rage, or the many armies in the field of the unfolding The Last Mythal trilogy.) However, the simple use of a gate (3e portal) can whisk that PC sorcerer to a copper dragon lair elsewhere in Faerûn. If you're feeling really generous, you could even give him the means to get whisked back home again. :}

So saith Ed.

Who hasn't forgotten the platters of other waiting Realmslore requests, and promises to deal with them all, eventually. (If he lives so long!)

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 19, 2004: Hello, all. To PDK, Ed speaks thus:

You're welcome! Regarding your perception of the 'races of men:' I'd say that VISIBLE "psionically gifted humans, elves, etc. are very rare in the Realms."

Many, many more individuals have weak, feeble wild talents (that SOMETIMES allow them a few seconds of feather fall, or seeing invisible creatures, or anticipating what's going to be attempted by others in the next combat round; to paraphrase CHEF: "that sort of thing") but very much fear to reveal their powers to others, and will literally only dare to try to use them in life-threatening situations. So, yes, as you conclude, psionically-gifted humans "should be treated as individual/unique creatures when encountered."

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



So saith Ed, who is so busy right now that even I (who know him and his busy-ness well) am awed.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 20, 2004: Hello, all. To Imvarda "Beal" Vodu, Ed saith:

I'm very sorry, but all of your very good and proper requests about Szass Tam's background must remain unanswered by me right now, for NDA reasons. He does feature in some Realms fiction, and I do hope to enlighten you more in future. I just can't do so right now, for WotC legal reasons.

However, to Wooly Rupert, Ed is able to impart a trifle more:

I trust that other scroll you refer to has discussed St. Sollars the Twice-Martyred? (Based on Ed Sollars, a real TSR employee who was "at the imperiled end of the line" every time the company was forced to enact layoffs. Not included in the Realms by me, BTW, and my spelling of his surname might be incorrect.)

Wooly, I have followed a strict personal policy of never introducing real people by name into the Realms. Characters played by real people, yes, of course (most of the Knights of Myth Drannor and the Company of Crazy Adventurers, plus a scattering of others from my various library campaigns, not to mention all the NPCs I've portrayed around gaming tables, down the years). That's not to say other writers haven't done this, without my knowledge; you'll have to ask them.

Personalities of real people finding their way into characters in the Realms, now, is something I do all the time - - but never wholesale. In other words, I NEVER take a real person and 'give them a Realms name and appearance' to create a Realms NPC. Instead, as all writers do, I observe real people talking, acting, and otherwise living in the real world around me and take a pinch of this way of speaking here, a whiff of that beauty there, a peck of this world-view or opinion, and so on, mixing and matching many little ingredients of many real people to 'make real' individuals I create (imagine).

So saith Ed, Bearer Not of the True Word but of many true words.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 21, 2004: Hello, all. Ed speaks to Dargoth's theory of other gods having Chosen:

An interesting idea, Dargoth. One that I can't confirm or deny for NDA reasons (heh-heh), and of course that no mortal being dwelling in the Realms could ever know the truth of (because high priests and even the gods themselves could - - and in many cases, already demonstrably do - - lie about such things). Kentinal proposes a just-as-valid possible alternative, and as kuj31 implies with his take-this-elsewhere request, this is one of those topics that scribes can energetically disagree upon, and debate at great length. As I've said many a time before: when it

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

comes to matters divine (and even of planar mechanics), most mortals can never learn absolute truths, or be certain that they've done so.

In other news, scribes such as Capn Charlie, Melfius, Jerryd, Gerath Hoan, and Gray Richardson should be aware that I have their Realmslore questions and requests, and will get to them when I can (what with the time of year and various Realms-related writing projects, I can only quote Peter Sellers: "Now is not the time, Kato!"). I've not forgotten you, and do need some WotC clearance on some matters to avoid offending against NDAs.

Life doesn't get simpler as you get older. It just gets more painful.

So saith Ed, the poor overworked dear.

I'll have to give him some personal TLC when next I see him (very soon, I hope). Strikes pose, licks lips, and purrs, "Wish me luck."  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 22, 2004: Hello, all. Herewith, Ed makes answer to zeathiel:

Drow are definitely unwelcome in Silverymoon.

Your quotations from the text I penned (and Rich Baker edited) for THE SILVER MARCHES are correct, but I confess I can't see any confusion. The first quotation is describing a magical property of the city wards, and the second is describing the attitude of Silverymoon to visitors from among the ranks of "The People of the Silver Marches" (the title of that chapter), and of the races known to dwell in the region who may be encountered (as traders) traveling in the Marches. As no member of the League of the Silver Marches counts drow as among its citizens ("people"), the second passage is dealing with what happens if drow (of any sort) show up at the gates of Silverymoon: they won't be allowed to enter (just as Drizzt was not allowed to enter, in Bob's novel STREAMS OF SILVER).

Because of the strong presence of elves and half-elves in Silverymoon (where Alustriel is trying to, in some respects, recreate Myth Drannor, remember?), drow are too much feared and hated to be openly welcome. Waterdeep is a human-dominated cosmopolitan trading city where coins rule and half the creatures of Faerûn rub shoulders; its tolerance is legendary and a foundation-stone of its mercantile success - - yet even in the City of Splendors, most folk react with either unease or open dislike to drow.

That's not to say that a DM can't make exceptions, or have particular individuals treated differently. Yet if \*I\* was a drow who wanted to enter Silverymoon, I'd adopt a very good disguise.

Alustriel can, of course, (by use of ward-tokens, as discussed in THE SILVER MARCHES) allow Drizzt to enter the High Palace or various other locations in the city without his having to enter via a city gate and walk the streets. Drizzt or any other drow can accompany a ruler of a League member and enjoy diplomatic immunity (as simontrinity alluded to when posting "while King Bruenor will speak for Drizzt," but you can be sure such individuals will be VERY closely watched (by members of the Spellguard as well as more mundane spies - - and by other eyes than merely those belonging to the city authorities and Harpers, too).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

simontrinity is quite correct in saying that it's "easier for people to believe an occasional rare drow may turn good, than it is to believe that a whole bunch of them" [good drow, that is] "are roaming around."

No, there aren't lots of drow worshippers of Eilistraee OPENLY wandering the streets of Silverymoon, but there ARE probably sixty or more dwelling in the city in disguise, and many more in the lands around Silverymoon and around Everlund (as Kentinal suggested). My Lady Hooded can provide details of where and how the Knights met with drow worshippers of Eilistraee. :}

So saith Ed, and yes, I can.

