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## **Baldwin I**

King of Montour (34-50). Baldwin was the son of King Richard. His reign was a mostly peaceful one of consolidation after Richard's long war with the Empire of Castrovia. This peace was at least in part due to the marriage of Baldwin with a kinswoman of the emperor in 28. He was succeeded by his son Michael I.

## **Baldwin II**

King of Montour (111-138). Son of Raymond I and Queen Isabelle, Baldwin II was only 14 when he became king. A weak man, his reign was marked by a rise in the independence of the nobility and a growth of noble armies. He was succeeded by his ill-fated son, Gregory.

## **Bare Cliffs**

A minor tribe of the Voor nation, the Bare Cliffs people dwell on the plains between Blooddrinkers, Red Faces, the Breaking River and the Ravens of Graam. They were long under the domination of the Blooddrinkers until the Montese occupation of the Breakingdale in the third century, where they were helped to throw off their neighbours' control. This did not materially help the tribe very much, as their lands remain marginal for agricultural exploitation. The Bare Cliffs people remain reliant on sheep and goat herding for their livelihoods.

## **Battle Under the Trees, the**

Near-legendary confrontation between King Arturo and the dwarfking of Rakrast, which saw the dwarfs defeated and their dominion over the future Montese heartlands ended.

## **du Belier, House of**

The du Belier family was granted lands along the Breaking River west of Krothering in 246, and are thus one of the oldest established noble houses in the Dale. Their lands were small, though rich. The fourth lord du Belier, Hugo (265-314), had three children. The eldest, Lionel (389-314) married Emilie, the daughter of his western neighbour of Fromont; the middle child, Julienne, married Bodwin Torsilley; and the third does not yet enter the story.

Both Hugo and Lionel were slain during Ekaterina's War, fighting on opposite sides of that conflict. Rumour abounded that they fell at each other's hands, but this was generally disregarded as a romantic exaggeration (but recent discovery in the basement of du Belier manor of an undead creature that may be Lionel suggests that there may be some truth to it all). Emilie Fromont was delivered of a posthumous son, whom she named Roland (after her paternal grandfather). She was made guardian of her son and governed the du Belier estates until he came of age.

Roland grew up to be an aggressive and warlike man, little interested in stewardship of his estates or the finer things in life. He signed on as an associate member of the Brotherhood of the Shield during the Gel conquest of Karakiraz and was captured at the sack of Atabash in 340. Ransomed, he returned to the Dale and joined the army of Raymond du Plessey, only to be defeated again at Raracas. Following the official surrender of Montour to the noyan in 342, Roland went underground, and led a small resistance movement against the Gel, being inspired by the death of his mother at the hands of the Gel invaders. For his ruthless actions he became known as the Wolf of Belier. The Wolf's depredations against the Gel came to an end in 345, when he was cornered, wounded and captured by a party led by the mercenary captain Yum Kax. (It was his capture that led to Prince Erling's fateful skirmish with the noyan's men and subsequent exile.) Roland was taken back to Karakiraz, where he died of his wounds.

As Roland died childless, the du Belier estates were adjudged to devolve to his cousin, Mordoc Torsilley, who placed them in the care of his mother, Julienne, who took up residence in Belier Manor.

## **Black Knights of Sardeth**

Military order. While not strictly an order, the Black Knights bear many things in common with one, and are therefore considered as such. Like the Golden Lions the Black Knights, so called from their heavy, blackened armour, were a mainstay of the armies of the Grand Duchy, being raised exclusively by the margraves of Sardeth. At their peak they numbered some 500 heavy cavalry, all based in Sardeth and its castles, and always ready to ride into the Warlands to engage any Montese raiders, or to engage in a bit of raiding themselves. They always served with skill and valour, and were greatly feared by their opponents. After the conquest of Thestria the Black Knights were allowed to remain in being through the submission of their master the margrave, but since that time the company has shrunk, to its current level of perhaps 150 heavily mailed cavalry.

## **Blooddrinker**

Arguably the strongest of the Voor tribes, the Blooddrinkers control a large swathe of the north-eastern Voorland, with their heartland being the fertile Redmoor. At one time the Blooddrinkers controlled as vassals both the Rugged Hills and Bare Cliffs tribes, were owed tribute by the Red Faces and were contesting the northlands with the Horsetamers. Several Voorkings were Blooddrinkers. An aggressive people with a long warrior tradition, they led the resistance to the Montese occupation of Breakingdale. Their decline began at the Battle of Red River in 271 and the tribe suffered very badly at the Battle of the Field of Blood in 291. In the fourth century the Blooddrinkers have withdrawn completely from Breakingdale (small skirmishes aside). Under the current king, Muchbled (r.336- ), there has been a notable warming of relations between Blooddrinker and Montese, to the extent that his own son has been fostered to his Montese neighbour, Sir Mordoc Torsilley.

## **Bodwin's Howe**

A small keep and village in Breakingdale. Home of Sir Mordoc Torsilley. The castle is built atop what appears to be an ancient settlement, first of the Voorish civilisation, then of dwarfs, then of Fendals of King Arturo's time. Several layers of ruins lie within the mound, barely excavated, though the Fendal

tomb of Lord Bodwin“ is open and a major shrine to Kandarian. The village sits at the bottom of the mound, below the main castle gate. It is home to nearly 500 people, about 3 in 4 Montese and the rest Voor. The current castle was built to interdict travel from the Redmoor to the Hills of Graam, and there has been a traditional dislike of the Bloodrinkers for the people of the Howe, though at this time there is a good personal relationship between Sir Mordoc and King Muchbled.

