

# INTRODUCTION

## THE STOR-GRIS ERA

It is the distant past of the World of Farland, before the Lords of Sin and the Dark Conquest. A different conflict consumes the land, a war fought by elves and dwarves against the fell and evil Dark Folk kingdom of Stor-gris. This dread kingdom is a land of orcs, goblins, and their kin—it is a slave-holding realm, full of monsters and terror.

The Races of the Light face an uphill battle: the dominion of Stor-gris is massive and heavily populated by the quick-breeding Dark Folk races, and worse, it is headed by strategic and ruthless leaders, and none moreso than the orc-demon Karoxfang, the founder of the kingdom, whose very name causes the bravest among the elves and dwarves to quail in fear.

If this isn't enough, the realm of Stor-gris is supported and advised by the Wintervale, the land of perpetual ice and snow that lies across the gulf to the east. This bleak place is ruled by the White Lady, a mysterious entity of great and terrible power. The elves and dwarves are menaced from two sides.

They have some allies. The gnomes have provided support, both militarily and otherwise, in the war against evil, but they generally take an isolationist policy. The halflings and humans too do what they can to support the good races, but their societies are primitive and undeveloped. In fact, many humans live in caves and huts, and while they understand the threat posed by Stor-gris, there is little they can do against such powerful and developed foes. Thus, the elves and the dwarves must bear the brunt of the conflict with Stor-gris.

They are aware of this fact, and they fully

understand the magnitude of their peril.

Sometimes the elves and dwarves have faced the armies of Stor-gris in open combat, but the seemingly endless hordes of orcs and goblins always makes this a dangerous proposition.

There are simply too many goblin-folk.

Nevertheless, they have one hope: their intellect.

The elves and dwarves have been planning a scheme to assassinate the dreadful Karoxfang and hopefully throw the wicked kingdom into disarray and perhaps civil war. The plan is tenuous, however, and its outcome lies in the balance....

This, then, is the backdrop of the *World of Farland: War of Immortals* Campaign Setting. Players in this setting face a centuries-old conflict between non-human races, a game of chess played for the highest of stakes—the freedom of the Races of the Light, or their ultimate destruction. The grand civilizations of the elves and dwarves hang by a thread... will they survive?

This campaign setting offers the opportunity to play in the World of Farland, but in a time in its history when great non-human civilizations vied for control of the continent, fielding massive armies and engaging in epic battles that would later become the stuff of myths and legends. At this point in its history, humans have not yet assumed the prominent position they will later occupy. The Stor-gris era is the time of the ascendancy of orcs, dwarves, and immortal elves. Campaigns set in this era begin in the year 9770 Elven Reckoning, approximately 10,700 years before the Lords of Sin and the Dark Conquest as told in the *World of Farland Campaign Setting* publication.

## HISTORY

Around 7000 years before the date in which War of Immortals campaigns take place, the first great elf houses were founded, and with them, the flowering of elven civilization began. At that time, orcs and most other monsters did not yet exist, and the elves lived in a virtual paradise, free from biological aging, most diseases, and the majority of perils save that caused by accidents. But such a utopian way of life could not last. Not long after, from the greatest and most noble elf house, *Al-Dustriel* (“Lovers of Honor and Glory”) came a peerless and lovely elven maiden, Talkana, called *Silumiel* (“Beloved One as Beautiful as the Moon”). Not only was Talkana Moondaughter, as she came to be called, the comeliest elf who had yet lived, she also proved to be gifted in many other ways: she was supremely intelligent, skilled in crafts, and adept in the fledging discipline of magic. She traveled the land, teaching and improving all with whom she came into contact. Dwarves were newly created at this point and just attempting to found their own civilization, and Talkana did much to guide and instruct them. She traveled to their home of Liferock to tutor them in elven ways.

But her curiosity and ambition was as great as her beauty and skill. Talkana ever sought to expand her knowledge until she contacted... something or someone she should never have sought. Without warning, some 6500 years before the present date, she disappeared. The elves sought her in the wilderness, but returned unsuccessful they deeply mourned her loss. However, something soon distracted them: the appearance of foul, stunted, evil creatures in the wilds—orcs. Soon after the orcs appeared, similar but distinct creatures followed—goblins and other Dark Folk. These beasts attacked the elves in their forest, and the elves found themselves fighting for their very existence. Though

individually these creatures were no match for an elf, they still represented a real threat due to their high birth rate.