Being candid by nature about matters sensual, let me just put it this way: the lands along the Rauvin between Silverymoon and Everlund are FAIRLY safe, being under the patrolled protection of both places. In this area are a number of small, private fortified manor houses that serve as rather exclusive inns (often patronized by caravan companies, adventuring bands, and parties of envoys). Some of them offer the services of some rather exotic ladies-of-pleasure who are, ahem, good at dancing, not shy about being unclad, and have skin of, yes, obsidian hue. Any Silvaeren who care to pay any attention at all to social news of Silverymoon knows of these "dark ladies," even if they've never seen them or ventured to any of these manors.

We Knights have stayed at several of them. As I recall, Torm had to be physically peeled away from a favourite lady when it came time for us to depart the manor of Vesprae's Gates - - and even Florin gets a wistful look on his face when Lady Vesprae herself is mentioned. (Dove teases him by uttering that name from time to time, just to see him look uncomfortable and mournful, all at once.)

love to all,  
THO

Oh, and a postscript to David Lemm:

Ed's "Uncle George" (actually his cousin, once removed) W.G. Hardy, was once chancellor of the University of Alberta. And a Canadian writer of note (author of Alberta: A Centennial History; City of Libertines; The Scarlet Mantle; The Bloody Toga, and others).

\*\*\*\*\*

December 23, 2004: Hello, all. Ed replies to Kentinal:

I'm afraid the proper answer to most of your questions must be:

I don't know, because my sources (Elminster and Laeral) can't be trusted to tell me the truth, and because no mortal can be certain they know the truth anyway.

This statement applies to your questions about 10th level spells (though I'll hint that I think your "quick answer" just might be correct \*wink\*), Shar's possible bans and allowances, and the number of Chosen in existence.

Can Chosen be killed? Certainly; Realmslore contains several examples of this (Syluné among them).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Do all deities have a Chosen? Possibly all deities may call one or more mortals "Chosen," whatever their actual status or powers may be, but this is unlikely. Certainly we thus far have no evidence of the majority of Faerûnian deities having Chosen. Only Mystra has a large handful of very powerful and somewhat independent "Chosen," because Mystra (as explained many times previously) is a special case among the divine.

So saith Ed.

Who's probably getting very weary of going over this ground repeatedly. Why all the fascination with Chosen, anyway? Are there lots of gamers interested in populating their Realms campaigns with divinely-blessed superheroes?

Just curious.

In the original Realms campaign, I was always fascinated by how adroitly Ed kept the Chosen in the background, available for moments of snappy repartee but far too busy pursuing their own multiple missions to dominate OUR adventuring.

THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 23, 2004 THO said: Yes, SirUrza, Ed is happily working away on the Knights of Myth Drannor trilogy. Unless plans change, you won't see the first book (tentatively entitled THE SWORDS OF EVENINGSTAR) until 2006, because Ed's collaboration with Elaine Cunningham, CITY OF SPLENDORS, will be 'the' 2005 Realms novel. Ed tells me he's having lots of fun with this one, but it CAN'T be an accurate retelling of our dozens-of-unfolding-subplots-at-once campaign play in the original Realms campaign, because none of the three books could then really 'tell a story.' Readers who didn't happen to be of we Fortunate Few gamers in the 'home' Realms campaign would endure a lot of "What's going ON?" puzzlement, and read a lot of narrative that would boil down to the sort of stuff you hear at conventions, that ends with a sheepish, "Well, I guess you had to be there."

So Ed has gone back to how we originally got our charter (as an adventuring band in Cormyr called, oddly enough, "The Swords of Eveningstar"), and started spinning a new tale from there that features a FEW of the NPCs and situations we Knights faced. Yes, Elminster should show up for a scene or two -- but JUST for a scene or two; this is a Knights book and not an Elminster book. Students of Cormyr will, of course, not want to miss a word of the first Knights book, because it reveals something of styles of speech, attitudes, bureaucracy, and divers other "little daily details" of the Forest Kingdom at the time.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 23, 2004: Ed saith:

House Starym DOES survive to the present day.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

However, when I pressed him for a LITTLE more detail, he just laughed the dirtiest of his maniacal laughs and said he had to telephone "a certain lady at WotC, to wish her Merry Christmas nightmares."

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 25, 2004 THO said: Karth, I'm happy to try answering your cartographers question by my lonesome (and ahhh, I get lonesome... about every hour or so, in fact... ). I don't have the lore in my head that Ed does, of course, but from my Knightly recollections (and Ed's notes, provided yo us all) I can dredge up this much:

Anyone can go to the Royal Court, ask directions of many guards (who can and will gruffly point you at the right building, wing, and floor), scurrying pages (who can give useful, accurate, and very brief locational replies), and clerks (most of whom are unhelpful, some sneeringly so), and eventually find their way to the Office of the Clerk of Maps.

The Clerk, an aging and bespectacled man by the name of Ulthaerus, was always far too busy to see us, accept appointments for any person or rank of person we could think up, or even (as far as a sneaking-about Torm was able to determine) show up in his inner office for work. However, he has six or seven Senior Underclerks (mostly tall, humourless, petty-power-loving [ahem] pricks [ahem] with fussy habits and names like Dueklaer, Ombrael, Instur, and Phelmet), and a dozen Junior Underclerks, who scuttle about and do all the real work. I only have two names of these nervous, helpful young men: Asgler and Paerimm. (These are all surnames, by the way; the only first names we ever learned for any of them was "Clerk." )

The office also has two Secretaries (the only females, of course, and the only ones who have everything you need to know memorized): the middle-aged, matronly, iron-patient Amilla and Jathys (first names, of course, and it's pronounced "JATH-ee-sss"). The Office is authorized to sell you street maps of every named settlement of Cormyr except military installations (in other words, you can't get High Horn, but you can get all the other places along the major roads; DMs who don't want their players to get particular maps, or who don't want to go to the trouble of generating maps for places like Espar, can just have the Senior Underclerks explain that those maps are 'out of stock' at the moment), plus a VERY simple overall road map of the kingdom. No other maps are available, and persistent attempts to obtain such things will invite War Wizard scrutiny (yes, being tailed by spies).

Detailed property maps (deed by deed) aren't kept at the Office of the Clerk of Maps, but at the much-harder-to-find Offices of the Land, whose Lord Registrars (self-titled clerks, not nobles) so jealously guard them that even courtiers and Court clerks from other departments can't get to see them. War Wizards and Obarskyrs are the exceptions, but even they won't really get helped by the Registrars (the "help" will be hindrance, full of misdirection and literal obedience rather than providing all that is desired or implied).

Neither Royal Court office provides keyed maps of cities (there are no feature or street names on any official maps for public purchase, just compass roses and place names), and neither allows visitors to "just look at" maps, even for fees (or attempted bribes). I can't recall the prices charged for maps (because, ahem, Torm stole the ones we wanted, although the rest of us didn't learn this until later), but I SEEM to remember something (probably the overall road map) being 75 gp.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

I do know that the maps had a reputation for being VERY accurate, each city being checked annually and a spell being used to 'project' the image of a correct master map onto parchment for precise copying by the clerks (so every map was hand-drawn, but was also darn near identical to the source map and all other copies of the same vintage).