## **Boibegus**

(b.320) A Voorish inhabitant of the town of Bodwin's Howe. Boibegus is a local rascal and occasional troublemaker with no fixed occupation. He possesses a certain base cunning, but is not truly clever. Annoying rather than malicious, Boibegus is a pest and nuisance, but not really dangerous. ~His late brother, Gnat (d.353), was a regular associate in Boibegus' schemes.

## **Breaking River**

A river that flows from the mountains north of Krothering to a juncture with the Raracas at the town of Upper Raracas, this is the heart of the Breakingdale. Most of the population of the region lives along it and its tributaries. It is navigable for riverboats from Bonfol in the south to Fromont in the north, and it is quite placid along most of that length, except for the passage through the Hills of Graam, where there are numerous rapids and hidden rocks. Its width at Bonfol is about 40 metres, at Krothering about 30 metres and at Fromont it is about 20.

## **Breakingdale**

A large valley lying to the northwest of the town of Upper Raracas, centred on the Breaking River. Breakingdale is the easiest route between the Kingdom of Montour and the Kingdom of Karakiraz. Montese forces occupied Breakingdale during the reign of Queen Florence, in the mid third century. Colonization was rapid, and the valley, once a Voor stronghold, now also has a large population of Montese farmers, though the further one goes from the river and its settlements the more Voors and fewer Montese you find. There are still many Voor clanholds which have resisted annexation. A few Ghorgandi live in the valley, mostly in the town of Krothering and points to its north. Despite the Montese conquest and control, the Voor clan structure is still loosely in place, and some Voor thanes, especially on the northeastern side of the river, who welcomed the Montese are now accorded the rank and title of lord. Others, though, fought the invaders and were dispossessed and their lands awarded to Montese lords. Those that still remain, however lowly their station seems to be, are accorded great respect from their people. The baronial forces, however, vigorously stamp out any inter-clan warfare.

The volcanic soil of the Breakingdale is fertile, and much of the valley is given over to agriculture, although some small scratch mines in the mountains to the north and east provide a small amount of mineral resources, and a bit of forestry goes on in the fringes of the forest, but this latter activity is always threatened by humanoid raiders.

About 60000 humans live on the plains of Breakingdale. This is split almost evenly between Montese settlers and the native Voors. In addition, there are a community or two of dwarfs, a halfling ghetto in Krothering town, and a few families of Ghorgandi refugees, the bulk of whom live in Fromont and surrounds.

## **Brecourt Manor, Battle of (358)**

A large Dornite raiding force some hundred strong, led by Sir Emeron of Galt, landed on the coast north of Ravandil in mid-July 358 and marched inland. The target of the raid appeared to be Lady Julienne du Valier, first wife of King Vandrad. The raiders were intercepted by forces under Duke Raymond du Plessey and Count Hugo du Valier, and a pitched battle ensued. The Dornites were supported by several shamans, whose magic had an important effect on the early stages of the battle. However, the greater mobility of the Montese cavalry over the Dornite infantry finally told, and the raiders were put to flight.

The battle was a costly one, however, with several notables and many knights killed on the field, and Duke Raymond grievously wounded.

## **Brotherhood of the Shield**

Military order. This is a large international order formed by the free nations of the east to oppose the ever-encroaching Gel Empire. It has official support in Castrovia, Montour and Valliore, and was tolerated in Karakiraz and the other human statelets on the Peninsula. Naturally, most of its early activity was based on the Empire, but since the collapse of that entity the centre of the Order has shifted to Valliore. Currently the Brotherhood holds numerous castles on the borders of Valliore and Montour, as well as having contingents permanently serving in the remaining fragment of the Empire, and it also provides the bulk of the garrison-army of Kutarmish, won with such cost in the Crusade of 337. In recent times the Brotherhood has also diverted some of its resources to the extreme northeast, where the resurgent Empire of Tabiti has recently made inroads into the local states. In many respects the Brotherhood is a state in its own right, and the Grandmaster has as much influence as many lesser monarchs, and great freedom in following his own policy without reference to others. The Brotherhood has vowed to keep out of the internal politics of the member-states, and Shield Brothers, to ensure their first loyalty is to the Order, are forbidden to marry or hold an official post for any civil authority. Permission to leave the order to do so is rarely given.

- **Benefits of the Brotherhood are these**—Shield Brothers, and to a lesser extent their associated soldiers, are accorded respect and honour from most, if not all, inhabitants of Castrovia, Valliore, Montour and the other dominions which fill their ranks. Members of the Brotherhood are subject not to civil jurisdiction, but to their own courts, which are generally more likely to acquit. However, Brothers who are found guilty by their own authorities are not treated softly. Death and expulsion are common sentences. Expelled members can then be tried for the same crime by the civil authorities. In Montour the Brotherhood has been given the right to commute any civil sentence of imprisonment, mutilation or death to life service under the Shield, if the criminal agrees.

## **Budding, the**

An important coming-of-age ceremony for girls of the Ghorgandi people. Typically it occurs between the 13th and 15th year of age, when the girl begins demonstrating adult bodily characteristics. After the Budding, a woman is ready to be married.

## Burnt Ears

A minor Voor tribe, the Burnt Ears live to the north and east of Krothering. They are a people in long, slow decline. Most of them have been assimilated into the Montese population of the Breaking River settlements, and the remaining people living a tribal existence in the woodlands have had to compete with pesties and, recently, an increased orcic activity. The tribe takes its name from the ritual scarification that both men and women suffer through upon reaching adulthood.

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