The elves called this early strife the Battle of the Sarum. Yet this conflict provided the elves with the impetus to study magic in earnest, and their new discoveries turned the tide of the battle. The Dark Folk were on the verge of defeat and ultimate extermination—when inexplicably, House Al-Dustriel turned on their kin and caused civil discord in the Sarumvest and its capital of Alustel. For the first time, elf shed the blood of elf. This civil strife came to be called the Kin Slayer Wars. House Al-Dustriel, with its allied houses, left the Sarumvest and founded the city of Talas in the wastelands to the east. And worse, the rebel elves aligned themselves with the orcs and goblinoids. The war dragged on, with the final result in doubt, for the rebels and Dark Folk were led by a powerful and enigmatic being that called itself the White Lady. Eventually, with great loss, the forces of House Al-Dustriel were defeated. The orcs were scattered and the White Lady fled this occurred some 3400 years ago. The elves set about to hunt down any orc stragglers. For hundreds of years, the elves knew peace.

But the White Lady returned centuries later, around 1700 years before the present date, and founded the Dark Folk realm she called Rothnog, setting herself up as its queen. Having learned from her defeat at the fall of Talas, she fortified her kingdom and built it slowly, treating and parlaying with the elves and dwarves until her military might was in place. Then she struck. Rothnog attacked and waged terrible war against the elves and dwarves. Some dwarves recognized the threat to their ancestral home Liferock and took themselves off to found the fortress of Wawmar. The White Lady was indeed successful in destroying Liferock, and she even threatened the bounds of the Sarumvest itself. Much of the reason for her success was her dreadful general

Karoxfang, the spawn of an orc and a demon. Yet always evil turns on itself, and the kingdom of Rothnog was split by its own civil war. Powerful orcish warlords rebelled against the White Lady, and war raged within the kingdom until the might of Rothnog was broken, though the White Lady emerged triumphant from the civil strife.

The elves and the dwarves saw their chance and attacked the weakened kingdom, defeating it utterly. The Lady and her vassal Karoxfang, around 450 years ago, attempted to flee east with their defeated army, but they were trapped and overwhelmed at Thunder Pass as they tried to cross the Grand Peaks. But the leaders of Rothnog would not be eliminated so easily. Karoxfang and his picked warriors fought their way out of the trap and escaped in the only direction open to them—to the south. The White Lady used her powerful magic to escape as well and took herself into the city of Gorgwath which she had prepared in the east. The elves at this point founded the Satellite Cities of Emerain and Palahan in the eastern plains of Aeltal to protect against attacks from Gorgwath. And again, the elves and the dwarves knew peace—but alas, it was all too fleeting.

Dispossessed orcs, goblins, and other Dark Folk from all over the Hinterlands flocked to Karoxfang. Having had the luck to take prisoner a famous dwarven architect and engineer, the vile general used the dwarf's knowledge to build for himself in the south a nearly unassailable fortress city he called *Stor-gris*, or "New Start" in the uncouth tongue of orcs. Slowly and quietly he reestablished contact with the White Lady in Gorgwath and began anew the work of Rothnog. He claimed the wide lands surrounding Stor-gris and founded Dark Folk cities and castles there. Gradually, he increased his domain and strengthened his armies, this time brooking no disobedience and quelling any hint of disagreement or unrest with extreme prejudice, for he would not have Stor-gris repeat the

mistakes of Rothnog. So skillfully did Karoxfang enact his plans that by the time the elves and dwarves, lulled into a false sense of security, perceived their peril and began to marshal their armies, it was too late. A deadly plague blew out of the east, and it killed disease-resistant elves and dwarves alike. Their armies decimated, there was little they could do as the forces of Stor-gris openly revealed themselves and laid claim to the Hinterlands, declaring that Karoxfang was the rightful king of all Siriand. About 70 years ago, Stor-gris gave them an ultimatum: submit to the rule of the orc-demon general... or die.

## THE WAR OF IMMORTALS

This ultimatum began the War of Immortals, so called because the immortal elves had to face down the might of Stor-gris, though their numbers were lacking. The dwarves fought on the side of the elves, though they trusted to the impregnability of their fortress of Wawmar as often as they fielded armies.

The War has run hot and cold for seven decades. The elves and dwarves have never faced with their full armies the full force of the dark kingdom, for they are heavily outnumbered. They have fought many skirmishes and engaged in much guerrilla action, but ever the armies of Stor-gris have pushed north, driving the elves from the Hinterlands and forcing them to withdraw closer and closer to their woodland kingdom of the Sarumvest.

In addition, Gorgwath has begun menacing the elves of Aeltal, and Dark Folk from the east have encroached on the Kingdom of Wawmar. It is becoming obvious that Stor-gris and Gorgwath are preparing for a massive assault—and indeed elven spies have reported a huge army gathering in Stor-gris. According to the spies, such a massive army has never yet been seen in the Siriand.