There are at least three shops in Suzail that have extensive collections of old (secondhand) maps from everywhere in the Heartlands, and one of them, Mustipher's, is a second-floor shop about midway along the southern side of the Promenade, above a cloak and sash shop. I recall that both Florin and Torm were of the opinion that Belvarus Mustipher (a fat, hand-rubbing, always-leering little man) employed some youngsters skilled at drawing to make simplified (but probably accurate, unless they got really bored, I suppose) copies of some of the maps, and display one copy at a time for sale. Mustipher's prices were 350 gp and up (he wanted a thousand gp for a Waterdeep street map and a detailed overland trade-route map, if memory serves me correctly; we didn't bite). The other two shops were down near the docks at the west end of the city, and east of the center of the city, somewhere a street or so south of the Promenade; I don't recall their names or locations because Torm and Rathan did the scouting and just told us.

Which is a very long way of getting around to what you wanted, Karth: the actual cartographers living in Suzail.

All I can say is there were only two publicly making a living at cartography, and only one of these would travel (within central Cormyr only, not east of Arabel or Marsember, or west of High Horn) to make measurements and observations so as to draw a 'new' map to order.

The non-traveling cartographer was Orustivus Malonder, a very wealthy retired adventurer of striking stature, looks, and voice (the "grand dramatic actor" type; think Luciano Pavarotti in build and beard, only gone gray), who lived somewhere in the wealthy area of the city north and west of the Palace and sold maps only through agents (urbane young adventuring types, all handsome young men, whom Torm suspected of reporting all unusual inquiries to the War Wizards) who could be contacted in several of the better taverns and dining houses along the Promenade. Malonder sold some rudimentary street maps of various Heartland cities (Ed just gave us copies of the originals he'd drawn for the FR Adventures hardcover, whenever we bought a map from Malonder), with SOME street names and features provided. He could also provide the same maps sold by the Office of the Clerk of Maps, but with a lot more features and streets "filled in."

The traveling (and best) cartographer was Lorimel Rustellur, who lives in Thornposts, a grand house two doors west of Taneth's (Taneth's festhall is keyed feature #54 on the Suzail map published in A GRAND TOUR OF THE REALMS in the 2nd Edition Realms boxed set, and Thornposts is the second L-shaped building 'along the row' northwest from Taneth's (due north of the westernmost of the two clumps of trees enclosed by this block of buildings).

Rustellur had done floorplan maps of many noble mansions and keeps, all over Cormyr, as well as "estates maps," which are illustrated 'from the air' views of the arrangements of buildings, gardens, bridges, and 'water features' on a landscaped estate (of a noble or very wealthy landowner). He never sold any of these for less than a thousand gp each (the idea being that only jealous fellow nobles hoping to 'build something grander' would bother to pay such sums, and so such maps would be kept out of the hands of thieves and "common persons"). Rustellur wouldn't sell any maps of Crown lodges, mansions, castles, or civic buildings, but could provide just about everything else (a DM wants players to have, from any sourcebook) if one could afford his always-steep fees; I doubt he drew custom maps for less than 2000 gp plus travel expenses, or sold any map for less than 800 gp.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



There are, of course, plenty of retired (and not-so-retired) traveling merchants and Purple Dragons resident in Suzail who can draw crude, not-to-scale "how to get to Tavern X/the house of Y/Dungeon Z" maps, often for as little as 25 gp.

There you go. I've quoted Ed extensively in what I've just posted here, and I'm a fairly good judge by now of 'how far' he wants things revealed, so I doubt he'll want to add much to this. I hope this is of help.

Oh, yes, and to Bookwurm and Wooly Rupert: yes, I'll be waiting under a certain someone's tree very late tonight, next to the crackling fire and wearing only a Santa hat, fishnet stockings, a sly grin, and a big ribbon and bow around my neck - - but if I COULD be in more than one place at once, I'd also be under yours. If only to see the expressions on your faces.

I get such a thrill when grown men suddenly start believing in Santa Claus again.

love and fair tidings of the season to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 26, 2004: PDK, Ed replies to your latest queries:

Far more psionically gifted 'wild talents' than spellfire channelers, undoubtedly. I'd say the ratios vary from place to place across the Realms, but will never be higher (except when folks who know about their own powers have deliberately gathered together with other 'gifted' folk) than 6 wild talents and 0.3 spellfire users per 1000.

Therefore, people who have weird, unique powers derived from psionic inner gifts are more common than spellfire users. Please bear in mind that many of these 'wild talents' possess minor abilities indeed, such as: darkvision or see invisible creatures and items for brief periods through intense concentration; momentary feather fall; detect magic or detect traps or dancing lights-equivalent for brief periods through intense concentration; mending (once only per month, intensely exhausting); minor creation (once only per four months, intensely exhausting), sharply limited telekinesis, etc. Most of them "know they can do something special" but have rarely or never explored it (and so don't know the limits/specifics of their own abilities). Many fear their powers, and even more fear what will happen to them if other people find out about their powers - - and so will never even try to use them except in emergencies, when their lives (or the lives of loved ones) are in peril.

So saith Ed, the willing servant of scribes of Realmslore.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 26, 2004 THO said: Yes, Whisper was very much our nemesis (somewhat in the manner in which Arbane pestered the Company of Crazy Adventurers). I hesitate to say more because of Ed's forthcoming Knights trilogy, which can hardly avoid saying SOMETHING about our battles with Whisper.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

your just-dropping-by-for-a-moment  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 27, 2004: Baalster, I too would like to see more about Melvaunt and Thentia, and I wouldn't be surprised to see one or both of them eventually appear in Ed's forthcoming series of DRAGON articles (now that Erik Mona's let the cat out of the bag, these can be talked about). VEDSICA, I'm afraid it's too early for Ed to reveal any roster of which cities will be covered. He did say this much:

I won't be covering Waterdeep (though some supportive detail for the City of Splendors may well creep into a Realmslore WotC website article or two), and NDAs and other complications will probably keep me away from Baldur's Gate, Neverwinter, and other licensed-out settings.

I'd like to spotlight some strategically-located cities that HAVEN'T received 'proper' or recent coverage as yet, and more than anything else I'd like to hand a DM "look and feel" details, from local cuisine notes to handy inns and taverns, so when players take their characters to a place that's thus far little more than a name on a map, the DM will end up with enough to 'wing it' for a night or two of play, and enough 'feel for the city' to develop said place if the players decide to settle down there for a month or a season.

So saith Ed, who also hinted that he intends to work with the Books people at WotC to make sure the ongoing column dovetails with future Realms authors' needs for city details.

