

# DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Forging the Realms Archive | 6/4/2014 **New!**



## The Eyes of the Dragon, Part 2

### Forgotten Realms

By Ed Greenwood

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How and where and when did the Forgotten Realms start? What's at the heart of Ed Greenwood's creation, and how does the Grand Master of the Realms use his own world when he runs D&D adventures for the players in his campaign? "Forging the Forgotten Realms" is a weekly feature wherein Ed answers all those questions and more.

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**H**ere's the second part of our glimpse of some of the current spies working for the Cult of the Dragon in various Sword Coast settlements. These are the "small fish"—the watchers at the bottom of the cult ranks. Adventurers are warned that the cult members who contact these watchers to impart instructions and to receive reports are more secretive, more mobile—and apt to be more dangerous.

### Scornubel

Despite being under the sway of the theocracy of Elturgard, Scornubel is—behind closed doors, after hours, and under counters—increasingly slipping back into worldly cut-and-thrust mercantile trading in all manner of goods. In other words, it's well on its way to once more becoming the seedy, anything-goes cesspool it was in the later 1300s DR. This is why the cult has spies here but is proceeding cautiously indeed in Elturel.

**Ordrel Thannest** is a dealer in fine textiles and adornments who keeps an upscale shop, Thannest's Finewears. He sells woven borders and collars to be sewn on to garments, to cover worn edges and to make them look more splendid. His shop also does sewing and alterations, specializing in padded shoulders, darts, and other techniques for making thin individuals look beefier, and fat ones less rotund in favor of looking large all over and hopefully more imposing.

Thannest is a nondescript, rather pleasant brown-haired man of middling height, gray eyes, and graceful movements, who is unfailingly polite, even under stress. Long married and with six grown daughters who do most of the running of the shop and all of the alterations, Thannest entertains himself daily by "scenting our fine Scornubrian air," which really means making the rounds of eateries, taverns, and shops he likes, strolling along favorite streets, and talking to many folk he meets. Ostensibly this is exercise, and he tells his family it's also to keep abreast of local rumor and happenings so he can guide the family investments (rental housing properties in the city). In truth, it's both of those things and spying for the cult.

Thannest's cult contacts intercept him during his strolls if they want to talk to him, often chatting in passing, just

long enough to say coded phrases that tell Thannest to meet for drinks at particular taverns later that evening to dicker over property rents and potential purchases (but really to pass on cult instructions and to question him about various people and places he's been earlier directed to keep an eye on).

Thannest is good at avoiding injury during violent encounters due to his speed and agility, but detests violence and has miserable fighting skills. His cult contacts know this, and if they think Thannest's prying may take him into danger, assign local hired muscle—who know no specifics of whom they've been hired by—to tail and spy on Thannest so they can rush to his rescue if need arises.

**Blaethra Lorntassar** is the chatelaine (head housekeeper and majordomo) of The House of the Lion inn in northwestern Scornubel. The inn is a large and well-appointed recently built one with its own walled yard and stables, and extensive kitchens—source of hot savory dove tarts that are locally famous and very popular (Blaethra devised the recipe and often oversees their making). Most often called Lornra by those who know her, Blaethra is a sharp-tongued, bustling, and often merry driving force of a woman, who crisply sees to problems, sorts out disagreements and muddles, and takes care of the needs of guests. She provides directions, recommendations, and even guides to many Scornubrian crafters, artisans, and experts. In this role, she sees, overhears, and deduces much that she passes on to cult contacts, who pay her highly—in part because she can always arrange to discreetly hide hot items or persons in a back room or cellar of the inn at a moment's notice.



For her part, Blaethra is so disgusted with the actions and attitudes of the "nosehigh goodly godly sorts" of Elturgard, as she calls them, and their attempts to "reform but actually ruin" Scornubel (she claims), that she's willing to try any alternative—and the cult seems a formidable and strengthening alternative to any traditional form of government. Even if their machinations end in disaster, perhaps she can better her own lot amid the chaos and end up the owner of her own inn and a generous handful of rooming houses, and live off the rents.

## Secomber

**Farldar Meltorn** is a middle-aged, sour-faced, sarcastic and sometimes surly halfling. He has an almost croaking, raspy voice and a very wide mouth and jowly face, and so he has been known since childhood as "Froggie," a nickname he long detested but has recently discovered he's come to rather like. He loves the darker shades of red, and he is almost always dressed all in crimson or maroon, or at least a red tunic or jerkin over black breeches.

Froggie is a superb forger of documents and handwriting of all sorts, and he is a capable actor and mimic, too. For years he made his living by his wits, but his activities, in a place the size of Secomber, inevitably brought suspicion upon him and made future triumphs harder and harder. So the regular covert pay offered him by the

cult just to observe and report was a godsend, and Froggie has worked hard to build a reputation in the cult's eyes as being good value for the coin he's paid. Diligent and seemingly everywhere in Secomber, constantly on the move (with a cover job as a trusted messenger carrying valuable messages and documents), Froggie sees much of both covert and open daily business dealings in, and outlander visits to, Secomber, and he often aids cult agents with false documents, alibis, and local guiding. He has been asked to keep a close eye on adventurers, and does so—sometimes making extra coin on the side for revealing what he's learned about adventurers to local rivals and those looking to hire—or scapegoat—outlander adventurers.

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### **About the Author**

**Ed Greenwood** is the man who unleashed the Forgotten Realms setting on an unsuspecting world. He works in libraries, and he writes fantasy, science fiction, horror, mystery, and romance stories (sometimes all in the same novel), but he is happiest when churning out Realmslore, Realmslore, and more Realmslore. He still has a few rooms in his house in which he has space left to pile up papers.

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