

Alternate Timeline Elves

The Golden Age of the Elves

In an alternate timeline, Elves conquered the known world and instigated an Elven empire. Other races became second class citizens, and religion never expanded past the small cult level, thus leaving the world with a uniform magic state and with a high population of magical creatures (see [magic](#))

Sub-Races still existed, but were more scattered throughout the world and they did not form sub-race majority societies/enclaves/ghettos.

Golden Age Politics

The Elven Kingdom is ruled by a Monarch, who is head of the most powerful family in the land. The Monarch's power is based on how much magic the family controls, and as I doubt the ruling family is decided on anything so trite as a magic duel, I assume ascendancy is determined in other, subtler ways (shows of power, clever lobbying, etc).

The Ruling family is customarily chosen from the seven Great Houses, the most powerful/wealthy families in the kingdom. The seven houses, and the approximately 13 lesser houses comprise the court. Or, at least, the most powerful members do. every elf is a member of one of the 20 houses, though there is a vast gulf between Kherlian Linley-Graen, General and Warden of the Southern Reaches, and Mecklet Linley-Graen, apprentice pig-keeper.

The Linley-Graen family currently rule the Kingdom (dispute the name if you wish). The King, and the Princes are Linley-Graens, and the King is also Head of the family. I'm also assuming that, as this is a Fantasy Hero campaign, the most powerful people in the kingdom, Heads of State, etc, aren't necessarily spell casters or blessed with some super-powerful attributes. The King rules because, along with a natural inclination to the role, he is particularly well-trained in governance and the affairs of State.

L-Gs have large holdings and vast business concerns, which are over-seen by the Family Council. While the King, as Head of the Family is also Head of this Council, his sovereignty is titular, a safeguard against conflict of interest. The kingdom is governed by a council, on which members of all 20 families hold seats. Of course, the L-G family own the most seats on this Council at present. Though there is one council seat reserved for each family, the other seats are contested (probably in some arcane manner). The Monarch's sovereignty over this council is complete: the Monarch is Head of all families, with final veto over all Council decisions. Though it is uncommon for the Monarch to cast a deciding vote against the expressed wishes of his-her family, it is not unknown.

The Family council decide on the runnings of their holdings and conduct Family business. The Council votes on new petitioners: upon reaching maturity, children apply to join a family, usually either their mother's or father's (if different) or sometimes a different family. Until they reach majority, a child is the responsibility of his/her mother's family: this only becomes important in cases of custody disputes, orphans etc. Genealogical records, rulings on matters of consanguinity and affinity and most other duties of Family Law Court are decided by this Council. There is no outside court of Appeals:

Family business remains within the Family.

The Queen is head of the Chauda-Mehl (Showda-mel) Family. This is fairly uncommon, as usually the Heads of State are from the same Family, and has lead to a situation where the QQueen has no political power as Queen, but an immense ammount of clout as Head of a Great House. The close alluance of two Great Houses has created an extremely stable power-base, that would take an extremely concerted effort to tumble.

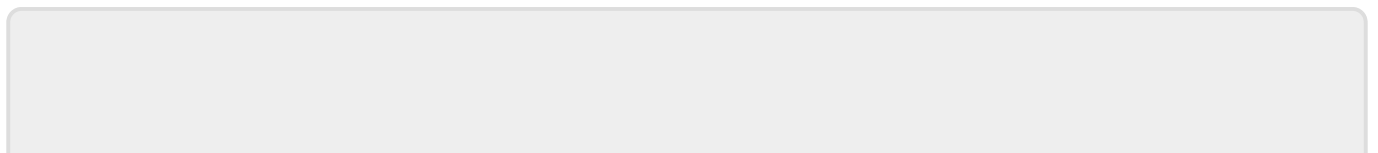
As demonstrated in the case of the King and Queen, marriage between two houses doesn't nessarily mean that husband or wife joins the other's house. Leavin a House, particularly if one holds high position in a Great one, is difficult, involving drawn-oput negotiations over assets and alliances.

Positions on Councils, land and businesses are usually inherited. children of council members are, after all, usually the best trained to succeed their parents. Because of elven longevity, however, Council sears aren't usually held for life. Within the Family, sub-families, or nuclear units will usually share responsibility for particular council sears, and the highest level of administrative work that the position demands. Most of the King's administrative staff are close relatives. The heirachy spreads out, web like (though that's slightly contradictory to "hierachy") from there.

Example: a seat, or seats in any Family council is reserved for the Head of Geneological records. This council member's immediate family members might be in charge of all Family Geneologists, or Head Librarian, or secretary, etc. Second cousins might be members of the Geneological Council, or Head Researchers. More distant relatives could be employed as assistants. Of course, the lower it goes, the more unlikely it is that one family unit is associated with one particular position. The reason, of course, is that if you're assured, by birht, the promise of a prestige position in a certain field, you're more likely to show an interest in that field. If you're father's position is janitor in a small library, you may have an ambition to stydy and obtain a better job in another field. Theoretically, of course, all positions are decided on merit, and there have been circumstances when a prestige position has been awarded away from its traditional family nucleas.

As mentioned, there are seven Great Houses, and this number is set. No other house has risen to Greatness in centuries, though not through lack of effort on the part of the Lesser Houses. The formation of new Houses are subject to strict criteria, and ruled on by the King's council. Petitions to combine Houses, to dissolve Houses, are also ruled by the King's Council. Changes are fairly common amoungst the lesser Houses, as they manoever for more power, subtly encouraged by the Greater, who don't have cause to worry if the lesser lights are busy with petty squabbles.

The close allegiance between the Linley-Graen and Chauda-Mehl houses is unique in the circle of Great Houses. That two such intricate and complicated entities can work together so well is very unusual. The Great Houses, though never openly hostile (being "above" the petty machinations of the lesser lights) are wary of one another, after all, how can you fully trust such powerful equals? The inherent distrust, however, doesn't adversely affect the running of the Elven Kingdom, and when dealing with foreigners, it is quite impossible to tell exactly what differences there are between each House.



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