Dargoth, Ed would be happy to do a Silver Marches update with Bob, but that's the sort of thing that's VERY hard to make happen (being as it involves two very busy creators, the WotC Books people, the WotC games people, and either DRAGON or WotC's Online Media department). Think of it as trying to make five different countries agree on something and then hammer out a detailed agreement: it CAN happen, but it's likely to take a long time and be "back burned" more than once.

As for Blueblade: Ed confirms that he will be covering at least one place extensively in his 2005 Realmslore columns (devoting 8 or 9 columns to it, if present plans persist). However, he won't (of course) say anything at all about where or what that place is, other than to say that of course it won't overlap at all with his DRAGON cities offerings.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 27, 2004 THO said: Ed has always steadfastly clung to the view that mortals can never know the whole truth about any of the gods, and that much of what we believe ("know to be true") about any god is largely a result of visions mortals have had ('sent by the gods,' most believe, but that doesn't address the "which god?" and the "yes, but accurate visions, or meaning what?" problems) or taught/preached by, yes, mortal priesthods.

So Mielikki in the Realms MAY be very different from the "real world" one. I know Florin Falconhand (briefly her mortal lover) found her so. I also know Ed has some big secrets up his sleeve about the gods that haven't been revealed in print yet. He still wants the published Realms

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

to reflect a LOT more about clergies, rituals, creeds, and so on, and a lot less about avatars and what this or that god really did one afternoon thousands of years ago.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 27, 2004 THO said: Nasty. A shapeshifter impersonating several Knights in succession to do covert killings and thefts around Shadowdale (something that's happened before). Most tracing and detection spells don't work properly in the central dale any longer, thanks to all the portals and wards and magical stresses the years have brought (Sylune's blood seemed to "stain" the Weave locally), so we're having a hard time tracking down this culprit.

Storm sequestered some of us Knights under her protection in her farmhouse, so everyone else could go "Knight hunting" in the dale without fear of slaying one of us (the real Knights, I mean). This led to a wonderful evening of in-character tale-telling and debates about what we Knights should do next, in the unfolding politics of the Dalelands.

One happy THO

Sage, I THINK (means: my guess) Ed borrowed this idea from Roger Zelazny; they became friends before RZ's tragic death (in the Amber books, if the blood of a royal Amberite is spilled on the Pattern, it damages the Pattern).

But then again, maybe not. I dimly recall The Simbul telling us Knights of her wounding in a battle against Red Wizards, and what it did to magic at that spot, years ago - - not before the Amber books, but possibly before RZ's first mention of any damage to the Pattern.

So far as my present understanding of what now holds in Shadowdale goes, it's like this: from the spot where Sylune died and radiating outwards for some miles (!), magic is wild. Not all the time, and more for some sorts of magic (detection, scrying, divination) than others (blasting spells), but I believe Ed rolls for random effects with every single spell that's cast.

It's Weave damage, and so will probably both spread and fade away over time, if I'm interpreting Ed-as-Khelben's sarcastic little lecture to certain Knights correctly: the flows of energy tend to 'iron out' anomalies in the Weave over time, making it all more or less alike.

Hope that helps; I know Ed and the Realms team have been keeping precise Weave powers and properties as vague as possible, so as to give maximum 'design elbow room' for years to come.

love,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 28, 2004: Hello, all. Herewith, Ed makes reply to Borch:

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.  
Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.  
Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.  
This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



I'm sorry, but your specific Baldur's Gate requests are ALL aimed "right at" current NDA prohibitions - - as I warned Verghityax about, some pages ago in this thread. So I'm afraid I can't provide answers to any of them at the present time.

You also asked me this: "When answering these requests, just how much of the answers come from memories. If an answer can't be given in this way, what do you do? Do you literally plunge into your cellar-full-of-Reamslore and search until you find what is needed or do you make it up most of the time?"

Well, it's like this...

Reamslore queries from various TSR, WotC, freelance creators working in the Realms, and outside license sources over the years have covered an astonishing amount of ground (in plain language: all sorts of weird topics), and my various Realms campaigns (the 'home' one and the library mini-campaigns) have delved even deeper, and for far longer. Then there's my pre-D&D Realms fiction creations and worldbuilding, and my post-TSR-purchase "behind the scenes" fun with fellow Realms aficionados such as Eric Boyd, George Krashos, Grant Christie, Tom Costa, and others. All of these have trained me to 'think Realms,' so I have a general idea in my head of what all of the parts of the Realms \*I\* put there 'work.' In other words, the general nature and look and feel of, say, Secomber or Daerlun. If I plunged into my cellar of Reamslore often, I'd disappear for months on end and be of little use to anyone. Moreover, the published Realms has diverged increasingly from my original over the years. These two factors combined compel me to usually just make things up.

That's my job and calling in life, it seems - - whether the question is coming from a WotC editor or game designer, or a scribe of Candlekeep or one of my players, I'm the guy who best "knows the Realms" and so CAN "just make things up" and have them fit (or at least feel right, so the experts can stitch and patch and explain everything into place, later). There are exceptions, of course: for an Impiltur question, I'd turn to George Krashos, for Cormyr I increasingly consult Garen Thal, Eric Boyd is my sounding-board and backup for many topics, and so on. There are also practical limitations to what I can answer here at Candlekeep. Requests for 'nigh everything about' a priesthood or race or kingdom are too broad for me to give quick answers, and are more likely to offend against NDAs and what I know of still-secret projects being cooked up for the Realms. Moreover, they're more suited to answering in Reamslore or DRAGON columns. I'm much happier when The Hooded One hands me small-focus queries. Gray Richardson's request for orc information, for instance: great questions, should have been dealt with in official Reamslore long ago, and might do just fine for the Candlekeep newsletter if I get WotC permission to participate. Otherwise, a monstrously large topic to try to tackle in short e-mails to Our Lady Hooded (fetching as she is). To do it justice could almost fill this thread for most of 2005 (okay, half the year if I leave out the orc gods and all matters religious).

So, yes, when THO relays a scribe's question about lore of a dale or oaths, I sit down and make a lot of stuff up. That's what this hobby (and the Realms) is about, in my view. As long as I can afford (and to the extent that I'm legally able) to go on doing this, I will. So keep 'em coming!

So saith Ed.

As I said in an earlier post, I suspect his Baldur's Gate silence has something to do with current work by Atari, although Ed of course will provide no confirmation of this.

love to all,  
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 28, 2004 THO said: Worry not, all. As much as time constraints, NDAs, and keeping out of the way of other forthcoming Realms publications that aren't exactly NDA-ed but that he "unofficially" knows about, Ed intends to answer ALL queries put to him here.

It may take months for a specific request to be dealt with, and many will have to 'carry over' from this thread to Alaundo's new 2005 Ed Questions thread, but we WILL get to everything.

As for Ed's concordance: it's called his brain, "such as it is" (his words, not mine).

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 29, 2004: BrokenRulz, Ed hereafter makes answer to your question: "How does Elminster celebrate the Yuletide/Soltice?"

The axial tilt, size, and rotational period of Toril are close to our Earth's but not identical. Solstices do occur, and at such times "the Weave shines forth most brightly" in the Realms.

Which is the bardic way of saying that at such times there's some restlessness in Mystra, due to her origins (Selune), and the Weave is therefore more active than at most other times (with surges of raw magical energy washing back and forth, sometimes 'powering up' cast spells to greater damage, duration, or area of effect than would normally be possible, and more often spitting off unintended wild magic side effects). Beyond such happenings, this time of year has little greater significance to Mystra and her Chosen. However, Elminster has visited our Earth often, and is familiar with Yule celebrations and the more modern commercial Christmas. (So, to a much more limited extent, are Laeral and The Simbul and Storm.)

EI has little use for presents and much of the foolishness associated with the etiquette of modern organized faiths of any sort, but it pleases his nature to do at Yuletide what he's always done as a Chosen: help folk and support their belief in magic or strength of Sense of Wonder.

In other words, he gives gifts of food, unlooked-for aid, and spell-cast warmth and shelter to those in need in the bitter winter cold, AND enjoys playing a mysterious Father Christmas figure, especially if he can do small acts of magic observed by one or two beings at a time rather than large audiences, so he can foster a belief in magic in those observers (awakening awe in adults - - and teenagers who've just scornfully stopped believing in Santa Claus - - of our world, in particular).

He enjoys showing up wherever I am, late on the night of Christmas Eve/wee hours of Christmas morning, and letting me see his wink and wave as he works some small magic to awe a youngster. And downs something handy from my wine cellar or liquor cabinet, too.

So saith Ed.

A night or two late for this Christmas, but the Master of the Realms keeps up with his Candlekeep answers as best he can at this frenetic (both for writing and family celebrations) time of year.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 29, 2004 THO said: Verghityax, in this case I know that Ed can't be much help at all, even without asking him. The ongoing use of Baldur's Gate for various computer and console games has caused Ed to just step back from it and do nothing in the way of Realmsplay or updating (and as we Knights have had no in-game reason to go there, we've respected that). Anything he has done will be secret and NDA-ed.

I checked with him re. your request and he said so far as he knows all of the NPCs you mentioned are still alive, that lore about the rulership of BG must remain sketchy for forthcoming computer game reasons, and that he has nothing in the way of updated stats and levels. Sorry. He and I both understand and admire your enthusiasm for detailing BG (boy, do we understand it! About a hundred-fold, when you look at all the cities Ed wants to tackle), but I'm afraid in this case there's just not much in the way of help Ed can provide. The mercenary company roster-change information, too, was deliberately left vague because that's precisely where a DM can build in his or her own secrets to spin subplots from (especially if players want to run characters who become mercenaries, or have extensive dealings with the mercenary companies - - and remember, the Flaming Fist mobilizes very rarely, but is an "old boys' network" presence of investments and business ventures and spying in BG daily, even if their armour sits dusty).

George has provided the 2nd Ed stats (ah, so swift! I love that in a man!) and he's quite correct in saying Ed's not much of a stats and levels guy. We still use 2nd Ed in the 'home' Realms campaign, and Ed would much rather focus on back story and intrigue and colour, and leave stats to individual DMs to tailor to their own campaign needs. (After all, in an intensive-roleplaying setting, why not make alterations? Characters don't walk around with class, level, XP, and hp information tattooed on their foreheads. Or anywhere else on their bodies, as much fun as it might be to go looking. )  
THO

P.S. To all patiently-waiting scribes, Ed promises more answers very soon.

\*\*\*\*\*

December 30, 2004: Why, THANK you, Karth - - I embrace and revel in your compliments, choosing to believe in them even I must confess I can scarce believe your "wide-eyed and innocent" claim of stance. Shameless, a flirt, and Hooded I am, all three, but I must correct an impression: I FEEL lonesome every hour or so, but I don't, ah, assuage the gnawings of that feeling that often. I let it build, deliciously, until the moment is right, and welcome all too few new arrivals, these days (except during a little after-dark summertime game of being hunted through the forest by many masked "suitsors," to borrow your word). I attend GenCon very rarely these days, and always anonymously (meaning: I don't wander around on Ed's arm), and am usually the very model of decorum whilst there. Although there was that enjoyable sojourn on the hood of a slowly-moving car nigh the lakeshore in Milwaukee, and several occasions in the Safe House...

Ahem. Enough titillation; I'm sure some scribes find this talk less than amusing. You must tell me more of the "Den O' Iniquity" reputation of GenCon SoCal, some day.

On to business, as they say.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Melfius, how old is your daughter Arilyn, and whereabouts (country, state or province, that sort of thing, not precise directions to her bedside or favourite play area) can she be found?

Ed probably can't travel much at Christmas, given his own family obligations, but perhaps a "letter from Santa"?

Ed was quite busy this year writing "Santa" replies to childrens' letters (local volunteers secretly do that to assist the Canadian Post Office up here, and Ed says he was very touched to receive letters to Santa from a lonely eighty-two-year-old widow and a twenty-one-year-old desperate-for-help-getting-presents-for-her-daughter single mother... he took time to buy and wrap presents for both of them, and then - - with the cooperation of the local police, of course, so they know who's creeping around houses, late at night - - put on a Santa suit in case someone was awake to see him, and delivered said presents to doorways, around two in the morning of Christmas Day. Old softie, indeed.

A postscript for Melfius: Ed has only very scanty Akadi lore, and is trying to track down some notes he made years back (with a view to squaring them against the 2nd Ed gods work Eric Boyd and Julia Martin did, and the later 3e iterations) before posting them through me. He warns that they ARE "slender."

Jerryd, Ed tells me there IS "pre-existing Realmslore on these islands" you asked about; the delay in his reply has been getting NDA clearance from Wizards (WotC effectively closes down from Christmas Eve through until early in January, and most folks there are whirlwind-busy throughout much of December getting various tasks and projects done and "their desks cleared" so they can enjoy the Christmas vacation without having to design or write or worry about unfinished work).

From my own hazy remembrances of Realmsplay [note to George Krashos: this is as good a time as any to answer your query: I never played a member of the Company of Crazy Adventurers, only a few Knights of Myth Drannor], I believe the outer islands are used by pirates and are littered with the wrecks of beached, scuttled, and half-burned ships, and inhabited by a few monsters and castaways and uncounted thousands of seabirds, while the inner trio have castles on them, and so presumably are inhabited (I know the Crazy Adventurers visited at least one of them). Ed will say more as soon as he can, and I honestly don't know how extensive his Realmslore on these island is.

Your point about scribes specifying if they want Ed to craft new Realmslore is well-taken and appreciated (and as for your wanting to finish another project before asking other lore-clarification questions, Ed laughed uproariously and said, "Me too! Me too!").

As for your Toril global figures, they seem fine to me on first glance. I've relayed them to Ed for his comments.

Now, as for the rather delicate matter of elven body hair, kuje, you KNOW Ed isn't the guy to go to for WotC rules battles. The PHBs rule, of course, with one note Ed added (as we laughed together on the phone, remembering the "Do dwarven females have beards?" furor that arose at least thrice, down the years), to wit:

If you always treat the comments in rulebooks as "racial norms" rather than absolutes, and as DM encourage your campaign to be roleplaying-heavy and rules-light (so that book-quoting rules-lawyers can be calmly replied with, "Oh? Really? That's odd, because standing right in front of

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

you is an individual you can clearly see to be the elf lord you were just introduced to, and yes, he has a pencil-thin moustache and razor-edged, line-of-chin beard. Are you going to tell him to drop the silly magical disguise, or ask him why he's a freak, or just trust your eyes and accept that he has the hair and go on with life?"), you can 'explain away' variants from the ever-changing game rules as "individuals who are different, that's all."

As it happens, all of the Knights can attest that Merith Strongbow has both (scant, but dark in hue and definitely present) facial and body hair (though unlike human males, he doesn't get facial stubble if he doesn't shave every morning, and in fact never needs to shave) and Torm of the Knights can tell you that certain elf ladies of his acquaintance definitely have genital hair abundant enough to be trimmed into shapes. A subject I'd probably better say nothing more about. :}

As for hairy halfling feet: I'm sure some hin do have shaggy-haired insteps, but as it happens most of the halflings I've directly detailed in Realmslore down the years have had smooth brownish skin on the tops of their feet, and tough layers of horn-like skin (akin to inch-thick callouses in texture) covering the bottoms of their feet, so they can comfortably go barefoot even on rough ground and in extremes of temperature.

So saith Ed.

Onward. Capn Charlie, don't hurl aside that planner: Ed IS at work on a short roster of festivals and holidays for you.

Sir Urza, Ed shares your enthusiasm for Silverymoon, and will be seeking to cajole certain WotC editors into agreement with him, when the time is right.

Verghityax, Ed confirmed that he doesn't have any stat and level updates to pass on to you, for the "standing back" from BG reason I gave. He also said he'd love to do a BG update game product some day, but only when "The computer games set therein are truly over and done with - and that may be a very long time indeed in coming."

And I believe that clears MY desk for the moment. Leaving it clear so I can lounge provocatively on it and further tease Woolly Rupert, Blueblade, Karth, and divers other scribes. Who can offer comment on my body hair... or not, just as they prefer...

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 31, 2004: Foxhelm, Ed makes reply to your recent fourfold query:

Thanks! You haven't bothered me at all, but brought some welcome entertainment. "A stinking lot of money," eh? Sounds nice. It's been years now since I've bathed in a pile of cash.

So let's get right into those questions of yours.

1. My top three campaign world and novels for RPGs I'd develop that aren't "traditional fantasy." Bear in mind that of course I'd vastly prefer to do traditional fantasy. However, if I couldn't...

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

Well, my favourite would probably be 'my take' on the tried-and-true (Amber, Highlander, umpteen vampire sagas from Yarbrow to Rice to Buffy to Otherworld, Outlandish, etc.) idea of a family of long-lived human-seeming folk who have some special powers (magic, self-healing, shapechanging, long lifespans and seeing in the dark or teleporting or "ironguard"-equivalent or whatever), and are either feuding or who are one of several rival families Who Dwell Among Us, and are nearing some sort of confrontation - - perhaps one that (a la Lovecraft/Zelazny's Lonesome October) opens gates between worlds (our modern real one and others, some of which are medieval and have working magic and are monster-dominated (Call of Cthulhu-style play thus resulting). I'd do this not-terribly-original project just because it pulls on so many 'hooks' that attract me (and thousands of other gamers, readers, and movie-watchers).

My second choice would be the space opera/sf setting of decaying stellar empires (now small handful-of-planet federations, leagues, and independent worlds) that's NOT dominated by horrible aliens or a huge interstellar war, but rather by ever-expanding companies/business conglomerates that consider themselves beyond all laws, and engage in covert piracy, control of planetary governments, and so on. Far too powerful for novel protagonists or PCs in a game to challenge; the heroes instead play the parts of the crews of the countless "tramp steamers" of space, who make the low-profit, dangerous daily cargo runs that keep everything running. The setting would be running low on raw materials (especially foods and fuels), and the only chances of good profits for these small fry are to explore, find new sources, procure and sell as much as they can, and then get out quick before the big conglomerates move in, wipe them out, and take over said new sources.

My third choice would be to go back in history to the decay of the Roman Empire, choose a somewhat-isolated geographical focus (the classic one is of course the British Isles, and yes, there it's King Arthur time), and build a game and novel line around the POSSIBLE outcomes (not what really happened during the plunge into the Dark Ages), with religious schisms and strife and raiding "barbarians" and umpteen self-styled emperors trying to set up their own kingdoms. No magic except VERY limited visions/healing/temporary vigor granted by various gods in return for deeds and rituals, but make sure diplomacy among power groups has a role, not just "I am the strongest Conan; watch as I hack foes down before they can do the same to me!" This could just possibly be mated with the sort of pulp sf plot (used for the Blade series of erotic fantasy novels in the 1970s) of the secret government program with time machine, through which agents are sent back in time to try to procure items and substances that could be of use in modern times. I'd make sure the dangers Connie Willis explored in DOMESDAY BOOK applied, too, of course.

2. I presume you meant to ask me what superpowers I'd personally like to have, as Ed Greenwood the hero or villain, rather than something I'd give to a game character if I could "break all the rules." So my answer would be: immunity to all poisons and diseases, complete self-healing and regeneration, the ability to fly, water walking, water breathing, feather falling, teleport without error, spider climb, mending, short-range being-specific mind-reading and clairaudience by concentration only, and detect lie at will. That'd do for starters, before I got into the handsome virility stuff. If I was being a villain, I'd add two things: shapechange (my fingertips and head or at least face, at minimum), and a short-range ability to control computers/electronic communications, computations, and results.

Well, now. I feel taller already.

3. Shows that would be popular in the Realms. Well, not that I'd want to watch them much, but I believe that the real 'knock them dead' daily viewings would be sermons from the heads or prominent clergies of various faiths, the news (nasty things happening everywhere else), a fashion show (with lots of skin for viewers unwilling or unable to buy new clothes all the time), and

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

various long-running sagas centered on heroes, starcrossed lovers, and pratfalling wisecracking cut-ups.

However, what I'd personally LIKE to see include many of the humorous suggestions put forward by you, Melfius, and Dargoth. I'd pay a lot to watch a reality show in which Red Wizards vied to seduce The Simbul and keep their lives, in situations where she was bound to discover that they were Red Wizards before long. Seriously, I think Dargoth's Town Watch idea would fly. As for the titillation factor, I'd personally like to see Alustriel's Bedchamber (hmmm; late-night hardcore fare), Storm's Harper Training, and some sort of reality show set in Cormyr where contestants are guaranteed a million gp if they can marry into the nobility, and royal rank and title if they can do so and also prove that Azoun IV was their father. :}

4. I have strong bonds not just to Elminster, but to Mirt (the fat, wheezing old moneylender of Waterdeep) and Storm (the sort of woman I'd love to marry or at least adventure with, if she were real).

Amongst darker characters, I'd like to explore more fully the lonely, tragic liches and what motivates them if they've lived for centuries and not gone insane. Do they play at manipulating kingdoms, like Larloch? Frustrating power groups (think I'll smash this Zhent or Twisted Rune or Red Wizard scheme)? However, I don't feel any personal strong bonds to any villains except a certain female I can't tell you anything more about, yet (perhaps for years).

So saith Ed.

I know what he means about Storm. If she were real I'd want to bed her myself. Yes, Wooly, I DO want to leave you with that image to savour.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 31, 2004: Hello, all. Hereafter, Ed's reply to Jerryd:

Jerry, I've perused your full globe-of-Toril construal from the Realms-list, and here's my take on it.

Like our real Earth, Toril is an oblate spheroid rotating in the same direction as Earth does, around a tilted axis (as Earth has). Its distance from its sun is unknown, being roughly equivalent to that of real-world Earth (but affording some "wiggle room" to adjust climate and to a small extent gravity). It's clear that the Heartlands of Faerun are SLIGHTLY warmer (higher temperature, longer growing season) than real-world Earth regions of the same latitude, but get a trifle colder in winter than real-world locales of the same latitude. In effect, discounting altitude- and wind-current-related factors, this is roughly equivalent to winter temperatures on Toril being about 5 degrees of latitude cooler than on Earth. In other words, Waterdeep at a little north of the 45th parallel on Toril averages the same winter-cold as does a Manitoba, Canada timberlands locale a little north of the real-world Earth's 50th parallel (though like any large city burning wood and peat and dung for warmth and cooking and industry, crowding people and livestock together, casting minor warming magics, and taking up slightly-warmer-than-winter air from Skullport and the Underdark depths, actual Waterdhavian street temperatures, when one escapes wind chill, can well be higher).

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

The D&D rules postulate an environment as least as rich in heavy metals as our real world, so Toril must be as dense as our real world. It's clear from any close examination of my original maps, the Fonstad FR Atlas, and the ProFantasy Interactive Atlas, that Toril is larger than Earth. TSR designers over the years have estimated anything from ten to fifteen percent larger, and I corrected some of them (discovering along the way that map projections seemed to be a subject neglected in the early grades of some American schools) to show that they were correct in seeing about a five percent 'window' in size, but that the bottom figure couldn't be less than 12 percent. We settled on official agreement at twelve percent at a design meeting at the TSR offices after I pointed out that a larger Toril, given similar densities, has increased surface gravity and therefore the "Barsoom factor" (Hey, I'm a strongman! Watch me bend iron bars with my little fingers!) comes into play. That was something we largely wanted to avoid, as it affects not just musculature and body strength, but trajectories and therefore weaponry and spell effects and yadda yadda. :) So 12 it is.

You came up with 14, which considering the slightly wonky maps in the Interactive Atlas, isn't bad.

There is a way of putting a tiny 'wiggle room' in the density/metals problem, too, which is to have celestial-body calamities (asteroid/planetoid impacts) and plate tectonics shift more heavy metals near the surface in Faerun than are to be found elsewhere on Toril (hence some of the in-print, metal-avoiding daily construction materials and weaponry of Kara-Tur). This in turn can cause axial wobble and will tend to be 'smoothed and evened out' over the long run, but a thousand years of Realms game time is still but a passing geological moment.

And yes, you can see from my comments here that I stand with the stated-in-print Waterdhavian latitude, so I'd follow the second suggestion in your article (to correct all the locations, rather than to ignore the difference in calculations that left Waterdeep 12 minutes south of the 45th parallel rather than about the same distance north of it).

Placing Toril a trifle closer to its sun than Earth is to the real Sun gives us our warmer climes, and postulating a greater axial tilt than real Earth gives us our swings to and from severe winter at extremes of latitude. Some climate jiggering must take place to avoid howling, all-scouring and fairly constant winds in places, but we already know that such jiggering is taking place, in-game, because of the great southern reach of the Inner Sea North glaciers (a secret that was in the Realms from the first, and made official in the internal-TSR-publication-only "Realms Bible" I wrote years ago, but only officially revealed to the wider gaming public in the 3e Epic Level Handbook: Iyraelia in Appendix 1), and because of my carefully-planted lore about the Phaerimm magically monkeying with the climate (hence the spread of Anauroch).

The slightly smaller size (12 versus 14) leads to a slightly smaller axial tilt than you arrived at, but by and large, your calculations are just fine, and you came to the same conclusions as the TSR designers did when they accepted my presentation all those years ago. Which makes the most valuable part of your article (the "What time is it in Waterdeep when it's such-and-such a time in Suzail?" and the hours of daylight bits) perfectly valid and very useful to all. Thanks, Jerry!

Interestingly, years ago I wanted to include a very simple Sword Coast naval trading pull-out game in DRAGON, of about the complexity level of the old Milton Bradley childrens' classic PIRATE AND TRAVELLER, only with water hexes rather than specific game-track routes [but with paths of double-speed hexes for trade-wind-aided open waters], wherein players picked up specific cargoes [cards with values] in various ports and sailed around within the limits of a single sailing season trying to get richer than each other. TSR editors (right up to the Creative Director level) wouldn't bite, which was a pity because it would have settled so many of the sailing

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.



times/coastal road caravan times/merchant shipping questions, down the years. As part of this game, all harbours were to be marked, all islands (of course) named, reefs and 'wash rocks' located, and a little 'back story' Realmslore snuck in about the two competing methods of seaborne location (the elder meridian was through the highest peak on Tharsult, and the newer competing one through Mintarn).

Regarding those islands you asked about: NDA clearance has been received, so expect my lore answer tomorrow.

So saith Ed.

Who's now got me waiting impatiently, if no one else.

Wheee, more newly-revealed Realmslore!

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 31, 2004 THO said: kuje31, I'm sorry, I should have slid in a smiley there to make it clear I was joking about rules battles, not being angry with you. Darn electronic media, that can't convey tone of voice. Sigh not, I pray. I've just chatted with Ed, and he says his comments stand: treat the printed rulebooks as racial norms and then have individuals with hair wherever you want it. After all, elves are the race most likely (by nature, inclination, and available time on their individual hands) to have developed (and experimented endlessly with) cosmetics (including hair dyes) and herbs (drugs) to affect the body, to say nothing of cantrips galore, right?

I recall from Realmsplay, years ago, that there's at least one elven adventuress in Waterdeep who has a glorious down-to-the-back-of-her-knees mane of deep GREEN hair. We were once in a brothel (ahem: festhall) where at least one of the lady dancers (who were all elves) had half a dozen tiny silver chiming bells braided into her pubic hair, too, so THAT elf had "body hair."

Dargoth, I've relayed your Zhent query on to Ed. We Knights have had thankfully little to do with those pests recently, but I can say we've slaughXXX run into two patrols in the woods between Shadowdale and Voonlar, and they retained the familiar "wizard, priest, and ten Zhentilar warriors" mix. One had the priest in evident command, and I'm sure the wizard was being the most supercilious in his snapping of orders, in the other - - before Torm sprang from a bough and broke his neck for him, that is.

Wooly, you're willing to get between this Hooded One and Storm? You're a brave man indeed! Consider yourself invited!  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

December 31, 2004: Jerryd, I tossed your most recent post in the direction of Ed's inbox, and just received this quick response:

Fair enough. So (bearing in mind that I can't speak officially for Wizards), we're agreed on Toril having a 12 percent larger diameter than Earth (therefore 8,880 miles or 14,280 km). I vote for  
Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.  
This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

the same gravity as Earth, so Toril must be about 90% as dense as Earth. I can live with that (as you say, we can assume divine tinkering with the availability of metals).

Adjust the latitude of all base calculations by 1.009, and I agree with your personal choice of 8.1 daylight Midwinter hours for Silverymoon and the axial tilt that results (28°53').

And I may just take you up on that offer of running calculations! I must admit that in running the Realms, I've just used the "mental map" comparison of the continental United States silhouette Jeff Grubb put into the Old Gray Box versus the Sword Coast Heartlands, and applied the (politically distorted) time zone differential, because I "know without thinking" how many hours "behind" TSR in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and WotC in Renton, Washington, were from me in Ontario, Canada, and most of the portal jumps or teleports in the 'home' Realms have either been relatively short (from point to point within the Dales or within Cormyr, for instance), or between Cormyr or the Dales and Waterdeep or its immediate environs (often atop Maiden's Tomb Tor).

So saith Ed.

Who warns me, Jerryd, that the incoming lore about the islands is long enough (!) that I may split it up into short messages.

love to all,  
THO

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 31, 2004 THO said: Ah, now. You HAD to ask.

Well, I don't even have to contact Ed to know some of his choices (we trade book recommendations all the time), and I've combined them with mine in a 'no particular order' list:

A HAT FULL OF SKY by Terry Pratchett (the second Tiffany Aching so-called childrens' Discworld novel; a little romp of a delight we both enjoyed).

GOING POSTAL by Terry Pratchett: any Discworld novel primarily set in Ankh-Morpork is going to be an interesting and enjoyable read. This one is another solid triumph. (Myself, I like to think of Ankh-Morpork as a parody of Waterdeep, although I KNOW it's not; it just makes it all even more screamingly funny, for me.)

Of course, being Discworld fans, we both enjoyed THE ART OF DISCWORLD, ONCE MORE WITH FOOTNOTES, and the DISCWORLD ALMANAK, too. :) If you aren't familiar with Discworld, you owe it to yourself to GET familiar. The first book in this long series is THE COLOUR OF MAGIC, but I agree with Ed in his oft-made library recommendation: especially for non-fantasy fans, the best book to start with is WYRD SISTERS. At the end of it, you know if Discworld is 'for you' or not. (If you have access to the first LEGENDS anthology from Tor Books, edited by Bob Silverberg, you can "try" Terry's Discworld short story therein as an intro, instead.)

IRON CROWN MOON by Julian May (already out in the UK from whence Ed snatched copies for us both, but North American publication won't be until April 2005, I think). The second in the Boreal Moon Tale. I agree with Ed that May's setting and magic system are superbly suited for low-magic (but powerful as heck, when it gets unleashed) fantasy gaming.

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**

JONATHAN STRANGE & MR. NORRELL by Susanna Clarke. A long, rambling, slow-paced Jane Austen period-style novel that many people are going to hate because "it doesn't go much of anywhere" or "too long-winded" or "literary posing" or some such. Ed and I both loved it for the footnotes, the depiction of magic as a scholarly British 'club' pursuit, the sense of mystery and old forgotten history and connections to Faerie. Not for everyone, but worth it.

THE LAST LIGHT OF THE SUN by Guy Gavriel Kay. Darker than Kay's previous books (grim Viking setting), but first-rate storytelling. Ed has often said that Kay's earlier A SONG FOR ARBONNE is the best fantasy novel published by a Canadian that he can think of, bare none (with the standalone novel Kay published just prior to that, as a more-ambitious but also more flawed, hence "almost as good, loses out to Arbonne by a whisker" TIGANA a very close second).

BONE by Jeff Smith. A huge, fat black and white "telephone book" of a graphic novel compilation. Perhaps cheating on the date (as it mostly contains older material), but it WAS published this year, and remains a strange (as in: what direction is this story going in? four or five different ones, all at once!) delight.

FORSAKEN HOUSE by Rich Baker. A Realms novel that left Ed positively delighted. I think it's superbly written, but wanted less battle scenes and more elven intrigue (and, hey, for once: scenes where elves interacted WITHOUT being all tense and daggers drawn, with the fate of the Realms As We Know It hanging in the balance). But that's just me, committing the cardinal sin of ragging on a book for not being the book \* I \* wanted it to be. The scene of the elf facing the passage of time for the human companions of his former adventuring group is a stellar moment. A great fantasy read by any measure, even for people who know not, and care less, what the Realms is.

I'm sure I'll think of lots more as I have time to reflect, but these are the first few to "fall off the top of my head," as it were.

Oh, yes: one short story that Ed mentioned he was going to nominate for a Nebula, from the December 2004 issue of REALMS OF FANTASY magazine: "The Chamber of Forgetting" by Sarah Prineas. I missed that issue (the local bookstore doesn't always receive its copies), but have ordered it from a newsstand distributor on the strength of Ed's recommendation.

love to all,  
THO

Produced at CANDLEKEEP.COM from original text by Ed Greenwood, via The Hooded One.

Document produced by Alaundo of Candlekeep.

Maintained and collated by Scott Kujawa from threads on the Candlekeep Forum.

This document is not to be distributed from locations other than the Candlekeep website.

**Candlekeep**